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THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

1878-79-80

ITS CAUSES, ITS CONDUCT AND
ITS CONSEQUENCES

BY

COLONEL H. B. HANNA

Formerly belonging to the Punjab Frontier Force and
late Commanding at Delhi

“The maintenance of an inviolable character for moderation, good faith, and scrupulous regard for Treaty, ought to have been the simple grounds on which the British Government should have endeavoured to establish an influence, superior to that of other Europeans, over the Native powers of India; and the danger and discredit arising from the forfeiture of this preëminence, could not be compensated for by the temporary success of any plan of violence and injustice.”

Resolution of the House of Commons in 1782.

VOL I

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TO

MY WIFE

I DEDICATE A BOOK WHICH
BUT FOR HER ENCOURAGEMENT
AND AID WOULD NEVER
HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

P R E F A C E

WHEN first the idea of writing a History of the Second Afghan War began to occupy my mind, my ambition went no farther than the production of a faithful record of events in which I had borne a small part, and of which, so far as they had come under my observation, I had taken careful note. The kindness of many of the chief actors in those events soon placed me in a position to realize this object, and I sat down to write the introductory chapter which was to explain to my future readers why the Indian Government had invaded a country with which it earnestly desired to live in peace and amity, little suspecting whither it would lead me.

To ensure that the sketch which I had in my mind, should be thoroughly accurate, I procured every official and non-official publication bearing upon Afghan and Central Asian affairs, and in studying these I, or rather we—for from the first, my wife was my fellow-student and co-worker—soon had the conviction forced upon us that the war of 1878 had sprung out of no change of attitude on the part of the Amir of Afghanistan, but out of a change of policy on the part of the British Government—a change due to fears which experience of the country beyond the Indus had

shown me to be ill-founded—and that, instead of having been reluctantly undertaken by an insulted and endangered State for the vindication of its honour and the protection of its frontiers, it had been deliberately led up to by a series of steps, some diplomatic, some military, which, in the end, had left Shere Ali no choice but to consent to the diminution of his own authority and his country's independence, or to accept a contest in which *his* fortunes, at least, were certain to suffer shipwreck.

But these unpleasant truths once admitted, we had to recognize that the scope of our book must be enlarged. To present a faithful picture of the war itself and to draw the right military lessons from its experiences, was no less important than before; but to lay bare the errors of judgment which had brought it about, was now of infinitely greater moment, since those errors, crystallized into a policy, still persisted, and might any day involve India in hostilities with neighbours who, powerless to harm her whilst she confined herself within her natural limits, must become formidable as soon as those limits were overstept.

The new title of our book—The History of the Second Afghan War, its Causes, its Conduct and its Consequences—reflected the change which had taken place in our point of view, and the amount of additional labour entailed upon us by that change may be gathered from the fact that two-thirds of the present volume deal exclusively with the first branch of our subject—the Causes of the War. For this labour, however, there was ample reward in the growing hope that

the History, when completed, would deal a deadly blow to the Forward Policy. Unfortunately, however, our progress was slow, whilst the danger that it had become my dearest desire to avert, was drawing rapidly nearer; so, feeling that this was a case where private must give place to public duty, I turned, in the spring of 1894, from the work to which, by accepting the papers so generously confided to me, I had pledged myself—to try, before it was too late, to show Englishmen the rocks towards which they were drifting, and to clear their minds of a delusion, by encouraging which it had become possible for the military party in India to dominate her Government, and to give a fatal turn to her relations with the border tribes.

The field of controversy once entered upon, I found great difficulty in withdrawing from it. The resistance of the Waziris to the delimitation of their country; the Chitral revolt and the subsequent Chitral expedition; the Tochi outbreak, and the border troubles that culminated in the Tirah campaign—events following rapidly on each other, and one and all confirming the soundness of my opinions and the accuracy of my forecasts—obliged me, again and again, to return to the charge in the hope that, by constantly re-stating my arguments, and multiplying the proofs on which they were based, I might drive the truth about a Russian invasion of India into men's heads. This is not the place to consider whether those endeavours met with any measure of success, but, at least, the History, at which we continued to work in the intervals between one pamphlet

and another, has been no loser by the study and thought given to its temporary rivals, and I may venture to hope that what those fugitive controversial writings failed to effect, may be attained by the more enduring historical indictment of the Forward Policy presented in the Work of which this volume is the first instalment.

H. B. HANNA.

Ashcroft, Petersfield, May 1899.

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ERRATA

- Page 48, 3rd para., second line, after "Afghanistan", a semi-colon; and fourth line, after "himself", a comma.
- „ 83, 2nd para., last line but one, for "voluntary", read "voluntarily"
- „ 108, line 18, after "light", a semi-colon.
- „ 127, 2nd para., fifth line from bottom, for "Simla", read "Peshawar".
- „ 295, eleventh line of note, for "remarkably", read "remarkable"
- „ 336, third line, for "planw as", read "plan was".

CHAPTER I

BRITISH RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN

FROM 1855 TO 1869.

WHEN in 1842 the armies of Pollock and Nott quitted Afghanistan, victorious in the field, but unsuccessful in every object for which a three years' war had been waged—a war in which our troops had experienced every vicissitude of fortune and endured every hardship which nature or man could inflict—a veil of impenetrable darkness fell, for a time, between India and that neighbour whose friendship and alliance she so eagerly coveted that, to gain them, she had spent seventeen millions of money, given the lives of thousands of her bravest troops, and carried fire and sword from Quetta to Kabul, and from the mouth of the Khyber to distant Turkestan. ¹

¹ Extract from Report of the East India Committee on the causes and consequences of the First Afghan war, written during its progress:—"This war of robbery is waged by the English Government through the intervention of the Government of India (without the knowledge of England, or of Parliament and the Court of Directors); thereby evading the checks placed by the Constitution on the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown in declaring war. It presents, therefore, a new crime in the annals of nations—a *secret war!* It has been made by a people without their knowledge, against another people who had committed no offence." "Effects on India.—The exhaustion of her

Behind that veil, the authority of Dost Mahomed, the ruler whom we had driven from his throne and, subsequently, sent a captive to India, was restored, and the anarchy which we had created reduced to order by his strong and skilful hand; but no British Envoy stood now at his side, as Sir Alexander Burnes had stood in the days before the war, to exercise an influence on his policy and to keep England informed as to the doings and intentions of her dreaded rival—Russia. It was lifted for a brief space in 1848, when Dost Mahomed, tempted by the hope of recovering Peshawar, despatched Afghan troops to aid his old enemies, the Sikhs, against his more recent enemies, the English; but it fell again when the battle of Gujrat had dissipated that hope and made of the Punjab an Indian Province.¹

flourishing treasury; complete stop to internal improvement; loss of the lives of fifteen thousand men (loss of camp-followers not known); destruction of fifty thousand camels; abstraction of the circulating medium of the country; loss of at least £13,000,000 (now estimated from £17,000,000 to £20,000,000); permanent increase of the charges on India of £4,500,000; paralization of commerce; diminution of the means of culture, of transport and of revenue; chilling the affections of the native army, and the disposition to enlist; loss of England's character for fair-dealing; loss of her character of success; the Mussulman population is rendered hostile; causes of rebellion developed by the pressure of taxes and the withdrawal of troops; and finally, the other political party in England is committed to the continuation of such deeds, after they are recognised by the people of these islands to be criminal, and after they had brought upon our heads disaster and retribution."

¹ "At the battle of Gujrat 4,000 of the very best men of Afghanistan, the *élite* of Dost Mahomed's army, splendid men,

In 1855, however, the Amir drew it aside with a more friendly hand, and sent his son and heir, Gholab Hyder Khan, to Jamrud to negotiate a treaty with Mr. John Lawrence and Colonel Herbert Edwardes, who had been deputed by Lord Dalhousie to meet him.

The Afghan prince was empowered to ask for assistance in men, money and arms, in case Persia, or Russia, or both combined, were to threaten Herat, then an independent state, but, under the Durani and Sudazai dynasties, a province of Afghanistan, and still an essential bulwark of that Kingdom's independence. But Lawrence had neither the authority, nor the wish to accede to such requests,—he seems, at this time, to have been doubtful of the advantage to India of entering into any dealings with Afghanistan—and the draft treaty which he prepared and which Hyder Khan finally accepted, contained only three articles: the first of which declared that there should be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable East India Company and his Highness Dost Mahomed Khan, Wali of Kabul and those countries now in his possession; the second pledged the East India Company to respect those countries and never to interfere in them; and the third bound the Amir and his heirs not only to respect the possessions of the East India Company, but to be the friend of its friends and the enemy of its enemies.

on splendid horses, as they were described by the officers present, commanded by the son and nephews of the Amir in person, were overthrown, beaten to pieces and driven from the field with tremendous loss by 243 Hindustanis of the Sind Irregular Horse, leaving their leaders slain and their standards in the hands of the victors.”—General John Jacob, C. B.

Two years later, in January 1857, Dost Mahomed himself met the same two representatives of the Company at the same place—Jamrud, and, both Governments being then on the eve of war with Persia who, in defiance of all warnings, had just seized Herat, a fresh treaty was concluded between them, by which Dost Mahomed, in exchange for a large subsidy given to enable him to equip and maintain an efficient army, agreed to receive British officers at Kabul, Kandahar, Balkh, or wherever an Afghan army might be established against the Persians, to watch over the application of the money to the purposes for which it was intended ; it being strictly laid down that those officers¹ were to abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of the Amir's Kingdom, and that, on the conclusion of peace, between the Allied Powers and Persia, when the subsidy would cease to be paid, they were to be withdrawn.

This treaty was temporary in its character, except as regards the seventh clause, which was to come into force when all the others expired and which gave to the Indian Government the right to maintain a Vakil, or Native Envoy, permanently at Kabul, and to the Amir a like right to send an Agent to Peshawar for the purpose of keeping each Government well informed as to the position and wishes of the other. To prevent the slightest chance of this provision's ever being used to cover larger demands on the part of India than the Amir intended to concede, it

¹ Major H. B. Lumsden, Lieutenant P. S. Lumsden and Dr. H. W. Bellew. Two native gentlemen, both Durani Afghans, also accompanied the mission.

was expressly stated that her Envoy was *not* to be a European officer.

The war proved of short duration. Persia sued for peace, one condition of which was her immediate withdrawal from Herat, which province returned, for a time, to a state of anarchical independence. On the termination of hostilities the British subsidy ceased to be paid to Dost Mahomed, the British officers left Kandahar, and a Mahomedan gentleman, Gholam Hussein Khan, went to Kabul as the East India Company's first Native Agent. In May 1863, Dost Mahomed took Herat by storm—the Indian Government having withdrawn its opposition to the reunion of that city with the rest of Afghanistan—and there he died, on the 9th of June of the same year. Before his death, Gholab Hyder Khan having predeceased him, he nominated as his successor his favourite son, Shere Ali, a younger brother of the notorious Akbar Khan, who murdered Sir William MacNaughten at Kabul in December 1841; but this prince's claim was, at once, contested by numerous members of his family, and the Indian Government, remembering the bitter fruits which it had reaped from its former attempt to force a ruler on the Afghan people, abstained, for a time, from recognizing Dost Mahomed's legal heir. It was not till December that Sir William Denison, then acting as Governor-General pending the arrival in India of the new Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, wrote a courteous letter to Shere Ali expressing his sincere hope that under his rule Afghanistan might possess a strong and united Government, and that the good understanding and friendship which had prevailed between that country and India in his father's

time, might gain strength and stability under his own administration.

For more than three years after the despatch of that letter, Shere Ali continued to be regarded as the Ruler of Afghanistan by the Indian Government, which recalled its Vakil, Gholam Hussein Khan, from Kabul on the discovery that he had been intriguing against him; but when in 1867 he was driven to take refuge in Herat, and his half-brother Mahomed Afzul Khan could announce that he was in full possession of the provinces of Kabul and Kandahar—it accepted the latter as *de facto* sovereign of the territory he had won. Yet Sir John Lawrence, whilst congratulating the new Amir, did not conceal the sympathy he felt for the misfortunes of Shere Ali “who had given him,” so he declared, “no cause of offence at any time”; and he dashed to the ground any hope of material countenance and aid which this recognition of his sovereignty might have awakened in Afzul’s breast, by the firm declaration that, should hostilities between him and his brother be renewed, the Indian Government would observe its former policy of strict neutrality. In conclusion Sir John Lawrence proposed, in accordance with the seventh clause of the treaty of 1857, to depute, if agreeable to the Amir, a Mahomedan gentleman of rank and character to be the British Representative at his court. Afzul Khan signified his willingness to receive an Envoy, and the Viceroy appointed Atta Mahomed Khan, in whose discretion and ability he reposed full confidence, to the post, but the Vakil’s departure from India was postponed from time to time, owing to the unsettled state of things in Afghanistan.

On the 7th of October, 1867, Afzul Khan died, and his

brother Mahomed Azim Khan was acknowledged as his successor, in open Durbar, not only by the assembled chiefs and nobles, but also by his nephew, Abdur Rahman, who must have expected to ascend his father's throne. Again an Amir notified his accession to the Indian Viceroy, and again the Viceroy courteously acknowledged the notification. But the reign of the new ruler was destined to be short; hardly had he been installed when the civil war broke out afresh, and this time fortune favoured Shere Ali, who, by the middle of September 1868, was able to inform Sir John Lawrence that, "by the grace and help of Almighty God his flag had safely reached the metropolis of Kabul." ¹

In his reply, dated the 2nd of October, the Viceroy congratulated his Highness on the recovery of his kingdom, advised him to deal leniently with his defeated enemies, and informed him that he—the Viceroy—was not only prepared to maintain the bonds of amity and good will which had existed between Dost Mahomed and the British Government, but so far as might be practicable to strengthen them.

The promise of help implied in these friendly words was soon fulfilled. On the 21st of December the Viceroy authorized the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab to give Shere Ali six lakhs of rupees (rather less, in those days, than sixty thousand pounds), and, in reporting this circumstance to the Secretary of State for India, he expressed the wish that the Indian Government might be empowered to give, at its discretion, to the *de facto* ruler of Afghanistan, arms, ammunition and substantial pecuniary aid.

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 43.

This gift of six lakhs of rupees marks a distinct departure from the former British policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan; for to subsidize one of two claimants to the throne of Kabul, was to espouse that claimant's cause, and virtually to decide for the Afghan people the question of what prince they should acknowledge and obey, so far as it was their custom to render obedience to any prince. There can be little doubt that similar assistance accorded to Azim Khan might have inclined the balance in his favour. That it was denied to him and granted to Shere Ali, indicates that between the accession of the one brother and his supercession by the other, the Viceroy and his Council had been convinced that, in the interests of India, the time had come for anarchy to cease in Afghanistan, and that they believed Shere Ali to be more likely to be able to put an end to it than any of his rivals. Whether, in arriving at these conclusions, they were influenced by Sir Henry Rawlinson's celebrated Memorandum on the Central Asian Question,¹ it is impossible either to assert or deny. Rawlinson himself claims for his able state paper the credit of having determined their policy at this juncture, and, certainly, that document in which he had not only advocated the subsidizing of the Amir of Kabul, but had named Shere Ali as the Amir to be so subsidized, reached Calcutta before the end of September 1868, and the letter recognizing Shere Ali's resumption of the Amirship and holding out hopes of British assistance in strengthening him in his recovered position, was not written till the 2nd of October,

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 31.

so that there was time for the Memorandum to have been considered by the Viceroy in Council before the determination to give aid to Shere Ali was arrived at. Probably the course adopted was the one which Sir John Lawrence had already decided to follow, and the Memorandum's chiming in with his own views led him to put them into execution with greater promptitude than might otherwise have been the case. The general policy of the Indian Government was, however, unchanged by it. The long array of facts which it brought forward to prove the rapidity of Russia's advance in Central Asia, awoke no alarm in the breasts of men who had long been familiar with them and who believed that, whilst that advance was inevitable and likely to continue, it was not, necessarily, inspired by any hostile intentions towards Great Britain; and but few of the "remedial measures" which it advocated with the object of hindering or delaying it, met with their approval. They were willing that the Indian Railway System should be extended so as to facilitate the concentration of troops on the North-West Frontier, and that the British Embassy at Teheran should be removed from the control of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and placed under the Secretary of State for India, but they passed over, in silence, the specific measures by which Rawlinson proposed to counteract Russia's influence in Persia, and they openly condemned his suggestions that a British Mission should be re-established at Kabul, that the Amir's authority should be upheld by a Native contingent officered by Englishmen, and that Quetta should be occupied and fortified—suggestions to which, it is fair to say, their author attached the condition that they should only be acted on,

if the willing consent of the Ruler and People of Afghanistan could first be obtained. The Viceroy and his Council summed up their objections to the policy of the Memorandum and formulated and justified their own in wise and courageous words :

“We object,” so they declared ; “to any active interference in the affairs of Afghanistan by the deputation of a high British officer with or without a contingent, or by the forcible or amicable occupation of any post, or tract, in that country beyond our own frontier, inasmuch as we think such a measure would, under present circumstances, engender irritation, defiance, and hatred in the minds of the Afghans, without in the least strengthening our power either for attack or defence. We think it impolitic and unwise to decrease any of the difficulties which would be entailed on Russia, if that power seriously thought of invading India, as we should certainly decrease them if we left our own frontier, and met her half way in a difficult country, and, possibly, in the midst of a hostile or exasperated population. We foresee no limits to the expenditure which such a move might require, and we protest against the necessity of having to impose additional taxation on the people of India, who are unwilling, as it is, to bear such pressure for measures which they can both understand and appreciate. And we think that the objects which we have at heart, in common with all interested in India, may be attained by an attitude of readiness and firmness on our frontier, and by giving all our care and expending all our resources for the attainment of practical and sound ends over which we can exercise an effective and immediate control.

“Should a foreign power, such as Russia, ever seriously think of invading India from without, or, what is more probable, of stirring up the elements of disaffection or anarchy within it, our true policy, our strongest security, would then, we conceive, be found to lie in previous abstinence from entanglements at either Cabul, Candahar, or any similar outpost; in full reliance on a compact, highly-equipped, and disciplined army stationed within our own territories, or on our own border; in the contentment, if not in the attachment, of the masses; in the sense of security of title and possession, with which our whole policy is gradually imbuing the minds of the principal Chiefs and the Native aristocracy; in the construction of material works within British India, which enhance the comfort of the people, while they add to our political and military strength; in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources; in quiet preparation for all contingencies, which no Indian statesman should disregard; and in a trust in the rectitude and honesty of our intentions, coupled with the avoidance of all sources of complaint which either invite foreign aggression or stir up restless spirits to domestic revolt.”¹

The allusion to the “contingencies which no Indian statesman should disregard” proves that though unaffected by Rawlinson’s nervous fear of Russian expansion, the Government of India did not close its eyes to the possibility of difficulties, some day, resulting from it both to Great Britain and to India; and it had not required any warning voice to direct its attention to the matter. A year before the memorandum

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 44.

on the Central Asian question reached Sir John Lawrence, he had written to Sir Stafford Northcote, then Secretary of State for India, pointing out that Russia's influence must soon be as paramount at Samarkand and Bokhara as it already was in Khokand, and had urged her Majesty's Ministers to determine with those of the Czar a line up to which "the relations of the respective Governments should be openly acknowledged and admitted as bringing them into necessary contact and treaty with the tribes and natives on the several sides of such a line." ¹

This suggestion had found no acceptance with Sir Stafford Northcote, who was of opinion that Russia's conquests in Central Asia were the natural result of the circumstances in which she found herself placed, and afforded no ground for representations indicative of suspicion or alarm on the part of Great Britain. Now, in this letter of the 4th of January, 1869, the Viceroy and his Council returned to the charge, meeting Sir H. Rawlinson's "remedial measures" directed against Russia with the counter suggestion that "endeavours might be made to come to some clear understanding with the Court of St. Petersburg as to its projects and designs in Central Asia, and that it might be given to understand, in firm but courteous language, that it could not be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, or in those of any State which lay contiguous to our frontier." ²

This proposal found favour with the Duke of Argyll, who had succeeded Sir Stafford Northcote at the India Office when

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), p. 20.

² Ibid., page 45.

the Disraeli Ministry gave place to that of Mr. Gladstone in December 1868, and, in due time, it bore important fruit.

With his father's kingdom, Shere Ali had inherited his father's desire to have the British Government for a friend and ally. We have seen how, in the letter announcing his victorious return to his capital, he reminded Sir John Lawrence of the relations of friendship and amity subsisting between Dost Mahomed and the Indian Government. Before the end of the year, whilst he still had hard work to maintain his position, he wrote to Mr. R. H. Davies, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, that "but for the hostile proceedings of Mohamed Azim Khan and of Abdur Rahman Khan, which diverted his attention towards them and compelled him to chastise them, he should already have sought a personal interview with the Viceroy." ¹

In his reply to this letter, dated 9th of January, 1869, Sir John Lawrence informed the Amir that he was leaving the country, and handing over his high office to his successor, but that the policy he had pursued with regard to the affairs of Afghanistan commanded the assent and approval of her Majesty, the Queen of England, and that as long as he—the Amir—continued by his actions to evince a real desire for the alliance of the British Government he had nothing to apprehend in the way of a change of policy on its part, or of its interference in the internal affairs of his kingdom, though it would lie with each successive administration to determine, year by year, what practical assistance in the way of money and materials of war should be made over to him

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1878), page 83.

as a testimony of its goodwill and for the furtherance of his legitimate authority and influence. As an immediate proof of the British Government's desire to see him establish a strong, just and merciful government throughout Afghanistan, Shere Ali was informed that a further sum of six lakhs of rupees, in addition to the six lakhs which he had already received, would, in the course of the next three months, be placed at his disposal, and that for neither gift would the British Government look for any other return than "in abiding confidence, sincerity and good-will."¹

Lord Mayo, the successor to whom Sir John Lawrence alluded in this letter, arrived at Calcutta on the 12th of January, 1869, and proceeded without loss of time, to arrange for that interview between himself, as Head of the Indian Government, and the Amir, which the latter had declared himself to have at heart. Shere Ali responded warmly to the suggestion that he should visit India, and though anxious on account of the critical state of things still prevailing in his kingdom, that the meeting with the Viceroy should take place at some point within easy reach of his frontier—he announced his readiness to go even as far as Calcutta if necessary. He suggested Lahore or Delhi, but Ambala, midway between the two, was the city finally decided upon.

Shere Ali started from Kabul on the 10th of February, leaving his son, Yakub Khan, to make head against his enemies in his absence. On the 3rd of March he reached Peshawar, and Ambala on the 25th. On the 27th the Viceroy also arrived in that city and, the same day, in

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 83.

public Durbar, he bade the Amir welcome to India, in the name of the Queen. On Monday, the 29th, the Amir, in his turn, received the Viceroy, and then, all the necessary ceremonious observances having been fulfilled, there began a series of private interviews between Shere Ali, who was attended by his able and trusted adviser, Syud Nur Mahomed Shah, and Lord Mayo, with whom were the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Mr. Davies; the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Seton-Karr; and Captain Grey, who acted as interpreter. The result of these interviews as embodied in the letter which the Viceroy wrote to Shere Ali at the latter's request, on the 31st of March, can hardly have been satisfactory to that prince. He took back with him as the reward for the risk he had run in leaving Afghanistan before the flames of civil war had been entirely extinguished, no tangible gain of any kind. Lord Mayo had had nothing to offer him but good wishes for his success in tranquillizing his kingdom and consolidating his power; a promise to regard with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of his rivals to disturb his position at Kabul; an assurance that he—the Viceroy—would endeavour, from time to time, by such means as circumstances might require, to strengthen his—the Amir's—Government, so as to enable him to exercise with "equity and justice his rightful rule," and to transmit to his descendants all the "dignities and honours" of which he was the lawful possessor; and an invitation to communicate freely with the Government of India and its officers on all subjects of public interest.

Never, surely, were vaguer benefits offered to a ruler of whom it was wished to make a friend; yet vague and shadowy

as they were, they were still too strong and definite for the Duke of Argyll who thought that certain expressions in the Viceroy's letter might some day be construed by that prince, or his successors, as meaning more than they were intended to convey, and was anxious that use should be made of any opportunity that might present itself to dissipate any false expectations that might have arisen in Shere Ali's mind.

Lord Mayo was able to assure the Secretary of State that it had been made clear to the Amir in conversation, that the promise to view "with severe displeasure" any attempts that his rivals might make to re-kindle civil war, did not mean that the Indian Government would ever take any armed action against his enemies; that the words "rightful rule" were not to be construed as implying any recognition of his "*de jure*" as well as of his "*de facto*" sovereignty; and that the expression of the wish that he might be enabled to transmit to his descendants all the dignities and honours of which he was the lawful possessor, carried with it no engagement on the part of Great Britain to recognize such descendants, and he, the Viceroy, therefore deprecated as unnecessary and inexpedient the proposal to impress these truths upon him again in writing. Lord Mayo also assured his Grace that during the Conference he had never contemplated giving the Amir annual grants of money, nor of adding to the amount already bestowed upon him by Sir John Lawrence, and he took credit to himself for the firmness he had displayed in resisting the earnest entreaties made to him by many persons of authority, the night before Shere Ali left Ambala, that he would promise his departing guest a large addition to the subsidy.

Yet the reasons by which that request had been supported were very strong, as Lord Mayo honestly admitted. Its advocates pointed out that Azim Khan had levied a year's revenue in advance; that Shere Ali had, therefore, to raise, at once, another half-year's taxes which would cause much poverty and oppression; that the sixty thousand pounds of Sir John Lawrence's allowance, not yet paid, was forestalled; that immediate supplies were necessary for the commencement of the Turkestan campaign; that the policy of support and countenance would not be believed in unless accompanied by a large gift of gold; that the Amir, notwithstanding the present of arms and ammunition which he had received, felt that he was going back empty-handed; and that Yakub Khan and the Sirdars left behind at Kabul, would laugh and say that he had gone on a fruitless errand.

Much of the correspondence which passed between the Duke of Argyll and Lord Mayo, whilst the one was Secretary of State for India and the other Viceroy of India, was of a semi-official character and, therefore, withdrawn from public cognizance, except in so far as the former, for his own purposes, made use of it when writing his book entitled "The Afghan Question." This method of conducting the affairs of a great Dependency may be convenient to the writers, but it has great inconveniences for the British People whom it allows to know only so much of their own business as it may suit the servants they employ to confide to them. The despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, dated Simla, 1st of July, 1869, which has just been dealt with, contains the following important quotation from one of these confidential communications.

“What the Amir is *not* to have:—No treaty; no fixed subsidy; no European troops, officers, or residents; no dynastic pledges. What he *is* to have:—Warm countenance and support, discouragement of his rivals; such material assistance as we may consider absolutely necessary for his immediate wants; and constant friendly communication through our Commissioner at Peshawar and our Native Agent in Afghanistan; he on his part undertaking to do all he can to maintain peace on our frontiers, and to comply with all our wishes in the matter of trade.”¹

“Warm countenance and support” which began and ended in words—and such, except for the gift of arms mentioned above, was the nature of the favour shown to Shere Ali by Lord Mayo—must have seemed to the Amir of very little practical use; but the above passage is not quoted here for the sake of emphasizing the bareness of the Ambala Conference so far as Shere Ali was concerned, but to call attention to the pledge contained in it that no European officers, or residents, should be stationed in Afghanistan, a pledge which, by some curious confusion of thought, is placed in such connection in the text as to make it appear as if European officers were among the things which the Amir had desired and the Indian Government had denied to him.

Private letters from Lord Mayo to the Duke of Argyll, however, put this matter in its true light. In one, the Viceroy told the Secretary of State for India that he had promised the Amir “that no European officers should be

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 95.

placed as residents in his cities";¹ in another, "that the only pledges given were that we would not interfere in his affairs; that we would not force European officers upon him against his wish";² whilst, to a letter of the 4th of April, he appended certain notes of the conferences of the 1st and 3rd of that month, which showed the extreme jealousy of Shere Ali and his minister, Nur Mahomed, on the subject of European agents of the British Government.

These promises added nothing to the engagements entered into by Sir John Lawrence with Dost Mahomed, but, by confirming them, and still more by offering that confirmation to Shere Ali as a compensation for declining to give him that on which his heart was set—a dynastic guarantee—the Viceroy certainly made them doubly binding on his successors in office and on the British Government.

For this dynastic guarantee the Amir strove and pleaded, urging "that merely to acknowledge the Ruler *pro tem* and *de facto*, was to invite competition for a throne and excite the hopes of all sorts of candidates."³ It was against the rivals of his own house that he desired British assistance, not against external attack. The fear of renewed civil war was ever present to his mind; dread of Russian aggression seems not yet to have crossed it; and Lord Mayo was careful not to exhibit the British Government as suffering from nervous alarms about proceedings to which the Amir did not give a thought."⁴ Nevertheless the desire to put a

¹ The Afghan Question, page 46.

² Ibid., page 55.

³ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 98.

⁴ The Afghan Question, page 44.

formidable obstacle in Russia's path *did* underlie the British Government's wish to see in Afghanistan a strong ruler who should also be Great Britain's friend and ally; and if this was a reasonable and legitimate object at which to aim, it was worth incurring some expense to secure. Lord Mayo shrank from expending a single rupee for this purpose; yet in a private letter to the Duke of Argyll, dated the 7th of July, 1871,¹ he seems to have claimed that his policy was identical with that of Sir John Lawrence—Lawrence who had boldly thrown India's purse into the balance in Shere Ali's favour. What is there in common between the point of view of the man who wrote, "*no doubt it is correct . . . that if we give a subsidy to the Amir he will employ the money for his own purposes and not in the manner we may desire. But, after all, our object must be to strengthen his position and to secure his good will, as the Ruler of the country,*"² and that of him who told the high authorities who were pleading with him to treat Shere Ali with liberality, "*that he wished to force the Amir to spend the sixty thousand pounds still due to him in paying his troops*"?³ And where is the likeness in the policy of the Viceroy who suggested that "*we simply engage to give the Amir a certain sum annually, so long as we are satisfied with his bearing and conduct towards us*" and who thought "*it would not be expedient that this sum should be less than ten or twelve lakhs of rupees,*"⁴ to that of his successor who assured the Secre-

¹ The Afghan Question, pp. 60—61.

² Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 63.

³ Ibid., page 96.

⁴ Ibid., page 66.

tary of State that "*it was expected that the consideration of an annual grant of money might be postponed for the present, and that he and his Council were not without hope that the Amir might be able to maintain his position and carry on his Government without any further assistance from them*"? ¹

On the other hand, Lord Lawrence was even less inclined than Lord Mayo to bind the British Government to Shere Ali by engagements, written or verbal, explicit or implicit. He disliked entanglements of all kinds, and had doubts whether it were possible for a European Government so to word its benevolent intentions towards an Asiatic Prince as to avoid arousing undue expectations in his mind. If *he* had been the Viceroy to meet Shere Ali at Ambala, though he would have sent him away with full hands instead of empty ones, he would hardly have written him a letter containing friendly phrases about his—the Amir's—"rightful rule," "the severe displeasure" with which the British Government would view the intrigues of his rivals, and its determination to endeavour "to enable him to transmit to his descendants all the dignities and honours of which he was the lawful possessor," for him to appeal to in after days; he would have contented himself with renewing the old pledge to respect the independence and integrity of Afghanistan, and for the rest, have left both sides free, trusting to the ordinary workings of human nature to draw them together in the face of a common danger.

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 99.

But though the Conference of Ambala was in many ways a disappointment to the Amir, it, undoubtedly, left upon his mind the conviction that he had in the British Government a neighbour who honestly wished him well and whom he could trust not to embarrass him with claims which the backward condition of his subjects made it impossible for him to grant; and, strong in that conviction he was able to set himself to the difficult task of re-establishing his authority throughout the provinces bequeathed to him by his father, with a mind free from all anxiety as to the course of events beyond their frontiers.

Indirectly, also, the Conference did strengthen his position, for the news of the magnificent reception accorded to him by the Viceroy soon spread far and wide, accompanied by rumours of the assistance he was to receive from the British Government, and these reports—powerfully aided no doubt by the able generalship of Yakub Khan—sufficed to put an end to the civil war. The army of Azim Khan, which still held Turkestan, dispersed; its leader, Mohamed Ishak Khan, fled, and the chiefs of the country tendered their submission to Shere Ali. Within his tranquillized dominions, the restored sovereign sought to put into practice some of the lessons which his journey to India had taught him. Travelling through the Punjab, a province which only twenty years before had been in that condition of semi-barbarism out of which Afghanistan still showed no signs of emerging—his eyes had been opened to possibilities of prosperity, peace and order, such as he had never dreamed of; and the desire to conduct his government on more civilized principles and to lift his people to a higher level of com-

fort and humanity, thus awakened in his breast, he lost no time in trying to realize. "The Amir from the moment of his return to his own country," so wrote Lord Mayo in July 1869, "has evinced the most fervent desire to comply with the wishes of the British Government as to the administration of his kingdom . . . He has, against all Afghan precedent and doctrine, reconciled himself to many of his opponents. . . . He has evinced a desire to carry out useful administrative and financial reforms in many parts of his kingdom, the accomplishment of which, should he not force them too quickly on his people, on which point we have repeatedly cautioned him, will go far to establish what we so much desire, a strong, just and merciful government in Afghanistan." ¹

Doubtless the teachable and conciliatory spirit, to which the Indian Government has here borne testimony, was not due to zeal for reform alone, but also, to the conviction that, in improving the condition of his people, he was strengthening his hold on the good-will of the British Government; whilst Lord Mayo's personal influence had much to do with the humanity and clemency with which he surprised both friends and foes. That Viceroy's noble presence, his frank courtesy, his warm-hearted kindness, his lofty views of his own duty towards the peoples and princes of India, above all his truthfulness and sincerity of purpose, undoubtedly impressed and charmed the Afghan Chief, who proved himself possessed of no small magnanimity, in that he was able to dissociate the man from the disappointing policy of

¹ Aghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 99.

which he was the mouth-piece; and the passion and earnestness with which in the evil days that were to come, he appealed to the promises of "my friend, Lord Mayo," were the measure of the confidence which he had reposed in that Viceroy's word.

CHAPTER II

THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA ; THE SEISTAN AWARD ; AND THE SIMLA CONFERENCE.

WHILST Shere Ali was striving to carry out the wishes of the Indian Government in the administration of the Kingdom to which he was gradually restoring the limits that had belonged to it under Dost Mahomed, the English Cabinet had approached the Ministers of the Czar with a view to the "recognition of some territory as neutral between the possessions of Great Britain and Russia, which should be their limits, and be scrupulously respected by both Powers."¹

To the form in which the proposal was first clothed, the Imperial Government took exception, but it agreed readily to recognize Afghanistan as a country lying entirely outside Russia's influence, and promised to do its best to make the Amir of Bokhara respect his neighbour's borders, on condition that the Indian Government should keep a restraining hand on Shere Ali and his subjects. But it took much longer to determine what was to be understood by the term *Afghanistan*; indeed, it was not till January 1873, that, through the personal intervention of the Emperor of Russia, his Government yielded to the British contention that it

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1878), page 103.

should cover all provinces actually acknowledging Shere Ali's sovereignty, thus abandoning Bokhara's claims to Badakshan and Wakhan.

During the three years occupied by these negotiations, the Indian Government lost no opportunity of commending to the Amir a pacific policy towards all his neighbours, and Shere Ali frankly accepted their advice and loyally acted upon it, even when provoked and tempted to disregard it. Thus, when the Amir of Bokhara invaded Badakshan and burned the town of Jungi Killa, Shere Ali contented himself with ordering his Lieutenant, Mahomed Alum Khan, to act vigorously on the defensive, and forbade him to make any counter attack on Bokhara; and he also abstained from annexing Kerki and Charjui, places which would have added materially to the strength of his northern frontier, and which he ardently desired to possess. Again, when, as not unfrequently happened, overtures were made to him by neighbouring Khans to combine with them against Russia, he firmly declined all such proposals, declaring that there was a treaty between England and Russia, and that so long as the latter country did not interfere with Afghanistan, he would neither make war upon her himself, nor give a refuge to men who had been fighting against her; and yet the very raid into Badakshan mentioned above, was due to intrigues of members of his own family, who, from a safe asylum in Bokhara, a country under Russian protection, were hatching plots to drive him from his throne.

If the conduct of Shere Ali gave the Indian Government no cause of complaint, neither had they any grounds for uneasiness as regarded the policy of Russia, whilst the delimitation

itation of Afghanistan was under discussion between the court of St. James and that of St. Petersburg. The influence of General von Kaufmann, Governor-General of Russian Turkestan, averted a repetition of the Amir of Bokhara's wanton invasion of Afghan territory; and when Abdur Rahman wrote to the Russian commander soliciting assistance against his uncle, Shere Ali, his request was refused with the intimation that Afghanistan was under the protection of Great Britain, and that Russia would neither attack the Amir nor suffer Bokhara to do so. Later on, Abdur Rahman was, indeed, received at Tashkent, but Kaufmann was careful to write to Shere Ali to explain away any misconception which this act of hospitality might create in his mind, and assure him that he had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, because he—the Amir—was under the protection of the English Government which was friendly towards that of the Czar, and because he had abstained from meddling with Bokhara and had given Russia no cause for dissatisfaction.

Strange to say, this friendly letter awoke in the Amir no little anxiety. He could not understand why it should have been written at all; and he misunderstood some expressions which were certainly puzzling enough in the Persian version in which alone he could read it. "What do the Russians mean, by giving as a reason for establishing friendly relations with me, that, up to the present time, I have given them no cause to be angry with me, and by asking for a reply agreeably to their aims?" were questions with which he assailed the Kabul Agent; whilst to the Viceroy he sent Kaufmann's letter with the request that his Excellency would forward

him such a reply for transmission to the Russian general "as may by you be considered appropriate and advisable."¹

In a long letter, written on the 24th June, 1870, Lord Mayo explained to the Amir the passages which had perplexed and alarmed him, and expressed a conviction that "these letters will be, when rightly understood, a source of confidence to your Highness, because they indicate that so long as you continue the course you have so happily pursued since the visit you honoured me with at Ambala, it is most unlikely that your territories will be disturbed by Russia, or by any tribe or state which may be influenced by the officers of the Emperor." He also declared that "these assurances . . . have given to me (the Viceroy) unfeigned satisfaction," and ended with a sketch of the reply which he thought it would be wise of the Amir to send to General Von Kaufmann.²

Since the Viceroy was satisfied, the Amir put away his fears. He wrote an answer in accordance with Lord Mayo's suggestion, and whilst continuing to forward to the Indian authorities each communication which reached him from the Governor-General of Turkestan, with a copy of his answer to it, he left the responsibility of objecting to these letters, if their contents were of a nature to call for objection, to the Indian Government, who saw in them, however, nothing but acts of neighbourly courtesy which violated neither the letter nor the spirit of the engagements Russia had accepted towards Great Britain.

Shere Ali must have been glad to shift the burden of

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1878), p. 180.

² Ibid., No. 1 (1878), pp. 184—185.

watching Russia's movements upon Lord Mayo, since he himself had enough to do in keeping his troublesome subjects in order, and in defending his authority against his powerful son Yakub Khan, who at the time of the receipt in Kabul of Kaufmann's first letter, was preparing to take up arms and who, a year later, actually made himself master of Herat. Partly through Lord Mayo's influence, the quarrel between father and son was patched up, for the moment, and Yakub Khan, after he had made his submission to the Amir, was allowed to return to Herat as Governor of that city and province.

Shortly before the tragic death of Lord Mayo that Viceroy obtained Shere Ali's consent to submit to arbitration the question of the ownership of Seistan, a province lying between Persia and Afghanistan, which, up to the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, had formed part of the former Empire, and after that event, was included in the dominions of the Durani Kings of the latter State. When on the death of Timur Shah, Afghanistan fell a prey to civil strife, Seistan lapsed into a state of independence, and such peace as was compatible with the quarrels of the chiefs of the four districts into which it was divided; and independent it remained for forty years, when it was brought under subjection first by the Sudazai ruler of Herat, and next by the Barakzai ruler of Kandahar. From 1834 onwards, it continued a bone of contention between the two rival Houses, till in 1851, Persia, taking advantage of the discontent of its inhabitants, revived her long dormant claim to its allegiance. Lash, one of the four districts mentioned above, was occupied by her in 1856, and though, by the treaty of peace signed with Great Britain in the following year, she was obliged under

protest, to evacuate it, she very soon recommenced her forward movement. Against these aggressive proceedings the British Government for a time steadily protested, pointing out that they were a violation of the Treaty of Paris, and maintaining the rights of Afghanistan in the territories which had been wrested from her; but, at last in 1863, tired apparently of fruitless controversy and doubtful of Afghanistan's power to stand up for her own claims, Lord Russell informed the Persian minister that her Majesty's Government having learned, "that the title to the territory of Seistan was disputed between Persia and Afghanistan, must decline to interfere in the matter, and must leave it to both parties to make good their possession by force of arms."

During the ensuing six years—Afghanistan being fully occupied by the civil war which followed on the death of Dost Mahomed—Persia continued to extend her authority throughout Seistan, destroying forts and levying taxes, as she advanced from point to point, till at last, in 1869, she went so far as to make incursions into Kandahari territory. Shere Ali, true to the pacific promises which he had just made to Lord Mayo, behaved throughout these raids with great forbearance; but he never abandoned his claims to Seistan, and if he consented, later, to submit them to the arbitration of the British Government, it was not that he shrank from vindicating them with the sword,—that oldest of arbiters to which Lord Russell had referred him,—but because he firmly believed that the British Government which had so often admitted their validity, would fully acknowledge and uphold them; more especially as its own interest would be better served by strengthening a kingdom still entirely free from

Russian influence, than an empire in which that influence was already paramount.

A Boundary Commission was appointed at the end of 1871, under the presidency of Sir F. Goldsmid, the arbitrator nominated by the British Government, on which Nur Mahomed, the Amir's principal minister, was the Afghan representative. This Commission spent some time in Seistan, collecting information as to the fertility or sterility of the soil, the course of the rivers, the nationality of the inhabitants, and investigating the past claims and present position of the two rival powers. Some months after the termination of this inquiry, the arbitrator gave his award, which proved to be an attempt to satisfy both parties by dividing the province between them. This compromise, even granting that the rights of Afghanistan were not sufficiently clear to warrant a decision entirely in her favour, was grossly unjust to that State, to which the waterless and barren half of Seistan was allotted, whilst to Persia fell the well-watered and fertile half, part of which, at least, had been seized by her whilst Shere Ali was restraining his people from offering resistance to her aggressions, in deference to the pacific exhortations of the Indian Government. Astonished and indignant, the Amir appealed to the Final Arbitrator, the British Foreign Secretary, and Persia, dissatisfied at having to relinquish any portion of the conquests to which she considered the British Government had given its anticipatory sanction, did the same.

In the early days of the Boundary Commission, Lord Mayo had proposed to send an envoy to Kabul to announce the result of the arbitration, which he probably thought would be favourable to Afghanistan, and to lay

before the Amir some considerations affecting the welfare of his kingdom. Pending the result of the appeal to London, this proposal remained in abeyance, but when on the 7th March, 1873, the Indian Government was informed by telegram that Sir F. Goldsmid's decision had been confirmed, the new Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, thought that the time had come to revive it. He accordingly wrote to the Amir expressing his desire to send Mr. Donald MacNabb, Commissioner of Peshawar, to Kabul for the twofold purpose of explaining to him the details of the Seistan settlement, and the result of the negotiations which had been so long in progress between England and Russia with regard to the boundaries of his dominions.

The news of an intended visit from a British Envoy caused great excitement in Kabul. The diary of the Vakil who was admitted to the meetings of the Durbar, at which, during three days the coming of the "Sahibs" was vehemently discussed, gives a lively picture of the anxiety, the hopes and fears with which Lord Northbrook's proposal was regarded by the Amir's immediate advisers. But the Amir's own answer to Lord Northbrook's letter sent through the Kabul agent, was short, sensible and business-like:—Before receiving an envoy charged to impart to him the details of the Seistan Award, he should like to be informed, in general terms, what decision had been arrived at, and likewise whether in other matters the coming of the Sahibs concerned the prosperity and consolidation of his kingdom?

On the 14th of April, having meantime received an answer to his questions from Mr. Donald MacNabb, who availed himself of the occasion to communicate to the Afghan Government Lord Northbrook's offer of five thousand Enfield

rifles, the Amir again made use of Atta Mahomed's pen to assure the Viceroy that it would afford him much gratification to meet the British officer deputed by his Excellency; nevertheless he should prefer, before receiving him, to send an Afghan agent to India to learn the Viceroy's views on the two points which the Envoy was to be empowered to discuss, and to lay before him his—Shere Ali's—own views as to the interests of the two Governments. If, however, after considering his reasons for desiring an alternative plan, the Viceroy should still think it well to depute an English officer to him at once, or should desire to do so after granting an interview to his Agent, he—the Amir—had no objection to either course.

There was no trace in this official communication, of any reluctance on Shere Ali's part to allow a British officer to enter his dominions, but in the private letter which accompanied it, the Vakil reported that the Durbar officials disliked the idea of an Englishman's being sent to announce the confirmation of the Seistan Award, averring that a refusal to accept it, made point-blank to the Viceroy's representative, in the Amir's capital, might have an unfavourable effect on the friendly relations existing between the two Governments. They feared, too, that the Envoy might meddle in Afghan affairs, by tendering advice as to the conduct to be pursued towards Yakub Khan and other rebellious Sirdars; whilst as regarded boundary matters other than those of Seistan, these were too important to be decided by any lesser authorities than the Amir and the Viceroy in person.

The Indian Government acceded to the Amir's proposal, and Nur Mahomed Shah, who had again been chosen to re-

present his master, was despatched to Simla. Here on the 12th of July, he was received by the Viceroy, who lost no time, in broaching the subject of the arrangement come to between the British and Russian Governments with regard to the northern frontier of Afghanistan, and in giving his reasons for thinking that arrangement advantageous to the Amir. The Russian Government, so Lord Northbrook argued, had indeed, formerly given positive and repeated assurances that it considered Afghanistan to lie completely outside its sphere of influence, and harboured no intentions of interfering in the affairs of that State; now, however, it had gone farther than this, since by accepting the definition of the northern and western boundaries of Afghanistan proposed by the British Government, it had put an end to the danger of differences as to the precise territories to which those assurances had applied.¹ The Viceroy also impressed upon the Envoy that the influence in Afghanistan conceded by the Anglo-Russian agreement to Great Britain, referred to the external relations of that kingdom only; and that on her side, as well as on that of Russia, no interference in its internal affairs was contemplated; the interests of India demanding that it should be both strong and independent. Lord Northbrook then went on to say that, if, in the event of any aggression from without, British influence were invoked and failed by negotiation to effect a satisfactory settlement, it was probable that the British Government would afford the Amir material assistance, in repelling an invader, on the condition of course, that he

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 112.

had followed its advice and had given his neighbours no just cause of quarrel.

The Envoy, in his reply, assured the Viceroy that the Amir and his people were fully aware that the British Government would use its influence in the interests of Afghanistan, and that they entertained no fear of its interfering in their internal affairs; in Russia's assurances, on the other hand, they placed no reliance, and only a promise of aid from the British Government could deliver them from the apprehensions with which they watched her steady advance towards their frontier.

That promise Lord Northbrook had no power to give; he had already stretched his authority to its limits in saying that, under certain circumstances, the British Government would probably assist in the defence of Afghanistan, as a telegram from the Duke of Argyll of the 1st of July, had warned him that "great caution was necessary in assuring the Amir of material assistance which might raise undue and unfounded expectations." Feeling, however, that the Afghan desire for a more definite declaration was not unreasonable, he now telegraphed to the Secretary of State for India asking for permission to promise Shere Ali "money, arms and troops if necessary to repel unprovoked invasion, we to be the judge of the necessity."

Whilst the Viceroy was waiting for the answer to this request, his foreign secretary, Mr. Aitchison, was busy explaining to Nur Mahomed the details of the Seistan Award, and of the Russo-British negotiations. The Afghan minister took no pains to conceal the aversion and resentment with which he regarded the former, and showed great sensitiveness

in regard to the latter; putting his finger on every doubtful expression in which the seeds of future misunderstandings might lurk; and even when these had been explained to his satisfaction, he still displayed less appreciation of the advantages secured to Afghanistan by the agreement than the British Government had expected them to inspire. He reiterated his declaration that his countrymen had no faith in Russia's promises whether made to them direct, or through the British Government, and that only their confidence in British support could give them courage to face the not distant future, when, the boundaries of Russia and Afghanistan having met, there would be no lack of border incidents of which the authorities of the former State could avail themselves to pick a quarrel with the latter. That that support would be liberally bestowed, he took for granted on the strength of the promises of Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo; and it was no easy matter to convince him that, though the latter Viceroy had encouraged the Amir to express his wishes to the Indian authorities, he had reserved to the British Government of the day, the right to fulfil, or reject, them at its pleasure.

When, at last, he had been brought to see that Lord Mayo's warm but vague expressions of friendliness did not justify the hopes which the Amir and his subjects had built upon them, Nur Mahomed declared that, if a new agreement came to be substituted for the old one, Great Britain would have to accept very different engagements towards the Afghan Government, which thenceforward would be satisfied with nothing less than written assurances that the British Government would consider Russia, or any State under her

influence, as an enemy, if guilty of acts of aggression on Afghan territory, and would under such circumstances come to the Amir's aid with money and arms, and, if necessary, with troops, who should be despatched by any route he might indicate, and withdrawn when invasion had been repelled; all this assistance to be rendered freely, "solely out of friendship to Afghanistan, and with the view of protecting the integrity of her position."

That the Amir should be allowed to dictate the movements of British troops was, of course, a preposterous pretension, but there is good reason to think that Nur Mahomed did not put it forward seriously. He had just been witness of the alarm which the bare suggestion of a British officer's visit to Kabul had awakened in that city, and, if he did not altogether share it, he was quite alive to the dangers which would threaten the independence of Afghanistan from the presence of British troops, even if they came into the country for the purpose of defending it against Russia, and it is not likely, therefore, that he really desired to see them enter it by any route, or for any period of time, long or short.

He may have counted on using the rejection of this impossible pretension as an excuse for raising his demands in the matter of money and arms, or he may merely have lost his temper under the irritation caused by Mr. Aitchison's laborious efforts to convince him of the vanity of his expectations of British assistance, and have shown for a moment the jealous pride which is part of the Afghan national character, but which, as a rule, the old and experienced diplomatist knew well how to conceal. Where he was really in earnest, however, was in desiring that any

agreement come to between the two Governments should be a public one, and that Russia should be expressly named in it as the enemy against whose possible aggressions it was directed; and his anxiety on this point was really highly complimentary to Great Britain, since it implied his conviction that Russia would never venture to violate the territory of a State which could count upon British protection, an opinion shared by a good many Englishmen, both then and now.

To this request, so natural in a man whose one aim was to keep his country at peace, and all foreigners at a safe distance from its borders, Mr. Aitchison turned a deaf ear; and when, in a second interview with Lord Northbrook, Nur Mahomed pressed it upon the Viceroy himself, it was only to be told that it was not the custom to make use in diplomatic documents of such words as *enemy* and *enmity*.

This second interview took place on the 26th of July, after the answer of the British Government to Lord Northbrook's telegram had been received at Simla. In that answer the Duke of Argyll intimated that he and his colleagues did not share Shere Ali's alarm with regard to Russia, but that the Viceroy might assure Nur Mahomed that they would maintain their settled policy in favour of Afghanistan, if the Amir abided by their advice in the management of his external affairs.

Not only did the British Cabinet not share Shere Ali's fears, but the Duke of Argyll, at least, had no faith in their reality. He seems to have thought that so little change had come over the Central Asian question during the years that had elapsed since the conference at Ambala, that there was no excuse for the revolution which had, professedly, taken

place in the Amir's mind, as regarded Russia, and that he only simulated anxiety in order to kindle a corresponding feeling in Lord Northbrook's heart, on the strength of which he could wring from him larger concessions than the Indian Government might otherwise be willing to make.

But in 1869, Shere Ali's necessities were even greater than in 1873, and he was equally well aware of the jealousy with which Great Britain watched Russia's every movement; yet he made no attempt to trade upon that jealousy, not even when he had come to realize how little Lord Mayo was willing to concede to his needs, and his straightforward conduct at Ambala ought to acquit him of duplicity at Simla.

Nor was the situation as unchanged as the Duke imagined. Looking simply at the actual advance made by Russia during the years in question, Shere Ali had, perhaps, no great cause for increased uneasiness; but he looked at many other things and was justified, from his point of view, in thinking that his position with regard to her was less secure than he had once supposed it to be. In the first place, he had had years in which to meditate on the discovery that he could not reckon on Great Britain's fears of Russia to insure to him material aid in his efforts to make of his kingdom a really strong State,¹ meditations which must

¹ No assistance of any kind had been accorded to the Amir by Lord Mayo, and the money which up to the time of this Simla Meeting he had been promised by Lord Northbrook, five lakhs of rupees, had been given partly to enable him to improve his administration, and partly as compensation to Afghan subjects who had suffered by the Seistan Award.

have sometimes led him to doubt whether the British Government cared as much for the strength and independence of Afghanistan as it professed to do.

In the second place, he had just learnt that its interest in that strength and independence was not keen enough to hinder the same Government from rendering an award which materially weakened his western frontier, and he argued that, if they had shrunk from defending his cause against Persia, they might be ready to sacrifice it again if ever disputes as to territory were to arise between himself and Russia, and he had to refer them to the same tribunal for settlement.

It was no answer to these anxious questionings to assure him that they had been met, in advance, by the agreement fixing the limits of his territories just concluded between Great Britain and Russia; for, as Nur Mahomed pointed out to Mr. Aitchison, it left the latter Power free to extend her boundaries till they became conterminous with those of Afghanistan, and thus to create a situation fraught with grave perils to the preservation of peace between the two States, perils inherent in the nature and habits of the inhabitants of each. And apart from this risk, over which he might perhaps exercise some modifying influence, what security had Shere Ali that Russia and Great Britain, on whose mutual good-will and harmony the independence of his country had come to depend, might not, at any moment, be brought into collision with each other as a consequence of divergent interests in another continent? The Amir looked further ahead than the Gladstonian administration, and fears which, in the sequel, proved only too well founded, deserved to be treated with consideration and respect. And such treatment

they actually received at the hands of Lord Northbrook who, interpreting the Secretary of State's telegram as sanctioning the proposals of the Indian Government—an interpretation which the Duke of Argyll tells us it was intended to bear¹—did, practically, show himself prepared to concede a great deal of what the Afghan Envoy had asked for.

Of course the promises by which Lord Northbrook offered to bind the British Government were not absolute, or unconditional; nor was the Amir to wait till an invader was at his doors before applying to that Government for assistance. Misunderstandings and disputes always preceded war, and these were to be at once referred to the British Government, which would endeavour to settle the matter and avert hostilities; but if its endeavours to bring about an amicable settlement proved fruitless, then the Amir might count upon it for money, arms and, also in case of necessity, for troops; it reserving to itself the freedom to decide when and how such aid should be rendered, and making the fulfilment of its promises to depend upon the Amir's abstaining from aggression, and accepting its advice in regard to his foreign relations. Not for the purpose of guarding against Russian aggression, but to strengthen the Amir's rule, Lord Northbrook signified his intention of making Shere Ali a present of ten lakhs of rupees in addition to the five already promised; five of the ten to be kept back to pay for the twenty thousand stand of arms for which he had asked. Gifts and promises were alike free; nothing was required of the Amir in return; only, in the memorandum furnished

¹ The Afghanistan Question, page 107.

to Nur Mahomed for communication to his master, the Viceroy pointed out that, looking to the responsibilities which the British Government had now assumed with regard to Afghanistan, it was advisable that a British officer of rank, accompanied by a competent staff, should examine her northern and north-western boundaries, then those of Seistan, and, finally, return to India *viâ* Kabul, so as to have the opportunity of laying before the Amir the views he might have formed with regard to the measures necessary for the security of the entire frontier.

This proposal had emanated from the Kabul Envoy himself, who when asked by Mr. Aitchison whether there would be any use in broaching the subject of British agents in frontier towns, had answered that, "as a friend", he would not advise the British Government to make any such specific proposal to which, from various causes, the Amir and his advisers would still be strongly opposed; and had then gone on to say that to a temporary military mission on the frontier there might be less objection, and that this would serve the double purpose of putting the British Government in possession of all necessary information as to the Afghan boundaries, and of accustoming the Afghan people to the sight of white faces; but he would not answer for the favourable reception of even this modified proposition, and begged earnestly that the fact of his having suggested it, should be kept strictly secret. ¹

The Simla Conference began and ended with an interchange of views and wishes; the Kabul Envoy had no authority to

¹ Afghanistan, No. 3 (1879), pp. 14—15.

sign agreements, and the Viceroy felt that some of the points touched upon were of so serious a nature that they could not be settled till he had the opportunity of discussing them with the Amir in person; but, at least, there had been perfect frankness on each side, and Nur Mahomed must have carried back to Kabul the conviction that Lord Northbrook saw the question of the defence of Afghanistan in very much the same light in which it presented itself to him, and that the British Government, even without binding itself by any formal pledge, might be counted on to assist the Afghans in repelling an unprovoked attack upon their country; whilst Lord Northbrook must have been left with an equally strong conviction that India had no reason to fear any Afghan leanings towards Russia. And yet the result of the conference was not that closer accord between the two Governments which it seemed to promise, but rather the reverse.

The Seistan Award, to which Shere Ali had reluctantly submitted, still rankled in his mind with a bitterness which Lord Northbrook's liberality in the matter of money and arms was powerless to assuage; and the suggestion that he should depart from his fixed resolve to admit no British officers into his dominions, turned the gratitude and confidence which that liberality, taken by itself, might have awakened in him, into suspicion and alarm. Whether Nur Mahomed, who, unfortunately, quitted Simla deeply offended by an angry expression used towards him by a British officer, made no efforts to overcome the Amir's jealous sensitiveness in this matter, or whether influences adverse to his own, at which he had hinted in conversation with Mr. Aitchison, proved too strong for him, we have no means of knowing;—what is

certain is that rather than afford the Indian Government an excuse for pressing this hateful proposal upon him, Shere Ali actually abstained from claiming the ten lakhs of rupees which had been transmitted to Kohat for his acceptance. Nor was this proposal the only outcome of the conference to which the Amir took exception; he evidently shared his Envoy's disappointment at the refusal to make the political situation clear and unequivocal by naming Russia as the Power against whose probable encroachments Great Britain was pledging herself to protect Afghanistan; and he noted with contempt the discrepancy between the Indian Government's anxiety to make of his kingdom a buffer between India and Russia, and its exhortations to himself to believe implicitly in the Russian Government's peaceful professions and not to waste his finances on unnecessary military preparations. Nor did the promises of support offered to him in the name of the British Government afford him much satisfaction, coupled as they were, with conditions which, practically, left each successive administration free to keep, or break them, as suited the convenience of the hour. He saw that, in the end, the interest of the British Empire would alone decide when and how help was to be accorded to him, and, seeing this, he failed to appreciate the difference to himself between the promises of Lord Northbrook and those of Lord Mayo. And, in truth, there was, and could be, no real difference between them. The object of the Duke of Argyll in 1873 was the same as that which he had impressed on the last-named Viceroy in 1869—viz., the avoidance of any engagement which should really tie Great Britain's hands and interfere with her freedom to decide, in each

complication that might arise, what line of action she would adopt. Probably there was no British statesman in the ranks of either political party who would have been willing to sign away that freedom, and this being the case, the superiority of Lord Lawrence's Afghan policy to that of his successors becomes apparent.

Recognising, on the one hand, that the independence and integrity of Afghanistan were of importance, though not of vital importance, to India—her security rested for him on far broader and stronger foundations—and, on the other, that the preservation of the former was the ruling passion of the Afghan people, and the maintenance of both the strongest desire of every Afghan Prince, Lawrence was prepared to give Shere Ali, in liberal measure, the means of defending his kingdom and upholding his power, unaccompanied by pledges or conditions of any kind, since pledges and conditions were certain to lead to misunderstandings, and to suspicions and disappointments on both sides. Under this policy, the dispute between Persia and Afghanistan would have been settled by themselves, probably in favour of the latter State, certainly at an infinitesimal cost of life and treasure compared to the expenditure of both which was to flow from the British claim to determine the Amir's conduct towards his neighbours; and there could never have crept into Shere Ali's mind the feeling that he had been duped by fair words, out of which all meaning evaporated the moment he tried to ascertain what they were really worth to him; whilst the Indian Government would have been preserved from the temptation to encroach upon his independence on the plea of defending it. Under this policy, the full responsibility for his actions left to the

Amir would have proved quite as effectual in withholding him from giving wanton offence to Russia, as the desire to merit British aid against her, and nothing in its principles and aims would have debarred the British Government from bestowing that aid, should the rendering of it at any given moment, seem in accord with the best interests of India. Under the policy which Lord Northbrook found in force and had to continue—a policy which is generally supposed to have been identical with that of Lord Lawrence, but which really differed from it fundamentally—it was impossible for that Viceroy altogether to avoid the appearance of taking back with one hand what he gave with the other; and if Nur Mahomed, nevertheless, left Simla still convinced that Afghanistan might rely upon the Indian Government to stand by her against Russia in case of need, that conviction did not rest upon the definite promises now offered to his Sovereign, but on that natural community of interests between India and Afghanistan in the presence of an ambitious and rapidly extending neighbour, which had always existed and must, in his opinion, always continue to exist—a community of interests which the pecuniary liberality recommended by Lord Lawrence would have sufficiently recognised and promoted.

The letter written by Shere Ali to Lord Northbrook,¹ after the return of Nur Mahomed to Kabul, which testified to his ruffled temper and sceptical frame of mind, proves conclusively the truth of the above reflections. It began with simple and cordial thanks to the Indian Government

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 119.

for the attention shown to his Envoy at Simla, and then went on in a strain of polite irony—recalling very forcibly to the mind of the student of La Fontaine's Fables the language used by *le vieux cocq, adroit et matois*, to express the great joy with which he had heard the good news of the prospect of peace and security reigning in all countries, and of the banishment of inimical expressions from diplomatic correspondence.

To the Seistan Award he alluded with proud displeasure. His Excellency had based a condition which he desired to impose upon him—the Amir—on a stipulation in the Treaty of Paris; had the Seistan question been decided in accordance with that Treaty, there would have been no occasion for any such condition. His Excellency wished him to issue stringent orders to his officers on the frontier to refrain from interference on the Persian border. Such orders, from the commencement (*i.e.*, from the time of the Conference at Ambala) he had issued out of regard to the British Government, now they should be repeated. The proposal to send British officers to inspect his frontiers he ignored, as also the promises on the strength of which the Viceroy had felt justified in urging it, but he noted with gratification “the friendly declaration of your Excellency, that you will maintain towards myself the same policy which was followed by Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo;” adding, with a relapse into irony, that “under this circumstance of the case, it was not necessary to hold all those conversations with Syud Nur Mahomed Shah at Simla. The understanding arrived at in Ambala is quite sufficient.” At the end of the communication, the Amir curtly dismissed a request made to

him through Mr. Donald MacNabb that he would permit Colonel Valentine Baker to return to India from Herat *viâ* Kabul.

There is no denying that this letter, with the exception of its opening sentence, was cold and ungracious; but it would be quite unfair to conclude from it that the Amir had ceased to value the British alliance. By that he held as firmly as before, but in its entirety and as it had been understood by his father and Lord Lawrence, by Lord Mayo and himself. The keynote of his mental attitude is to be found in his declaration that the understanding arrived at at Ambala was sufficient; *not* the promises made to him by Lord Mayo in his memorandum, the vain nature of which had been so carefully explained to Nur Mahomed by Mr. Aitchison, but the understanding at which he and the Viceroy had arrived, after a careful consideration of the interests and circumstances of their respective countries.

That understanding *excluded* all British interference in Afghan affairs, all British officers from Afghanistan, and *included* warm friendship on the part of the British Government towards himself; and on his side, a willingness to be guided by its advice in his foreign relations, and to keep the peace towards all his neighbours. Of course the Amir would have liked that warm friendship to have borne fruits in yearly supplies of money and arms, though he must be acquitted of having asked for either except when invited to do so;—but it was something to feel sure that, in the moment of danger, it could be relied on not to leave him in the lurch, and this assurance, notwithstanding Mr. Aitchison's warnings and explanations, he still possessed—for

were not the frontiers of Afghanistan virtually the frontiers of India, and was not Russia regarded with as much suspicion in London and Simla as in Kabul itself? The idea that so long as he did nothing contrary to the engagements he had accepted towards the British Government, that Government would abandon its "settled policy towards Afghanistan" and seek the advantage of its Indian Empire in rectifying its frontier at his expense, instead of in defending his kingdom against the common foe, had not at this time crossed his mind, his worst suspicions never having gone beyond a doubt lest it might prove itself weak and yielding in negotiating with that foe.

Shere Ali, as we have said, had ended his letter to the Viceroy with a refusal to allow an English officer to pass through his dominions. The form of this refusal, not the substance of it—for Lord Northbrook never disputed the Amir's right to exclude Englishmen from his territories—was visited by the Viceroy with gentle censure, as also the omission of all mention of the promises of the British Government and the request which had sprung out of them. Shere Ali replied on the 10th April, 1874, reiterating his declaration that the arrangements made by Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo were sufficient, and expressing his earnest hope that Lord Northbrook would remain "firm and constant" to his predecessor's policy, "in order that Afghanistan and its territories might be maintained inviolate and secure." As regarded the Baker incident, he offered the excuse—unfortunately a true one—that his people were "rude mountaineers," implying that to travel among them was to court danger; and he justified a similar refusal to allow Mr. Forsyth to pass through his

dominions on his way from Yarkand to India, by pointing to the disturbed state of the country owing to the attitude of his son, Yakub Khan, who was once more threatening to rise in arms against him.

This hostile attitude was the natural consequence of a step which the Amir had taken on the 22nd of November, 1873. On that day, in fulfilment, so he informed the Viceroy, of "a unanimous representation" made to him by "certain of the chief personages of the State and officers of the Government", Shere Ali had "honoured and exalted Sirdar Abdullah Jan (his youngest son) with the title of heir apparent."¹ This important act was communicated to the Government of India on the 30th of the same month, and on the 21st of January, 1874, the Viceroy made a brief but suitable reply to the announcement, expressing the hope that his Highness might still enjoy many years of life and good health, and that his heir might learn, under his tuition, to conduct the government with wisdom and success; but he offered no congratulations on an appointment of which he could not approve, and which might lead to a state of things in Afghanistan very injurious to British interests. Lord Northbrook's foreboding, as we have seen, was quickly fulfilled; Yakub Khan, indignant at his younger brother's being preferred before him, began at once to strengthen the defences of Herat; but, after a time, running short of money and finding himself unable to pay the large number of troops that he had collected, he became anxious to come once again to terms with his father. On a promise

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 118.

of safe conduct given to him by two of the Amir's officers, who had been sent to Herat to confer with him, he accompanied them to Kabul, where, after some days of apparent friendliness, he was seized and thrown into prison.

Shocked at this violation of a prince's plighted word, and alarmed lest such treatment of his ablest son should alienate from Shere Ali many of his Sirdars,—Lord Northbrook instructed Atta Mahomed, the Native Envoy at Kabul, to tell the Amir that, “as his friend and well-wisher,” he, the Viceroy, trusted the report of Yakub Khan's arrest was untrue, and that he desired strongly to urge upon his Highness the observance of the conditions under which his son had come to Kabul. By so doing he would maintain his good name and the friendship of the British Government.¹

This message, with its veiled threat of the withdrawal of the British Government's support, was resented by the Amir and his advisers, not merely as a violation of the often renewed promise not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, but also as an unjustifiable meddling with a strictly family matter. The chief members of the Durbar told the Agent of the Indian Government that there was not “room for the fulfilment of conditions and stipulations between son and father”; whilst the Amir, himself, though willing to admit that the Viceroy's recommendation was “based on friendship and well-wishing,” rebuked his interference on behalf of a son, “whose misdeeds he was ashamed to repeat,” with the sarcastic remark that “sincere and intelligent friends do not like under any circumstances to put

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 126.

their faithful friends to such shame," and denied the right of the British Government to withdraw its friendship from him, so long as he was guilty of no violation of his engagement with it.¹

Lord Northbrook seems to have taken this rebuff in good part; at any rate, he made no farther attempt to procure the release of Yakub Khan; maintained the old friendship with the Amir on the old terms, and before many months had elapsed, was defending it and them, with warmth and force, against an attack from a most unexpected quarter.

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 127.

CHAPTER III

SIR BARTLE FRERE'S MEMORANDUM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

It was shown in the preceding chapter that Shere Ali's uneasiness as to his own and his country's future had not been laid to rest by the Russo-British agreement, settling the limits of his dominions. The boundaries fixed included, "indeed, all that he could justly claim, but who was to guarantee them against violation on the part of Russia, if ever she and Great Britain ceased to be on friendly terms?" This was a risk easy to forecast, and the Amir's consciousness of it found expression in his eagerness to obtain from the Indian Government those definite and public promises of support against invasion which would, as he believed, suffice to hold his Northern neighbour's ambitions in check; but that the other party to the delimitation agreement—Great Britain herself—should plot against the independence of Afghanistan, and should do so whilst no change had as yet passed over the relations subsisting between her and Russia, was a contingency so at variance with the sentiments of confidence in British good faith with which Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo had inspired his father and himself, that even Afghan suspiciousness failed to foresee it. Yet this undreamed of danger was actually hanging over him during the last year of Lord Northbrook's tenure of office, though the first intimation of

it only reached him after that viceroy had given place to Lord Lytton.

On the 12th of June, 1874, Sir Bartle Frere, Ex-Governor of Bombay and Member of the Indian Council, addressed a letter to Sir John Kaye, Secretary of the Foreign Department of the India Office, in which he revived Sir H. Rawlinson's recommendations that English agencies should be established in Afghanistan, and that Quetta should be occupied and converted into a strong military post, whilst omitting the condition on which their original author made their realization to depend. Boldly setting aside all scruples based upon the plighted word of three successive viceroys, he not only urged the British Government to take these steps, with or without the Amir's consent, but to depute at once, to Herat, from the Persian side, a military officer with three or four good assistants, and to convert this temporary mission into a permanent one, if the Ruler of that city could be brought to consent to such a measure—that Ruler being Shere Ali's rebellious son, Yakub Khan, who was thus to be encouraged to look upon himself as an independent prince, and to persist in setting his father's authority at defiance:—in other words Frere asked Her Majesty's Ministers to reverse the policy adopted by the Indian Government in 1857 when, under Lord Canning's wise headship, it withdrew its long sustained opposition to the reunion of Herat to Kabul and Kandahar,¹ and to split up with their

¹ "If upon recovering Herat from Persia, we set it up as an independent State, my belief is, that we shall set up a sham which we shall not be able to sustain. I do not share the

own hands the kingdom, the unity of which they were so concerned to defend against the supposed designs of Russia; whilst he justified these acts of bad faith, in advance, by the contention that Shere Ali's probable unwillingness to release us from our engagements towards him, might justly be interpreted as a sign of his bad feeling towards us.

opinion that there is danger or trouble to British India in the consolidation of the Afghan nation. On the contrary, I believe we cannot encourage that consolidation too much. The Afghans themselves, even if united, can never be formidable to the British power, if only we will deal wisely with them. Their strength as aggressors ceased to be any reasonable source of alarm to us from the time when the plain of Peshawar and the Trans-Indus Valley passed away from them, and the Sikhs no longer intervened between us. *Now that a wise foresight has fixed our boundary at the foot of their own impassable mountains, leaving no room for a single battalion to deploy against us, we stand in a position of security as regards aggression from that quarter, which, I venture to think, calls for a change of policy.* Instead of being content that Afghanistan should continue divided, and thereby weak for offence, I would desire to see it united and strong; a compact barrier in our front. By encouraging this as far as lies in our power, at all events by not opposing it, we have a far better chance of extending our influence across the breadth of Afghanistan up to Herat than by laying down, as a condition, that Herat shall be maintained in its own state of independence. That it should be independent of Persia, we may rightly claim, for Herat is Afghan, and not Persian. But that it must be independent of the chief authority at Kabul, I would not require, or even concede. I would concede it no more than I would concede the pretension now put forward by the Shah, that Kandahar must be independent of that authority."—Lord Canning's Minute relating to the Agreement with Afghanistan in 1857.

This letter called forth a vigorous protest from Lord Lawrence, to which, on the 11th of January, 1875, Sir Bartle Frere replied, recapitulating and defending the policy on which he wished to see Great Britain embark. Eleven days later the first step towards giving effect to his recommendations was taken, when Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India, without officially or unofficially communicating this second letter to the Indian Government,—the first he had sent privately to Lord Northbrook—addressed a Secret Despatch to the Viceroy, in which he intimated that, although no immediate danger from Russia's progress in Central Asia threatened British interests in those regions, yet the aspect of affairs in Europe was sufficiently grave to inspire solicitude and to suggest the necessity of timely precaution—the precaution suggested being the establishment of a British Agency at Herat, to be followed up by a similar arrangement at Kandahar, with the eventual prospect of a third at Kabul, though, for the time being, in deference to the certain opposition of its fanatical population, the Afghan capital was to be spared the presence of a European envoy. The meagreness and doubtful veracity of the information received from the Vakil in Kabul, was the excuse offered for this proposal, the startling nature of which it was sought to disguise by the assertion that, "if the Amir's intentions were still loyal," he could not object to it, as "more than once in former years he had expressed his readiness to permit the presence of an agent at Herat;" and by the assurance, of which Lord Northbrook was directed to make use in his communications with Shere Ali, that it was in the interest

of Afghanistan herself that her Government was asked to agree to such a revolution in her relations with Great Britain.¹

This despatch was received in Calcutta by the middle of February, and on the 18th of that month the Viceroy replied by telegraph, that, in his opinion, time and circumstance were unsuitable for taking the steps proposed; that there were no records in the Indian Foreign Department to show that the Amir had ever agreed to the presence of a British Agent at Herat, and that if he—Shere Ali—were now to object to such an arrangement, his refusal would be no proof of disloyal intentions.

The bluntness of the denial given by this message to the Secretary of State's facts and deductions, seems to have staggered the British Government, which made no immediate answer to the inquiry whether its instructions were to be carried out at once, or whether a discretion was to be left to the Government of India with respect to time and opportunity. This delay was utilized by the Viceroy in tracing to its source the impression that Shere Ali had, at one time, been prepared to allow European Agents at Kandahar, Herat and Balkh; and in submitting to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, and through him, to the most experienced of his officers, the following questions:—

1st. Will Shere Ali, in your opinion, willingly consent to the appointment of British Officers as Residents at Herat and Kandahar, or elsewhere?

2nd. Will the presence of such Residents at either place be advantageous to the British Government?

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pp. 128—129.

3rd. Are you satisfied with the sufficiency and accuracy of the intelligence furnished by the Native Agent at Kabul, and, if not, can you suggest any way of procuring more accurate intelligence?

The report as to the Amir's former attitude towards the British Agent question proved, so far as Lord Northbrook investigated it, to rest upon the authority of two persons only—Captain Grey who acted as Interpreter at the Ambala Conference, and Mr. Girdlestone who in 1869 was Under-Secretary to the Indian Foreign Department; but as additional witnesses in support of it were forthcoming later on, it will be convenient, at this point, to examine and weigh all the evidence which could be adduced in its favour.

Captain Grey, relying on notes of the discussions at Ambala between Nur Mahomed and the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Seton-Karr, taken by himself at the time, vouched for the former's having said, that, as a precaution against Russia, the Amir would gladly see an Agent, or Engineer Superintendent in Balkh, Herat, or anywhere but actually in Kabul, and also for the Amir's having, a few days later, expressed his willingness to receive an Envoy, as soon as things had settled down in Afghanistan, anywhere except in his capital.

Mr. Girdlestone in a Note dated March 26, 1869, had recorded a similar recollection.

Dr. Bellew, an old acquaintance of Shere Ali's, and Medical Officer to that prince's escort in 1869, had, at that time, received the impression that the Amir would gladly see Agents at Herat and Kandahar.

Colonel Burne, who claimed to have been in Lord Mayo's full confidence, corroborated all that Captain Grey and Dr.

Bellew had said as to the willingness of the Amir at Ambala to consider the subject of British agencies in Afghanistan, had he received encouragement to enter officially into the subject and had his expectations of being granted a new treaty been fulfilled. "The same evidence," so wrote this witness, "which certified to Shere Ali's desire for a treaty, certified to his willingness to receive British Agents . . . I can testify to the fact that the Viceroy and those associated with him accepted the evidence of the Amir's wishes, in both cases, as genuine."¹

On the other hand, Mr. Seton-Karr, in conversation with whom Nur Mahomed was said to have used the words reported by Captain Grey, when appealed to on the point, declared that neither the Amir, nor his Minister, ever expressed a willingness to receive British officers as Residents in any Afghan city; Mr. Girdlestone when asked to give his authority for the opinion contained in his note of the 26th of March, 1869, could only say that he thought he had formed it on information furnished to him either by Major Pollock, or by Mr. Thornton—neither of whom was able to confirm his recollections; Dr. Bellew's testimony was very vague—a mere impression, and he did not say from whom he had derived it; and the emphatic declaration of Colonel Burne, who claimed to be in Lord Mayo's full confidence, was contradicted by the whole tenor of that Viceroy's public and private correspondence with the Duke of Argyll, both during and after the Ambala Conference.

And what was the evidence of which Colonel Burne wrote

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 174.

as certifying both to Shere Ali's desire for a treaty and to his readiness to receive British agents—that evidence which he declared Lord Mayo had accepted as genuine? It was that of an Afghan spy, whose identity is still hidden behind the initials X. Y., and who seems to have played the eavesdropper so effectually that he was not only able to supply the Indian Government with accounts of discussions that took place between the Amir and his councillors at Kabul, Lahore and Ambala, but to repeat Shere Ali's private conversations with Nur Mahomed at which no third person was present. Now, this source is tainted in itself, and from its very nature, incapable of corroboration; yet even this witness, when questioned in 1875, was obliged to confess that so far as he had been able to ascertain at Ambala “it was the belief of the Amir's councillors that he never agreed to the location of British agents in Afghanistan.”¹

It will be seen that the evidence with regard to the disposition of the Amir towards British agents, military or political, in the spring of 1869, is very conflicting, and accepting the good faith of the witnesses on both sides, with the exception of the Afghan spy, it comes to be a question of probabilities:—who is most likely to have noted accurately and remembered clearly—Mr. Seton-Karr or Captain Grey, Lord Mayo or Colonel Burne? and as the answers are certain to differ, the question is one which admits of no settlement. Fortunately, however, it needs none. Whatever opinions Shere Ali may have expressed in his secret consultations with his ministers; whatever concessions he may have been prepared

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), p. 144.

to make in exchange for a treaty guaranteeing his own and his heirs' right to the Afghan throne, at a moment when his hold on it was hardly secure from day to day—the only agreement to which British statesmen could justly hold him bound, was to that finally arrived at between him and the Indian Government, which we find embodied in Lord Mayo's despatch of the 1st of July, 1869, and elucidated in the Viceroy's private correspondence with the Duke of Argyll; and the only excuse to be offered for devoting so much time to a matter which ought to have had no political importance, is that such importance was afterwards, most unfairly, attributed to it.

To the first of the three questions laid by the Indian Government before the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab and his officers, the answer returned was unanimous: Mr. H. Davies himself; Colonel Sir R. Pollock, Commissioner of Peshawar; Major-General R. Taylor, Commissioner of Amritsar; Lieutenant-Colonel Munro, officiating Commissioner of the Derajat Division; Captain Cavagnari, officiating Deputy-Commissioner of Peshawar; and Mr. T. H. Thornton, Secretary to the Punjab Government, all agreed that the appointment of British Officers, as Residents at Kandahar, Herat, or elsewhere, would be distasteful to the Amir and that he would not willingly consent to such a measure.

As regarded the second question—the Lieutenant-Governor thought that harm both to the Amir and the British Government would result from the presence of British Residents in Afghanistan; Pollock, assuming that the officers would be in the Amir's dominions against his wish, was certain that nothing would be gained by sending them to either of the places specified; Taylor, after much weighing

of *pros* and *cons*, ended with avowing the belief that it would be a deeply unwise act to force European Residents upon the Amir, and strongly deprecated the placing of officers in positions where they might be exposed to injuries which it would be a grievous misfortune to India to have to avenge. Munro was evidently too convinced of the futility of asking the Amir's consent to a measure which even the Sirdars most friendly to him would not sanction, to waste time in considering its possible advantages; and Cavagnari, though eloquent on the subject of the benefits that might accrue from it to all parties, had to admit that, if the Amir did not willingly assent to the measure, it would probably be productive of very evil results. Everything would be done to thwart the envoy, and not unlikely some sort of insult would be offered to him which would either necessitate his being withdrawn, or supported in his position by force of arms. Lastly, Mr. Thornton gave it as his opinion that the deputation of British Officers into Afghanistan would probably lead to grave embarrassments:—here again, practical unanimity.

The third question was variously answered.

Mr. Davies thought the diaries of the Vakil, for the most part correct; approved of his reticence with regard to the internal affairs of Afghanistan; and desired no innovation on the existing system, believing that if Herat should ever be threatened, the British Government would hear of the danger quickly enough from the Amir himself.

Sir R. Pollock, whilst doubting whether the sufficiency of the Vakil's information was equal to its accuracy, thought that any Native Envoy who should attempt to report all

that he believed to be correct, would very shortly find his position unbearable; and could only suggest that the Vakil's diaries should be supplemented and checked by the occasional employment of other agents.

Munro, who in the first instance, wrote rather slightly of the intelligence received through Atta Mahomed, in a later note, quoted the Nawab Foujdar Khan in support of the opinion that that intelligence was generally to be relied on, much of it being obtained from independent sources, and *not* from the Amir.

Cavagnari declared that it was notorious that only such information as the Amir approved of was furnished to the Indian Government by its Native Agent at Kabul, and set even more value than Sir R. Pollock on news received from special agents deputed occasionally to Afghanistan.

Mr. Thornton was satisfied with the accuracy, but not with the sufficiency of the Vakil's reports; and General Taylor passed over the third question altogether.

Strengthened by these expressions of opinion in favour of the maintenance of things as they were, the Government of India addressed on the 7th of June, a letter to the Marquis of Salisbury in which it sustained and enforced the views already communicated to him by telegraph; vindicating Atta Mahomed against the charge of supineness and untrustworthiness; sweeping away the sanguine expectations founded by the Indian Secretary on Shere Ali's supposed willingness, in the past, to receive British Officers; and vigorously disputing the conclusion which Lord Salisbury had shown himself prepared to draw from any dislike of the same proposal which he might display in the future. Lord Northbrook and his Council were ready to admit that the presence of a British

Agent at Herat would be an excellent thing, if he were there with the Amir's cordial consent; but they maintained that nothing but evil could flow from it, if that consent were withheld, since either the British Government must accept Shere Ali's refusal without altering its policy towards him—a course which might encourage him to disregard its wishes in other matters—or else, treating it as a sign of unfriendly feeling on his part, it must withdraw from him its assurances of support. In either case British influence in Afghanistan must suffer; in the latter, a grave injustice would, probably, be committed, for reluctance to accede to British wishes on this one point, the point of all others on which Afghan feeling was known to be sensitive, would not prove Shere Ali disloyal to the British alliance. It was true that his language after the Simla Conference had been unsatisfactory, but Sir R. Pollock, whose intimate acquaintance with Nur Mahomed Shah gave him the best means of forming a correct judgment of the Simla negotiations, and who, in 1874, had obtained confidential information as to the sentiments of the Amir—had stated his conviction that no unfavourable change whatever had taken place in them; and the Indian Government itself could testify to the fact that, since the Ambala Conference, Shere Ali had never shown any disposition to neglect its advice as to the external affairs of Afghanistan, and that he had accepted fully, though reluctantly, the Seistan Award, by which there was every reason to believe he would abide.

But if they were right in their opinion of the Amir's attitude towards the British alliance, so Lord Northbrook and his Council went on to argue, then the main object

of the policy which had been pursued uninterruptedly since the days of Lord Canning up to the present hour, was secured—a strong Afghanistan, over whose ruler British influence was powerful enough to keep him from aggression upon his neighbours. An opportunity for closer relations would, probably, present itself in course of time, and Great Britain should be ready to take advantage of it when it occurred. A Russian advance upon Merv might render it desirable for England to enter into a treaty engagement with the Afghan Government, and the establishment of a British agent at Herat would be the natural consequence of such an engagement. Nothing would be gained by taking any specific measures until Merv had been occupied; but the more clearly Russia was given to understand the position which Great Britain had assumed towards Afghanistan, the better it would be for the maintenance of peace.

In conclusion, the Viceroy and his Council defended themselves against the assumption that in commending to Her Majesty's Government a steady adherence to the old patient and conciliatory policy towards Afghanistan, and in making every reasonable allowance for the difficulties of the Amir, they were to be supposed to imply a willingness to concede every caprice of that prince; and they instanced their recent conduct in sending gifts to the Mir of Wakhan, a vassal of the Amir's, as a proof of their ability to hold their own against him when they felt justified in opposing his pretensions.¹

¹ The Council that signed this letter consisted of Lord Napier of Magdala, H. W. Norman, Arthur Hobhouse, W. Muir and A. Eden.

Lord Salisbury's rejoinder to this communication was not written till the 19th of November. It began with the assurance that he had carefully considered the despatch and the papers accompanying it, and then went on to sum up its conclusions in words which expressed a meaning exactly the opposite of that which its authors had intended to convey. The Indian Government and its "able officers" were made to declare that they had no doubt as to the insufficiency of the information which they were in the habit of receiving from Afghanistan, and the Viceroy was represented as favourable to the immediate deputation of a British Officer to Herat, though, incidentally, he had raised for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government the point whether the advantages to be gained by the arrangement were such as to justify efforts being made to obtain the Amir's concurrence in that step.

Lord Salisbury then went on to set aside the testimony borne by "his Excellency and his most experienced officers" to the loyalty of the Amir, as not worthy to be weighed against "the well-known peculiarities of the Afghan character;" and to cast doubt on the assurance that Shere Ali had always abstained from aggression on his neighbours, by a reference to certain military operations recently undertaken by him, which suggested that the contingency of collision between his forces and those of Russia, or of the allies of Russia, must not be left out of account, and by the assertion that the Amir had "never shown any disposition to seek peace by abating a doubtful claim." He argued also that, "even if Shere Ali's loyalty could be reckoned on for an indefinite period," the oppressive character of his Government might,

at any time, lead to a revolt against his authority, which would open a field "for foreign intrigue dangerous alike to his power and to the interest of Great Britain."

All such evils, however, would lose their formidable character "if warnings could be given to the Indian Government, or advice tendered to the Amir in good time;" and Lord Salisbury persisted in clinging to his happy conviction that Shere Ali's consent to the appointment of British Agents in his dominions might be won, if he could be led to take a juster estimate of his position, a task to which Indian diplomatists, who "had often triumphed over more stubborn prejudices," would surely prove equal. The first step therefore was to bring an Indian diplomatist's influence to bear on him without delay, and, to effect this the more easily, the Viceroy was advised to conceal, for the present, his intention of establishing a permanent British Mission in Afghanistan, and to give to the Embassy which he was now instructed to send, some ostensible object of smaller political interest which it would not be difficult to find, or, if need be, to create. The Envoy selected was "not to depart from the amicable tone in which intercourse with the Amir had hitherto been conducted"—for was it not one of the main objects of his mission to leave on Shere Ali's mind an undoubted impression of the friendly feeling of the British Government towards him?—but, maintaining this tone, he was to impress earnestly upon the Amir the risk he would run if he should impede the course of action which that Government thought necessary for securing his independence.¹

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pp. 147—149.

The astonishment with which the Viceroy and his Council must have read the first part of this despatch, could only have been surpassed by the anxiety which its concluding paragraph could not fail to inspire in men, on whom it threw the duty of carrying out instructions so contrary to their ideas of what both good policy and good faith demanded of them. Once again, but this time with waning hope, they laid bare the errors which underlay Lord Salisbury's assertions and vitiated his conclusions, and reiterated their own views as to our relations with Afghanistan, firmly repudiating the false construction which had been put on their former expression of them. They had *not* stated that they entertained no doubt as to the insufficiency of the intelligence furnished by the Vakil, nor hinted that he reported only what the Amir wished him to report,—on the contrary, they had expressed their belief that he withheld no information of importance, and that such information as he did impart was fairly full and accurate; whilst so far from having desired it to be understood that they shared the Secretary of State's eagerness to see a British officer at Herat, they had strongly deprecated the mere mooted of such a proposal, which they knew would be most unwelcome to the Amir. To that opinion they still adhered; but in view of the positive instructions now received, they had consulted with Mr. Davies and Sir R. Pollock as to the steps to be taken to carry out the British Government's wishes, and had come to the conclusion that, if a Mission were to be sent at all, its real purpose should be frankly and fully stated to the Amir, who was shrewd enough to know that Special Missions were not sent to discuss matters of minor political importance.

This difference of opinion as to the initial steps to be taken to bring about more intimate relations with Afghanistan was, in itself, a sufficient reason why the Indian Government should refer the whole matter back again to the British Government for further explanation; but other questions, certain to arise, rendered this reference still more imperative. Were Her Majesty's Ministers prepared to give unconditional assurances of their determination to protect the territories of Afghanistan against external attack; and, if the Amir should apply for assistance in fortifying Herat and in improving his army, to what extent should his demands be complied with? In the Viceroy's opinion the Amir's demands were likely to prove large, for his objections to British officers were very strong, and his expectations of pecuniary aid, as had been shown at Simla, very high. And by what arguments was the Indian Government to try to overcome that repugnance? Lord Salisbury had written of the Amir's independence being in serious peril, and of the possibility of neutralizing that peril by the personal influence of a British agent; but from what quarter was danger supposed to threaten? Was it the Russians who were to be represented as eager to invade Afghanistan, or the Amir who was to be charged with conduct calculated to bring him into collision with Russia or her allies? The Indian Government possessed no information confirmatory of the former line of argument; and, having only recently been the channel of communication through which the Amir had been assured that he had nothing to fear from Russia, and might devote his entire attention to the improvement of his internal government, they felt some

difficulty in making to him representations of an opposite character.

Neither did Lord Northbrook and his council share, to the full extent, Lord Salisbury's apprehensions that Great Britain's interests were in danger from the misgovernment of the Amir, or from his ambitious proclivities. Discontent there might be in Afghanistan, but there could be no doubt that Shere Ali had consolidated his power throughout its length and breadth, and that the officers intrusted with its administration had shown extraordinary loyalty to his cause. Nowhere had intrigue, or rebellion, been able to make head against his authority; even the wildest tribes were learning to appreciate the advantages of a firm rule; and any attempt on the part of Russia to intrigue with factions opposed to the settled government would defeat itself, and afford the Amir the strongest motive for disclosing to us such proceedings. As to the contingency of a collision with Russia being brought about by Shere Ali's ambition, negligence, or over-confidence—they thought that the British Government hardly did justice to the Amir's past conduct, which had been marked by the most unqualified acceptance of the advice offered him by the Indian Government. Never, in all the years that had elapsed since the Ambala Conference, had he deviated from the peaceful attitude towards his neighbours which had then been enjoined upon him. Even so recently as the previous September, when news of the disturbances in Khokand had reached Kabul, he had written to the Governor of Afghan Turkestan to exercise such restraint upon his people that no act contrary to the friendship existing between Afghanistan and Russia might take

place; and the military movements which had aroused Lord Salisbury's alarm had been directed against a rebellious Afghan chief whose reduction to obedience was a purely domestic matter, with which the Indian Government had no right to intermeddle, and, yet, the Amir had gone beyond his obligations in notifying to it his intentions before entering on hostilities, and in, afterwards, keeping it informed of their progress.

The despatch closed with a few remarks which the Viceroy and his Council, deeply impressed by the grave importance of the subject with which they were dealing, submitted to the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, "in the hope that the whole question might yet be reconsidered;"—remarks which sum up with firm and comprehensive grasp all the arguments against the measure which they now found themselves called upon to force on the Amir.

"It is in the highest degree improbable that the Amir will yield a hearty consent to the location of British Officers in Afghanistan which the Mission is intended to accomplish; and to place our Officers on the Amir's frontier without his hearty consent would, in our opinion, be a most impolitic and dangerous movement. Setting aside the consideration of the personal risk to which, under such circumstances, the Agents would be exposed, and the serious political consequences that would ensue from their being insulted or attacked, their position would be entirely useless. They would be surrounded by spies under the pretext of guarding them or administering to their wants. Persons approaching or visiting them would be watched and removed; and though nothing might be done ostensibly which could be complained of as

an actual breach of friendship, the Agents would be checked on every hand, and would soon find their position both humiliating and useless. Such was the experience of Major Todd at Herat in 1839 when his supplies of money failed. Such was the experience of Colonel Lumsden when he went to Candahar in 1857, as the dispenser of a magnificent subsidy.

A condition of things like this could not exist for any length of time without leading to altered relations, and possibly even, in the long run, to a rupture with Afghanistan, and thereby defeating the object which Her Majesty's Government have in view. We already see the fruits of the conciliatory policy which has been pursued since 1869, in the consolidation of the Amir's power and the establishment of a strong Government on our frontier. The Amir's not unnatural dread of our interference in his internal affairs, and the difficulties of his position as described in our Despatch¹ of the 7th of June last, combined, perhaps, with the conviction that, if ever a struggle for the independence of Afghanistan should come, we must in our own interest help him, may have induced him to assume a colder attitude towards us than we should desire. But we have no reason to believe that he has any desire to prefer the friendship of other Powers. We are convinced that a patient adherence to the policy adopted towards Afghanistan by Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence, and Lord Mayo, which it has been our earnest endeavour to maintain, presents the greatest promise of the eventual establishment of our relations with the Amir on a satisfactory footing; and we deprecate, as involving

¹ Paragraphs 24 to 26 and 33 to 36.

serious danger to the peace of Afghanistan and to the interests of the British Empire in India, the execution, under present circumstances, of the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's Despatch."^{1 2}

The signing of this dignified and earnest remonstrance was the last service rendered by Lord Northbrook to the joint interests of India and Afghanistan. Weighty in itself, it possesses a special interest as showing how much his treatment of the Afghan Question had gained in sympathy, fairness and farsightedness since the day when he, too, had proposed to send a British Envoy to Kabul. The reluctance displayed by Shere Ali to accede to this proposal, and his subsequent sacrifice of money which he sorely needed, rather than incur the faintest suspicion of having allowed himself to be bribed to look favourably on the British desire to place European Officers in his frontier towns, had opened Lord Northbrook's eyes to the fact that the step which had seemed so simple to him, was really fraught with danger to the prince whose interests he honestly wished to serve; and he had not only desisted from pressing his request, but had returned to the policy of his predecessors, without allowing a tinge of personal disappointment to embitter the relations existing between India and Afghanistan. Well would it have been for both countries if he had succeeded in his endeavour to impress upon the Home Government the lessons of patience, moderation and generous appreciation of another's

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pp. 147—149.

² Signed by Lord Northbrook, H. W. Norman, A. Hobhouse, W. Muir, E. C. Bayley, A. J. Arbuthnot and A. Clarke.

difficulties, which he himself had learnt so thoroughly; but this satisfaction was not to be his. The same mail that carried the Despatch of the 28th of January to England, conveyed also Lord Northbrook's resignation of his office, and, on the 28th of the following month, Lord Salisbury addressed a Letter of Instructions to the new Viceroy, Lord Lytton, that ran counter, in every particular, to the earnest advice and solemn warnings which he had just received.

This letter dealt with the relations of Great Britain both with Afghanistan and Khelat, which, in each case, were described as unsatisfactory; but as that part of it relating to Afghan affairs has alone been published, we can only guess at the nature of Lord Salisbury's Instructions with regard to Khelat from subsequent events; that they were important and explicit, however, is proved by the fact that, before reaching Calcutta, Lord Lytton took the unprecedented step of interfering by telegraph with arrangements into which Lord Northbrook was entering with that state.

The Instructions as regarded Afghanistan amounted to this—that Lord Lytton was to lose no time in sending an Envoy to that country charged with the task of overcoming the Amir's "apparent reluctance" to the establishment of permanent British Agencies within his dominions. This time, Lord Salisbury did not leave to his Viceroy the duty of finding, or creating, an excuse for the despatch of this mission. The notification of "the Queen's assumption of the Imperial title in relation to her Majesty's Indian subjects, feudatories and allies," and of Lord Lytton's "assumption of the Viceregal office" were "the objects of smaller political interest" towards which it was to be ostensibly directed.

If the consequences of his infatuation had not been so fatal, one would be tempted to smile over the gravity with which, strong in his belief that the Amir's reluctance was only "apparent," Lord Salisbury weighed the important question of whether the British Envoy should travel *viâ* the Bolan Pass to Kabul and return by the Khyber, or *vice versâ*, and the condescension with which, in the end, he left the decision of the route to the Amir.

That Shere Ali might decline to allow the British Envoy to travel by either, was an alternative to which he resolutely shut his eyes; but to another possible danger they had been opened by Lord Northbrook's pertinent hint—that the price to be paid to the Amir, in exchange for the surrender of his right to exclude all Europeans from his kingdom, would have to be a high one. The Amir when invited to show his confidence in the British Government by frankly uttering his hopes, might put forward quite inadmissible demands:—How was this difficulty to be met?

Lord Salisbury had a simple solution ready. Lord Lytton was to divide those demands into such as he had no intention of conceding, and into others which, under certain conditions, he might be willing to entertain, and to instruct his Agent to prevent the former demands becoming subjects of discussion, whilst the latter he was to refer to the Indian Government with such favourable assurances as might induce the Amir to recognize the advantage of facilitating, by compliance with the Viceroy's wishes, the fulfilment of his own.

We are not told what were the requests to which all expression was to be denied, but those which "under certain conditions" Shere Ali was to be permitted to formulate were:

1st. A fixed and augmented subsidy.

2nd. A more decided recognition than had yet been accorded by the Government of India to the order of succession established by him in favour of his younger son, Abdullah Jan.

3rd. An explicit pledge by treaty, or otherwise, of material support in case of foreign aggression.

The question of the subsidy appeared to Lord Salisbury of such minor importance that, with the contemptuous hint that Lord Lytton would "probably deem it inexpedient to commit his Government to any permanent pecuniary obligation on behalf of a neighbour whose conduct and character had hitherto proved uncertain," he left it to the Viceroy's decision.

As regarded the recognition of Abdullah Jan, Lord Salisbury was quick to see that Lord Mayo's vague promise—"to endeavour, from time to time, as circumstances may allow, to strengthen the Government of your Highness and to enable you . . . to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor"—could have given little satisfaction to its recipient; but the most acute mind would be puzzled to detect the difference in degree of "ambiguity" between the hopes which this "ambiguous" language was intended to encourage, and those that were to be fed "by a frank recognition of a *de facto* order in the succession established by a *de facto* Government to the throne of a foreign State," which recognition was not "to imply, or necessitate, any intervention in the internal affairs of that State;" and the difficulty is made all the greater by the fact that Lord Salisbury was clearly as little inclined as Lord Mayo had been, to supply the Amir with

funds to enable him to do for himself what the British Government's respect for the independence of Afghanistan forbade it to do for him.

Nor was Lord Salisbury less alive to the "ambiguous" nature of the terms in which Lord Northbrook had couched his promises of assistance to the Amir in case of aggression on his territories, for to them he attributed the "ambiguity and reserve" by which "Shere Ali's attitude towards the Government of India had (has) ever since been characterized;" but as the Disraeli administration had no intention of taking upon itself greater responsibilities than those which Mr. Gladstone's Ministry had been ready to incur, the Secretary of State for India had no more definite instructions to give Lord Lytton on this head than that he should try to answer the demand, were it renewed, in different words to those employed by Lord Northbrook, words which might "secure to their unaltered policy the advantages of which it had (has) been hitherto deprived by an apparent doubt of its sincerity."

Now Shere Ali was too astute a prince to be satisfied by any change in the *form* of a declaration, so long as its *substance* remained the same; and, therefore, so far as his "attitude of ambiguity and reserve" sprang from vexation at having been denied an unconditional assurance of support against Russian aggression, no juggling with words, however skilful, would avail to alter it. But, as has been conclusively shown, Shere Ali's discontent, which was not of a nature to alarm the Indian statesmen who knew him best, since it had never displayed itself in any act running counter to the obligations which he had accepted towards the British Go-

vernment, was due to several causes, amongst which, not the one insisted on by Lord Salisbury, but the Seistan Award and the proposal to send a British Envoy to Kabul that preceded the Simla negotiations, and the suggestion to depute British Military Officers to examine his frontiers that marked their close, were the chief. No reversal of the Seistan Award was possible; and now this new attempt to secure more cordial relations with him was to be ushered in by a repetition of the demand which had already done something to sap the foundations of the old friendship; the same demand in a far more odious form, since it was to be imposed upon the Amir as a test of his loyalty to the British alliance, and to be supported by threats.

“If the language and demeanour of the Amir be such as to promise no satisfactory result of the negotiations thus opened, his Highness should be distinctly reminded that he is isolating himself, at his own peril, from the friendship and protection it is his interest to seek and deserve.”—So runs the eleventh paragraph of Lord Salisbury’s Letter of Instructions to the new Viceroy, a paragraph in which the germs of an Afghan war lay hidden; for how could negotiations promise a satisfactory result when they were to begin in a disregard of the Amir’s most cherished right; to be carried on with duplicity;¹ and to end in imposing upon

¹ It was duplicity to pretend to be giving the Amir something which had never yet been within his reach, when the most anxious care was to be taken not to commit the British Government to anything more definite than what Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook had offered him.

him a number of entirely new obligations. "Her Majesty's Government must have for their own agents undisputed access to its (Afghanistan's) frontier positions."—"They must have adequate means of confidentially conferring with the Amir upon all matters as to which the proposed declaration would recognize a community of interests."—"They must be entitled to expect becoming attention to their friendly counsels."—"The Amir must be made to understand that, subject to all fair allowance for the condition of the country and the character of the population, territories, ultimately dependent upon British power for their defence, must not be closed to those of the Queen's officers, or subjects, who may be duly authorized to enter them by the British Government." Such were the conditions to which Shere Ali was to be called upon to submit—and what was he to receive in exchange? A subsidy, if Lord Lytton should deem it expedient to give him one; the advantage of the advice of British officers in the improvement of his military organization; and a re-embodiment, in an improved form of words, of Lord Northbrook's conditional promise of aid against unprovoked attack by any foreign power.

And if negotiations conducted on such a basis were to result in "the irretrievable alienation of Shere Ali's confidence in the sincerity and power of the Indian Government"—sincerity towards himself, power as against Russia—why then, "no time must be lost in re-considering, from a new point of view, the policy to be pursued in reference to Afghanistan."

It is hardly necessary to say that Lord Salisbury did not establish any connection between the new policy which he

was instructing Lord Lytton to inaugurate and that "irretrievable alienation" of Shere Ali's confidence which he foresaw as possible; on the contrary, he attributed his prevision of that contingency to his acquaintance with Shere Ali's past conduct which had "more than once been characterized by a significant disregard of the wishes and interests of the Indian Government"—conduct to the loyalty of which Lord Mayo had borne generous testimony, and which Lord Northbrook had so recently vindicated against this very aspersion.

This Letter of Instructions and the Despatches exchanged between Lord Salisbury and Lord Northbrook have been thus minutely analysed, because succeeding despatches, containing the history of subsequent events, are so full of misstatements as to the causes in which those events had their roots, that it would be vain to attempt to make them clear to readers who did not enter on their consideration with a full and accurate knowledge of the state of the Afghan question, at the time when Lord Northbrook yielded the Vice-royalty of India to Lord Lytton.

CHAPTER IV

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW POLICY.

ON the 5th of April, 1876, Lord Lytton arrived in Calcutta, and on the 5th of May Sir Richard Pollock, Commissioner of Peshawar, addressed a letter to Shere Ali informing him of the new Viceroy's intention to depute his friend, Sir Lewis Pelly, to Kabul for the purpose of notifying to his Highness his—Lord Lytton's—accession to office, and “the addition which it had pleased her Majesty the Queen to make to her Sovereign Titles, in respect to her Empire of India.”¹

The Commissioner of Peshawar was the accepted channel of communication between the Indian and the Afghan Governments, and a subordinate must write in conformity with the instructions of his superior; but it is impossible to help pitying Pollock for the necessity that compelled him to impart information which he knew would be so unwelcome to its recipient, and to appear to approve of a step against which he had so recently protested.

This letter was debated in the Afghan Durbar for several days, and those discussions revealed that the old objections to the reception of a European Mission were as strong and

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 174.

lively as ever in the minds of the Amir's advisers. All the former arguments against such a step were revived—the danger to the “Sahibs” themselves from Afghan fanaticism; the danger to Afghanistan should they be injured, or insulted; the danger to the good understanding between the two countries were the Envoy to ask what the Amir could not concede; the danger that, if the Afghan Government admitted a British Envoy, it might be required to receive a Russian Envoy also.

None of these arguments appear, however, in the letter, at once courteous and ironical, in which, on the 22nd of May, the Amir replied to the Commissioner. His Highness had heard with joy “the glad tidings of the assumption of the *Shah-i-Shah* by Her Majesty the Queen,” and of “the arrival of his noble Excellency Lord Lytton,” and “expected that the friendship and union of the two exalted Governments, more than in former times, would (will) be fixed and secured.” As regarded “political parleys”—those that had been held at Simla were “sufficient and efficient,” and there was no need for further discussion of subjects that had then been settled; but if the English Government entertained any thought “of refreshing and benefiting the God-given State of Afghanistan,” let them hint it, and he would send a confidential Agent to learn “the things concealed in the generous heart of the English Government,” and to reveal them to him—the Amir—that he might “carefully weigh them and commit his answer to paper.”¹

In a long despatch written on the 10th of May, 1877,

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 174.

Lord Lytton speaks of the "studied ambiguity" of the response. In reality its meaning was clear enough to the Viceroy, who did not relish the rebuff which it dealt to his over-confident policy, nor its politely veiled insight into his ulterior schemes.

In July the Commissioner of Peshawar's pen was again called into requisition to express the Viceroy's regret at the reluctance evinced by the Amir to the reception of a friendly Mission, and his belief that that reluctance was due to a misconception of his Excellency's objects. Sir R. Pollock was further instructed to warn his Highness that by hastily rejecting the hand of friendship now held out to him, he would render nugatory the friendly intentions of the Viceroy and oblige him to regard Afghanistan as a State, which had voluntarily isolated itself from the alliance and support of the British Government.

To Atta Mahomed, Pollock wrote the Viceroy's mind in still stronger terms. The reasons urged in the Durbar against the coming of the Mission were dismissed with impatient contempt. His Excellency could not suppose that the objection, on the score of the Amir's inability to protect it, was serious. The notion that the Envoy might put forward demands incompatible with the interests of the Amir must "have been derived from idle reports, or mischievous misrepresentations, by which his Highness would always be liable to be led into grievous error as to the intentions of the British Government, so long as he declined to avail himself of the opportunities afforded him for entering into frank and open communications with it." As regarded the surprising statement that the Amir would be obliged to receive Russian

Envoys if he accepted the British Mission, the Viceroy, "as the responsible Representative of the Queen of England and Empress of India," could not "consider this excuse a valid one." Was not the Amir aware that the British Government, acting on behalf of his wishes and interests, had obtained from the Government of the Czar written pledges not to interfere, directly, or indirectly, in the affairs of Afghanistan?

His Excellency was willing to believe that, "in declining to receive the Envoy of the British Government, the Amir might not have fully weighed" all the responsibility that he would incur, if he deliberately rejected the opportunity afforded him of making known his views in regard to the interests of Afghanistan, nor the impossibility of the British Government's maintaining a community of interest between the two states, and protecting the independence and integrity of Afghanistan under conditions incompatible with the ordinary intercourse of friendly Courts; and, believing this, he was still ready to authorize Sir Lewis Pelly to wait upon the Amir at such place as he might appoint. But the Amir's alternative proposal to depute an Agent to ascertain what the Vakil had designated as "the objects sought by the British Government," Lord Lytton declined to entertain "as derogatory to the dignity of that Government"; and the Native Agent was to warn Shere Ali that, if he continued to refuse "to receive the Viceroy's Envoy, the responsibility for the result would rest entirely on the Government of Afghanistan."¹

Not content with bringing pressure to bear on the Amir

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 176—177.

and his ministers through the ordinary official channel, the Viceroy authorized Dr. Bellew and other of their personal friends to address to them letters "explaining the sentiments" of the Indian Government, and "the importance of the opportunity then offered to the Afghan Government for materially strengthening its position at home and abroad."¹

If Shere Ali had not previously weighed all the considerations set forth in Pollock's letter to Atta Mahomed, he certainly must have found food for painful thought after he had been made acquainted with its contents. The contemptuous treatment accorded to a reason which he had urged successfully upon preceding Viceroys, was no light blow; but the turning of his Minister's second plea for rejecting the mission into an argument for compelling him to receive it, was a still harder one. How was he to believe that the fear lest the Envoy should put forward inadmissible demands was groundless, when the visit of that Envoy was, itself, a thing which the British Government had no right to ask him to accept, and which it would not be safe for him to agree to? And what comfort could he derive from the reminder that the Russians were pledged not to meddle in Afghan affairs, when he knew that this attempt to force a Mission upon him was due to no other cause than the British Government's want of confidence in Russia's promises? Shere Ali must have reflected, too, that if there was a difference between the Viceroy's sending an Envoy to Afghanistan, and his—the Amir's—sending one to India, that difference was in favour of the proceeding which violated no solemn under-

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 167.

taking, and which would have served Lord Lytton's purpose equally well, whether that purpose was confined, as had at first been stated, to the communication of two pieces of Court news, or embraced as had now been admitted—notwithstanding the sneer at the Vakil's allusion to "objects sought by the British Government"—a desire to afford him, the Amir, "an opportunity of making known his views."

And that invitation to make known his views had a sinister sound when backed up by threats of the consequences which would flow from neglecting it—all the more sinister because Shere Ali, from the day when his wishes had been refused at Ambala up to this spring of 1876, had never, on his own initiative, expressed a desire for any change in the relations in which he stood towards the British Government—relations which, however unsatisfactory they might be to his dynastic ambitions, at least respected his own and his country's independence.

Altogether a serious communication, this letter of Pollock's of the 8th of July, and the Amir may be pardoned for taking seven weeks to ponder over it before writing his answer, which was brief and quite free from "ambiguity." He had received and understood the Commissioner's letter to himself, and had arrived at a clear comprehension of the letter addressed by him to the agent. He had already stated his wish that his Envoy might be received by the Viceroy; as this was not acceptable to the British Government, he now proposed, either that an English representative should meet an Afghan representative on the frontier to explain, mutually, the views of their respective Governments, or that the British Agent in Kabul, who had long been intimately acquainted

with his wishes, should proceed to India to lay them before the Viceroy.

This latter proposal was accepted by the Indian Government, with the intimation that, if the Vakil were to come at all, he must come quickly, as the Viceroy was to start on the 10th of October on a tour through Kashmir and along the North-West Frontier of India.

Atta Mahomed reached Simla on the 6th of October, and, on the 7th, he had a conversation with Sir Lewis Pelly, to whom he stated that the Amir's wishes were identical with those which he had expressed, personally, to Lord Mayo in 1869, and had laid before Lord Northbrook, through Nur Mahomed, in 1873; and when questioned, named eight causes as having tended to estrange the Afghan from the British Government.

1. The decision of the Seistan Boundary Commission.
2. The recent proceedings of the Indian Government in Khelat—proceedings of which an account will shortly be given.
3. The intervention of Lord Northbrook in favour of Yakub Khan.
4. The transmission to the Mir of Wakhan of presents without the Amir's knowledge, or consent.
5. The personal annoyance of the Amir at the results of the Simla Conference, and the influence of Nur Mahomed, who had been embittered against the British by the scant courtesy shown to him by certain persons at Simla, and whilst acting on the Seistan Commission.
6. The Amir's displeasure at a reference made to his advisers in a recent letter from the Commissioner of Peshawar.
7. The Amir's distrust of the British Government's policy

towards himself, which he believed to have only British, and not Afghan, interests in view.

8. The Amir's conviction, dating from the Simla Conference, that whilst the British Government desired to depute Political Agents into Afghanistan and to induce him to guide his policy by their advice, it was unprepared to bind itself to any future course in regard to him.

Atta Mahomed explained the Amir's objection to the visit of a complimentary mission, by his Highness' impression that it could lead to no improvement in the mutual relations of the two states—a natural impression, considering the high-handed way in which Lord Lytton had set about trying to mend them; also by his conviction that the presence in Kabul of even a temporary mission might create excitement and be attended with personal risk to the Envoy—a foreboding fatally fulfilled after Shere Ali's death; by his fear lest the complimentary mission should merge into one of a permanent character—exactly what Lord Lytton intended it should do—and that an envoy once established in Kabul might become a referee for discontented Afghan subjects, or, in any case, cause annoyance to the patriotic party, and raise the hopes of the disaffected—an opinion which he supported by citing the experience of other Native States.

Nevertheless the agent assured Sir Lewis Pelly that the Amir did not suspect Great Britain of conspiring with Russia against him, nor of coveting any portion of his territory—a confidence altogether misplaced so far as Lord Lytton was concerned, as Atta Mahomed was very soon to discover—on the contrary he counted on Great Britain's defending him against Russia in her own interest. As to

Russian agents in Kabul, the Vakil "admitted" that one had recently quitted that city, and that two others, "men of no consequence," were still there.

Why, in the report of this conversation, the word *admitted* should have been used in this instance, implying, as it does, that the truth had been dragged out of the witness, it is hard to see, since Atta Mahomed had himself forwarded the letters brought by these agents, to the Indian Government, which had discovered in them no cause for alarm or offence, and could now affirm that all Russian agents were regarded by the Amir as sources of embarrassment.

Of the general situation in Afghanistan, Atta Mahomed gave an excellent account: tranquillity prevailed on all the frontiers, and the party of Yakub Khan had broken up, though that prince, whose character and abilities the Vakil thought the Indian Government had overrated, was still so far a source of danger that the Amir could not safely quit Kabul whilst his son remained there in confinement; on which account, and also because he thought it concerned his dignity not to leave his capital for the purpose of receiving a British Envoy, he had ignored the Viceroy's offer to allow him to name the place of meeting.

These were the views expressed by the agent in his official interview with Sir Lewis Pelly; but Captain Grey, who rode home with him and saw him again privately the following morning, reported that he had brought him to allow that the Amir's position was really precarious and that he would, probably, be glad to come to the Indian Government's terms, if he were once convinced of its meaning real business—a mistaken opinion, for certainly nothing in the sequel goes

to prove that Shere Ali ever, for a moment, regarded Lord Lytton's proposals with favour.

On the 10th of October Atta Mahomed was admitted to an audience with the Viceroy, who, after recapitulating the information furnished by the Agent to Sir Lewis Pelly with regard to the views and feelings of the Amir, went on to remark that it was all very full and interesting, but quite new. Why was it that the Kabul Diaries contained merely reports of events, without comment or explanations?

Atta Mahomed was not willing to grant that his Diaries were meagre and uninteresting, but if they appeared so to the Viceroy, his Excellency must bear in mind that he had received no encouragement, or instructions from the Government to furnish it with impressions and opinions as well as with facts,¹ and that it was not safe to put very confidential matter into his letters.

The Viceroy then desired the Agent to understand that thenceforth he would be expected to keep the Indian Government fully informed, not only of all that took place in Kabul, but also of his own impressions as to the causes and character of the events reported by him, and of the dispositions

¹ "We think that the Agent shows a right judgment in omitting to report every idle rumour that may come to his hearing." (Despatch of Government of India, June 1875.)

"It is probable that his (the Agent's) influence with the Amir depends, in a considerable measure, on his abstinence from criticism on the internal state of Afghanistan and on the persons trusted by the Amir. On the whole I consider this reticence favourable to British interests." (Lieutenant-Governor R. H. Davies, 25th of March, 1875.)

and motives of the chief actors in Afghan affairs. He must do this fully, even at the risk of occasionally expressing mistaken views, and take his own precautions for the safety of his despatches as far as Peshawar.

Lord Lytton next dwelt on "the profound compassion" with which he regarded Shere Ali's position and state of mind since, buoyed up, as he was, with the false notion that the British Government, for the protection of its own interests, would be compelled to help him in the event of external attack, he was allowing himself to drift into danger, the gravity and imminence of which he very inadequately realised. It was true that, so long as he proved himself "our friendly and loyal ally, not our interests only, but our honour would oblige us to defend his territories and support his throne; but the moment we had cause to doubt his sincerity, or question the practical benefit of his alliance, our interests would be all the other way." "The British Government could only assist those who valued its assistance," and the aid which "the Amir seemed disinclined to seek, or desire," might "at any moment be very welcome to one, or other of his rivals." "Our only reason for maintaining the independence of Afghanistan was to provide for the security of our own frontier," and, if we ceased to regard that country "as a friendly and firmly allied State, what was there to prevent us from providing for that security by an understanding with Russia which might have the effect of wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether?" "If the Amir did not desire to come to a speedy understanding with us, Russia did, and she desired it at his expense."

"As matters now stood, the British Government was able

to pour an overwhelming force into Afghanistan . . . before a single Russian soldier could reach Kabul." "If the Amir remained our friend, this military power could be spread round him as a ring of iron; if he became our enemy, it could break him as a reed." Our relations with Afghanistan must become better or worse. He—Lord Lytton—was prepared to do all in his power to make them better, but he could undertake no "responsibility for the protection of a frontier which he was unable to look after by means of his own officers." "In the unhappy ambiguity" which characterized the Amir's relations with the British Government, he might well shrink from receiving British Agents, since his people would think that they had been sent "to threaten, or bully him; to spy out the nakedness of the land, or to encourage the disaffection of his subjects." But how different the result, how advantageous to the Amir, if the advent of the British Agent were preceded by the publication of a document "frankly declaring to all the world that the British Government was the friend of his friends and the enemy of his enemies." With an empty treasury, a discontented people and a rebellious son, "the Amir's position was surrounded with difficulties" and yet this was the man who pretended "to hold the balance between England and Russia, independent of either," this "earthen pipkin between two iron pots."

British policy did not "permit of the alteration of definite treaty engagements," but the Amir hitherto had only had "verbal understandings with us," the letter given to him by Lord Mayo "not being in the nature of a treaty engagement;" now, however, he had "the opportunity of concluding arrangements which would make him the strongest

sovereign that ever sat on the throne of Kabul." The Indian Government was prepared to promise that, in the event of unprovoked aggression upon his dominions, assistance should be afforded him in men, money and arms; that meantime, if it were his wish, it would fortify Herat and other points on his frontier, and lend him officers to discipline his army; that it would grant him a yearly subsidy—its amount to be settled by the Plenipotentiaries—and recognize Abdullah Jan as his successor, whilst asking nothing of him in return, except that he should refrain from attacking or provoking his neighbours; hold no external communications without our knowledge, more especially with Russia; allow British Agents to reside at Herat and elsewhere on the frontier, and a mixed Commission of British and Afghan officers to demarcate his borders; make arrangements for free circulation of trade on the principal trade routes, and for the establishment of telegraph lines along them; open Afghanistan freely to all Englishmen, official or non-official—providing as far as practicable for their safety, although he would not be held absolutely responsible for isolated accidents—and either accept a British Resident in Kabul, or depute an Envoy to the Viceroy's Head-Quarters, and receive special Missions whenever required to do so.

If the Amir was prepared to treat on the basis thus laid down, the Viceroy was willing to send Sir Lewis Pelly to negotiate a treaty with Syud Nur Mahomed Shah at Peshawar, or elsewhere; but if the Amir was not prepared to accept that basis, it would be useless for him to depute his Agent to India, as no other could be admitted. In the former case, the Treaty might be drawn up by the Plenipo-

tentiaries and signed by the Viceroy and Shere Ali at Peshawar in November, or at Delhi, should the Amir accept his Excellency's invitation to the Imperial assemblage to be held there in January 1877.

At a second interview which took place three days later, the Viceroy, after recapitulating his demands, concessions and warnings, charged Atta Mahomed to bring the Amir to a sense of the real position of affairs and to induce him to be present at the Imperial assemblage; and then dismissed him with a letter for the Amir on the subject of the proposed negotiations, an *aide-mémoire* for his own guidance, and a watch and chain, and a present of Rs.10,000 as a mark of the Indian Government's appreciation of his past faithful service.

What strikes one first in reading the official record of these conversations between Lord Lytton and Atta Mahomed, is the rapid growth of the claims of the British Government upon the Amir. On the 22nd January, 1875, Lord Salisbury avowed no larger aim than the establishment of British agents in Herat and Kandahar; on the 10th of October, 1876, Lord Lytton demanded that Afghanistan should be freely opened to all Englishmen, official and unofficial, for whose safety the Amir was to provide, though he was not to be held absolutely responsible for isolated accidents. This condition attached to an offer of alliance which the Amir could only reject at his peril, struck a deadly blow at Afghan independence; for the Government that imposed it would, of course, claim to be its interpreter, and as the free circulation of Englishmen in Afghanistan was certain to result in many "isolated accidents," that Government would keep in its hands the power of picking a quarrel with its

prince and people, whenever it ceased to be to its interest to maintain the arrangement of which this clause formed a part.

But what impresses one, perhaps, even more strongly, is the proof that these conversations afford that Lord Lytton had not only adopted Lord Salisbury's views, but that he found pleasure in clothing them in the most frankly brutal form. What was this earthen pipkin that it should presume to dream of remaining independent of the two iron pots, between which it was privileged to be allowed to swim down the stream of time? What value need be attached to verbal understandings, or to the mere letters of Viceroy's? Treaty engagements, signed and sealed, alone were binding; and treaty engagements we had none with Shere Ali, so of course we were free to make any frontier arrangements¹ that suited our interests without any regard for his, or to help to put one of his rivals in his place, if that rival were willing to buy our assistance at our price. And what was to prevent us from uniting with Russia to wipe Afghanistan out of the map altogether?

Nothing, apparently, so far as Lord Lytton was concerned, except lack of opportunity; but other statesmen, of longer memory and more sensitive honour, would have been withheld by the remembrance of thirty-four years of peace, of three years of unjust and disastrous war, and by the restraining force of constantly renewed promises, none the less sacred

¹ These arrangements, even then, were taking in Lord Lytton's mind the form of the annexation of the Pishin and Kuram Valleys.

because not embodied in any formal document—promises made to a prince who had broken none of his engagements to us, and had given us no right to believe from his conduct in the past that he would be false to them in the future.

And if the passionate pursuit of the object which he had been sent to India to effect—the virtual subordination of Afghanistan to India—hardened Lord Lytton's heart and blunted his conscience, it exercised a no less deadening influence on his intellect and his imagination. He could neither draw the right conclusions from his own arguments, nor form to himself a true conception of the effect which his words and acts would have on the mind of the Amir. His only excuse for insisting upon the admission of British Officers to the Afghan frontier towns, was his fear of the ambitious designs and restless intrigues of Russia—intrigues and designs of which he had no evidence—yet, in his eagerness to prove the powerlessness of the Amir to stand against Great Britain should he alienate her favours by refusing this demand, he boasted that he could throw an overwhelming force into Afghanistan long before a single Russian soldier could reach Kabul. The boast was perfectly true, but the conclusion to be drawn from it was not that which he tried to impose on Shere Ali, but its exact opposite:—the superiority of our position being so incontestible, there could be no need for the indecent haste with which he sought to establish British Officers in Herat and Kandahar.

Again, he reproved the Amir for venturing to doubt the sincerity of Russia's promises of non-intervention in Afghan affairs, whilst he was doing his best to induce him to give up his only bulwark against British interference in them by

the bribe of our assistance when his doubts should prove well-founded; he reproached him for his distrust of his—Lord Lytton's—good intentions towards him in the same breath with which he repudiated the engagements contracted with him by former Viceroys; he invited his confidence whilst sapping the foundation on which it had hitherto been based, and claimed his friendship with his hand at his throat.

“Trust me, or I will betray you; love me, or I will break you in pieces”—these were the commands and threats with which Lord Lytton assailed Shere Ali, and he actually seems to have persuaded himself, at times, that they would not only clear up the “ambiguity” of the Amir's attitude, but win his lasting gratitude and devotion. *At times*—not always—glimmerings of a clearer perception of the workings of human nature occasionally visited him, and these found substantial expression in the measures taken to profit by that “further alienation of Shere Ali's confidence” which might result from the too persistent determination to bully him into submission—measures which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

Four days after the dismissal of the Vakil, Lord Lytton furnished Sir Lewis Pelly with instructions by which to guide himself in the coming conference with Shere Ali's representative. The tone of these was one of studied moderation and courtesy, contrasting a little too sharply with the harshness of the Viceroy's language when frankly explaining himself to Atta Mahomed; but there was no change for the better in the substance of the demands which Pelly was to press upon Nur Mahomed, and the arguments by which he was bidden to support them were both false and cruel.

For instance, if there was one thing which allowed of no doubt, it was that the Amir abhorred and dreaded the thought of admitting British officers to any parts of his dominions—yet, by stringing together a few expressions which he had used, or been reported to have used, when struggling at Ambala to induce Lord Mayo to guarantee to him and to his heirs the kingdom which he had fought so hard to recover and on which his hold was still so insecure, Lord Lytton tried to make it appear that he had given his “anticipatory assent” to the demand now made upon him to receive them, and that he “desired” the condition on which not only the meeting of the conference, but the continuation of the old friendship had come to depend. On the strength of these baseless assumptions, the Viceroy boldly went on to declare that the matter of the British agents was one on which the two parties were already so perfectly agreed, that nothing remained for Sir Lewis Pelly to do but to come to a “friendly arrangement with Nur Mahomed as to the measures necessary to give effect to an accepted principle.” As a matter of fact, as will presently be seen, the negotiations never got beyond the discussion of this point on which such perfect agreement existed, and the Afghan Minister died fighting against “the accepted principle” to his last breath.

Again, we know what the Amir went to Ambala hoping to obtain; what, at Simla, Nur Mahomed asked in his name; and we know, too, what Lord Salisbury had authorized Lord Lytton to give—a dynastic guarantee which, like the “ambiguous formula” of Lord Mayo, was to bind us to no interference on behalf of Shere Ali, or his heir, and a promise

of assistance against foreign aggression, differing, in form only, from the conditional pledge which Lord Northbrook had offered him and which, according to Lord Salisbury, he had rejected as a mockery. This decision may have been good policy; but there was in it nothing new; nothing more favourable to the Amir than in that pursued towards him by former Viceroys; nothing that can acquit Lord Lytton of wilful misrepresentation when he described himself as prepared to contract with Shere Ali a definite and practical alliance on the terms desired by his Highness in 1869 and 1873. And, above all, it was cruelly unfair of Lord Lytton, knowing as he did that he was *not* prepared to give to Shere Ali more than the shadow of the things on which his heart had been set; those things in exchange for which, so he had once declared, there was nothing he would not do to evince his gratitude—to hint that if the Amir should hesitate now to comply with his—the Viceroy's—wishes, not only would all our engagements towards him and his descendants be vitiated by that reluctance, but that, out of his own mouth, he would stand condemned.

The instructions were accompanied by an *Aide Mémoire* for Treaty, and an *Aide Mémoire* for subsidiary Secret and Explanatory Agreement, which reproduced in more exact form the conditions and concessions with which we are already acquainted.

CHAPTER V

GENESIS AND GROWTH OF THE FORWARD POLICY. *Read*

IN the year 1856, on the eve of that Persian War which was the immediate cause of the second treaty negotiated by Sir John Lawrence with Dost Mahomed, Brigadier-General John Jacob, C.B., the able and successful Administrator of the Sind Frontier, addressed a private letter to the then Governor-General, Lord Canning, enclosing a Memorandum in which he explained his views on the political situation of the day and on the best measures to be adopted to assure, for all time, the absolute security of India's North-West Frontier.

Looking far into the future, he beheld Herat converted into an English fortress and garrisoned by 20,000 British and Native troops; but, for the moment, he was content to rest that absolute security on the occupation of Quetta, a small town and mud fort in Khelat territory, lying twenty-four miles beyond the Bolan Pass and 202 miles from Jacobabad. Here he desired to locate a Field Force, to consist of the Sind Irregular Horse, with two thousand irregular cavalry; two regiments of Native Infantry with one thousand Irregular Beluch Infantry; two troops of Horse Artillery and two Field Batteries—the latter to be specially raised for the purpose. This step would, he believed, place us in possession of a position “which would preclude all possibility

of successful invasion; which would give us by moral influence a full control over Afghanistan; establish the most friendly relations with us throughout the country; and ere long bring down a full stream of valuable commerce from all Central Asia to the sea."

Time has falsified these predictions. Quetta has long since been deposed from its proud position of sole and adequate protector and guardian of the North-West Frontier; British relations with Afghanistan have suffered, instead of gaining, by the creation of that standing menace to the independence of the latter state—a great fortress on its border; and the trade of central Asia, hampered by high tariffs, the outcome of Russian and Afghan jealousy and suspicion, has dwindled steadily year by year.

Jacob's plans and arguments made so considerable an impression on Lord Canning's mind, that he might have forestalled Lord Lytton in the occupation of Quetta but for the strenuous opposition of his Military Secretary, that Henry Durand who, as a young Engineer officer, had blown in the gates of Ghazni, and who had brought back with him, out of the perils and humiliations of the first British invasion of Afghanistan, a clear comprehension of the enormous difficulties which must beset any force operating in and through that country, and who was able to convince the Governor-General that an occupation of Quetta, undertaken as a demonstration against Persia must end in an advance upon Kandahar, or even upon Herat.

Durand's representations carried the day: instead of demonstrating at Quetta, we demonstrated at Bushire, and the event belied Jacob's prediction that a descent on the

coast of Persia would not greatly alarm her Government, and that an attempt on our part to penetrate into the heart of that country, would be met by a rapid advance on our unprotected North-West Frontier, and the establishment of a Persian army in firm and secure possession of Kandahar. Persia was easily coerced, and within a few weeks of her submission, Lord Canning had cause to thank Heaven that he had not embarked upon a distant adventure by land, for India was in the throes of the great Mutiny, and John Lawrence was hesitating whether, or not, to abandon Peshawar and retire behind the Indus. Great as were the difficulties with which the British in India had to cope in 1857, they would have been far greater had Baluchistan risen against us, as it undoubtedly would have done, if Jacob and his faithful Irregular Hindustani Troops had been at Quetta, hundreds of miles away, at a season of the year when return would have been impossible.

There was never a time when John Lawrence was not opposed to the policy of advancing our frontiers; never a time when he had faith in Jacob's dream of conciliating the Afghans by dangling before their eyes the benefits which their Baluchi neighbours were reaping from our presence among them, and of gaining their confidence by placing ourselves in a position from which it would be comparatively easy to menace their independence.¹ He always shared

¹ "The enjoyment of regular pay by the Khelat people would have great influence on the Afghans generally. If all distrust of us be removed from the Afghan mind, as it has been removed from the minds of the government and people of

the opinion of an eminent soldier of the present day, that "the less the Afghans see of us, the less they will dislike us;"¹ and though it was he who signed both the first and second treaties with Dost Mahomed, he never doubted that the Indian Government would have acted more wisely in abstaining from all political relations with Afghanistan. But the grave danger which he and India had escaped in 1857, confirmed him in those views and gave additional force to the condemnation which, nine years after the rejection of General Jacob's proposals, he pronounced upon a similar scheme emanating from Sir Henry Green, Jacob's successor in Sind, and endorsed by Sir Bartle Frere, then Governor of Bombay.²

More cautious than Jacob, Green did not advise a sudden and immediate advance to Quetta, but merely the adoption of measures in Baluchistan and the Bolan which should lead us thither almost imperceptibly, and he justified his anxiety to see that place in British hands by the argument, that the screen of mountains separating India from Afghanistan shut us off from all timely knowledge of events occurring in Central Asia, and that it was essential to our safety that we should go beyond it. Like Jacob, Green prophesied evil things if his advice was not accepted and acted on.

But Lawrence had heard both the arguments and the

Khelat, the whole country would aid us heart and hand."—Letter from General John Jacobs.

¹ Lord Roberts.

² Papers relating to Central Asia and Quetta.

prophecies before, and he was unconvinced by the one and indifferent to the other. In the Minute in which he examined Green's proposals, he stated that he had fully considered Jacob's reasonings at the time of their original publication, had not lost sight of them in the interval, and adhered to the decision deliberately arrived at in Council that an advance to Quetta was not advisable, though, if at any future time a real danger to the Indian Empire were imminent, it would always be open to the British Government to take that step. He further denied that by such an advance the Indian Government would obtain better, or quicker, information as to Central Asian affairs, than already reached it through St. Petersburg and Peshawar. He repudiated with calm contempt the insinuation that the Government of India was in the habit of shutting its eyes to all that was taking place beyond our border, and claimed for himself and his Council a perfect acquaintance with the effects which Russia's movements in Central Asia were having upon the minds of the peoples living beyond our frontier, and with the fact that the neighbouring States had long been discussing on which side—British, or Russian—they should range themselves; and he gave as his reasons for dissenting from the course which Sir H. Green would have had him adopt in view of the said effects and discussions, his belief that, "if the course of events should ever bring us to a struggle with the Northern Power on our Indian frontier, the winning side would be the one which refrained from entangling itself in the barren mountains which now separate the two Empires, and that the Afghans themselves, foreseeing this result, were

likely, in the end, to throw their weight on the same side.”¹

If the Statesman spoke in this Minute, an exhaustive military judgment was passed upon the policy of Jacob and Green by the Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst. Prefacing his remarks with two extracts from Sir Henry Havelock’s “War in Afghanistan,” descriptive of the country between Sukkur and Dadar, Sir William Mansfield pointed out that if we assumed the troops then at Jacobabad to be thrown forward to Quetta, we should have the spectacle of a force separated, by such ground as that described by Havelock, from the nearest point on the Indus by a distance of 257 miles—equivalent in time to twenty days’ march without a halt on the part of the advancing force; incapable of being reinforced or provisioned during the hot season; and in danger, should it be seriously threatened in front, of having the Bolan Pass closed in rear by the predatory tribes whose habits, it was safe to assume, did not differ from those of the generation which gave so much annoyance to Lord Keane. In his—Sir William Mansfield’s—opinion, if we were to accede to a military occupation of Quetta, the most ordinary prudence would compel us to double the estimate of troops submitted to Lord Canning by General Jacobs, and to include in it at least 3,000 British infantry and artillery and a regiment of dragoons, for after the bitter experience of the Mutiny, no Government would ever dream of holding a distant outpost with Native soldiers only. Such an occupation would be

¹ Papers relating to Central Asia and Quetta, pp. 13—15.

a very costly affair, and, considering the defences afforded on our side of the Bolan Pass by the difficulties of the ground, he thought it very questionable whether the outlay would be worth while, even if the Russians were at Kandahar and Kabul, so long as there was peace between Great Britain and Russia; and that if the worst prognostications of the Russophobists were fulfilled, he should still be inclined to say that the side whence to defend the Bolan was not the *western*, but rather the *eastern* extremity, because *there* a hostile force could be struck on the head before it could have time to deploy with its heavy material, without which a modern army could not move against such forces as we should array against it, on any field we might choose between Shikarpur and Dadar. The desert would thus be turned into our most useful ally, instead of being a formidable difficulty, as would be the case if Jacob's plan were adopted.

Once at Quetta, however, we could not stop there, but must be drawn on and on, till ultimately we should find ourselves occupying the whole of Afghanistan, and this he supposed to have been General Jacob's real intention. The Commander-in-Chief did not affirm that it was Sir H. Green's also, but he asked whether that officer had ever weighed the consequences of the movement proposed, and the certainty that those consequences would present themselves at once to the Afghan mind, and the minds of Persia, Bokhara and Russia. That we should be able to creep over the country between Jacobabad and Quetta so insidiously that neither India nor her neighbours should be aware of our proceedings until the whole of our scheme of advance had been accomplished,

he deemed impossible; and he branded the suggestion as dishonouring to British Policy.¹

No more was heard for some years of the vital importance of Quetta to India; but eight months after the rejection of Sir H. Green's proposals, the policy of defending India by pushing forward into Afghanistan raised its head once more, in a Note written by Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Lumsden, Deputy Quarter-Master-General, at the Viceroy's request. Lumsden, a great traveller and linguist, well acquainted with the countries and peoples lying to the north and west of India, agreed with Jacob that the Bolan was the only route by which a Russian army was ever likely to advance against us; yet he strongly condemned the idea of attempting to forestall our great rival in the occupation of Herat, and scoffed at the "disciples of the Jacobean principle," who had "no scruple about locating an outpost 250 miles in advance of its nearest support, with the Bolan Pass and a desert" between that support and it. In his opinion, "to advance beyond the mountains forming our present strong frontier, and to make the difficult accessory zones in advance the principal field of operations was to commit the mistake for which Jomini condemned the French Directory, when, with fatal result, they invaded Switzerland." And yet the man who saw so clearly the folly of believing that our "certain and even rule" would be acceptable to the "restless Afghan" for longer than the life-time of the generation which, from personal experience of both, could contrast it with "the anarchy and oppression" which preceded it—this

¹ Papers relating to Central Asia and Quetta, pp. 16—19.

very man wanted the Indian Government to possess itself of the strategical key to Afghanistan, by taking over from the Amir the valleys of Kuram and Khost. With the Peiwar and Shutargardan Passes in our hands, so Lumsden argued, we should master Kabul, and our presence there, in alliance with its government, would give to that government immense moral and physical strength. As Jacob had counted on soon reconciling the Afghans to our presence, in a position which threatened Kandahar, by subsidies of money and arms; so Lumsden thought to induce the Amir to welcome our taking up a position, whence we could dominate his capital, by relieving him of the trouble of collecting his own revenues in one portion of his dominions, and by promises of support against internal, or external foes. Each of these officers was equally convinced that his particular scheme would be a cheap, effectual and final solution of the North-West Frontier Question, and, it is hard to say, which of them presented his proposals in the more moral and philanthropic light. Jacob's assurance that, in the arrangements proposed by him, "we should act in no respect other than as we might be prepared to justify before all good men in the world, or before the throne of God," being matched by Lumsden's anxiety to make amends to Afghanistan for having been "unjustly invaded by us in her prosperity, by not shrinking from strengthening her in her adversity; by securing for her oppressed subjects the benefits of a strong administration; by acting faithfully in all our dealings; and in showing, by example, that our Christian precepts were something more than the selfish hankerings of mercantile adventurers." ¹

¹ Ibid., pp. 27—37.

But Lumsden had to deal with the same man who had been proof against the plausible reasonings of Jacob and Green, and his note simply gave Sir John Lawrence the opportunity of re-asserting his fixed determination to take no steps which could alarm the susceptible jealousy of the Afghans, or violate the spirit, if not the letter, of our existing agreements with them; "for whether we advance into Afghanistan as friends or foes, would, in the end, make little difference—the final result would be the same." The Viceroy could not be brought to see the distinctions, moral and political, which the advocates of the Forward Policy drew between their own aims and methods, and those of the authors of the Afghan War; the policy was one and the same, and there could be no escaping the evils that flowed from it; neither could he be shaken in his conviction that any advance, whether towards Kandahar or Kabul, would be construed by the Afghans into the forerunner of the occupation of their country, which, indeed, it must prove, since Quetta and Kuram were only valuable in the eyes of those desiring their occupation, as stepping-stones to Herat and Kabul, in the event of a Russian advance.¹ He did not

¹ In writing to the *Times*, on the 30th October, 1878, Lord Lawrence re-affirmed this opinion:—"In 1854, when the occupation of Quetta was advocated, it was done so openly, on the ground of its being a first step in advance to the occupation of Kandahar and Herat; or, in other words, the invasion of Afghanistan; and this view has been reiterated, from time to time, in the press and in documents of an official character which have been made public. Hence the grounds of offence and apprehension to Afghans."

deny that those cities were important strategical positions; but they could not be occupied in the strength that would be necessary, except at an enormous cost of men and money. The soothing doctrine that we could occupy large territories beyond our frontier, inhabited by restless and warlike tribes, with the force which barely sufficed to hold India securely, found no acceptance with him; on the contrary, he thought that all, or nearly all, the troops so employed, would have to be added to the then existing army, and that the constitution of this new force, so far as it was Native, must be "a serious matter," as Afghans in any number would be out of the question," "Gurkhas in excess of the five regiments on the Bengal establishment were not to be had," and "Hindustanis and Sikhs would not like such service."

And for us to advance to meet Russia was to give her so much vantage ground; for we should thereby lessen the distance she would have to march her armies, whilst increasing the interval between our own troops and their true base of operations. Let the Russians, if they had the means and the desire to attack India, which he doubted, undergo the long and tiresome marches which lie between the Oxus and the Indus; let them wend their way through difficult and poor country, inhabited by a fanatical and courageous population, where, in many places, every inch could be defended; then they would come to the conflict on which the fate of India would depend, toil-worn, with an exhausted infantry, a broken-down cavalry and a defective artillery, and our troops would have the option of meeting them, wherever the genius of our commanders might dictate.

As to the fear that to allow Russia to occupy the coun-

tries adjacent to our western border was to give her the opportunity of stirring up strife and hatred against us among the mountain tribes, Sir John Lawrence pointed out, that *her* risks would be greater than *ours*, since the wider the area over which she spread her rule, the greater the danger of insurrection which she herself would run, and the greater the likelihood that the tribes would seek our aid against her. The argument in favour of an advance on our side, drawn from the internal troubles which the extension of Russia's power to our frontier might provoke in India itself, he met with the remark that, whether those troubles occurred, or not, would depend largely on the Government of the day and the contentment of the people; that, at the worst, our troops massed along the border, ready to meet the invaders, would have a greater influence on that discontent, than the same troops locked up beyond the mountains of Afghanistan; and, that should a really formidable insurrection arise in India; the proper action of its rulers would be to recall the army beyond the Passes, the fate of which, when retiring, encumbered with women, children and camp-followers, might be most melancholy.

"Taking every view, then, of this great question," wrote Sir John Lawrence in conclusion, "the progress of Russia in Central Asia, the effect it will, in course of time, have on India, the arrangements we should have to make to meet it, I am firmly of opinion that our proper course is not to advance our troops beyond our present border; not to send English officers into the different States of Central Asia; but to put our own house in order, by giving the people of India the best Government in our power; by conciliating, as

far as practicable, all classes; and by consolidating our resources. I am greatly in favour of opening up lines of communication of every kind which, on full consideration, are likely to prove useful, so far as the means will permit; but I strongly deprecate additional taxation to any important extent, and I am greatly adverse to increasing our debt on unproductive works.”¹

After an interval of only nine months, the attention of the British Government was again called to Quetta by Sir Henry Rawlinson, who, in the memorandum of which mention was made in the first chapter of this history, recommended its occupation on the ground that the erection of a strong fortress at a point which would cover the frontier, and, in the event of an invasion, delay an enemy sufficiently to enable us to mass our full forces in the rear, would be likely to have a salutary effect upon the Native mind in India, which was said to be disturbed by our continued inactivity.

The proposal was, in this case, a thoroughly honest one, hiding no ulterior aims; yet its author, as we know, was quite alive to the fact that it might be misunderstood by the Afghans, and showed his sense of the importance to us of retaining their good-will by declaring that, “if the tribes in general regarded this erection of a fortress—above the passes, although not on Afghan soil—as a menace, or as a preliminary to a further hostile advance, then we should not be justified, for so small an object, in risking the rupture of our friendly intercourse.”

It is worthy of note that neither Jacob nor Green—

¹ Ibid., pp. 37—42.

both practical soldiers of great ability—advocated the erection of fortifications at Quetta. What they desired was the presence, above the Bolan Pass, of a small and highly mobile native force. Both had served under Sir Charles Napier who, when Commander-in-Chief in India, had branded as a fool the man who should desire to preserve and utilise the numerous forts scattered over the Punjab, and the former had himself pulled down those which he found his troops occupying in Sind.

Rawlinson with whom the idea of a fortified camp originated, though a soldier by profession, spent so large a portion of his life in the political service, that he could not be expected to share Napier's and Jacob's aversion to shutting up troops behind earth-works; but even he never dreamed of any thing more than a fort sufficiently strong to enable a small body of men to protect the upper end of the Bolan Pass long enough to give the Indian Government time to mass its forces at the lower end, and it was left to more recent times to witness the erection of the huge fortress which is the Quetta of to-day.

No effect was given to Sir Henry Rawlinson's recommendations; but the fourth attempt to commit the British Government to the policy of strengthening India by advancing her frontiers, met, as we already know, with a very different reception; and Lord Lytton arrived in Calcutta as much pledged to the occupation of Quetta as to the establishment of British Officers in Herat and Kandahar.

During Lord Northbrook's Vice-royalty, Baluchistan had been in a very disturbed state owing to the quarrels of the Khan and his chiefs, and, in the end, the Indian Government

had been obliged to intervene, in order to open the Bolan route which the civil dissensions had practically closed to trade. Its agent, Major Sandeman, an officer known and honoured all along the frontier, was well received by both sides, and soon brought about an apparent reconciliation between the Khan and his rebellious subjects; but no sooner had he withdrawn than fighting began again, and he had to return, taking with him a military escort of a thousand men. The occasion was favourable to the occupation of Quetta, but Lord Northbrook's Government, faithful to Lord Lawrence's policy, forbore to take advantage of it, and Sandeman was instructed to confine his action to the opening of the Bolan to the Kafilas waiting at Jacobabad and Shikarpur, and to a fresh endeavour to establish peace between the contending parties.¹ This time his success was real; the Kafilas, following a march behind the mission, reached the entrance to the Pass unmolested, and were permitted to traverse it on payment of the customary dues—which some of the Afghan merchants were much inclined to evade—and, after the matters in dispute between the Khan and the Sirdars had been submitted to a court of arbitration, terms of agreement were accepted by both parties and ratified on oath, in open Durbar.

By this arrangement tranquillity was restored to Baluchistan, and had Lord Northbrook been still in office, the mission would, probably, have been withdrawn as soon as time had tested the permanence of its work; but that Viceroy had quitted India a few days after Sandeman had started on his

¹ Baluchistan, No. 2, pages 140, 167, 168.

second journey to Khelat,¹ and withdrawal did not enter into Lord Lytton's views; on the contrary, his mind was set upon increasing the strength of the British force in Baluchistan, and so locating it that it should not only exercise a commanding influence in that state, but also menace Afghanistan. For a few months Sandeman was left to act freely on Lord Northbrook's instructions, then, in September, the Viceroy sent his private Secretary, Colonel G. P. Colley, to inquire into his doings, and either to revise them, if they should appear to be out of harmony with the Indian Government's new frontier policy, or to confirm them by concluding with the Khan of Khelat a secret treaty, the sixth article of which provided for the permanent occupation of that prince's territory by a British military force.

Colley's secret instructions also directed him to occupy Quetta, and to examine carefully the country in which the troops forming the British Agent's escort were to be stationed, as it was desirable to have "as soon as possible the opinion of a more experienced military man than Major Sandeman on the question of their distribution and safety."²

Colley arrived at Khelat on the 18th of October, where, after a grand Durbar, he obtained the Khan's signature to the treaty, and then proceeded to show himself "a more experienced military man" than Sandeman, by breaking up the little force, which the latter officer had hitherto kept

¹ It was to stop Sandeman's Mission that Lord Lytton sent to Lord Northbrook the telegram of which mention was made in a former chapter.

² Baluchistan, No. 2, page 360.

intact, into small bodies. At Khelat, as a guard for the British Agent, he left the mountain guns and a small detachment of infantry; to Dadar, at the south-eastern entrance of the Bolan, he sent all the cavalry; and at Quetta he placed a wing of infantry;—dispositions which so isolated the various detachments that they could be of no possible assistance to each other, and interposed a long and dangerous defile between one of them and the country from which it had to draw its supplies.¹ Some weeks later these dispositions were modified, but hardly improved; for, though the strength of the Quetta garrison was brought up to a regiment of infantry, a squadron of cavalry and a mountain battery, the addition did not render it self-sufficing; nor was there much gain to its communications from the nominal establishment of a small force at Mithri, two marches from Dadar, since, during the cold weather, it was to be scattered along the foot of the hills as a check on the raiding propensities of the Marri and Bugti tribes, and, during the hot weather, was to be withdrawn to Jacobabad, leaving only a few of its number behind to hold the hill posts.

The credit, or discredit, of these arrangements did not lie

¹ In the Government of India's despatch of the 23rd of March, 1877, Quetta is described as lying "in a district abounding in supplies," and Colley probably believed that the troops stationed there would be independent of India in the matter of food and forage. Such flattering descriptions are often to be met with in geographical accounts of these regions, but the abundance spoken of must be understood in relation to the needs of the Kafilas passing through them, not in relation to the requirements of a military force permanently located in the locality in question.

with the Commander-in-Chief, who exercised no control over the troops employed in their execution, and whose signature is wanting to the despatch in which the modifications just described were approved. ¹

The occupation of Quetta, whatever its ultimate object, was, at the moment, only a move in the game which Lord Lytton was playing against Shere Ali; and it was quickly followed by other measures equally well devised to cow that prince into submission, or to drive him into open hostility.

A few pages back mention was made of the Memorandum in which Colonel Peter Lumsden advocated a British occupation of the Kuram and Khost Valleys, and of the uncompromising rejection of that proposal by Lord Lawrence. But schemes which made no impression upon the practical and

¹ In making these reckless dispositions Colley was probably led away by his overweening faith in the power of the breech-loader. In 1877 he wrote to General C. C. Ross: "the only point on which I feel I take a different view from you and most of the officers of Indian experience I meet, is as to the change produced by the breech-loader; this is, perhaps, natural. Until I came out here I had been living principally with officers fresh from the great breech-loading battles in Europe. I have many friends in both the German and the French armies, and the one thing that seemed to have impressed itself most on them was the utter impossibility of dislodging even the worst troops from any tolerable defensive position, if armed with breech-loaders and well supplied with ammunition, unless shaken previously by artillery." A few years later this mistaken confidence was to lead to a disaster to the British arms, and cost the writer of this letter his life.

just mind of the veteran Indian Statesman, had an irresistible charm for the ambitious and inexperienced Visionary who now filled his place. Lumsden, promoted to be Adjutant-General, and warmly supported by the Quarter-Master-General in India, Major-General Frederick Roberts, soon secured Lord Lytton's ear; and the dream of dominating Kabul from the summit of the Shutargardan and thence over-awing or dethroning Shere Ali, at his pleasure, took complete possession of the Viceroy's imagination. To prepare the way for its realization, he had the road between Rawal Pindi—the largest cantonment in Upper India—and Kohat—an important frontier-station commanding two roads into the Kuram Valley—repaired; the approaches to the Indus at Kushalgarh put into order, and a bridge of boats substituted for the ferry at that place; whilst to Thal, a village separated from Afghan territory by the Kuram River, he sent Cavagnari and other officers, with orders to select the site for a military camp and to obtain all possible information as to the country lying beyond that stream. He further established a bullock and mailcart service between Rawal Pindi and Kohat, and opened an alternative road suitable for the passage of guns, between the latter place and Attock on the Indus, *viâ* the Nilabgashah and Quarra jungles; he despatched a commissariat officer to form a large depôt at Kohat, and gave orders to collect at Rawal Pindi immense quantities of ammunition and ordnance stores, also a large number of transport animals; and finally, he directed the Commander-in-Chief to hold in readiness to move to Kohat, or its neighbourhood, three batteries of artillery—two of which were to be equipped

with mountain guns—two companies of sappers and miners, a regiment of British and two of Native cavalry, and two regiments of British and four of Native infantry.¹

But Lord Lytton did not stop short at measures to be taken within British territory. Determined to impress Shere Ali with the salutary truth that the British arm was long enough to reach him on his north-east as well as on his south-west frontier, he supplied the Maharajah of Kashmir, who sent a deputation to meet him at a place called Madhapur—the proposed visit to Kashmir had been abandoned—with arms of precision, and encouraged him to push forward troops into the passes leading to Chitral.²

From Madhapur, Lord Lytton proceeded to Peshawar, where he made the acquaintance of Cavagnari, Deputy Commissioner of that District, a man of rash and restless disposition and overbearing temper, consumed by the thirst for personal dis-

¹ The above items of information are taken from papers dealing with the blockade of the Afridi Tribes in 1876, which were presented to the House of Lords on the 28th February, 1881, and some of these measures were stated to have been adopted with a view to rendering that blockade more effective; but even of these it is hard to believe that they were not taken with the ulterior purpose of intimidating the Amir; whilst others can have been intended to serve no other end; notably the assembling of a large Field Force on the North-West Frontier, since in November 1876 the Viceroy prohibited the use of troops against the recalcitrant tribes, on the ground that the frontier police, if increased in numbers and armed with the Enfield rifle, should suffice to reduce them to submission, and the military operations known as the Jowaki War were not undertaken till a year later.

² The Afghan Question, page 213.

tion, and as incapable of recognizing and weighing the difficulties, physical and moral, which stood in the way of the attainment of his ends, as the Viceroy over whom he was thenceforward to exercise so pernicious an influence. From Peshawar he went on into Sind, where, on the 8th of December, he signed the treaty with the Khan of Khelat, in the presence of a large gathering of chiefs; and then continued his journey to Karachi and Bombay. The 1st of January, 1877, saw him in Delhi, the centre of the brilliant assemblage gathered together to do honour to their new Empress, an assemblage in which the Amir of Afghanistan was conspicuous by his absence.

This crowning achievement of his first cold-weather tour accomplished, the Viceroy returned to Calcutta to await the harvest of confidence and gratitude which he expected to spring up in Shere Ali's mind at the spectacle of a Government that had taken so much pains to prove to him its power "to break him as a reed," actually condescending to ask to be allowed to listen to his wishes and to relieve his anxiety of mind.

CHAPTER VI

THE PESHAWAR CONFERENCE.

ATTA Mahomed reached Kabul at the end of October, where he must at once have remitted the letter of which he was the bearer to the Amir, and have made him acquainted with the substance of the conversations he had held with the Viceroy, and the tone and temper of Lord Lytton's remarks; not till the 23rd of November, however, was he re-summoned to the palace to hear the proposed negotiations discussed by the Durbar. The debate was a long one; yet, in the end, the only decisive opinion at which the Prince and his ministers were able to arrive, was that the preliminary condition to the meeting of a conference laid down by Lord Lytton—that condition to which Shere Ali was credited with having given his "anticipatory assent"—was one to which they could not agree.

Throughout the month of December the discussions in the Durbar and the visits of the Vakil to the Amir were frequent. Atta Mahomed, urged on by the Viceroy, who had grown impatient at what he considered artful delays on the part of the Amir, and culpable supineness on the part of the Native Agent himself, putting great pressure both on Shere Ali and his advisers to compel them to yield to the demands of the Indian Government. On the 21st of December he was able at last to report that the Amir, "owing

to helplessness," had agreed to waive his objection to the residence of British officers on the border, but that he felt it incumbent on his Government to represent some important conditions (literally, difficulties,) with regard to that residence to the British Government, and such representations his Envoys, the Sadr-i-Azim,¹ Nur Mahomed Shah, and the Mir Akhor,¹ Ahmed Khan, would be empowered to make. The British Agent further informed his correspondent, the Commissioner at Peshawar, that he had heard privately that the Durbar authorities intended to propose attaching very stringent conditions to their consent to the admission of British officers into Afghanistan."

The two Envoys, accompanied by Atta Mahomed, left

¹ Prime Minister; and Master of the Horse (literally, Lord of the Stables).

² 1st. Should by any accident any injury occur to the life or property of any British officer in Afghanistan, steps should be taken (in such matters) according to the custom and law of Afghanistan, and the British Government should not put much pressure on the Afghan Government.

2nd. The Duties of all British Officers on the border should be fully defined (literally, limited); they should not secretly, or openly, interfere with the internal civil and military affairs of Afghanistan.

3rd. Should a Russian Agent come to Afghanistan, contrary to the wishes of the British Government, to make representations regarding any object, the British Government should make their own arrangements to prevent his arrival, and give no trouble as to this prevention to the Afghan Government."

4th. The language of this clause is very confused, but Sir A. Pollock interpreted it to mean that, if the British Government failed to give the Afghan Government sufficient aid in money and arms, the Afghan Government should be free to decline

Kabul on December 31st, 1876, and, travelling by short marches on account of the bad health of Nur Mahomed, arrived at Peshawar on the 27th of January, 1877. The following day Dr. Bellew visited the Sadr-i-Azim—the Mir Akhor's only part in the Conference seems to have consisted in falling asleep over its proceedings—sent by Sir Lewis Pelly to make complimentary inquiries, and to ascertain when it would suit the Afghan Envoy to begin the discussions.

Nur Mahomed received his old acquaintance in a friendly way—they had met at Kandahar in 1857, at Ambala in 1869 and in Seistan in 1872—but his mind was evidently preoccupied and for a time conversation flagged. At last, after Dr. Bellew had expressed the hope that everything in the house assigned to him was to his liking, he roused himself to reply that, so far as he himself was concerned, he was perfectly comfortable and happy, adding, after a brief pause, that his thoughts were dwelling on the business that had brought him to Peshawar; and when the Doctor replied that he hoped all would turn out well, he answered that both he and the Amir looked upon him—Bellew—as a friend, but that it was different as regarded the British Government. The Amir had come to have a deep-rooted distrust of its good faith and sincerity,—distrust for which he had many reasons. Bellew protested that the British Government was most favourably disposed towards the Amir, but the Envoy continued sceptical. The British Government's acts did not accord with its words. Why this press-

any assistance, whilst continuing, for friendship's sake, to permit the residence of the British Officers.

ing to send British Officers to Afghanistan, the reasons against which proceeding had been understood and accepted by Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, if there was no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of that country? The Afghans were a small people, no match for the great British nation; but they were self-willed and independent, prizing their honour above life; and the Amir had lost his confidence in the British Government since Lord Northbrook meddled in the matter of his son Yakub Khan, and sent presents, without his consent, to the Governor of Wakhan. These acts had thrown the entire Durbar into alarm; and both the Amir and his people objected to the coming of British Officers, knowing that their advent would mean the loss of Afghan independence. Matters had now come to a crisis, and the situation was a most grave one. This was the last opportunity for settlement, and God only knew the future.¹

Dr. Bellew remarked, in reporting this conversation, that the Envoy spoke with great earnestness and gravity.²

On the 30th of January the Representatives of the Viceroy and the Amir met for the first time, and the incompatibility of the positions taken up by the respective Envoys became immediately apparent; Sir Lewis Pelly arguing on two assumptions, one of which Nur Mahomed absolutely denied,

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 195.

² Nur Mahomed had a personal cause for gravity; he had, as he told Bellew, just narrowly escaped death in consequence of Major Grey's having written him a letter reminding him of his having acquiesced, at Simla, in the coming of British Officers to Kabul.

whilst the discussion of the other he desired to defer till a later period of the negotiations. The first of these assumptions was that there existed between the Governments of Great Britain and Afghanistan "*nahamwari*"—misapprehensions—which it was essential to remove; the second, that, by sending an Envoy to India, the Amir had definitely committed himself to the principle of British Officers on his frontiers, a point on which Sir L. Pelly declared emphatically that he had no discretionary powers. The interview closed with a request on the part of Nur Mahomed that he might be made acquainted with the *nahamwari* of which Sir Lewis had spoken, with a view to preparing himself to discuss them.

At the second meeting, which took place on February 1st, Sir Lewis Pelly, professing to believe that Nur Mahomed's inquiry about the "misapprehensions" spoken of had reference only to the particular word by which the idea to be conveyed had been rendered in Persian, offered to substitute for it another expression—*fahmi na sawab*—which more exactly corresponded with the English term; but the Kabul Envoy put aside this quibble and stuck to his point, which was to try to discover in what the misapprehension consisted, and which of the two, the Amir or the Viceroy, was supposed to be labouring under it. Sir L. Pelly, after referring to the *Aide Mémoire* given to Atta Mahomed by Lord Lytton, said that they were the Amir's apprehensions and anxieties that the Viceroy desired to remove. "What apprehensions and anxieties?" asked the Envoy. "The Amir feels none; nor has he ever given the British Government cause for uneasiness." Sir Lewis replied that

the misapprehensions were of long standing, and then went on to specify the Amir's dissatisfaction at not having obtained from Lord Mayo a dynastic guarantee, supporting his plea by quotations from several official documents. The Envoy at once asked for translations of the papers referred to, and then, "having observed that it was necessary in these discussions to proceed link by link of the chain, otherwise confusion would ensue, begged that the meeting might now terminate."¹

The translations asked for² were sent to Nur Mahomed on the morning of the 3rd, and the same day there was an unofficial interview between the two Envoys in which Nur Mahomed showed clearly that his mind was still full of the anxiety which he had revealed to Dr. Bellew.³

At the meeting of the 5th February, the British Pleni-

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1879), pp. 197—98.

² These were translations of the wishes and requests submitted by the Amir, either in person or through his Minister, or through the British Agent in 1869 and 1873, taken in connection with the Viceroy's letter to the Amir, dated 11th October, 1876, paragraph 6:—

Discussion, dated July 1873, at page 20 of volume "Affairs of Central Asia, 1872—75."

The Amir's requests made in May 1873; *vide* page 19 of above-mentioned volume.

Paragraph 8 of Note, dated 29th March, 1869.

Paragraph 3 of a letter from the Punjab Government to the Foreign Secretary, dated Umballa, 1st April, 1869.

³ At this interview Sir L. Pelly read over to Nur Mahomed the *Aide Mémoire* which Lord Lytton had given to Atta Mahomed, and promised to telegraph to Calcutta for leave to furnish him with a copy of it.

potentiary having reiterated his assertion that the Amir was not satisfied with the old treaty, and that on that account the present Viceroy had offered him a new one much more favourable to his dynasty and power, on certain conditions which he must be assumed to have accepted,—the Envoy asked whether he was to understand that all the existing agreements, from the time of Lord Lawrence down to the time of Lord Northbrook, were annulled. “I have no authority to annul any treaty, only to revise and supplement that of 1855,” was Sir Lewis Pelly’s answer. “But supposing the present Viceroy makes a treaty with us, and, after he has gone, another Viceroy wishes to revise and supplement it—what are we to do?” enquired Nur Mahomed; to which awkward question Sir Lewis could only reply that there could be no objection to revising a treaty with which the Amir had expressed himself dissatisfied.

But Nur Mahomed would not allow that the Amir had expressed dissatisfaction, nor would he consent to accept the treaty of 1855 as the only agreement existing between the Afghan and the British Governments. Such admissions would at once have opened the door to the Viceroy’s demand to be allowed to place British Officers in Afghanistan, and although Nur Mahomed did not say that the Afghan Government would never, under any circumstances, accept the “preliminary condition,” he yet claimed the right—a right which, in sending him to Simla, the Amir had expressly reserved—to state all its objections to that condition. “Let me speak all that is in my mind,” was his appeal to Sir Lewis Pelly, “and let every word I utter be written down, that, when I have concluded my argument, you may weigh it long and earnestly;

then give your decision, and when I have heard it and thought over it in my turn, you shall know mine." And the British Plenipotentiary consented to listen, and sat silent, whilst during three consecutive sittings, under great difficulties—for his illness was rapidly increasing upon him—the Afghan Envoy struggled and fought for the old friendship on the old basis, striving to force his adversary—for that was what he felt Sir Lewis Pelly to be—to understand that, in demanding the establishment of British Officers on the Afghan frontiers, Lord Lytton was asking what was subversive of that friendship, and incompatible with the full confidence which he claimed as a right from the Amir.

The trusted friend of Shere Ali, his companion at Ambala, his representative in Seistan and at Simla, Nur Mahomed knew every link of the chain which, during twenty-one years, had been slowly and carefully forged by the wisdom of British and Afghan Statesmen, to bind their respective countries each to each, and he would not let one of those links slip through his fingers, or be cut away by this new Viceroy on whom the office, but not the spirit, of his predecessors had devolved. Some passages of the papers on which Sir Lewis Pelly had relied as proving the Amir's dissatisfaction in the past and his willingness, in 1869, to accept the condition against which he now rebelled—the Kabul Envoy disputed, on the ground that they did not tally with the Afghan record of the Ambala Conference; others he admitted to be correct; but he steadily refused to allow that the Amir had returned to his country in anxiety of mind, or that his feelings at that period, or his subsequent conduct, should be judged apart from the letter, in which Lord Mayo

had embodied the conclusions at which he and his guest had finally arrived.

Nor was Nur Mahomed more accommodating in the matter of those "wishes" of the Amir which Lord Lytton insisted on fulfilling; and he had no difficulty in showing that from the time of the Ambala Conference up to the present hour, his master had pressed no political wishes on the British Government. All advances tending to a change in the mutual relations of the two States had come from the British side. It was not the Amir who, in 1873, had sought to enter upon fresh "parleys" with the Indian Government, but Lord Northbrook who had expressed a desire to communicate to the Amir the decision of the Seistan Arbitration Referee, and the result of the long negotiations between Great Britain and Russia with regard to the limits of Afghanistan; and the Amir to gratify that wish had deputed him—Nur Mahomed—to wait upon that Viceroy. Again, it was Lord Northbrook who, at the Simla Conference, had introduced the subject of Russia and had said "of his own accord" that in case of a violation of the Afghan frontier by a foreign enemy, the English would, probably, help the Afghans to repel the aggressors. He himself had told Mr. Seton-Karr that the previous pledges were sufficient, but that if the Indian Government thought differently, then it must understand that the people of Afghanistan would not be satisfied with indefinite promises of assistance; and he had spoken in the same terms to the Viceroy. After that the subject of the promises which would content the Afghan people had been discussed at length; "nothing had been left unconsidered;" and, yet, the upshot of the whole matter was that no change was

made in the relations of the two countries, for, as the Amir expressed it in his letter to Lord Northbrook, "that very arrangement and agreement at Ambala is sufficient, so long as from the side of Her Most Gracious Majesty, the great Queen of England, the foundation of friendship shall remain intact and stable. Please God Almighty, from the side of this supplicant at the Divine Throne, also the foundation of friendship will remain strong and firm as at the time of the interview at Ambala, where I met Lord Mayo, whose authority is in my hand, as also the document of Lord Lawrence, which is now in my possession."

After the vindication of Shere Ali from the charge of having so forced his wishes on the attention of the British Government that he was now bound to submit to their fulfilment, clogged with any conditions which Lord Lytton might see fit to attach to his favours—Nur Mahomed glanced at the still more dangerous assumption which had been put forward to bolster up Lord Lytton's demand for the opening of Afghanistan to Englishmen, official and unofficial—the assumption, namely, that without such mutual freedom of access there could be no friendship between the two States. By implication he had already shown that the exclusion of Englishmen from Afghanistan was the basis on which the friendship between that country and Great Britain had been founded by Dost Mahomed and Lord Lawrence, and on which it had been confirmed by Shere Ali and Lord Mayo; now he recalled and pressed home the facts that Lord Northbrook had accepted the Amir's reasons for declining to permit Colonel Valentine Baker to pass through his dominions, and that the friendship between the two Govern-

ments had not suffered from this refusal, for Lord Northbrook, in his farewell letter to Shere Ali, had written that he left it on the same footing as before, and that his successor would continue to uphold it.

There was no grievance then in the Amir's mind with respect to the matters referred to by Sir L. Pelly; yet discontent had really found place in it in connection with other questions, and if the British Plenipotentiary would permit him to mention some of the causes of this discontent, in a friendly and unofficial way, without provoking controversy by a reply, he, the Envoy, would gladly do so.

The desired permission having been accorded to him, Nur Mahomed named four acts of the British Government as having aroused distrust and displeasure in the minds of the Amir and his subjects.

1. The neglect of that Government to take any notice of a petition from the chiefs of Baluchistan to Shere Ali,¹ asking him to settle their differences, which petition the Amir had forwarded for its consideration.

2. The interference of Lord Northbrook in favour of Yakub Khan.

3. The sending of presents to the Mir of Wakhan, a feudatory of Afghanistan, without the Amir's permission having first been asked, and obtained.

4. The Seistan Award.

On the first of these four causes of discontent Nur Mahomed laid no stress; it was, at worst, but an offence against

¹ Previous to the war of 1838—42, the Amir of Kabul stood in the relation of suzerain to the Chiefs of Baluchistan.

courtesy, since Shere Ali could not have hoped that the British Government would sanction the renewal of a connection which had been severed so long:—but on the other three he based his plea for the abandonment of the fatal preliminary condition, arguing that, if there had been cause for *anxiety* (*andeshā*) in acts which, though they violated, in some degree, the British pledges to respect the sovereign rights of the Amir and the integrity of his dominions, were, yet, but trivial matters—the result of the proposal to place British officers on the Afghan frontiers must be *remorse* (*pashemani*).

Then once again he passed in review the decision arrived at with regard to this same proposal by Lord Lawrence who “was very well acquainted with the circumstances of Afghanistan, to whom its good and evil were clearly known,”—and the confirmation of that decision by Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, and ended by imploring the British Government not “to scatter away former assurances,” but to consider “the true facts of the state of affairs in Afghanistan, with justice and impartiality.”

That Government knew well that the Afghans had a dread of this proposal, and that it was firmly fixed in their minds and deeply rooted in their hearts that, if Englishmen, or other Europeans, once set foot in their country, it would, sooner or later, pass out of their hands. In no way could they be reassured on this point, and it was impossible to remove these convictions from their minds, for they adduced many proofs in support of them. But the convictions of the people of Afghanistan being such, the protection of Englishmen in the midst of the hill tribes was difficult—nay,

impossible. And, besides this danger from the fierce independence of the Afghan people, the Amir had enemies who, to mar the friendship of the two governments, would secretly kill some sahib. Had not such men murdered the Commander-in-Chief of the Amir's army in the very midst of twenty thousand of his troops? Now, the Amir would have to protect the sahibs with his army; but if that army had not availed him to protect the life of his own Commander-in-Chief, in what manner could he protect the life of any other person?

Again, if, at any time, a disturbance or revolution should occur in Afghanistan, the sahibs would be certainly destroyed. But if, from one cause or other, they should be killed, what would be the consequences? Eternal reproach and bitterness against Afghanistan, and the changing of the friendship with the English Government into enmity.

Three years before, an English officer had been murdered between the frontiers of the two States,¹ and the efforts of the Amir to obtain satisfaction for the British Government for this outrage—efforts which had earned the approval of Lord Northbrook—had resulted in nothing but the loss of many lives, the defection of Nauroz Khan² and the closing of the Khyber road, owing to the resentment of the people. And what would be the consequence should such an occurrence happen on those far-distant frontiers, the inhabitants of which comprised people of all sorts of tribes?

¹ Major Macdonald.

² Governor of Lallpura, and a connection by marriage of the Amir.

In the proposal to place British Officers on those frontiers, besides the immediate loss of reputation and injury to Afghanistan, there lay the seed of bitterness of feeling and a certainty of the alienation of the two Governments, either then, or later. Under the present arrangement nothing had occurred contrary to friendship, and so long as the Amir held to it, confirmed, as it was, by writings and documents of the British Government, no blame could attach to him; but if he suffered himself to be persuaded to depart from it, and to undertake what he could not perform, not only would he be put to shame in the eyes of all nations, but he would incur the reproaches of the very Government that imposed upon him an impossible task, and bring trouble upon his kingdom.

Sir Lewis Pelly had said, on the first day of the Conference, that he desired to remove any anxieties that might be in the mind of the Amir—now let him say whether, in demanding the admission of British Officers to Afghanistan, he was proposing what would remove an old anxiety, or raise a fresh one, not only in the mind of the Amir, but in the minds of all his people?

The Afghan Envoy closed his long and weighty address with the following words:—

“Therefore I now expect from the great, civilized English Government that they will well weigh the several arguments I have adduced in conversations and discussions, and the quotations I have made from papers and documents, as well as what I have said on the head of the customary usage and the impracticability of this proposal, owing to the views of the people of Afghanistan and the actual condition of

their country, in order that they may arrive at a just and correct opinion as to who has the right on his side and what is best. And I beg that the English Government will not raise a question which will abrogate the former treaties and agreements and the past usage, in order that the friendship should continue strong on the same footing as hitherto."

It is easy to see why Nur Mahomed had asked to be allowed to state his case without interruption. He felt that much might depend on its clear and accurate statement, and he could not trust himself to preserve a calm and courteous tone if once discussion were admitted, and altercation followed on discussion. There was a hot fire of resentment burning in the breast of the sick man—resentment of the cruel pressure that was being put upon the Amir, and, in his heart, a fierce disgust of the quibbles, to which the Viceroy had not been ashamed to resort in order to escape from the obligations bequeathed to him by his predecessors; and, under contradiction, that resentment and disgust might have blazed forth in indignant words. Had he not once already been betrayed into an expression of despairing impatience, when, after he had carefully explained why Shere Ali had *not* left Ambala with a mind ill-at-ease, Sir Lewis Pelly had remarked that the Amir's anxiety was probably due to the fact that the British Government had not deemed it necessary to formulate all the Amir's wishes in a treaty?—"I hope our friendship will always remain strong and lasting on both sides," Nur Mahomed burst out, "in accordance with the old agreements"—those old agreements of which he never for a moment lost sight, to which he clung with

pathetic confidence in their efficacy to keep his prince and country from all harm;—"but if such very serious discussions are to arise in the path of friendship at any time, upon doubtful expressions, it gives room for much regret and despair."

The despair thus hastily alluded to must have taken complete possession of Nur Mahomed's soul as he listened, three days after the conclusion of his statement, to the British Plenipotentiary's rejoinder,¹ for its very first words must have convinced him that all he had urged had been spoken in vain. Lord Lytton had laid it down as an undeniable fact, that Shere Ali had left Ambala a dissatisfied and anxious man, and it was quite useless therefore, so far as Sir Lewis Pelly was concerned, to prove that he had done nothing of the sort, and that the anxiety which had subsequently grown up in his mind, was due to causes other than those to which it suited Lord Lytton's purpose to ascribe it. Not content with reiterating assertions which had just been refuted, the British Plenipotentiary proceeded to draw from the grievances which Nur Mahomed had named as really troubling the Amir, all of which it must be borne in mind appeared to Shere Ali in the light of infractions of his own, or his country's, independence,—the conclusion that, if the crowning violation of that independence, against which he had sent his Envoy to protest, had been consummated years before,—had an intelligent British Officer been at the Amir's elbow from Ambala days to the present time—no such grievances would ever have arisen; a conclusion which seems to rest

¹ February 15th, 1877.

upon the assumption that the larger grievance would have swallowed up all minor ones.

“The Viceroy,” Sir Lewis Pelly went on to say, “having given every practicable consideration to the circumstances of the past relations between the two Governments, and having carefully studied the position of the Amir in relation to the existing political situation in Central Asia,—a situation which shows that the integrity and independence of Afghanistan and the consolidation of the Amir’s rule may ere long be imperilled,—deems it equitable, and for the common interest of both Governments, that he should inform the Amir of his willingness to accord him (the Amir) open and active support against the danger of interference from without.

“The Viceroy further desires that this concession should be unaccompanied by any demands on his part whatsoever, or by any conditions other than such as are reasonable in themselves, or plainly necessary to enable him to fulfil the obligations which he would undertake in ratifying a Treaty of the contemplated character. That among these conditions is one which is so obviously essential to the proposed undertaking that it would be futile to open negotiations except this condition should be agreed upon as a preliminary, viz. : the admission, on the part of the Amir, of the principle that the British Government shall be allowed to station British Agents on the frontiers, which this Government undertakes to aid in defending; for it is manifest that the Viceroy could not pretend to protect those frontiers, except he should be enabled to collect, through his responsible Agents, timely intelligence of what might be passing on, or beyond them, and so prepare himself for meeting contingencies,

and for explaining to her Majesty's Government, from independent, unprejudiced and official sources, the facts of any alleged aggression, and the necessity which existed for repelling the same."

The statements contained in this passage are simply monstrous. To call a treaty for which Shere Ali had certainly never asked Lord Lytton, and which was being forced on his acceptance, a *concession*, was a cruel insult; and what can be said of the distinction drawn between *demands* and *conditions*, when every one of the *conditions* contained in the *Aide Mémoire* given to Atta Mahomed, was, both in form and substance, a *demand*; or of the assumption that every such condition was *reasonable* and *necessary*, one supremely so—the condition which Nur Mahomed had solemnly declared must prove fatal to the independence of Afghanistan and to the friendship with the British Government?

But worse was to follow, viz., the repudiation of every agreement between the two Governments, except the Treaty of 1855, by which, as Sir L. Pelly was careful to remind his hearer, the Viceroy was not bound to aid the Amir against his enemies, either foreign or domestic; whilst, if its first article provided for perpetual friendship between the two Governments, such friendship between States implied *good neighbourhood*, and good neighbourhood, in Lord Lytton's eyes meant, as we already know, not only the reception of British Officers in the Afghan frontier towns, but the opening up of Afghanistan to all British subjects.

If the Amir rejected all the Indian Government offered and asked, and no basis of negotiation were left, the Viceroy, while observing the terms of the Treaty of 1855, would

decline to support the Amir in any troubles, internal or external, and their unknown consequences, and would continue to strengthen the frontier of British India without further reference to the Amir. But, if once the "preliminary" principle were accepted, Sir Lewis Pelly would be happy to discuss, in the most friendly and fair manner, the details of a formal agreement under which the British Government would bind itself, not only to a defensive and offensive alliance, but to the public recognition of the Amir's heir and to affording his Highness support against factious disturbance within his dominions.

The bribe was a high one, and Nur Mahomed could not know, though he might suspect, that these pledges were to be so worded as to leave the British Government practically free as regarded the fulfilment of them; nevertheless he took no notice of the Viceroy's offers, but merely remarked when the Plenipotentiary ceased speaking, that he did not understand what was meant by "strengthening the British frontier without further reference to the Amir;" and when Sir L. Pelly had replied that it meant that "the Viceroy would take such measures as he might deem wise and lawful for strengthening the frontier of British India and providing for the safety and repose of that Empire, and this without communication with the Amir," he asked again, "Does this mean within the territories of the Amir of Afghanistan, or otherwise?"

"I have already stated," Sir Lewis Pelly replied, "that the object of the present Conference is not to interfere with Afghanistan. I have also stated that the Viceroy will observe the terms of the Treaty of 1855, even if the proposed negotiations do not have place. I now repeat that the Viceroy

has no intention of interfering with the jurisdiction of the Amir in any territory where we have recognized that jurisdiction."

It is difficult to conceive the bitterness of soul in which the dying Prime Minister of Afghanistan must have quitted the Conference Chamber that day; for he saw all that was implied in this limitation of the British Government's engagements with Afghanistan to those contained in the Treaty of 1855, coupled with the Viceroy's statement that he had no intention of interfering with the jurisdiction of the Amir *in any territory where we had recognized that jurisdiction*, knowing, as he did, that when that treaty was signed, *neither Herat, nor Kandahar formed part of the territory over which Dost Mahomed's jurisdiction extended.*

On the 19th of February the two Envoys met for the last time. Neither can have suspected that this was to be their final interview, though Nur Mahomed probably felt that, for him, the end not only of the Conference, but of life itself was not far off, and, in that conviction, found strength to plead once more his country's and his sovereign's cause. He had promised to give an answer to the British Agent's condition that day, but, for the moment, he put it aside, and addressed himself to the task of proving that the Treaty of 1855 was not the only engagement binding Great Britain to Afghanistan. It was not by this treaty, of which he had made no mention, that Nur Mahomed stood, but by the Treaty of 1857, with its seventh clause excluding British Officers from Afghanistan, a clause which had never been abrogated, though the rest of the Treaty had lapsed; by Lord Mayo's promise to respect the independence

and integrity of Afghanistan—the Afghanistan in which both Kandahar and Herat were included ; and by Lord Northbrook's communications to Shere Ali as to the agreement come to between England and Russia with regard to the boundaries of the Afghan Kingdom.

He did not, in so many words, accuse Lord Lytton of plotting to rob the Amir of any portion of his territories ; but in arguing that his Sovereign had no reason to fear a Russian violation of the frontiers determined for him by the good offices of the British Government, he showed Sir Lewis Pelly that he had seen through his equivocal answers and was strong to meet them, so far as justice and the facts of the case can strengthen a weak State against a powerful one.—The limits which England has imposed upon Russia, shall she not respect them herself? Lord Northbrook's assurances that the Amir need fear no aggression or interference in the territories specified in Lord Granville's letter of the 17th October, 1872, have they no application to the Government in whose name they were written? Have we been preserved from the jaws of the Russian Bear only that the British Lion may devour us at his leisure?—All these bitter questions tingle and burn through the calm, dry arguments by which Nur Mahomed maintained his former contention that Shere Ali could not be tormented by anxiety, either before, or after, the Simla Conference, because he had confidence in British good will and British power, and because Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook had assured him that he had no grounds for fear ; and there can be no doubt that Sir L. Pelly understood the Afghan Envoy's line of defence as fully as the latter understood the former's line of attack.

“The authorities of the Government of Afghanistan have the most perfect confidence that there can be no deviation from the tenor of these writings, which have been briefly mentioned, in respect to the peace and tranquillity and lasting friendship of the States, in accordance with the reply of his Highness, the Amir, to the letter of Lord Northbrook of the 6th September, 1873. If there should be a want of confidence in the substance of these successive writings approved by Governments, or the probability of a causeless want of confidence in them becoming a reason for displeasure to the Governments, what propriety is there in this? It is far from the welfare of States, if there should be the possibility of objection to the promises made by such religious Governments and such Ministers and Viceroys. If the authorities of the Government of Afghanistan were, without cause, to think there was the probability of objection to the treaties and agreements they have in their hands, it would undoubtedly be contrary to confidence and amity and friendship.” With these lofty words the Envoy dismissed the question of the true limits of Afghanistan, and turned once more to the task of trying to make Sir L. Pelly understand why the preliminary demand, or condition, as he preferred to call it, was *not* reasonable, nor obviously essential. He put aside Sir L. Pelly’s assertion that misapprehensions had arisen owing to want of knowledge on the part of the Amir. The things which had displeased his master, had been done *with* knowledge, not *without* knowledge, and they had been adduced by him—Nur Mahomed—to show that in every case the real cause of offence had been an infraction of the Amir’s rights, or an inattention to the formalities of friendship.

He—the Envoy—did not entertain the idea of external danger to his country; but the dangers that must arise from British Officers on the frontier were apparent and admitted of no doubt. He had nothing to say about a new treaty—that could wait: the matter in hand was to prove the binding force of previous agreements, from the Treaty of 1857 down to the last letter written by Lord Northbrook before his departure from India; for all these were connected together; they were not separate, but one; and what one and all established or confirmed, was the right of the Amir to exclude Europeans from his dominions, a right which the Government of Afghanistan could never consent to surrender.

The Envoy repudiated the responsibility for the maintenance of the cordial and intimate relations of the two States which the Viceroy had sought to fix upon the Amir. It was not Shere Ali, but Lord Lytton, whose acts were opposed to the spirit which had animated the discussions at Ambala. His Excellency had asked the Amir to afford him the “means” of showing his favour towards him—he, Nur Mahomed, begged to say that no better “means” existed than those of the past.

The Amir had been warned not to reject his own advantage:—did men ever reject their own advantage? The cordial desire of the Viceroy for Shere Ali’s advantage had shown itself in such new and hard conditions that the Amir had no choice but to reject them. Sir L. Pelly had stated that, unless the Amir agreed to the essential preliminary condition, the British Government could not take upon itself any responsibility for the defence of his frontiers, and had further said that it had no wish to embarrass the Amir in

the matter of the carrying out of this proposal. Now, he begged to say, that the Amir was glad to be relieved from this embarrassment. Being freed from it, he had no other weighty matter to lay before the English Government, on which he did *not* put the responsibility of repelling the attacks of an external enemy, nor of protecting his frontier.

It was for the Viceroy to consider "all the treaties and agreements and writings," to which reference had been made; "all the assurances of the Indian Government," which had been brought forward that day; all the difficulties, inherent in the condition of Afghanistan itself, which stood in the way of the realization of his desire to place his own Officers on the Afghan frontier. He—the Kabul Envoy—could only earnestly hope that, through the good offices of Sir L. Pelly, Lord Lytton would be brought to act "with great frankness and sincerity of purpose," in conformity with the course of past Viceroys, and that, "by means of his own good acts, the relations of friendship and unity might be increased."

As for there being no basis for negotiation left—there would still be the basis laid for the present Government of India by the wise arrangements of its predecessors, arrangements which had been approved by the Queen herself. Friendship had been maintained on that basis for a very long time, and the Afghan Government was certain that the British Government "of its own perfect honesty would continue constant and stable to that firm basis."

When the Kabul Envoy ceased speaking, the angry disappointment of the English Plenipotentiary found vent in

harsh and sneering words.¹ So, the Envoy had declined the *sine quâ non* preliminary! That was the point before them, and he, Sir Lewis, declined to go off into controversy. But since the Envoy had stated that the Amir had always adhered to the terms of the old treaty, he would ask him whether he considered the refusal to receive temporary and special missions; the rejection of British agents; the absolute and permanent closing of Afghanistan against British subjects and their trade; and the denial to an English traveller of a passage towards British India—were acts of friendship and good neighbourhood, or consonant with the spirit of the first article of the Treaty still subsisting? The Envoy might be satisfied now with the assurances received from General Kaufmann, but he could not have forgotten the representations which the Amir had made to the Government of India as to his fear of Russian aggressions. All these matters, however, were for the judgment of the Afghan Government—England had no reason to dread Russia. The preliminary condition having been rejected, he—Sir Lewis—had no authority to open negotiations; he would, however, refer what the Envoy had said to the Viceroy, though he felt bound to say that there was no probability of the British Government's consenting to treat on any other terms, and he feared that the Amir had missed an opportunity, which might never recur, of greatly strengthening his power.

At the conclusion of Sir L. Pelly's remarks, the Kabul Envoy requested that all that he himself had said that day

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pp. 211—212.

might be submitted to the Viceroy, on receipt of whose reply, he would state what he thought expedient, or inexpedient, in his Excellency's decision, and then either give a definite answer, or refer to the Amir for further instructions.

And so the sitting ended, and Nur Mahomed quitted the conference chamber, carrying with him the intimate conviction that he had pleaded and argued in vain. The man who could accuse the Amir of infringing the Treaty of 1855 by acts which the whole course of the subsequent relations between Great Britain and Afghanistan had sanctioned, and who could not see that the injury to the friendship established by that treaty, lay with the state that was endeavouring to give to the term meanings which Lord Lawrence never dreamed of attaching to it—was a man impervious to reasons and proofs, because blind to honesty and justice.

The sneering taunt cast at Nur Mahomed's political appreciation of events in Central Asia, as shown by his credulous confidence in Kaufmann's letters; the ignoring of the facts he had cited to prove that that confidence rested not so much on the Russian General's promises as on Lord Mayo's confirmation of them—a confirmation which Lord Northbrook, in his turn, confirmed, going so far as to discourage the Amir from spending his resources on unnecessary military preparations; the contemptuous dismissal of the whole subject as one concerning Afghanistan alone; the boast that England had no reason to fear Russia—one and all these things must have served to clear the Envoy's mind of any hope still lingering in it, that the justice of the cause he had so worthily advocated would yet prevail.

During all those many weeks of waiting for the Viceroy's

reply, the dying Afghan Minister's soul must have been dark and heavy within him, and his thoughts full of bitterness; for he knew that he had spoken no idle words when he told Sir Lewis Pelly that the fruit of the *acceptance* of British officers would be "repentance," and he could not conceal from himself that the fruit of their *rejection* might be to Afghanistan, the loss, with or without war, of any portion of her territory not guaranteed to her by the Treaty of 1855, on which Lord Lytton and his military advisers might cast covetous eyes, and he must have relinquished all hope of shaking the Viceroy's determination to force that fatal choice upon the Amir. One thing only it was still in his power to do—namely, to clear his master from the aspersion cast upon him by Sir Lewis Pelly of having been false to the only treaty which Lord Lytton chose to acknowledge, and to this duty he consecrated the moments in which increasing pain and weakness would allow him still to work.

Once during that interval of suspense, a ray of light pierced the darkness enshrouding him; this was when Sir Lewis Pelly communicated the "agreeable telegram," in which Lord Lytton had authorized him to express to the Envoy his thanks for the care he had taken to explain fully the Amir's views and feelings; but the arrival of the Viceroy's written instructions to his representative quenched that feeble flame.

CHAPTER VII

THE VICEROY'S LETTER

THE last meeting between the British and Afghan plenipotentiaries had taken place on the 19th of February, and, on the 15th of March, Sir Lewis Pelly addressed to Nur Mahomed a letter in which he set forth the final instructions of the Viceroy, which letter,¹ for convenience' sake, will be treated here as written by Lord Lytton himself, whose actual words it reproduced.

The Viceroy had had laid before him Nur Mahomed's statement of the Afghan case, taken down, word by word, as it had been spoken, and he now began his refutation of that statement by dividing it into two parts; the one referring to the past, the other to the present. The first, which included all the Kabul Envoy's arguments bearing on the former relations of Great Britain and Afghanistan, all his proofs that a good understanding had existed between their respective governments on the basis which the Amir was now asked to abandon—he thrust contemptuously aside; only pausing before passing on to matters more worthy of attention, to express his conviction that the resentment which the Amir had long, apparently, been harbouring in his mind, would never have gained an entrance there, had

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pp. 214—220.

he admitted to "unrestricted intercourse" with himself "an intelligent British officer," and his regret that the "rude and stationary condition" in which Afghanistan had remained during Shere Ali's administration, should still prevent that prince from receiving a British Envoy at his court.

"The real drift and purport" of the second portion of the Envoy's statement, Lord Lytton confessed himself almost unable to understand. So far as he did apprehend it, it seemed to amount to this—that the Amir, though dissatisfied with the result of his relations with the British Government up to the present day, was equally dissatisfied with all the proposals made for their improvement; whilst, at the same time, he had no counter-proposals of his own to offer.

Of the three propositions contained in the foregoing paragraph, the first is untrue in itself, or, at least, untrue as a representation of what Nur Mahomed had asserted; the second was incapable of proof, as the benevolent intentions of the British Government had never been discussed between the two plenipotentiaries; and the third cannot be looked upon as a matter of reproach, since it is hardly a political offence to have no counter-proposals to make when one is content with things as they are, or sees that one can only change them for the better in one respect, at the cost of making them very much worse in another.

Having thus given proof of his own intelligence and fair-mindedness, the Viceroy went on to take Nur Mahomed to task for having wasted time in combating demands that had never been preferred by the British Government, and that he was not justified in attributing to it, to the entire neglect of the proposal which alone he was at liberty to

discuss. He had been at infinite pains to explain why a British Envoy could not be received at Kabul—a step to which the Amir's assent had not been asked—and he had taken no notice of the request to admit British officers to other parts of Afghanistan. Let him now state distinctly and promptly what were his instructions in this matter. For a plain answer to this plain question, no reference to Kabul was necessary.

Accustomed as one has become by this time to Lord Lytton's habit of inventing, or misstating, the facts from which he desired to argue, it is impossible to read without a shock of surprise the accusation brought by him against Nur Mahomed, of combating demands which had never been preferred, and neglecting the proposal which alone he was authorized to discuss, knowing, as one does, that the Afghan Envoy's statement contained no allusion to a British Mission at Kabul, and that "the whole drift and purport" of his historical argument went to prove that it would be impossible for the Amir to protect the lives of British officers on "far distant frontiers," in the midst of wild hill tribes. Possibly Lord Lytton would have written the truth had he seen it; but his mind was so preoccupied by his own views and aims that he could not grasp those of other people; and he constantly read into their words what it suited his purposes to find there. This preoccupation, or criminal inattention, in studying the documents on which he had to pass judgment, are the only explanations which can save him from the imputation of having knowingly resorted to falsehood on this and many other occasions, when driven into a corner by the unanswerable logic of an opponent.

Having attacked Nur Mahomed's statements, Lord Lytton thought it prudent to place his own above comment, or refutation.—The Kabul Envoy had expressed a desire to discuss the expediency, or in expediency of his—the Viceroy's—conclusions, but such superfluous criticism could not be permitted. The Amir had taken ample time to consider the preliminary proposal submitted to him through Atta Mahomed; he had been informed that its acceptance was essential to the commencement of negotiations, and by sending an Envoy to Peshawar he had signified his agreement with it—therefore Nur Mahomed's conduct in discussing it at all was a breach of the understanding on which the Viceroy had consented to receive him. In his—Lord Lytton's—opinion, the offer to station British Officers on the Afghan frontier was “a great concession” made by the British Government to the Amir; and unless the latter “specially invited” and “cordially welcomed” their presence and “solemnly guaranteed their personal safety and comfort,” the former would certainly not allow its officers to reside in his dominions. It had no desire to pin his Highness “pedantically” to an understanding from which he now wished to withdraw. If, therefore, the Amir objected to placing his relations with Great Britain on a new and better footing, the two Governments would revert to their former relative positions; but it was imperative that the Envoy should be made to understand what those positions really were, as he seemed completely to misapprehend them, imagining, apparently, that the British Government was already bound to support and defend his sovereign against any foreign, or domestic enemy, and that, consequently, the Amir “had nothing to gain by a new treaty of Alliance which, so far

as the British Government was concerned, would be a mere re-statement of the obligations it had already contracted on his behalf, whilst, so far as his Highness was concerned, it would impose upon him obligations altogether new."

It is impossible not to help admiring the transformations which "the essential preliminary" underwent during these negotiations. Originally, in the eyes of Shere Ali and his people, the most hateful of *démands*, it appeared in the *Aide-Mémoire* given to Atta Mahomed under the friendly form of a *condition* attached to the most desirable of concessions; now, in Lord Lytton's latest Instructions, it has turned into a *concession* itself, a boon so great that the British Government half hesitates to bestow it. But, perhaps, the Viceroy, who certainly had had cause to wince under Nur Mahomed's grave irony, was trying to make use of the same weapon; and the "concession" was no more to be taken seriously by the Envoy, than Lord Lytton had been expected to take seriously Nur Mahomed's assurance of perfect confidence in his readiness "to acknowledge, in their exactitude, all the conditions and agreements" that his predecessors had made with the Afghan Government.

Leaving this point unsettled, we have to consider whether Lord Lytton was justified in rebuking Nur Mahomed for his persistent attempts to induce the British Government to abstain from forcing its "concession" on the Amir. The light in which the proposal to place British Officers in Afghanistan had all along been regarded by Shere Ali and his Durbar, was well known. They had made no secret of their objections to it to Atta Mahomed, and he had truthfully reported their arguments and described their excitement

and alarm. If, in the end, overborne by the pressure put upon him directly by the Vakil, and indirectly by military measures which menaced the independence and integrity of Afghanistan on every side, the Amir had consented to send an Envoy to Peshawar on the basis laid down by the Viceroy, the latter had been warned that he did so under compulsion—"from helplessness"—and that he still claimed the right to make representations as to the difficulties which beset the execution of the preliminary condition. Thus, though technically and "pedantically," the Amir may be said to have agreed to the principle of British Agents on his frontiers, it is impossible to deny that he was entitled to explain his reason for objecting to it. This was all Nur Mahomed had done; and, considering the arguments he employed and the facts reported by the Vakil, it was unfair to speak of the Amir as having "completely changed his mind" since entering upon negotiations.

Nor does a careful study of the records of the Peshawar Conference support the Viceroy's summary of Nur Mahomed's arguments with regard to the relative positions of the English and Afghan Governments. Here again Lord Lytton seems to have missed "the drift and purport" of the Kabul Envoy's contention which was—*not* that the former Government was bound by existing engagements to defend the Amir against external and internal foes, but that the observance of the engagements into which it had entered with that prince *had actually*, during many years, secured Afghanistan against external aggression and internal disturbance, and would, if faithfully adhered to, continue to do this; whilst, if Russia should ever attack his borders, the Amir

reckoned upon the instinct of self-interest to bring India to his aid. If the Envoy had quoted Lord Northbrook and had referred to the different points that had been discussed between that Viceroy and himself at Simla, it was not to press any claims upon his successor, nor to imply that unconditional assurances of assistance had in 1873 been made through him—Nur Mahomed—to Shere Ali, but simply to support his contention that, after all subjects of interest to the two Governments had been fully considered, the old agreements had proved sufficient for the maintenance of friendly relations advantageous to both.

Those old relations were, however, so little satisfactory to the British Government in 1877, that, in order to replace them by others of a more intimate nature, Lord Lytton felt called upon to begin by sweeping away the foundation on which the Afghan Envoy had presumptuously supposed them to rest. The Treaty of 1857 contained only one article—the seventh—which was not transitory in its character; and of that the Viceroy could only say that it was quite superfluous, as it was “obvious that no Treaty stipulation was required to oblige the British Government not to appoint a resident British Agent at Kabul without the consent of the Amir, for it was not practically in the power of one State to accredit a representative to the Court or Government of another, without the consent of that Court or Government, nor could such an absurd idea ever occur to the Government of any civilized Power.” Neither could that clause bind the Amir never, under any circumstances, or at any future time, to assent to the appointment of a resident British Officer at Kabul, for such a stipulation would have

been clearly "inconsistent with the freedom and dignity of the two contracting powers." The seventh article, therefore, contained nothing to preclude the British Government from pointing out, at any time, to the Amir the advantage, or propriety of receiving a British Officer as its permanent representative at Kabul, nor from "urging such an arrangement upon the consideration and adoption of his Highness in any fair and friendly manner." But as the British Government had "not proposed" and did "not intend to propose that arrangement, the Envoy's remarks on the Treaty of 1857 were not to the point and need not be further noticed."

Nur Mahomed must have experienced a shock of pleasant surprise on learning, at one and the same time, from so good an authority as Lord Lytton that no civilized State would, or could, accredit a representative to the Court of another without that Court's consent, and that this impossibility had never entered into the intentions of the British Government; but the pleasure must have been short-lived, for he would immediately remember that among the conditions enumerated in the *Aide Mémoire*, of which he had wisely obtained a copy, there was one that ran thus:—

"(8) The Viceroy will forego the establishment of a permanent Envoy at Kabul on condition:—

(1) That the Amir depute an Envoy to Head Quarters.

(2) That he receive special Missions whenever required."

A man can hardly *forego* what he has never claimed; and therefore Nur Mahomed, on comparing these mutually destructive passages, must have been driven to one of two conclusions:—either that Lord Lytton was afflicted with a memory so bad as to unfit him for the conduct of State

affairs, or else that it was he, not the Amir, who had "completely changed his mind," since entering upon negotiations.

Having disposed of the Treaty of 1857, Lord Lytton went on to repudiate all obligations arising out of the verbal, or written assurances of Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, and in acquitting himself of this honourable task, he hurled a series of bitter charges against the Amir. Shere Ali had never fulfilled "the excellent intentions," on the strength of which Lord Mayo had promised "to view with severe displeasure" any attempt to disturb his throne; and he had "relaxed" by his "subsequent conduct" the "bonds of friendship" which that Viceroy had established between him and the British Government; also he had shown no wish to deserve the friendship which had been so unreservedly offered him at Ambala. (Can this be the same Amir of whom Lord Mayo wrote "he has evinced the most fervent desire to comply with the wishes of the British Government"?) "He had refused to permit a British Envoy to pass through his dominion." (A proceeding justified by Lord Northbrook.) "He had allowed the murderer of Colonel Macdonald to remain at large, instead of cordially and efficiently co-operating to avenge the crime." ("The Amir without any pressure agreed to every thing which the British Government considered it right to demand as a satisfaction for that incident"—*i.e.* the murder in question—wrote Lord Northbrook in 1878.) "He was mainly answerable for the closing during the last two years of the Khyber Pass." (That closing was the consequence of the Amir's efforts to do the very thing he had just been accused of not doing, *viz.*, to bring the murderer of Major—not Colonel—Macdonald to justice.)

So far, the charges referred to matters with which the reader is acquainted: those that followed were altogether new. Lord Lytton accused Shere Ali of having openly received and subsidised the heads of frontier tribes who were in the pay and under the control of the British Government; of having, for some time past, been speaking and acting in such a way as to indicate hostile designs on territories beyond his own, and in the neighbourhood of British territory; and of having ever since the commencement of the negotiations still proceeding, openly and actively endeavoured to excite against the British Government the religious animosities of his own subjects and of the neighbouring tribes by misrepresenting the policy and maligning the character of that Government.

It will be convenient to leave these grave charges undiscussed until the remaining paragraphs of Lord Lytton's Letter of Instructions have been passed in review. In these a distinction was drawn, of which more will be heard hereafter, between the people of Afghanistan and the Amir. With the former the British Government had "no sort or kind of quarrel; it sincerely desired their permanent independence, prosperity and peace;" and they might rest assured that so long as they were not excited by their Ruler to acts of aggression upon the territories, or friends, of that government, no British soldier would ever be permitted to enter Afghanistan uninvited; as regarded the latter, it repudiated all liability, though it did not withdraw from any obligations it had previously contracted towards him, and would scrupulously continue to respect his independence and authority throughout those territories which, up to

the present moment, it had recognised as being in his lawful possession, and would duly abstain from interference in them, so long as he no less scrupulously abstained from every kind of interference with tribes, or territories not his own.

Certain, apparently, that by this time he must have triumphed over the Envoy's prepossessions in favour of the Afghan version of the facts in dispute—Lord Lytton, in conclusion, appealed to Nur Mahomed to acknowledge that he had offered the Amir altogether new and very substantial advantages, and to believe that it was with all sincerity that he had authorized the Native Agent at Kabul to tell that prince that, if he really desired to secure and reciprocate the friendship of the British Government, it should be his without reserve, and he should find in it a firm and faithful ally.

These assurances were flattering enough, and there was this much truth in them that, within the limits imposed by a long list of conditions and concessions, Lord Lytton was, at this time, prepared to treat Shere Ali with a certain amount of liberality; but he had still two things to learn—the first, that broken pledges are a bad foundation for new agreements; the second, that the limits which seemed to him so rational and beneficial to both sides, were such as no Amir of Afghanistan, being a free man and not a mere British puppet like Shah Shuja, could ever accept, except at the point of the sword, and, even then, only with the secret resolve to break through them at the earliest opportunity.

To return now to the new charges which Lord Lytton's

letter brought against Shere Ali.—In the despatch in which the Viceroy subsequently explained and defended his whole conduct towards Afghanistan,¹ these accusations were repeated in a more definite form. “Intelligence had reached the Indian Government,” during the weeks occupied by the Kabul Envoy’s statement, “that the Amir was straining every effort to increase his military force; that he was massing troops on various points of his British frontier; that he was publicly exhorting all his subjects and neighbours to make immediate preparations for a religious war, apparently directed against his English, rather than his Russian neighbours; both of whom he denounced, however, as the traditional enemies of Islam; that, on behalf of this *jihad*, he was urgently soliciting the authoritative support of the Akhund of Swat, and the armed co-operation of the Chiefs of Dir, Bajaur, and other neighbouring Khanates; that, in violation of his engagements with the British Government, he was, by means of bribes, promises and menaces, endeavouring to bring those chiefs and territories under personal allegiance to himself; that he was tampering with the tribes immediately on our frontier, and inciting them to acts of hostility against us; and that, for the prosecution of these objects, he was in correspondence with Mahomedan Border Chiefs openly subsidised by ourselves.”

The despatch then went on to say that Sir Lewis Pelly had brought this intelligence to the knowledge of Nur

¹ Despatch No. 13 of 1877, dated May 10th, 1877, addressed to the Marquis of Salisbury.—See Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pp. 160—172.

Mahomed, who had replied, "that the reports which had reached us of the Amir's utterances and proceedings were, he trusted, much exaggerated; he feared, however, that, since his absence from the Kabul Durbar, his Highness had fallen under mischievous influences which he himself deplored and condemned; he would lose no time in addressing to the Amir strong remonstrances on this subject."

Turning to the substantiatory documents accompanying the despatch, we find the letter in which Sir Lewis Pelly "brought the intelligence of Shere Ali's words and acts to Nur Mahomed's knowledge;" also an extract from a letter of the British Plenipotentiary's to the Viceroy. In the letter Sir Lewis Pelly accused the Afghan Envoy of neglecting to furnish his Master "with full and faithful reports of the attitude of the British Government," and the Amir of intriguing with the Russians and of exciting the people of Afghanistan against the British Government by spreading amongst them wilful and injurious misrepresentations of the objects of the proposed friendly negotiations; he further charged the officials and people of Kabul with unfriendly conduct towards the British Agency in that city; and he ended by demanding that the misrepresentations of which he had complained should be as publicly retracted as they had been publicly made. The extract ran as follows:—

"I have addressed the Envoy as desired in your Lordship's telegram of the 25th inst., (February 1877) and now beg to enclose a copy of my draft. The Envoy has, at once, sent a verbal reply by Atta Mahomed Khan to the effect that he will lose no time in causing the *Jehad*—holy

war—to be put a stop to, and will send me a satisfactory written reply as soon as he is able to work.”¹

Whatever the explanation of the discrepancies which mark the two versions of the message here attributed to Nur Mahomed, it is equally difficult to accept it in either. From the beginning of the Conference to the end, the Afghan Envoy never allowed himself to slip into the smallest admission derogatory to the dignity and honour of the Amir; and it would have been as much at variance with his character for loyalty and caution to take the *Jehad* for granted, and to promise off-hand to put a stop to it, as to offer to address strong remonstrances to his master. That he undertook to send “a satisfactory written reply” is probable; but it was a reply satisfactory from his point of view; and such answer, on the 3rd of March, he duly returned.²

The only admission which this letter contains is that the Envoy had already heard these reports either from Sir Lewis Pelly, or from Atta Mahomed—*their truth he simply denied*. Such stories were doubtless current; they had arisen naturally enough out of the doings of the Conference. Princes were bound to consult their family and chiefs in matters of State. Those chiefs consulted their own people, and so the matter spread from mouth to mouth and, in spreading, was added to and altered. Had not rumours of the entrance of a

¹ Afghanistan, No. 2 (1878), p. 11.

² Letter given in Appendix I. This letter was not published until some time after Lord Lytton's despatch of the 10th of May, 1877, to which, in justice to Nur Mahomed and the Amir, it should have been attached.

British army into the Kuram Valley, and all sorts of surmises as to the designs of the British Government been set afloat, owing to Deputy Commissioner Cavagnari's presence on the Kuram frontier? The Amir had placed no reliance on reports so injurious to the British Government;—why then should that Government give credence to statements injurious to the Amir? The insinuation that he had not given the Amir full and faithful reports of the debates of the Conference, Nur Mahomed repudiated with dignity. As regarded the correspondence with the Russian Authorities, he had no instructions to say anything; but, “for right's sake,” he would mention that every paper received from Russian Officers had been opened, and its wax and seal removed in the presence of the British Native Agent; nor had any answer been returned to such papers contrary to the tenor of that first letter, which had been written to General Kaufmann in consultation with Lord Mayo. No Russian Agents had entered Afghanistan, though carriers had come bearing letters, and in winter had stayed a few days in Kabul. The Envoy could not credit the rumour that the Mayor of Kabul had forbidden the people of that town to visit the Agency quarters, and that the members of the Agency had been treated in an unfriendly way by the Afghan officials:—Atta Mahomed, who was then at Peshawar, could testify that none of the Afghan Nobles, or Chiefs had been more honoured by Shere Ali than he. As to the demand made upon the Amir to retract the libels on the British Government—it was impossible for him to retract what he could not admit to have ever been published.

No doubt rumours with regard to the discussions of the

Conference had gone abroad, which had wildly excited the Afghan people, and, in spreading from mouth to mouth, had assumed exaggerated proportions, and it is more than probable that Nur Mahomed's reports of those discussions had filled Shere Ali and his Council with anxiety and alarm; but for them to have this effect, they did not need to deviate one hair's-breadth from the truth. The documentary evidence, however, furnished by Lord Lytton in support of his assertion that the Amir was preaching a *Jehad*, is meagre and unsatisfactory in the extreme, consisting of the following extracts, one of which is of later date than the letter in which Sir Lewis Pelly brought this charge to the Kabul Envoy's notice.

EXTRACT from CANDAHAR NEWS-LETTER, No. 29, for
the week ending 9th August, 1876.

“A CANDAHARI, who hires out baggage animals in Turkestan, Bokhara, and Cabul, and who has been on friendly terms with the writer (Daod Khan) from his infancy upwards, and who, for the last three or four years has been on intimate terms with Sirdar Mahomed Alam Khan, Loi Naib Bahadur, arrived at Candahar a few days before the death of the Sirdar. On the writer of this letter asking him for the news of the country, he said that Mahomed Alam Khan brought with him to Cabul secretly a Russian, who came from Turkestan. On his arrival at Cabul, by order of the Ameer, he went to reside in the house of Mirza Mahomed Tahir Khan, situated in the quarter of the town called Alli Raza Khan. Of the arrival of this Russian, which is kept secret, only the Ameer, Mahomed Alam Khan, and Mirza Mahomed Tahir Khan knew of it. When the Ameer has interviews with the Russian they take place secretly in the garden of the Fort, where they hold council together. A few days after the

arrival of the Russian the Ameer sent for Mulla Mushk Alam, who is a man trusted by the Ameer, and of note in the country. He lives some distance from the city. The Ameer consulted with him, pointing out that he was on friendly terms with the British Government, that he could now get nothing from them, and was disheartened, and desired to fight with them. He asked, in the event of his doing so, whether the Mullas and Mahomedans would aid him, and whether it would be contrary to their religion to do so. The Mulla replied that, were he (the Ameer) to do so, it would be in accordance with his religion, and would benefit him in this world and in the world to come. Enquiries were made of the Candahari as to whether the British Agent at Cabul, Atta Mahomed Khan, or the Sadr-i-Azim, knew of this occurrence, and he replied in the negative. The writer can fully certify that the Candahari who gave him this news has been, for the last few years, an intimate friend of the late Mahomed Alam Khan; that he felt it to be his duty to give this news as told to him, and that, in writing it, he has only done what was right and proper; that, if true, it is of value, if false, telling what was told to him can do no harm." ¹

Extract from KAZI SYUD AHMED'S Diary of News for
the 22nd March, 1877.

"A FEW Chiefs of Kandahar who were discontented with the Ameer have gone over to the side of the English at Khelat, on account of which the Ameer feels very anxious.

"Russian couriers bring letters for the Ameer almost every week by the way of Sheikh Ali through Hazarajat. The Ameer sends answer through Shaghasi Sherdil Kkan, Governor of Turkestan.

"The Ameer is now quiet, does not talk of jihad openly, but

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 178.

preparations are otherwise being made all the same. It is said that the Ameer is waiting for a reply to the letter he has sent to the Russians, asking their advice in his project of jihad.”¹

We have no means of verifying the accuracy of the information imparted by Kazi Syud Ahmed, the Munshi (Secretary) left in charge of the Agency at Kabul during Atta Mahomed's absence; but, if the reports mentioned by him had been well-founded, the Indian Government which was busy on the frontier preparing to profit by the dissolution of the old friendship, would have had small reason to complain. The “earthen pipkin,” painfully recognizing that he was between two iron pots, and that he was in more immediate danger from his eastern than from his northern neighbour, might well have been pardoned if he had received and answered the messages with which the Russian Government was said to be besieging him. As a matter of fact, however, there exists no evidence to show that General Von Kaufmann was in more frequent communication with Shere Ali at this time than formerly, and the correspondence captured at Kabul contains no letter which makes any mention of a *Jehad*, indeed up to the date of Lord Lytton's despatch of May 10th, 1877, none that had not been opened and read in Atta Mahomed's presence, or written with his knowledge, and its contents communicated by him to the Indian Government.² It may be said that all incriminating letters had been destroyed either by Shere Ali himself before his departure

¹ Ibid., No. 1 (1878), page 221.

² Correspondence between Russian authorities and Shere Ali. Central Asia, No. 1 (1881).

from Kabul in December 1878, or by his son Yakub Khan, during the few months of his rule in that city; but this explanation does not tally with the undoubted fact that the Russian Mission of 1878 came upon the Afghan Government as a most unpleasant surprise; and that the subsequent negotiations at Kabul bore no trace of having been led up to by any previous interchange of views. But this point will be fully discussed later on.

A passage in a letter written by Sir William Nott when he was commanding in Kandahar, in 1840, to Sir William Cotton at Jellalabad, seems strikingly applicable to the evidence of the anonymous Kandahari hirer-out of baggage animals, furnished to a Kandahari News-Writer, as to revelations made to the former by an Afghan Chief, since deceased, with regard to certain secret doings of the Amir. "I have no means of obtaining information as to their (the Russians') doings in Central Asia," wrote Nott, "except by conversing with merchants, horse-dealers etc., and *perhaps, not much reliance can be placed on their accounts.*" Yet, it is likely that the Amir did try to ascertain how far he could count upon the religious sympathies of his subjects and his Mahomedan neighbours, in the event of war between himself and the British Government. With British troops established at different points of his frontier; with the soldiers of the Maharajah of Kashmir pressing forward to take up a position from which they, too, could menace Afghan territory; with British demands of an obnoxious character constantly pressed on his acceptance, and supported by threats of evil consequences to himself and his dynasty if he failed to agree to them with alacrity and thankfulness—Shere Ali would have been blind if he had

not recognized the danger hanging over him, and criminally negligent if he had taken no precautions against it.

The real truth of the situation in the winter of 1876—1877 is that both sides were preparing for a possible war; but that the Viceroy was preparing for a war of aggression, and the Amir for a war of defence, and that the aggressive measures had preceded the defensive ones. Many accusations have been brought against Shere Ali—he was dissatisfied; he was sulky; he was unfriendly; he was ambiguous in speech and act; he was blind to his own advantage—but no one has charged him with the folly of meditating an invasion of India. And not only is there not a tittle of evidence to prove that the Amir ever entertained the thought of taking the offensive—but there is good reason to believe that he was under no delusions as to the probable result to himself of even a defensive war, and that he would have welcomed any change in the attitude of the Viceroy which would have justified him in modifying his own. “Your Government,” said Nur Mahomed to Sir Lewis Pelly at the close of the first meeting between the two Plenipotentiaries, “is a powerful and great one; ours is a small and weak one; we have long been on terms of friendship, and the Amir now clings to the skirt of the British Government, and till his hand be cut off, he will not relax his hold of it.”¹ The Kabul Envoy spoke these words “as a private individual and not in an official sense,” nevertheless they may be taken as expressing the true state of his master’s mind at the time of their utterance.

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 197.

The Viceroy's answer to Nur Mahomed's statement was delivered to the latter on the 15th of March and, on the 16th, he sent his Secretary, Munshi Muhammad Bagir, to Sir Lewis Pelly to reply to the remarks made by the British Plenipotentiary at the last meeting of the Conference (February 19th). But Sir Lewis Pelly refused to listen :—"the Kabul Envoy had been given ample time in which to state his case and he had stated it at length. He had since had nearly four weeks in which to answer his—Pelly's—remarks,¹ and he could not now be permitted to waste further time in discussing them. If, however, in giving a definite answer to the agency question, he should make any relevant remarks, he—Sir Lewis—would receive them with his wonted courtesy.

The Secretary explained that his Chief was too ill to consider the Viceroy's instructions; but Pelly contended that, if the Kabul Envoy were well enough to prepare criticisms on his remarks, he must be well enough to give a plain "Yes" or „No" to the Viceroy's question whether he was prepared to accept the preliminary condition. In vain the Secretary declared that it must be long before the state of Nur Mahomed's health would allow of his studying the Viceroy's letter—Sir Lewis Pelly would accord no consideration to a plea "evidently intended to gain time for a further reference to Kabul," and the Secretary had to withdraw with his message undelivered.²

¹ These remarks had not been taken down by Nur Mahomed's Secretary, but, a fortnight later, on Sir L. Pelly's invitation, he came to the latter's house and copied them from the English report of the meeting.

² Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 220—221.

Nur Mahomed had made his last effort and it had failed. The answer to Sir Lewis Pelly's harsh and unfair strictures on the Amir's conduct, painfully prepared on his sick bed, had been refused a hearing, and there was nothing left for him to do but to prove that his illness was not a mere pretext to gain time—by dying. He passed away on the 26th of March, and the British Plenipotentiary sent deputations of condolence to the Afghan Mission; caused the flags on the fort to be hoisted half-mast high, and sixty guns—one for each year of the dead Prime Minister's life—to be fired over the grave; had himself represented at the funeral; and sent off a special messenger to Kabul to convey to the Amir the tidings of his Envoy's death.

No heavier blow could have befallen Shere Ali at this, the most critical juncture of his life, than the loss of the man on whose statesmanship, diplomatic skill, wide knowledge of affairs and devoted loyalty to himself he had so long been accustomed to rely. An Englishman who knew Nur Mahomed at Ambala, wrote of him "that he had there jealously guarded his master's interests, had given life and character to the negotiations, and had sedulously laboured to give a foundation of permanence to whatever had passed between the two rulers"¹ (Lord Mayo and Shere Ali); and it was in jealously guarding his master's interests and in sedulously labouring to defend the foundations of permanence which he had assisted to lay—that he died. It is possible that, if he had lived, he might have succeeded in

¹ *Ambala Conference*, by S. E. J. Clarke, Special Correspondent of the *Englishman*.

averting the Afghan war; but the possibility is so small that, on the strength of it, one can hardly desire that his life should have been prolonged to witness the overthrow of the Kingdom he had helped to build up; to share the flight, and be present at the death in exile of the prince he had served so well; to see Englishmen overrunning and laying waste the land they had pledged themselves to him to respect and defend. How small that possibility is proved by the events that followed immediately on Nur Mahomed's death. Better informed than Sir Lewis Pelly as to the hopeless condition of his Minister, the Amir had not waited to be apprised of his death to despatch another Envoy to Peshawar, invested, this time, with full powers to accept the fatal preliminary condition; but Lord Lytton, though aware that this new Plenipotentiary was on the way, and that he had authority to yield all that had been declared essential to the commencement of negotiations, instructed Sir Lewis Pelly, on the 30th of March, to break them off on the ground that they had lapsed of themselves for lack of any common ground of agreement, and to leave Peshawar as early as possible "to avoid further entanglement." Should new Afghan Envoys arrive meantime, he was to tell them that his powers had terminated.

With this arbitrary act, ended the Conference of Peshawar—that tragic prologue to a still more tragic drama. ¹

¹ According to Lord Roberts ("Forty-one Years in India," Vol. 2, pp. 98—99), "On learning the death of his most trusted Minister, and the failure of the negotiations, Shere Ali broke into a violent fit of passion, giving vent to his fury in threaten-

ings and invectives against the British Government. He declared it was not possible to come to terms, and that there was nothing left for him but to fight; that he had seven crores of rupees, every one of which he would hurl at the heads of the English, and he ended by giving orders for a *jehad* (religious war) to be proclaimed."

The incident may be a true one, though Lord Roberts gives no authority for his account of it. Shere Ali had good cause to feel that it was impossible to come to terms with a Government which argued away its own engagements, whilst magnifying his; and after staking the continuance of the friendship between itself and him on a demand destructive of all confidence and good will, broke off negotiations with him at the very moment of his yielding to its unwise importunity. That his rage and grief should find vent in threatenings and invectives was the most natural thing in the world, but, as has been seen, there exists no proof that he ever proclaimed a *jehad*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RUSSIAN MISSION.

It must not be supposed that Lord Lytton's policy during the year covered by the despatch of the 10th of May, 1877, commanded at every point the unanimous concurrence of his Council. Of the six ordinary members originally composing it, three—Sir Henry Norman, Sir Arthur Hobhouse and Sir William Muir—remained faithful to the convictions which they had shared with Lord Northbrook, and it was not until they had been replaced by Sir John Strachey, ¹ Sir E. B. Johnson and Mr. W. Stokes that the unanimity which the despatch would lead us to believe had always existed, was really attained. ²

In June 1876 when the answer to be returned to Shere Ali's letter, virtually declining to receive Sir Lewis Pelly, was under the consideration of the Council, these three members protested strongly against the impolicy of forcing an Embassy upon the Amir, in whom they declined to see an enemy of the British Government's, and whose reasons

¹ At one time, an earnest supporter of Lords Lawrence and Mayo in their endeavours to remove "that jealousy of our intentions which in past years had been so fruitful of mischief," now a convert to Lord Lytton's views.

² Afghanistan, No. I (1878), pages 165—167.

for deprecating the presence of British Officers in Afghanistan they accepted as genuine and valid; and at the end of the discussions, each of the three embodied his views in a Note. These Notes were submitted to the Viceroy who, in acknowledging them, gave the following assurance:—

“In conclusion I have only to say that when we have received the Amir’s reply to my present communication, it will be necessary to report officially to the Secretary of State the steps taken in accordance with the instructions of her Majesty’s Government; and members who may still dissent from the course thus taken, will then have a fitting opportunity of fully and officially recording the grounds of their dissent.”

The necessity recognized in this passage seems quickly to have lost its binding force. The Amir’s reply remained officially unreported, and dissentient Members were thus deprived of the opportunity of bringing their views to the notice of the Home Government. Just before leaving India, however, in October, 1876, Sir William Muir, at the close of the discussions in Council as to the instructions to be given to Sir Lewis Pelly for his guidance in the coming Conference with Nur Mahomed, wrote a second Note, repeating and enforcing the opinions contained in the first, and asked that both might be treated as official Minutes when the subject was eventually reported to the Home Government. The request was not complied with. Lord Lytton refused to accord to the second Note the official footing claimed for it by the retiring Councillor, and returned it, by his own account, to the writer through Sir Henry Norman; though, strange to say, Muir never received it and Norman

denied its ever having been intrusted to him. The first Note, in regard to which Lord Lytton did subsequently admit Sir William Muir's right to have it recognized and treated as an official dissent, seems to have been either lost, or overlooked by the Indian Government; and when its author asked, two years later, that both Notes should be presented to Parliament along with the other papers relating to Afghan affairs, the request was refused by Lord Cranbrook on the ground that they were "unofficial," and Sir William Muir was compelled to publish them himself, in order to establish his freedom from all complicity with a policy which he condemned.

The presence of this strong dissentient element in the Council during the first months of Lord Lytton's term of office, goes far to explain the delay in rendering to the British Government that account of the negotiations with the Amir to which it was constitutionally entitled.¹ Certainly the justification for that delay put forward by the Viceroy, that "there had been nothing of any practical importance to report," whilst he had been engaged in carrying out the Secretary of State's instructions, will be accepted by no one who has carefully followed the progress of his negotiations with the Afghan Government, and recognized, with Sir William Muir, that it "abounded with critical occasions and

¹ The Government of India is bound by law "to correspond" with the Home Government, "from time to time, and constantly and diligently to transmit an exact particular of all advices and intelligences and of all transactions and matters whatsoever." (See 13 Geo. III. C. 63, S. 9.)

alternative openings," on which the judgment of the British Government ought to have been taken. Remembering the tenor of Lord Salisbury's Letter of Instructions, it is not safe to deny that, if officially consulted,¹ he might have confirmed Lord Lytton's action at all points; but had the British Government been aware, in time, of the lengths to which the pressure recommended by the Secretary of State was being carried, it might have enjoined greater caution and forbearance on an over-zealous subordinate. Be this as it may, the fact is clear that the opportunity of modifying the Salisbury-Lytton policy was withheld from Lord Beaconsfield and his Cabinet, as a whole, till long after its almost certain consequences had become apparent; withheld, indeed, until withdrawal from it had been put out of their power. Even after the Conference had been arbitrarily broken off, there was still a possibility of keeping up some kind of intercourse with the Amir; but when Lord Lytton followed up this action by forbidding Atta Mahomed's return to Kabul, and recalling the other Members of the Agency to India—relations between the two States ceased altogether, and the time and manner of their renewal was left to the chapter of accidents to shape and determine.

No more unwise step than this withdrawal of the Vakil from Kabul could have been taken, if Lord Lytton still entertained any respect for the British Government's "settled

¹ There can be no doubt that Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton carried on quite as active a demi-official correspondence with regard to Afghan matters in 1876 and 1877, as the Duke of Argyll and Lord Mayo in 1869.

policy" towards Afghanistan, or cherished any hope of using that country as a buffer between the dominions of the Empress of India and those of the Czar; but the Viceroy's mind was engrossed by schemes quite incompatible with the cautious conduct and moderate aims of his predecessors, and to him it appeared a clever thing first to free the British Government from all Afghan "entanglements" by dropping the Peshawar negotiations, and next to avoid the danger of inopportune overtures on the Amir's part, by depriving him of the channel through which he had so long been accustomed to approach the Indian Government. Friendly intercourse with the prince who ruled over Herat and Kandahar, was a thing to be eschewed by the man whose ambition it was to add those provinces to the Indian Empire, and who was well known to be busy in drawing up a plan for their conquest and permanent occupation,—a plan that he was only withheld from putting into immediate execution by the restraining hand of the Home Government, which had strong reasons, in the then state of Europe, for deprecating any attempt to involve it in hostilities in Asia. ¹

¹ Proof that news of this projected movement on Kandahar and Herat had reached the Amir is contained in a letter from the Meshid agent, dated July 28th, 1877, (Central Asia, No. 1 (1878), p. 120) in which it is reported that British troops were about to advance on Kandahar; that the Governorship of that city had been conferred by the Amir on Afzul Khan, the maternal grandfather of the Heir Apparent, who had been directed to build cantonments in Pishany (Pishin), and had summoned, 1,000 horsemen from Farah (midway between Kandahar and Herat); and that twelve regiments from Kabul and four from Herat had been ordered to proceed to Kandahar.

As far back as the summer of 1875, the Turkish Question was occupying the attention of the Great Powers. One by one, the Christian provinces of Turkey were being driven into rebellion by hopeless misgovernment, and in Herzegovina the insurrectionary movement had assumed a very serious aspect.

On the 30th November, 1875, a Note was drawn up by the Austrian Minister, Count Andrassy, which declared in the name of Austria, Germany and Russia, that the promises of reform made by the Turkish Government had not been fulfilled, and that it had become necessary for the Powers of Europe to combine to insist on the Porte's giving effect to the many engagements which, hitherto, it had persistently disregarded. France and Italy joined in the Note, but England held aloof till pressed by Turkey herself to sign it.

The Note was sent to the Turkish Government which answered it with ready promises of redress and amendment, and continued as before to do nothing. On the invitation of Russia, the Prime Ministers of the three Empires met at Berlin, and drew up a Memorandum of the measures by which Turkey was to be coerced into giving effect to her broken engagements. The British Government refused to support it, and it was never presented. An insurrection in Bulgaria followed, frightful atrocities being committed by the troops sent to repress it. Excited by the accounts sent to the *Daily News* by that paper's Bulgarian correspondent, and by the fiery eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, who emerged from retirement to denounce the weak and barbarous Government which sanctioned, or could not hinder, such barbarities—public opinion in England was so deeply stirred that it

became difficult for the Ministry to continue in its pro-Turkish policy. In the month of June 1876, Servia and Montenegro came to the assistance of their oppressed fellow-Christians; and when, as was to be expected, they proved no match for their antagonist, Russia intervened, and an armistice was concluded, which it was hoped might be utilized to bring about such complete concord among the Great Powers as must overcome even Turkey's ingrained obstinacy and supineness.

A conference, proposed by Lord Derby, met at Constantinople; but the Porte first gained time by professing its willingness to make all necessary reforms itself—for which purpose it went through the farce of summoning a National Parliament—and finally, when further delay was impossible, refused to submit to the terms which Europe sought to impose on it. Then, at last, Russia's patience gave way. On the 24th of April, 1877, she declared war against Turkey; and in June she marched one army towards the Balkans and another into Asia Minor. The Turks, beaten in the first instance, turned to bay at Plevna, and for some months the issue of the war was uncertain; but in November, Kars was taken by assault; in December, Plevna surrendered, and the victorious Russian armies marched towards Constantinople.

Thoroughly alarmed, Mr. Disraeli summoned Parliament together a fortnight earlier than usual, and announced to it, in the speech from the Throne, that the Queen could not conceal from herself that, should the hostilities between Russia and Turkey be prolonged, some unexpected occurrence might render it incumbent on her to adopt measures of precaution.

What the Ministry meant by measures of precaution soon became apparent. A vote of six millions sterling for military and naval expenses was called for and granted by the House of Commons, and the Mediterranean fleet ordered to Constantinople. A little later Indian troops were brought to Malta, the Reserves called out, and Cyprus occupied with Turkey's consent.

It is easy to see the connection between the fluctuations of the Disraeli Administration's policy towards Afghanistan and the various stages of the situation which has just been described. Even as early as January, 1875, when Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Northbrook instructing him to take measures to procure the Amir's assent to the establishment of a British Agency at Herat, he must have foreseen that the Eastern Question was on the point of becoming once more a menace to the peace of Europe. His second communication on the same subject, in which he over-rode, or ignored the Indian Government's objections to his scheme and insisted on the immediate despatch of a Mission to Kabul, was written after the Herzegovina insurrection had assumed such serious proportions that Austria, Germany and Russia were taking counsel together as to the best way to coerce Turkey into better behaviour towards her unfortunate subjects—consultations which the British Government was watching with suspicion and distrust. The Instructions to Lord Lytton were drawn up a month after the presentation of the Andrassy Note, when it had already become apparent that Turkey's new promises would be no better observed than her old ones, and that stringent measures would have to be adopted to bring her to a less refractory frame of mind. Lord Lytton's

interview with Atta Mahomed, in which his determination to force on the Amir a treaty securing to England vastly increased influence in Afghanistan, was enforced by threats that betrayed the alarm and agitation of his mind—took place six days after Russia had proposed to the other guaranteeing Powers joint action in compelling the Porte to agree to an armistice with Servia and Montenegro, and when the negotiations as to the duration of that armistice were throwing the divergent views and aims of the British and Russian Governments into strong relief. The Conference of Peshawar began ten days after the termination of the futile Conference of Constantinople; ran its course whilst the British Foreign Office was making its last efforts to obtain from Turkey such concessions as should deprive the Czar of all excuse for drawing the sword; and was abruptly broken off by the Viceroy, on the plea of keeping the British Government free from entanglements, when it had begun to be clear that those efforts would prove unavailing. Finally, Lord Lytton's scheme for a march on Herat coincided with the successes achieved by Russia in the first stage of her war with Turkey, and its abandonment, with the reverses sustained by her in its second stage, reverses which Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues hoped might prove decisive. With the surrender of Plevna this hope vanished, and the British Government took steps which, as we have seen, brought England and Russia to the very verge of war.

So far, though the coming and going of emissaries bearing letters from Kaufmann to the Amir had kept Lord Lytton, and, in a minor degree, the Beaconsfield Ministry in a state

of nervous alarm, and the movements¹ of British officers on the Perso-Turkoman frontier,² and the passage through India of a Turkish Mission to Kabul³ had called forth remon-

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1878), pp. 86—110.

² Between 1874 and 1877 there were three such officers, viz., Captain the Hon. G. Napier, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles MacGregor and Captain F. N. Butler. The first, after spending a month in Meshid negotiating vainly with the Persian authorities about a recent Persian raid upon Herat, made his way to Kelati-Nadiri on the Perso-Turkoman frontier, and thence along the border to Astrabad close to the Caspian. The second explored the Persian Province of Khorassan, bordering on Afghan and Turkoman territory, but was withheld from penetrating into either by the prohibition of the Indian Government. The third was twice on the Perso-Turkoman frontier: the first time as a mere traveller; the second time sent, according to Lord Lytton, to ascertain the state of things in Merv—according to Butler himself, to lead the Turkomans against the Russians in the event of a conflict between England and Asia in the East. Whatever his object, his presence on the north-east Persian border was very unwelcome to the Russians; and Marvin, in his "Reconnoitring in Central Asia," gives it as his opinion that, if Napier, MacGregor, Butler and their forerunner, Valentine Baker, had never appeared there, Russia would have been spared a whole series of Turkoman campaigns which cost her millions of money and hundreds of lives.

³ An interesting account of this Mission is given by Mr. Grattan Geary, Editor of the *Times of India*, in his volume of travels entitled "Through Asiatic Turkey" (pp. 320—27). The Envoy at the head of it, tried hard to persuade the Amir that he had nothing to fear from England who had "long laid aside the system of annexing Native States," but much from Russia, "the enemy of all Mahomedan States."

The Amir's answer was perfectly consistent with the whole of

stances from the Russian Government;¹ though Shere Ali was suspected by the one side, of disloyal leanings towards a Russian alliance, and by the other, of unneighbourly intentions with regard to peoples under Russian influence:²—notwithstanding all this friction, all these recriminations, nothing had actually been done in contravention of the under-

his conduct towards the two “iron pots.” He was in no way hostile to England, in no way inclined to favour Russia; but both Powers were pressing upon him, and he could not be caught unprepared. He must guard against possible attack from the former who, from Quetta, was now looking in at Kandahar; and he must acquaint himself with the movements and aims of the latter, whose frontier now nearly touched his own.

The Turkish Envoy, evidently well instructed by the Indian Government, pointed out that his refusal to receive a British Mission had given rise to the impression that his sympathies were no longer on the side of England. To this, Shere Ali replied that he personally had no objection to Englishmen in Kabul; but his subjects felt differently, and if one of them killed a British officer he should be held responsible, and it was better therefore not to run the risk. The Envoy next broached the subject of an alliance between Afghanistan and Turkey against Russia, and tried to induce the Amir to pose as the champion of Mahomedanism in Central Asia—but the Afghan ruler remained provokingly clear-sighted and cool-headed. He was too far from Turkey to give her aid in the field; she, too far from him to come to his assistance; and Afghanistan, too weak to cope, single-handed, with Russia. If England were Turkey’s friend, why did she not help her? She had plenty of troops and many ships by means of which she could move them wherever she liked.

¹ Central Asia, No. I (1878), pp. 121—22.

² Ibid, pp. 90—94.

standing which, since 1873, had governed the Asiatic relations of the two great rival States.

Now, however, Russia took up the gauntlet thrown down to her in the passage of the Dardanelles by a British fleet, and the introduction of Indian troops into Europe; and the order was given to mobilize an army in Russian Turkestan, and to despatch a Russian Mission to Kabul.

The reports of Russia's warlike preparations in Central Asia spread rapidly through Afghanistan, growing as they spread, till, by the time they reached Peshawar, the army about to be thrown across the Oxus had swelled, according to one account, to thirty thousand,¹ according to another, to eighty thousand men.² In reality it consisted of fifteen thousand four hundred men, divided into three columns:—one, seventeen hundred strong, at Petro Alexandrovsk; another, twelve thousand strong, at Tashkent; and a third, also numbering seventeen hundred men, at Margelan in Ferghana.

The columns, all well equipped and well organized, were eventually to act in concert, and, for this end, were to concentrate on the Oxus, or to converge on some convenient point in Afghan Turkestan; but in the meanwhile a special task was assigned to each. The right column was to seize the ferry at Charjui, hold the Merv Turcomans in check, and open out a road on the right bank of the Oxus; the centre was to overawe the tribes inhabiting the regions between the Oxus and the Hindu Kush; whilst the left column

¹ Afghanistan, No I (1878), p. 227.

² Central Asia, No. I (1878), p. 139.

³ Ibid., p. 133.

was to establish Russian rule over the tribes occupying the upper course of that river.

The troops composing the main body left Tashkent in two divisions, early in June, and after a toilsome march of two hundred miles, in the course of which they had to cross two broad and rapid rivers, the Sir Daria and the Zarafshan,¹ and to traverse two waterless Steppes, exposed to the rays of the midsummer sun, fanned by the fiery blast of the desert and suffocated by clouds of hot dust—they reached Jam, a town on the frontier of Bokhara, one hundred miles north of the Oxus. Here they halted for a month, awaiting further orders; suffering, in enforced repose, the same torments from sun, wind and dust as on the march; with the natural result that their ranks were decimated by dysentery, typhus, fever and sun-stroke.²

The right and left columns moved at the same time as the main body, and the former, at least, encountered the same difficulties; its march to Charjui lying across a trackless

¹ In a letter to the *Sovremeni Izvesti* of October $\frac{10}{22}$, 1878, a correspondent. in describing the passage of the rivers Sir Darya and Zarafshan by the main Russian column, states that the former river "is very wide, and the current is so swift that the rafts were carried down the stream for a distance of three versts"; the latter "flows with a terrible rapidity, and sets large stones lying at the bottom of its bed into motion when it overflows (which was the case during our passage across), the width of the river would be about 3 versts, and it then forms several arms. Several carts were lost, and their contents carried away during our passage."

² Central Asia, No. 2 (1878), pages 16—17.

desert, swept by violent gusts of hot wind, which enveloped the troops in clouds of dust, whilst the feet of the men, the hoofs of the horses and the wheels of the gun carriages sank, at every step, deep into the friable sand.¹

The Russian Mission consisting of General Stolietoff and of six other officers, escorted by twenty-two Cossacks, had left Tashkent before the troops began to advance; but by the time General Von Kaufmann's letter announcing its despatch reached Shere Ali, each of the three columns was well on its way, and rumour, as we have seen, had carried exaggerated accounts of their strength to Kabul.

Ever since it had become apparent that the Russo-Turkish difficulty might end in a war between Great Britain and Russia, the Amir had been subjected to great pressure from his own relatives and friends to induce him to choose definitely between the rival Powers. But a definite choice was the very thing that he desired to avoid. He was as unwilling to subordinate Afghan interests, which he held to be bound up with Afghan independence, to the ambitions of Russia as to the fears of Great Britain; and though he laid the advice tendered to him by Sikandar Khan and Sirdar Afzal Khan before his Durbar, and talked of consulting the whole body of Afghan Grandees, he never wavered in the belief that his true policy was to bind himself to neither neighbour.

If the reports which reached the Indian Government from several quarters may be trusted, home pressure was not the only kind brought to bear on Shere Ali at this time. Since

¹ Central Asia, No. 2 (1878), pages 16—17.

the end of 1877 two Russian Native Envoys had visited Kabul, both of whom are credited with having striven to win him over to the Russian side. A confidential News-letter from the Government Agent at Peshawar, dated June 18th, 1878, professed to give the exact terms¹ laid by the

¹ "1. That the Amir may permit the location of Russian Agents at Kabul and at other places in his territory where it may be deemed necessary to locate such Agents.

"2. That permission be accorded for the quartering of Russian troops at four suitable places on the boundaries of Afghanistan, and that the Amir should engage to protect those troops.

"3. That the Russian Government be allowed to construct a road from Samarkand to Kabul then from Kabul to Herat and from Herat to Kandahar.

"4. When necessity arises, the Kabul Government may allow passage, by routes it may be desirable to follow, to Russian troops proceeding to India.

"5. That telegraph wire be set up between Samarkand, Kabul, Kandahar and other places where Russian troops, or Agents be stationed.

"6. That when necessary, Russian troops may be supplied with provisions and carriage on payment of reasonable prices.

"7. The Russian Government will allow the continuance of Afghanistan to the representatives, successors and heirs of the Amir in perpetuity, in accordance with the will (of the last sovereign) and legal rights.

"8. That the Russian Government will in no way interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and the administration of the country.

"9. That the Russian Government will ever afford proper aid for the maintenance of peace in Afghanistan, and to (assistance against?) the external and internal enemies of the Principality.

"10. The Russian authorities will consider the enemies of the Amir as their enemies.

"11. That if it becomes desirable that the Russian Government should send an expedition to wage war in India, the

second of these Envoys before Shere Ali; but none of the reports so sedulously collected by the Government Agent at Peshawar contains any hint that these proposals, if made, were favourably received by the Amir, whilst they furnish ample proof that he was alarmed by the movement of Russian troops towards his frontier, and angry when he heard of the despatch of the Russian Mission;¹ and though, in the end, he withdrew his opposition to its journey, he certainly connived at, if he did not directly order, the measures by which his officers in Turkestan sought to delay its advance.

Delay was obviously of incalculable value to Shere Ali at a time when the course of events in Europe—the connection between which and the Mission he fully understood—might at any moment assume an aspect which would relieve him from the hard necessity of choosing whether to risk the swift destruction of his independent authority by appealing to arms, or to acquiesce in its slow extinction by the gradual spread of Russian, or British influence within his dominions. He was well aware that that change in the relations between Great Britain and Russia, which he had foreseen as a possibility in 1873, had actually occurred. Still war had not yet broken out between the two Empires; it might even be averted; in which case Russia would, probably, withdraw her pretensions to interfere with him, or his territories, and Great Britain herself, relieved from the

Amir should furnish supplies to the Russian troops on payment; and that the Afghan Government will establish Agents at the capital of Russia, at Tashkent, etc.”—*Vide* Central Asia, No. 1 (1878), page 159.

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1878), pages 137—138.

pressing anxiety which had inspired Lord Lytton's feverish efforts to reduce Afghanistan to a state of virtual dependence upon the British Government, might revert to her former policy of non-intervention, tempered by friendly counsel and friendly support. The Amir's hopes were to be fulfilled in the end, but too late for him to profit by their fulfilment.

Whilst General Stolietoff and his companions were journeying slowly towards Kabul, a Congress was sitting at Berlin; and before the Mission had crossed the Hindu Kush, a treaty had been signed by the Great Powers which put an end to the fear of a renewal of the Russo-Turkish struggle on a wider scale. On the 13th of July the maintenance of peace between England and Russia was assured; but news travelled slowly through the wild regions of Central Asia, and the Mission moved on, not knowing that the causes to which it owed its existence had passed away.

In obedience to the Amir's orders, the Shahgassie Sherdil Khan had sent a messenger to meet General Stolietoff at Shinabad in Bokhara, with the request that he would remain there till there had been time to arrange for his suitable reception; and when this attempt to postpone the Mission's entry into Afghanistan failed, it was kept waiting three days on the left bank of the Oxus for the guard that was to escort it to Kabul. The opportune death of the Governor of Marzar-i-Sherif furnished an excuse for detaining the Mission in that city; and when, on the appointment of his successor, it was permitted to proceed, solicitude for the safety and comfort of the travellers so reduced the length of each day's journey, that it was the 22nd of July before they entered Kabul, mounted on elephants which had been

sent out to meet them, and attended by several of the Afghan Ministers, the Commander-in-Chief and one of the Afghan Princes.

Pride and policy combined to inspire the royal welcome accorded by the Amir to his unbidden guests, and the same motives prompted him to display, to the utmost, his military power in the Review which was held in their honour on the 2nd of August; but these marks of courtesy towards themselves, and of respect for their Government must not be taken as proofs that he had come to favour the objects they had been sent to further. Certainly the jealous care with which he kept them shut up in the Residency in the Bala Hissar, closely guarded, secluded from all visitors save those who came by his command, and never allowed to show themselves in the streets of the city—bears testimony to the embarrassment which their presence occasioned him, an embarrassment due, in part, to his anxiety for their personal safety, and, in part, to his fear lest, whilst openly negotiating with him, they might secretly intrigue with his ministers and chiefs.^{1 2}

At the reception Durbar held on the 26th July, General Stolietoff merely presented General Von Kaufmann's letter commending him to the Amir as a man high in the Emperor's favour and in his own confidence, leaving the serious

¹ Central Asia, No. 2 (1878), page 6.

² A Shahgassie, cousin to the Amir, who accompanied Mr. G. B. Scott when he was surveying a portion of the Khujiani country in 1879—told him that, except the Doctor, not a single officer of the Mission was ever permitted to go through the city. The Doctor occasionally went out in a covered palankin, escorted by a strong body of cavalry.

business of the Mission to be discussed in more private interviews with the Amir, or his Ministers. ¹

In the absence of all official documents referring to the Mission, we have only the rumours current in Kabul at the time, as reported to Cavagnari by his secret agents in Afghanistan, to go by for the details of the secret designs which Stolietoff was empowered to communicate to the Amir; but whether they did, or did not, include the right to survey the country between the Oxus and Kabul, to establish supply depôts on various points of the Afghan frontier, to construct roads, and telegraph lines and to move troops freely within Afghan territory—is of little consequence, since there can be no doubt that the Mission was sent for the purpose of ascertaining the military resources of Afghanistan, and of persuading, or frightening, the Amir into placing those resources at Russia's disposal, in the event of war's breaking out between her and Great Britain; and these, or similar measures, would have been the natural outcome of such a radical surrender to Russian influence.

What *is* of consequence, however, are the indications as to the spirit in which the Russian overtures were received by the Amir which these reports furnish. According to one anonymous statement, the Afghan Ministers were generally of opinion that the Amir would not enter into any engagement with Russia, which would sanction her interference in

¹ It was currently rumoured at the time that Stolietoff was also the bearer of an autograph letter from the Czar; but the Russian Government subsequently denied the existence of any such letter, and it seems not to have been found at Kabul.

his country. Another nameless informant told Cavagnari it was the impression in Kabul that the Amir had not concluded any arrangement with the Russian Envoy, and that he was trying to gain time with a view to watching what action the British Government would take. Several accounts mention that the Amir spoke with bitterness of the conduct of that Government towards him; ¹ but none of them hints that he showed himself inclined to yield to a new friend what he had refused to an old ally; and, in addition to this negative evidence to the consistency of his conduct, we have the positive testimony of Prince Lobanoff, the Russian Ambassador in London, who told Lord Granville in 1881 that all the correspondence relating to Afghanistan in the possession of the Russian Government went to prove that Shere Ali was neither Russian nor English, but an Afghan desirous of preserving the independence of his country. ²

Yet many causes were at work to sap Shere Ali's spirit of patriotic independence; chief among them, his uncertainty as to the attitude that Great Britain might take up as a set-off to the rebuff she would conceive she had suffered in the reception of a Russian Mission at Kabul, and the knowledge that the Russians held in their hands a master card in the person of his exiled nephew, Abdur Rahman, who, at that time, was universally believed to be ready to accept the Afghan throne on any terms which Russia might care to dictate. ³

¹ Central Asia, No. 2 (1878), pages 2, 6, 7, 9.

² Ibid., No. 1 (1881), page 29.

³ Central Asia, No. 1 (1878), page 137.

Then there was the pressure exercised on him by the movements of the Russian troops towards his frontiers; by the activity with which road making was being carried on in Russian Turkestan; and the surreptitious surveying of his own territories by the men whom the Mission had left behind at different points of its advance, ostensibly to carry despatches; and to these grounds for uneasiness must he added a rebellion of the Kandahari Ghilzais, some of whom were said to have gone to Quetta to prefer complaints against him and to solicit British interference,¹ and last, but not least, the illness and death of his appointed heir, the young Abdulla Jan, out of love for whom he had so alienated his two elder sons, Yakub and Ayub Khan, that, for his own safety's sake, he had been compelled to make a prisoner of the one and an exile of the other. That, under so great a burden of public anxiety and private grief, he still opposed a firm front to the Russian demands, and forebore to lend himself to their plans for weakening and embarrassing the Government of whose conduct towards himself he had good reason to complain—gave him a fresh claim on British consideration and entitled him to very different treatment than he was fated to receive.

It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate the pressure to which he was subjected by the direct action of the Russian Envoy. General Stolietoff's own position was one which called for great reserve and caution. The news of the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin must have reached Kabul before him, or very soon after, and he would hesitate to take

¹ *Ibid.*, No. 2 (1878), pages 7 and 9.

any steps which might jeopardise the newly re-established friendly relations between Russia and Great Britain. It would therefore become his aim, whilst allowing the Amir to perceive the true objects of the Mission, and trying to impress him with the belief that behind any demands that he—Stolietoff—might prefer, lay the power and the will to enforce them—to avoid pressing them on his immediate acceptance; and to give gradually such a turn to the negotiations that, if their results should ever be published to the world, they would be found to contain nothing that it would not be difficult to justify or, if need be, to surrender; and he certainly managed matters with such skill that, in the end, he not only made the Amir appear in the light of a supplicant seeking favours at Russia's hands, instead of in his true character of a proud and jealous prince conceding unwillingly the least that he could hope the Russian Government would accept, but actually took away unsigned the treaty which he had come so far to conclude.

The terms of this draft treaty,¹ which are known to us in two versions, furnished from memory by Afghan officials to General Roberts in 1879, are modelled on those which, at different times, had been offered to Shere Ali by Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, or which he had sought to obtain from those Viceroy's. On the part of the Russian Government, there was offered recognition of his appointed heir, and promises to protect all Afghan merchants trading in Russian territory; to treat with consideration any of his servants whom he might send to Russia to learn arts and

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1881), pages 17 and 19.

trades; and to assist him, with advice or otherwise, at its discretion, to repel invasion, on his undertaking not to wage war with any foreign power without its consent. On the Amir's part, there was the acceptance of engagements to report to the Russian authorities in Central Asia, in a friendly manner, all that went on in his Kingdom, and to communicate his wishes to General Von Kaufmann, who was to be authorized to fulfil them.

The messenger who carried to General Stolietoff the first authoritative intimation of the signature of the Berlin treaty, brought him, at the same time, so imperative an order to return to his own country, that, leaving Colonel Rosgonoff in charge of the Mission, he quitted Kabul on the 24th of August and reached Tashkent on the 16th of September, thus accomplishing in twenty-three days, the distance which it had taken him two months to traverse on his outward journey. From that city he wrote to the Amir that he was trying, night and day, to gain their objects and hoped to be successful. "I am starting," so the letter went on, "to see the Emperor to-day, in order to inform his Majesty personally of our affairs. If God pleases, everything that is necessary will be done and affirmed. I hope that those who want to enter the gate of Kabul from the east will see that the door is closed; then, please God, they will tremble." ¹

These words can hardly refer to the draft treaty, the rejection of which would certainly have occasioned Shere Ali neither annoyance, nor alarm. The privilege of sending a few of his subjects to learn the arts and trades of Europe,

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1881), page 18.

he had rejected when offered to him by Lord Mayo at Ambala; nor is it likely that he would feel himself repaid for the surrender of any part of his political independence, by the Russian Government's promise to assist him, at its discretion, by advice or otherwise, to repel a foreign foe. And yet it was to this letter that Prince Lobanoff appealed three years later, when he and Lord Granville were fencing over Russia's Afghan policy at the period now under review, as a proof that Stolietoff had not tried to get a plan of his own Government's adopted, but to further the Amir's views. What then were the affairs in which Stolietoff was busy day and night? The explanation most in harmony with all the circumstances of the time, is that Shere Ali, perceiving that Russia and England were about to revert to their former relative positions with regard to himself, and having already received an intimation that a British Mission was about to visit his capital—requested Stolietoff to use his influence to obtain from the Emperor Alexander a promise to act as his protector, or, at least, as his intercessor, in case his reluctant acquiescence in the unsolicited visit of the Russian Mission should have drawn down upon him the resentment of the British Government.

Such a claim he must have felt himself justified in urging without offering any corresponding sacrifice of his own authority, or dignity; and such a claim common humanity, and, perhaps, some feeling of personal sympathy for the prince whose embarrassments he had helped to create, would bind General Stolietoff to support to the utmost of his power.

CHAPTER IX

THE BRITISH MISSION AND THE VICEROY'S MINUTE.

THE note of haste and anxiety which vibrated through the Letter of Instructions to Lord Lytton and the despatches to Lord Northbrook of the 22nd January and the 19th November, 1875, is not to be detected in the Letter of the 4th of October, 1877,¹ in which Lord Salisbury acknowledged Lord Lytton's despatch of the 10th of May. He had come to see that "foreign"—*i.e.* Russian—"aggression" on Afghanistan "might not be, and probably was not, imminent":—in other words, he had abandoned the alarmist stand-point of Sir Bartle Frere, and could, in consequence, afford to treat the Amir with what, to him, must have appeared generous patience and forbearance. The tone of the latter half of this despatch of the 4th October, though marred by a lack of that gift of sympathetic imagination without which it was impossible for him to judge Shere Ali fairly, is honourable to the writer, as proving that his new Afghan policy had been inspired by no vulgar greed of territory, but by genuine uneasiness as to the consequences to India of leaving Afghanistan to take her own measures of defence against Russian aggression. That uneasiness removed,

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 222—224.

the desire to impose upon the Amir, by force, what Lord Salisbury still believed to be his better plans for assuring the independence of Afghanistan, disappeared with it; and this change of view found expression in the injunction laid upon the Viceroy to abstain for the present, on the one hand, from any hostile pressure on that prince, and, on the other, from any renewed offer of concessions which had been refused.

It is easy to see how severe a blow the first half of this prohibition struck at Lord Lytton's ambitious schemes; what a stumbling-block it put in the way of the measures by which he was clearing the ground for hostile action at some not distant date. His border policy having been framed to exercise the pressure which he was now forbidden to employ, practically collapsed; and, in his disappointment, he must have been glad of the opportunity to utilize some of his coercive preparations, which was afforded him by the opposition of the Jowakis to the new road that he had ordered to be made through the Kohat Pass. The practical bearings of this little war on the greater war which was to succeed it, will be seen later on: here it need only be mentioned that it lasted into March, 1878, and consequently had not long been brought to an end before the first rumours of the movement of Russian troops in Central Asia, and of the despatch of a Russian Mission to Kabul, revived Lord Lytton's hopes of being allowed a free hand in his dealings with the Amir.

On the 7th of June the Viceroy telegraphed to the new Secretary of State for India, Lord Cranbrook, the report that Kaufmann had apprised Shere Ali of the approaching visit of a Russian Envoy. Other telegrams followed in quick

succession,¹ giving the different forms which the rumours concerning the Russian Mission, from time to time, assumed; seeking for definite indications of the views of the Cabinet as regarded Russia's conduct in sending, and the Amir's conduct in receiving that Mission; asking for permission to insist upon the immediate reception of a British Envoy; and hinting that the whole business had better be left to the Indian Government to settle. Lord Cranbrook was in less haste to push matters to extremities than Lord Lytton. Not till the 1st of August did he take notice of the latter's pressing messages, and, then, only to telegraph that, before insisting on the reception of a British Envoy at Kabul, steps should be taken to make sure that a Russian Envoy had actually arrived there. Two days later, however, when this fact had been placed beyond dispute, he gave the desired permission, coupled with a request to be informed by what steps the Viceroy proposed to coerce the Amir, in case he should refuse the demand to be made upon him. Lord Lytton was not prepared with an answer to this pertinent question; but he gave an assurance that no action should be taken without full previous communication with the Home Government,² and then addressed himself to the task of selecting the members of the proposed Mission. His choice fell upon the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, Sir Neville Chamberlain, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., who was to be accompanied, for political duties, by Major P. L. N. Cavagnari, C.S.I., and Major O. B. O. St. John, R.E.; by

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 226—229.

² Ibid., No. 1 (1878), pages 228—229.

Captain St. V. A. Hammick as Military Secretary; by Captain F. M. Onslow and Lieutenant N. F. F. Chamberlain as aides-de-camp; and by an escort of two hundred and fifty sabres under Captain A. H. Prinsep. These officers were to start for Kabul very early in September, and, meantime, a native emissary was to be sent in advance to deliver to the Amir a letter from the Viceroy, conveying a notification of Sir Neville Chamberlain's approach, and requiring him—Shere Ali—to make the necessary arrangements for the Envoy's safe passage through Afghan territory;—the Native gentleman selected for this delicate office, being the Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, C.S.I., Atta Mahomed's predecessor at Kabul, whence Lord Lawrence had recalled him, in 1864, for abusing his position by intriguing with Azim Khan against Shere Ali himself.

Before this ill-chosen messenger could leave Peshawar, the news of the death of the Afghan Heir Apparent had been received in India, and Lord Lytton sent down from Simla, in haste, a second letter, this time of condolence, in which the Amir was assured that the British Mission should postpone its departure from India, in order that his Highness might not be troubled by any public business, however important and urgent, until the usual period of mourning—forty days—should have expired.¹ The assurance was a kindly one, and, if carried out in the spirit as well as the letter, might have gone far to reassure the Amir, and dispose him to acquiesce in the visit of the Mission; but, unfortunately, Lord Lytton put the narrowest interpretation upon the

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 232—234.

concession which courtesy and humanity had wrung from him ; for, whilst directing Sir N. Chamberlain to remain, for the present, at Peshawar, he sent orders to Gholam Hussein to hurry his journey, in order that no time might be lost in convincing Shere Ali that he must look for the entry of the British Mission into his capital at an early date, and authorized Cavagnari to enter into negotiations with the Khyber tribes—a step little calculated to promote the Amir's peace of mind.

Whilst the Native Envoy was travelling towards Kabul, and Sir Neville Chamberlain and his companions were waiting at Peshawar—the Viceroy was engaged in drawing up the instructions by which his Envoy was to be guided, and in the preparation of a long and elaborate minute,¹ intended to explain to the members of his Council the situation, of which the appointment of a British Mission to Kabul was the latest development ; the objects to which the Envoy was to seek to gain the Amir's assent ; and the alternative policy which he, Lord Lytton, had in contemplation should that assent be withheld.

The Instructions directed Sir Neville Chamberlain to hold himself in readiness to start as early as possible after the 16th September ; warned him that “political exigencies” might make it necessary for him to cross the frontier before any formal reply to the Viceroy's letter could be received from the Amir ; and bade him push on as quickly as possible, even in the teeth of attempts made by the local officers upon the road to delay, or dispute his passage. Only in case “of arms being used, or any hostile demonstration made in earnest by

¹ Afghanistan, No. 2 (1881), pages 4—24.

persons responsible to the Kabul Government," was he to return to British territory. Arrived in Kabul, he would of course, be received by the Amir in public Durbar; and he was to take this opportunity of declaring that his Mission was of a friendly character, and its object, to clear up the misunderstandings which had arisen since the Conference of Ambala. In less formal interviews, he was to state openly that the immediate cause of his deputation to Kabul was the affront offered to Great Britain by the reception of a Russian Mission; which unfriendly act, and the whole course of recent events in Central Asia, had so affected the political situation as to make it necessary for the British Government to ascertain what interpretation was to be put upon the new aspect of affairs, and what, thenceforward, were to be its relations with Afghanistan.

If the Envoy found Shere Ali disinclined to explain, or if he discovered from other sources that he was already pledged to a policy adverse to British interests—he was to adopt towards him and his Ministers a tone of grave warning; but if convinced that the Amir had views and engagements incompatible with the renewal of satisfactory relations with the British Government—he was to consider his mission at an end and return to India; and the test of the Amir's real disposition and intention was to be his agreement, or refusal to require the Russian Agency, if still in Kabul, to quit his dominions. If, on the other hand, the Amir seemed to desire a reconciliation with the British Government—he was to be assured that he could secure its friendship by dismissing the Russian Mission; engaging to accept British control over the external relations of Afghanistan, to the

exclusion of the political action, or influence of Russia ; and by permitting the residence within his dominions of English officers, as a guarantee against future misunderstandings between the two Governments, and as an unmistakable manifestation of his alliance with Great Britain.

Sir Neville Chamberlain was not to insist upon the admission of a British Representative at Kabul, because "previous discussions had elicited expressions of the Amir's particular disinclination to see an English Resident in his capital;" but he was to make it clearly understood that, if the British Government contented itself with the placing of permanent agents at Herat and Balkh, it expected free access to Kabul for special Envoys, whenever it might think it advisable to send one.

In return for these two concessions Sir Neville Chamberlain was authorised to promise the Amir :

1. An annual subsidy not exceeding, for the present, twelve lakhs.

2. The recognition of the heir named by him during his life-time, and the continuance of the subsidy to such heir on his succession to the throne of Kabul.

3. An engagement to join the Amir in defending by force of arms the territories then under his acknowledged jurisdiction, if Russia, or any States under her influence, should attempt to take possession of any part of them.

The two first promises were to be freely offered ; the latter to be given if asked for. Minor matters, such as the opening of Afghanistan to the English, and the allowing free transit of commerce through the Khyber, were not to be pressed. If the Amir were to allude to the British occupation of

Quetta, he was to be told that our troops were there in accordance with a treaty of twenty years' standing, and that one object of the proposed Mission to Kabul in 1876 was to explain our intentions with regard to Baluchistan, and to give the Amir satisfactory assurances as to our action in that country; but that now the time for discussing it had passed.

The concessions asked of the Amir in this Letter of Instructions were moderate compared with those which Sir Lewis Pelly had been instructed to wring from his Envoy, and the promises to be made to him, in return, more definite, and less hedged about by saving clauses; but the grounds on which Sir Neville Chamberlain was bidden to demand the admission of British officers to Afghanistan were those, fighting against which Nur Mahomed had died—namely, the attribution of the misunderstandings that had arisen between the British and Afghan Governments, to the lack of a British Resident at Kabul, and the assumption that the Amir's objection to British Agents was practically confined to such Agents in his capital. Had Sir Neville Chamberlain ever reached Kabul, it is probable that Shere Ali would have finally accepted the "essential preliminary", and have done his best to insure the safety of his dreaded guests; nevertheless, it would have been a wiser thing not to rake up the embers of dead controversies, but simply to instruct the British Envoy to present the old unpalatable demand as the expression of the British Government's fixed and unalterable will; the Amir being more likely to yield to a strength which he recognised, than to arguments which he impugned. But Sir Neville Chamberlain never reached Kabul; and the cause of his failure to do so, is to be found

in the injunction laid upon him to force his way thither against all resistance falling short of armed opposition; whilst the origin of that injunction must be sought, not in "political exigencies," which had no existence either in Europe, or in Asia, but in the plans for the ultimate settlement of the North-West Frontier, which were occupying Lord Lytton's mind, and which he explained to his Council in the Minute of the 4th of September.

This extraordinary document reveals the most daring ambition united to the blindest optimism. Whilst writing it, Lord Lytton had, evidently, seen no bounds to the Indian Empire save those which the British Government's moderation might appoint; and if he drew its ultimate frontier line at the Northern side of the Hindu Kush, it was not from any doubt as to the feasibility of carrying it further, but from uncertainty as to whether England would undertake the permanent administration of the whole of Central Asia, and from commiseration for the misfortunes which a merely temporary occupation of its Russian provinces would bring, first, upon our enemies, and then upon our allies. In the Viceroy's opinion, Russia's military position was so weak that, "if England were securely established at Kabul, with the passes of the Hindu Kush in her possession, and outposts at Faizabad, Kunduz, Balkh, and Herat," "the result of a contest between the two Empires on the Oxus could (can) not be doubted;" and this enormous *if* staggered him so little that his only difficulty seems to have lain in resisting the temptation to turn his hypothesis into a reality on the spot.¹

¹ Lord Lytton, in his Minute, relegated this invasion of Central

On one point we know he did not resist it; for, though, at the end of the Minute, he explains that he has been looking "a long way ahead," and that he does not deem it desirable to undertake to garrison even Herat "for many years to come"—yet the constitution of the army which began to assemble, only a few weeks later, at Multan, proclaimed its destination to be that city. Nay, so far as it is possible to disentangle Lord Lytton's immediate aims from the suggestions and considerations by which they were overlaid, they seem to have fallen very little short of his widest outlook. If, in one paragraph, he renounces the idea of himself dethroning the prince whom he admits to "have no equal in his kingdom for character and ability," on the express ground that a free competition for the Afghan throne

Asia to some remote period, but there is no doubt that he expected it to come in his own day. "I believe," so wrote, on August 28th, 1878, the Simla correspondent of the Indian Government's organ—*The Pioneer*—"I believe it is no secret that had war broken out (with Russia), we should not have remained on the defensive in India. A force of 30,000 men, having purchased its way through Afghanistan, thrown rapidly into Samarkand and Bokhara, would have had little difficulty in beating the scattered Russian troops back to the Caspian; for coming thus as deliverers, the whole population would have risen in our favour. In the feasibility of such a programme the Russians fully believed."—That the Russians were aware of Lord Lytton's schemes, is confirmed by the fact that General Skobelev sharply interrogated Colonel Brackenbury whom he met on the Shipka Pass, as to what had "become of that column of 10,000 men that had been organized by your people to raise Central Asia against us"—(*Times*, October 5th, 1878); but that they believed "in the feasibility of such a programme" is more than doubtful.

would probably result in Abdur Rahman's establishing himself "in the Trans-Hindu Kush Provinces, as a Russian feudatory," and in Persia's seizing Herat, leaving only Kandahar and Southern Afghanistan to us, till the disturbances and struggles which must be looked for in Kabul should compel us to annex that province also—in another, he unfolds plans which would have had exactly the same disintegrating effect on the Afghan Kingdom; and he more than reconciles himself to the idea of Herat's falling, temporarily, into the hands of Persia, by the reflection that the application of pressure to her sea-board would easily oblige her to resign that city, and that "we could not establish ourselves there under more favourable conditions than those created by a treaty, in which we should appear as its recognised liberators and guardians."

The immediate measures from which such tremendous consequences were to flow were three: (1) "an armed occupation of the Kuram Valley"; (2) "the concentration of a force at Quetta sufficient to threaten Kandahar"; (3) "the opening of direct negotiations with the various semi-independent tribes along the border, with a view to detaching them from the Amir's cause."—In the first of these proposals may be traced the influence of Lumsden and Roberts; in the second, that of Green and Sandeman; in the third that of Cavagnari; whilst Colley's hand can be recognised in the military axioms, taken from the experience of Europe, and applied, without modification, to the widely different conditions presented by Afghanistan; and he, Roberts and Cavagnari may be jointly credited with the prognostications of easy, cheap, and rapid success, that abound in the

Minute, and wherein can be read the profound contempt for a semi-savage foe with which they had imbued their highly-placed pupil. The limitation of the troops to 6,000 in the Kuram and 10,000 at Kandahar, was the practical outcome of this contempt; and to that limitation and to the tardy provision made for the mobilisation of even this insufficient force, must be attributed a large part of the wasteful expenditure that had to be incurred when, at the last moment, the counsels of men of better knowledge and sounder judgment prevailed over the crude theories and baseless expectations of the Viceroy's unofficial advisers.

The Minute protested that no steps at variance with a possible renewal of good relations with Shere Ali were to be taken till Sir Neville Chamberlain's Mission had definitely failed; but, through it, there runs an undercurrent of distrust of that prince, and of preference for some successor to him of weaker stuff, who, rising to power out of a chaos of our creating, and unable to maintain his position against the steady menace of our presence in the Kuram, must needs bow to our demands, and lean submissively on our support. This preference explains the discrepancy between the harshness of the instructions given to Chamberlain with regard to the mode of his advance to Kabul, and the moderation of the terms which he was to offer to the Afghan Government when he got there. Lord Lytton desired to avoid war with Afghanistan; but he was indifferent to a rupture with the reigning Amir, and he firmly believed that there was no necessary connection between the two. He went even further than the belief that it was possible to break with the ruler and keep on good terms with the

people of Afghanistan: he absolutely flattered himself that British troops could occupy Afghan provinces and march through the territory of Independent Tribes, and yet escape being regarded by the inhabitants in the light of invaders and enemies. There seems to have been no room in his forecasts even for those plundering propensities of the hillman, to which the sight of a baggage train, or a handful of stragglers is a temptation not to be resisted; and the explanation of this extraordinary delusion lies in the fact that he omitted Afghanistan from among the factors of the military problem which he had to solve. In his judgment, it was not the 976 miles which separate Peshawar from Tashkent; nor the cruel ruggedness of the narrow Afghan roads; nor the deadly extremes which characterise the Afghan climate; nor the incurable barrenness of Afghanistan's vast mountain chains; nor the small extent of her cultivable soil—which hinder Russian hosts from appearing before the gates of the former city, but the poverty of Central Asia, and the distance between Tashkent and her base in Europe; and he was consequently free to argue that India being, by comparison, a rich country, and England able by her command of the sea to supplement India's resources at will—a British advance to the Oxus was as easy as a Russian counter-movement from Turkestan to the Indus must be difficult.

It is not surprising that a civilian, who had picked up a few military terms without acquiring any real knowledge of the theory and practice of war, should have derived satisfaction from the thought of Peshawar's superiority to Tashkent as a base of supply; but it is astonishing that the military men, from whom he had learned to talk of "bases,"

should not have taught him that an army is none the better for starting from a rich country, if the distance to be traversed is sufficiently long, and the rate of progression sufficiently slow to exhaust its commissariat and transport resources before it reaches its goal—that goal an utterly barren one. Viewed by the light of this stern truth, the barrier which stands between Russian ambition and India is exactly the same as that which stands between British ambition and Russian Turkestan, viz. :—the indomitable spirit of the Afghans, which may be counted on to retard to the utmost the march of any foreign force through their country, and that country's extraordinary sterility and inaccessibility. These two factors dominate the Central Asian Question so completely as to dwarf into insignificance such minor considerations as the greater, or less degree of ease with which supply and transport can be originally collected, or the personal predilections of an Afghan ruler; and they may be trusted to keep the two Empires apart, even if some future Amir should be so untrue to the traditions of his race as to be willing to subserve the schemes of either. Yet Lord Lytton took no count of the one, and did worse than ignore the other; for that he saw in Afghanistan a source of supply to whichever Power—Russia or Great Britain—should succeed in occupying that country, is evident from the fact that he believed the latter would lose her superiority of position over the former, if once Russian troops were established in Kandahar and Kabul. There existed ample evidence, both geographical and historical, to show that Afghanistan could not support the foreign garrison that would be required to keep her people in subjection, and

that, for the prosecution of a campaign beyond her south-east frontier, Europe must furnish, for all time, both the men and the supplies, since nature did not provide the means by which the amount of her cultivable land could be appreciably increased. But such evidence would have been embarrassing to Lord Lytton, whose whole case against Shere Ali rested on the assumption that Russia was, if not a present, certainly a future danger to India; whereas, encased in the invulnerable armour of ignorance, he could regard his own policy, past, present and future, with cheerful satisfaction, and look forward to its results with equanimity, whether they assumed the guise of a peaceful agreement with Shere Ali—and British officers at Balkh and Herat; a new Amir at Kabul—and British troops in the Kuram; or a general disintegration of Afghanistan—and the British Empire extended to the north of the Hindu Kush.

CHAPTER X

AT THE GATES OF THE KHYBER.

THE Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan arrived in the Afghan capital on the 10th of September, and was received on the 12th by Shere Ali, who handed to him a letter from the Commissioner of Peshawar which had been just brought to Kabul by the Amir's own post, and desired him to open and read it. ¹

The letter which had been intended to overtake the emissary on his journey, informed him that the British Mission would leave Peshawar on the 16th, or 17th of September, whether he had, or had not, been admitted to an audience with the Amir; that its objects were friendly, and that any refusal of a free passage to it, or any interruption to its progress would be regarded as an act of hostility; and it directed him to push on as rapidly as possible, and to act firmly should any attempt he made to impede his journey. It was, of course, strictly private, and the Amir had no right to desire to be made acquainted with its contents, nor the Nawab, to comply with the demand; but nothing in the incident justified Lord Lytton in telegraphing to Lord Cranbrook that Shere Ali *had opened* a private letter to an officer of the Indian Government;

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 241.

neither can it be said to have exercised any appreciable influence on the Amir's conduct, since the letter, with the exception of the sentence referring to Gholam Hussein's journey, was identical with one written at the same time to the Mustaufi by Major Waterfield, who had succeeded Pollock as Commissioner of Peshawar, and with three communications made, respectively, to the Governors of Ali Masjid, Dakka and Jalalabad, which, being addressed to officers of his own, must have been doubly offensive to Shere Ali's pride—as, indeed, his words on this occasion amply prove.

“I do not agree to the Mission's coming in this manner,” he burst out when the Nawab had finished reading the obnoxious letter; “until my officers have received orders from me, how can it come? It is as if they wish to disgrace me. It is not proper to use pressure in this way. It will lead to a complete (rupture) and breach of friendship. I am a friend as before and entertain no ill will. The Russian Mission has come and come with my permission. I am still afflicted with grief at the loss of my son. I have had no time to consider the matter. If I get time, whatever I consider advisable will be acted upon. Under these circumstances they can do as they like.”^{1 2}

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 241.

² Lord Lytton's telegraphic summary of Gholam Hussein's letter of the 12th of September runs thus: “He (Shere Ali) merely informed messenger verbally that British Government must indefinitely await his pleasure on subject of them, (Lord Lytton's letters,) which he would consider whenever it suited him, adding that Russian Mission had come with his permission.

It was the tampering with his officials, the slighting of his authority in a way which must bring it into contempt with his own servants, which wrung from him this indignant protest and betrayed him into a statement, which Lord Lytton was not slow to turn against him. "The Russian Mission had come with his permission"—was not this avowal an insult flung in the face of the Indian Government whose Envoy he had refused to receive?

If the words had been spoken with the intention of contrasting the different treatment meted out to General Stoliétoff and to Sir Lewis Pelly, they would certainly have been insulting, and foolish into the bargain; but the context shows clearly that no such thought was in the Amir's mind. Occurring as they do between his assertion that he was still a friend to England, and his plea for consideration on the ground that he was overwhelmed with grief and had no time to consider the demand which was being so harshly pressed upon him—they can only have been intended to imply that what he had conceded to Russia he knew he could no longer refuse to Great Britain, and that the British

and that, in the present state of relations with us, he saw no reason for our sending British one.'

Who can recognize in this cold-blooded version of that letter the disjointed, distracted sentences given above? It reads like a deliberate expression of the Amir's resolve to have nothing to do with the British Government, instead of a desperate appeal against the cruel self-will which was robbing him of all chance of resuming his old friendly relations with it. The concluding words are not to be found in the letter, nor to be inferred from anything it contains.

Mission should be honourably received in Kabul, if only time were granted him in which to make arrangements for their coming, freely and in his own way.

That his argument admitted of misconception seems, however, soon to have struck either the Amir himself, or some one of his advisers, for on the morrow of this interview, the Wazir told the Nawab that his master had not invited the Russians to Kabul, but that when once they had crossed the Oxus, he had been compelled by the exposed state of the country and the estrangement of England, to allow them to proceed.¹ Both the Amir's statement and that of his minister were true, and taken together they throw an instructive light on the character and methods of the former. Of a proud, independent, jealous temper, his ruling desire always was to keep Russian and Englishman alike out of his dominions; but when circumstances became too strong for him, he chose to cover his weakness by a voluntary and dignified acceptance of the inevitable. This was what he had done as regarded Stolietoff's Mission, and this, so the Wazir assured Gholam Hussein, he was prepared to do as regarded Sir Neville Chamberlain and his companions, if the Indian Government would but give him the chance. The Wazir went on to say that when some of the Russian servants who were lying ill had recovered, the remaining members of the Mission should be suitably dismissed, and that the Amir would then send a confidential messenger to conduct the British Mission to Kabul, and make himself responsible for its safety and good treatment. The Emissary himself was of

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 242.

opinion that the dismissal of the one Mission, and the sending for the other would take place immediately after the Eed, a Mahomedan festival then close at hand.

The letter reporting the conversation with the Wazir was written on the 13th of September. On the 15th, Gholam Hussein wrote again, warning his Government that the Amir was in a bad humour and that "on account of grief and indisposition he could not bear to hear alternately harsh and conciliatory language;" but assuring it, at the same time, that the Afghan ministers were still hopeful that matters would be satisfactorily arranged, and that it was his own belief that there was still a chance left "for further discussions," if the British Mission's entrance into Afghan territory were delayed.

On the 13th, the Nawab wrote two letters, one of which he sent by the Amir's post, the other by a private hand. In the former, evidently written at the Amir's suggestion, he sketched the terms in which that prince should be addressed by the Indian Government if an increase of friendship and goodwill, and not their "daily destruction" were desired; in the latter he intimated that if that Government, for its own purposes, were content to delay, the proposed conciliatory communication might prove useful; but if it considered delay injurious, then his stay at Kabul was of no further profit and he had better be withdrawn.¹

Even whilst he wrote, the order recalling him to India for which he asked, was being issued at the instance of Sir Neville Chamberlain. The Envoy Elect had arrived in Pesh-

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 243—247.

awar on the 12th of September to find Cavagnari already negotiating with the Headmen of the Khyber Tribes occupying lands between that city and Ali Masjid, for a free passage for the British Mission through their respective territories. The arrangements were on the point of completion, on the understanding that they were to lapse if actively opposed by the Amir or his officers—when Faiz Mahomed, the Afghan Commandant at Ali Masjid, sent peremptory orders to the Headmen to return to their villages, and it became necessary either to let them leave Peshawar, or for the Indian Government to guarantee them against the consequences of their disobedience, by taking upon itself, for the future, the payment of the subsidy which the Khyber Tribes had hitherto received from the Amir.

Such a guarantee might content the Headmen; but to detach the Tribes from their dependence upon Afghanistan was an act bordering so nearly upon open hostility to the Amir, that it could not fail to confirm him in his belief that no friendly Mission was knocking at his gates, but the advanced guard of an invading army. Cavagnari, at least, saw the proposal in this light;¹ and the Viceroy to whom the question was referred, telegraphed back that care was required to avoid giving the Amir any plausible ground for complaint by a separate arrangement with the Khyberis before open opposition had been offered to the Mission, and recommending the bringing of matters to a crisis by the despatch of a letter to the Governor of Ali Masjid, stating that the Mission

¹ "Such a measure may prove an obstacle in arranging matters with the Amir."—Telegram from Cavagnari.

would start immediately and, requiring from him a plain answer to the question whether he was prepared to guarantee its safe passage through the Pass. If he said "Yes", the Headmen were to be allowed to obey his summons; if he said "No", or gave an evasive reply, or no reply within a reasonable time, then Sir Neville Chamberlain was to settle matters with the Khyberis and advance, throwing the responsibility for what might happen on Faiz Mahomed.¹

That officer showed no desire for evasion, or delay; he answered Chamberlain's letter at once, in polite, but explicit terms:—There was no need for the Mission to negotiate for an Afridi escort; if the Amir gave consent, he—Faiz Mahomed—and his troops would be their escort to Dakka, Afridis or no Afridis; but they were servants to carry out the orders of their master, and should the Envoy come without the Amir's permission, it would lead to a collision between the Ali Masjid garrison and the Afridis on the one side, and the Mission on the other. The Mir Akhor (Master of the Horse) who was on his way from Dakka, might perhaps have orders to communicate; but the Envoy could do as he chose about stopping at Peshawar till the Mir arrived, or proceeding at once by force.

Chamberlain's first impulse was to address the Mir Akhor direct on the subject of the advance of the Mission; but when he learnt that the Mir had reached Ali Masjid, and still no intimation of his being the bearer of friendly instructions was received, he changed his mind, feeling, as he wrote to the Viceroy, that to repeat to one Afghan official the

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 40.

assurances which he had already made to another, would be to risk placing his Government in the position of seeming to plead for privileges which belonged to it of right;¹—a reflection which may be accepted as creditable to the Envoy's patriotic pride, but hardly to his knowledge of the subject with which it had become his duty to deal; since no agreement that had ever existed between the British and Afghan Governments had given the former the *right* to send Missions into Afghanistan, and the Amir's *right* to exclude them had been recognised by four Indian Viceroys.

The Nawab's letter of the 15th of September, which was received in Peshawar on the 19th, greatly exasperated Chamberlain, who telegraphed its contents to the Viceroy with ironical comments of his own.—It was clear the Amir was bent on stretching procrastination to the utmost, and on asserting his claim to total independence of action by making the acceptance of the Mission, and the time of the visit dependent on his sole pleasure. If these points were yielded, then he held out the hope that he would hereafter, at his own time, send a person to bring the Mission to Kabul and receive it honourably. He, his ministers and the officers in command of his outposts had all said in the clearest language, that they would, if necessary, stop the advance of the Mission by force. The determination was just as clear to his—Sir Neville's—mind as if half his escort had been shot down; and it seemed to him that, unless the Viceroy accepted this position, all chance of a peaceful solution had passed away. Shere Ali was determined to uphold his

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 257.

own will and dignity at any cost to the dignity of the British Government. The telegram ended with the already mentioned request for the recall of Gholam Hussein, whom it accused of writing as though it were the duty of the Indian authorities to accept wholly the views of the Amir, and who asked for answers to letters in which there was nothing to reply to.

No more momentous telegram than this was ever flashed to Simla, for it was the spark which, falling into a mind prepared to receive it by obstinately nourished suspicions and fears, by long brooding over the imaginary offences of the Amir and long dwelling on the equally imaginary advantages to be reaped by India from the occupation of certain portions of that prince's dominions—was to kindle that great conflagration, the Second Afghan War.

The next day, Sir Neville Chamberlain followed up this telegram by two others in which he informed the Viceroy that the Khyber Headmen had agreed to escort the Mission to Ali Masjid, or, until at any nearer point, it came into contact with the Amir's authorities, and, if necessary, to give it safe conduct back to Peshawar; that the Mission would camp on the morrow at Jamrud—the limit of British territory—and that, the day after, Cavagnari with a small party would proceed to Ali Masjid. A few men, Sir Neville thought, would suffice to test things as well as the whole escort; and he thought it desirable to reduce to a minimum any indignity that might be offered to his Government. If, as he expected and as every Native expected, Faiz Mahomed were to refuse to allow the Mission to pass his post, he should consider that refusal as tantamount to having

been fired on, and return to Peshawar. After long wavering and considerable preparation, the Mission could not move forward out of British territory and be openly turned back, without disgrace in the eyes of India to the Government which had sent it; and he personally would rather have war without the insult.¹

Lord Lytton's telegram in reply echoed his Envoy's views; and Chamberlain's programme was carried out with the result which he and every Native had anticipated. Cavagnari was stopped on the heights above Lala Chena, about a mile from Ali Masjid and within sight of that fort, by the levies of the Amir, who threatened to fire if he approached them; and Faiz Mahomed who came out to meet him, showed himself as firm and bold of speech in the conversation that ensued, as in the letter which he had previously written to Sir Neville Chamberlain.

The interview took place beside a water-mill, shaded by a few trees in the bed of a stream; there being present on the British side, Colonel Jenkins, commanding the Escort, two or three of the Guide Cavalry, some of the Khyber Headmen, and two Native gentlemen, representatives, the one of a Mahomedan, the other of a Hindu Native State, who² had joined the Mission at Lord Lytton's particular invitation; and, on the Afghan side, the Naib, or Deputy of the Mir Akhor, a considerable number of the Ali Masjid levies, and some of the Afridi Headmen who had not been parties to the Peshawar negotiations.

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), page 240.

² Sirdar Obed Ulla Khan of Tonk, and Maharaja Pertab Sing of Jodhpur.

Cavagnari opened the discussion by pointing out that Faiz Mahomed and he were servants of their respective Governments, met to carry out the orders they had received, so that, whatever the result of their meeting, there need be nothing personal between them; a sentiment in which the Governor of Ali Masjid cordially concurred. But when the British officer went on to ask whether the officials at Ali Masjid had been instructed to guarantee to the Mission safe passage and proper treatment, and to express the hope that if there were any latitude in the orders received from Kabul, Faiz Mahomed would use it in the interest of peace—the Afghan officer, though still courteous, was quite unyielding.

His desire to act in a friendly manner had been evinced by his having permitted Gholam Hussein Khan to pass his post, an act of politeness for which he had been blamed by the Durbar; he was proving it, at that very moment, by consenting to that interview, and by restraining his troops from firing on the British party; but he had received no orders to let the Mission enter the Khyber and, without such orders, he could not allow it to proceed. If the Mission would wait, he would communicate with Kabul and ask for instructions. Cavagnari replied that he had no authority to agree to further delay; he was there to say that the Mission would move forward next morning, unless the Afghan officials distinctly stated that its advance would be opposed; and once again he begged Faiz Mahomed not to take upon himself the responsibility of stopping the Mission, unless his orders constrained him to do so, for, whatever his action, it would be considered as the Amir's. The Afghan commander owned the greatness of the responsibility, but

could only repeat that he stood there as a sentinel at his post, and, without the orders of the Amir, the Mission should not pass.

“But how do you know,” asked Cavagnari, “that the Amir will not be angry with you for trying to stop the representative of a Government with which he has long been on friendly terms?”

Then Faiz Mahomed grew warm:—“Friendly? what friendship was there in the British Government’s present conduct? If the Amir had given the word, he himself would have gone down to Jamrud to meet the Mission and bring it up the Pass; but now the British had come on their own account, and had bribed the Amir’s servants to give them a passage. They were setting Afridis against Afridis, would cause bloodshed and strife in the country—and they called themselves friends!”

The Afridis who were standing round applauded this speech, and there was an uneasy movement among them which convinced Cavagnari and Jenkins that it would be imprudent to allow the conversation to continue in this tone. The former, therefore, interrupted the Khan by saying that the subject was not one for subordinates to discuss; and then asked, for the last time, whether the Governor of Ali Masjid would oppose the passage of the Mission by force. The answer came quick and sharp:—“Yes, I will; and you may take it as kindness, and because I remember friendship, that I do not fire upon you for what you have done already. You have had a straight answer,” he added, as the English officers shook hands with him and mounted their horses.

An answer so straight that it left nothing more to be

said; so Cavagnari and Jenkins rode back to Jamrud to report their failure, and to bear testimony to the courtesy of the Afghan Governor, who, in Cavagnari's opinion, had softened down a great deal of the insult intended, and prevented a collision between his followers and the little British ¹ party, which must have proved fatal to the latter. ²

The news of the repulse at Ali Masjid was telegraphed to Lord Lytton, who, at once, directed the Envoy to dissolve the Mission, and to intimate to the two Native noblemen attached to it, that he should have pleasure in thanking them in person, and would arrange, should they desire it, for their association with the military operations that had now become necessary.

From his own point of view Lord Lytton had played his cards well; so well that, both at home and in India, the great majority of Englishmen honestly believed at the time, and many believe to this day, that Shere Ali was faithless

¹ Afghanistan No. (1878), page 251.

² It was natural that Cavagnari should feel grateful to the man whose firmness and temper had been his and his companions' sole protection in a most critical hour; but in doing justice to the subordinate, he struck an undeserved blow at the principal. All through this miserable business Shere Ali's behaviour was that of a bewildered, ill-used man, struggling to preserve his prestige in the eyes of his own subjects, but in no way eager to provoke a collision with the neighbour whose power to crush him, individually, he sadly recognized; and it is far more likely that Faiz Mahomed strictly carried out his master's commands in delaying, but not insulting the members of the Mission, than that he had received orders to offer them provocation, which orders he took it upon himself to disobey.

and forsworn, their race's implacable enemy, Russia's secret ally, a prince whom honour, patriotism and the instinct of self-preservation alike called upon them to crush, and they could therefore follow the Viceroy into the contest which he had provoked, without any inconvenient misgivings of conscience; whilst the few men who knew that Shere Ali was far more sinned against than sinning, and who spoke out boldly in his favour, could not gain credence for their defence of a man whom public opinion had already condemned.¹ The cloud of passion which darkened men's minds in those days, has melted away with the lapse of time; but much of the misconception and ignorance out of which it sprang, still lingers. To dispel these is no useless task, since there is always danger of the past's repeating itself, so long as men have not been brought to see its errors; and there is no better way of dispelling them in this case, than by asking ourselves whether, without prejudice to India, or disgrace to England, the war which had now become inevitable, might not have been averted.

Taking into account Lord Lytton's prejudice against Shere Ali, his fears of Russia, his visions of conquest, his expectations of sudden and easy success, and also the characters and ambitions of the men by whom he allowed himself to be influenced—no other line of conduct than that which he pursued could have been expected of him. The situation,

¹ See the Volume entitled *Causes of the Afghan War* as a proof that there were in 1878 men who knew the truth with regard to Lord Lytton's dealings with Shere Ali, and tried to make that truth prevail.

however, might have been very differently treated; and in the hands of a man of Lord Lawrence's wide views and cool judgment, or of Lord Mayo's sincerity of mind and chivalrous generosity, it would almost certainly have been used to re-establish the old friendship with Shere Ali on a firmer basis.

There was no need for haste; for if danger had ever threatened India from, or rather through, Afghanistan, it had passed away before Lord Cranbrook signified his assent to Lord Lytton's schemes for punishing the Amir for having suffered the visit of one Mission, by inflicting upon him another. No one—not even Lord Lytton—had ever professed to believe that, except as the ally of Russia, there was anything to fear from Afghanistan; and with the signature of the Treaty of Berlin, the Russian Government had abandoned all hostile intentions towards Great Britain. Recognizing this, and recognizing also that the Russian Mission had not come to Kabul by the Amir's invitation, but against his wish—a statesman really desirous of continuing at peace with that prince, would have lost no time in requesting the British Government to call upon the Czar to withdraw his officers from Afghanistan—a demand which, in the end, when it could have no influence on the course of events, was actually made and acceded to—and would, meantime, have let it be as widely known as possible that he did not hold Shere Ali responsible for the visit of the Russian Mission, nor see in his reception of it any intention to insult ourselves. Such a statesman would have made use of the terrible domestic and political misfortune which had befallen the Amir in the death of his son and

heir, to renew diplomatic intercourse with him in a way that would have been as gratifying to the prince as it would have been honourable to the Viceroy. He, too, would have sent a Native Emissary to Kabul; but that Emissary would have been Atta Mahomed, or some Mahomedan nobleman of whom it could, at least, be known that he was not personally distasteful to the Amir—not his old enemy, Gholam Hussein; and the one letter entrusted to this messenger would have contained simply the expression of the Viceroy's sympathy and the assurance—sincere, not formal—that nothing should be done by the Indian Government to embarrass him at a time when he was suffering, not only the grief of a bereaved father, but the perplexities of a sovereign who had just witnessed the destruction of all his arrangements for the future of his Kingdom.

In conversation with the Afghan Ministers, the Emissary would have been empowered to take credit to his Government for having rid them of the incubus of the Russian Mission, and to express the hope that when the Amir had recovered from the shock of his son's death and had settled once again the succession to the throne, he would take steps to renew his former intimate relations with Great Britain, either by inviting a British Envoy to his court, or—if he still felt that the subjects to be discussed were too important to be left to the judgment of any subordinate—by proposing a meeting between himself and the Viceroy.

There can be no doubt that Shere Ali would have yielded to wishes so moderate in themselves, and so courteously expressed; all the more readily because of the proof that he would have just received in the withdrawal of Stolietoff's

Mission at the British Government's request, that he could not look to Russia to stand by him against her own immediate interests; and the fact that the reconciliation between him and Great Britain had been brought about at a moment when he not unnaturally feared being called to account for his share in recent events, would have gone far to obliterate the remembrance of the injustice and harshness under which, for a time, he had had to suffer, and to restore his confidence in British good will and good faith.

The line of action sketched above, if adopted by the Indian Government, would have proved eminently practical, for it would have attained its aims—the preservation of peace, and the restoration of good relations with the Amir;—the course actually pursued, tried by the test of results, was eminently unpractical; for the war into which it plunged India secured none of the objects for which it was waged—neither British Officers on the Afghan frontier, nor British influence paramount throughout Afghanistan, nor even a weaker sovereign on the throne of Kabul.

CHAPTER XI

MOBILIZATION.

THOUGH Lord Lytton's whole conduct towards Shere Ali had been steadily leading up to a rupture between the British and Afghan Governments; though he had allowed his thoughts to dwell upon the advantages which Great Britain might reap from such a breach till it had come to seem to him a thing devoutly to be wished; though he had indulged in dreams of conquest so distant and extensive that the resources of the British Empire were inadequate to their achievement—yet the dissolution of the Mission found him unprepared for the struggle he had provoked, and unwilling to open his eyes to its probable dimensions and duration.

The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Haines, and the Military Member of Council, Sir Samuel Browne, with whom the responsibility for the Viceroy's military action really lay, saw the coming contest in its true proportions, and laboured hard to dissipate his dreams of cheap and rapid victory. But Lord Lytton's visionary mind, fed by the flattering promises of his irregular advisers, refused to believe that the whole business would not be over in a fortnight; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be induced to adopt the most ordinary precautions for the protection of India's own frontier.

One step, however, which Sir Frederick Haines had previ-

ously urged upon him in vain, he now consented to take, namely, to strengthen the garrison of Quetta which, far too weak for the position into which it had been thrust, even whilst it had only the hostility of the surrounding tribes to fear, was in imminent danger of destruction now that, at any moment, the prince and people of Afghanistan might have to be reckoned among its possible assailants.

As usually happens when a thing is done hastily and at the eleventh hour, the work of reinforcement proved difficult and costly. The nearest available British troops were at Multan, 576 miles distant from Quetta; and it was therefore to Brigadier-General John Murray, the officer commanding that District,¹ that the order to prepare a mixed force of European and Natives was sent, with directions to despatch it as quickly as possible by the frontier road on the right bank of the Indus to Rajanpur, where it was to concentrate preparatory to beginning its toilsome march through the desert of Baluchistan. Murray, an exceptionally able officer, spared no pains in carrying out his instructions; but the time allowed him was so short, and the means at his disposal so limited, that the troops left Multan badly clothed, badly equipped and provided with an insufficient and hastily improvised transport—equally unfit to bear the terrible heat of the desert in autumn, and the intense cold of the upper end of the Bolan Pass in winter.

¹ Since 1878 the nomenclature of Divisions and Districts have been changed in India. What was a Division in 1878, is now a First Class District; and what was then known as a District, is now called a Second Class District.

Lord Lytton further directed that a force, sufficiently strong to cross the Afghan frontier and threaten Kandahar, should be assembled at Multan and held in readiness to take the field on the 1st of November, and that the contingent of the Nawab of Bahawalpur—one of several Punjabi Princes who had asked that their troops might take part in the impending military movements—should proceed to that city to replace the garrison of which it had been deprived by the more pressing needs of Quetta.¹

But it was not to Quetta, nor yet to Kandahar that the Viceroy looked when maturing his schemes for bringing about the collapse of Shere Ali's authority, but to the Shutargardan Pass, whence, as he fondly fancied, he could dominate Kabul and dictate terms to the Afghan Government. The steps by which he had smoothed the way for the entrance of a British force into the Kuram Valley, have already been enumerated. The regiments destined to take part in that advance had been detailed before the assembling of the Mission at Peshawar; and now, on the 24th of September, two days after its dissolution, orders were issued for their rapid concentration at Thal, the extreme frontier outpost of the Kohat District, divided from Afghan territory by the Kuram River only. To the command of this force the Viceroy appointed Major-General F. S. Roberts,

¹ This particular corps was well disposed and loyal; nevertheless, the employment of troops not under the control of the British Government, nor the command of British Officers, to hold a British base of operations, was open to very grave objections, and ought not to be accepted as a precedent to be followed.

V.C., C.B.,¹ who was to retain his post of Quarter-Master-General whilst, temporarily, handing over its duties to Colonel C. C. Johnson, C.B., who continued to perform them with much tact and ability till the end of the war.

It was impossible to enter upon warlike movements directed towards two widely separated points of the North-West Frontier, without awakening the jealous alarm of the Independent Tribes along its entire length; and it was therefore essential that military preparations should go hand in hand with the political work of soothing that alarm, and inducing the Tribesmen to transfer their very imperfect friendship from the Amir of Afghanistan to the British Government. The Governor-General's Agent in Baluchistan was early informed of the proposed despatch of reinforcements to Quetta, and instructed to secure the co-operation of the Khan of Khelat and of the Tribes dwelling between Khelat and Quetta, in the impending war, and to arrange with them for the passage of British troops through their respective territories.

The Political Officers in the Kohat District were, at the same time, directed to use their best endeavours to allay the fears of the inhabitants of the Kuram Valley by assurances that, so far as they were concerned, the British advance would be of the most friendly character; they being

¹ On the 15th March, 1878, the Viceroy had nominated Roberts to the officiating command of the Punjab Frontier Force, pending the creation of a Chief Commissionership of the North-West Frontier, a post which he was eventually to fill. In May, however, he had been recalled to Simla.

accepted as allies, and their independence strictly respected.¹ Cavagnari's negotiations with the Afridis had never been broken off, but their progress was slow, and as it was felt that on the conduct of this powerful clan would depend that of the Wazaris, Mohmands and other tribes, and, if of a hostile nature, might kindle a conflagration all along the border—measures were hastily adopted to ensure the safety of Peshawar. The Guides Corps from Hoti Mardan, which had been sent to occupy an old Sikh fort at Jamrud as an answer to Cavagnari's rebuff at Ali Masjid, was detained there, though under orders to join the Kuram Field Force; and the 1st Sikhs and a Mountain Battery were summoned from Kohat to strengthen the Peshawar garrison which, prostrated by the malarial fever, always rife in that district in the months of September and October, and exceptionally severe in the autumn of 1878, could scarcely furnish the necessary guards.

The tedious process of buying, one by one, the adherence of the Khyber Tribes proved, at last, too much for Cavagnari's overbearing and impetuous nature; and casting about for some way of bringing them more rapidly under British influence, he hit upon a plan which, early in October, he laid before the Viceroy.

Asiatics are, notoriously, easily affected by success—a brilliant feat of arms at the outset of a campaign usually attaching them for a time, at least, to the side of the victor—and what feat of arms could be more brilliant, and, under the circumstances, more likely to impress the minds of the

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 251—252.

border tribes than the surprise and capture of the fort whose garrison had dared to shut the door of the Khyber in the face of a British Mission?

This, then, was Cavagnari's scheme, and he was not mistaken in thinking that it would fire the imagination of a man of dramatic instincts, fond of effect and display, like Lord Lytton. In vain did the Commander-in-Chief and Sir Neville Chamberlain¹ protest, insisting on the great risk to be run and the little advantage to be reaped from the enterprise, even if successful—the Viceroy put more trust in his own military judgment, backed up as it was by the approval of General Roberts whom Cavagnari had consulted before telegraphing his proposal to Simla, than in theirs, and declined to be guided by their advice.

The plan, as finally settled, was as follows:—After a night march, Ali Masjid was to be attacked at day-break by the Guides and 1st Sikhs under Colonel Jenkins, supported by 400 British and 600 Native troops, drawn from the Peshawar garrison, and by three heavy guns; and that it would be successfully surprised, Lord Lytton seems to have taken for granted, since he made no provision for what was to happen in case of failure. But General C. C. Ross, the experienced officer commanding at Peshawar, who

¹ On October the 27th the *Times* correspondent telegraphed: "It was reported with some show of plausibility, that at one time the military arrangements were suffering from divided counsel; that the Viceroy was very anxious to insist upon the advance at once on Ali Masjid, but that the Commander-in-Chief absolutely refused to entertain the idea until his reserves were in complete support."

had been selected to lead the expedition, ¹ was less blindly sanguine. To night marches he had a deeply rooted objection, and in surprises he had no faith; therefore, though prepared to attack Ali Masjid, if ordered to do so, and to provide the necessary troops, he did not shrink from pointing out that the operation was a doubtful one, and that, owing to the sickly state of the Peshawar garrison, there would practically be no reserve available to cover his retreat, if retreat became imperative.

There were good reasons for Ross's misgivings. Never was fortress less open to capture by surprise than Ali Masjid. Perched on a detached and precipitous hill, no enemy could approach it unobserved, except under the cover of night; and it was practically impossible for a couple of thousand men, encumbered with heavy cannon, to get within striking distance of it during the few hours when such cover could be enjoyed. But even if the nature of the country had not put insuperable obstacles in the way of a *coup-de-main*—the condition of Peshawar itself was a guarantee that the approach of a British force would be known in Ali Masjid in ample time to prepare for its reception. That city swarmed with Pathans, all of them, under the circumstances of the case, natural,

¹ It was currently reported in India that Roberts was to lead the attack; and, on the 6th October, the *Times* correspondent telegraphed home that "The latest news from Peshawar states that 200 men of each regiment in garrison, together with the Horse Artillery and 40-Pounder Battery, and Sappers and Miners, have proceeded at once to Jamrud. The Guides and a regiment from Kohat will join them there. It is believed that this force, under the command of General Roberts, will attack the fort of Ali Masjid."

unpaid spies and informers, and no movement of troops could hope to escape their vigilant observation, nor fail to be at once reported to Faiz Mahomed; and, after eliminating the advantages attaching to a surprise, the project's chances of success were very small, for the threatened position was exceedingly strong, and the ground over which an attack must be delivered afforded hardly any cover to its assailants.

In 1839 a British force of almost exactly the same composition and strength as that which was to be employed against Ali Masjid, suffered a disastrous repulse at Pashat, a small fort far less strongly situated than that which guards the mouth of the Khyber. This post, which lies in the Kunar Valley, fifty miles north-east of Jalalabad, was attacked by Colonel Orchard at dawn on the 29th of January. Three times his troops rushed gallantly to the assault; again and again, the engineer officer, Captain Pigou, made the most strenuous efforts to blow in the gate—the attack failed, and when ammunition ran short there was nothing to be done but to withdraw, with a loss of sixty-five killed and wounded. The incident was probably unknown to Lord Lytton, for Kaye barely mentions it, and Durand's history had not yet been published; but had he been familiar with its facts, he was the last man to have seen their bearing on any scheme of his own; and, despising the remonstrances of his Commander-in-Chief, he would have allowed little weight to Durand's opinion that "imperative necessity alone can excuse the adoption of a mode of attack so hazardous and so liable to failure from many causes."¹ Dispassionate students of war

¹ The First Afghan War, by Sir Henry Durand, page 184.

will, however, be likely to share the views of the man who blew in the gates of Ghazni, and to ask that the "imperative necessity" for running such a risk at Ali Masjid shall be made clear to them. Was it in the interest of the security of the North-West Frontier, or as an indispensable preliminary to a swift advance on Kabul, that Cavagnari conceived and Lord Lytton adopted this hazardous scheme?—One feature of it, not hitherto mentioned, gives the lie to either supposition. Ali Masjid was to be surprised, stormed, captured and—abandoned! Left empty, swept and garnished for the Amir's troops to re-occupy, or to fall into the hands of the Afridis.

The key to this extraordinary *dénouement* may be found in the fact that the Viceroy, obstinately convinced of the superiority of the Kuram Valley as a road to Kabul, had, at this time, no intention of including the Khyber in the field of the projected military operations; and that he therefore regarded the capture of Ali Masjid, not as a first step in a campaign, but simply as an isolated act of daring, the sole object and use of which was to dazzle and amaze the Tribesmen, far and near.

Ross's representations had no effect except, perhaps, to injure for a time his own professional prospects;¹ but the Military Member of Council when he heard of the projected adventure—which was not till the order for its execution had been issued—insisted so strongly that the folly of abandoning

¹ Though most eager to be sent to the front, Ross was kept tied down to Peshawar all through the first phase of the war, and was not employed during the second.

Ali Masjid should not be added to the folly of taking it, that the Viceroy consented to modify this portion of the plan. That the whole scheme fell through, in the end, was due to the timely receipt at Simla of the news that four battalions of Afghan infantry, three field-pieces and a mountain battery had arrived at Ali Masjid, and that further reinforcements were on their way from Dakka.¹ Its relinquishment must have been a great relief to the minds of Lord Lytton's responsible military advisers; but the possible effect on the border tribes of the presence of a large body of Afghan troops in close proximity to the Indian frontier, appeared to them so dangerous, that they strongly urged the diversion to the Peshawar District of that portion of the Kuram Force which was assembling at Kohat.

To this proposal Lord Lytton could not be brought to consent; under continued pressure, however, he was induced to authorize the bringing up of the effective strength of the troops in the Peshawar Valley to 7,100 men by reinforcements drawn from down-country stations, and the mo-

¹ On October the 13th the *Times* correspondent telegraphed:—
“It was in contemplation at one time to make a rapid advance against the fort of Ali Masjid and to endeavour to seize it by a *coup-de-main*. . . . Various reasons have prevailed with the Government in favour of delay. In the first place, Ali Masjid has been greatly strengthened by reinforcements of troops, accompanied by artillery. It is said that there are some 6,000 Regular troops occupying the Khyber Pass, so even if the fort, which is situated about nine miles from the entrance of the pass, were captured, it would be very difficult to hold it until all our preparations for a further advance were completed.”

bilization of a Reserve of 6,000 men at Lawrencepur, an abandoned cantonment on the Grand Trunk Road, between Attock and Rawal Pindi. In the opinion of Sir F. Haines and Sir S. Browne, the crisis was so serious that the mobilization of an army corps would hardly have sufficed to meet it; but as no further concessions were to be wrung from a man who saw in the costly preparations which his legitimate advisers felt it their duty to press upon him, a rebuke of his more sanguine view of the situation which he had created—they had to be thankful for the little he was willing to grant them; whilst General Ross had to make with the limited forces at his disposal, the best dispositions he could for the safety of the frontier, by adding the 1st Sikhs, a Company of Sappers and Miners and a Mountain Battery to the Guides at Jamrud, and by encamping 3,000 men at Hari Singh ka Burj, an old Sikh fortified post, standing half way between Jamrud and Peshawar.

A little later when, as will presently be seen, the Secretary of State had allowed Lord Lytton a free hand in the matter of military preparations—orders were given to mobilize another Division, composed of Bombay troops, who were to assemble at Sukkur; to hold a considerable number of Madras troops in readiness to move when required to do so; and to attach a siege train, consisting of three Heavy Batteries and an Engineer's Siege Park Equipment to the Division concentrating at Multan¹—an addition which confirmed the rumour that an advance on Herat was contemplated, since, short of

¹ Distribution of the Army, November 1st, 1878; and Assistant Adjutant-General's Return, Kandahar Field Force.

Herat, there was no town in Afghanistan that would need such an amount of heavy cannon either for its capture, or its subsequent defence.

Later still, apparently as an after-thought, or in condescension to the prejudices of his official military advisers who persisted in thinking that the Khyber was the best, as it was certainly the time-honoured route to Kabul—command was given to concentrate an additional Division in the Peshawar Valley, and to move up the Reserve from Lawrencepur. But, although Lord Lytton was now quite ready to mobilize any number of troops, he still hesitated to sanction the expenditure necessary to make of the different forces efficient and mobile bodies, not having as yet been shaken in his conviction that the mere threat of their presence on the Afghan frontier would suffice to disarm all opposition, and insure the triumph of his policy.

CHAPTER XII

THE ULTIMATUM.

WHILST preparations for the invasion of Afghanistan *via* the Kuram and the Bolan routes were being hurried forward, and the military authorities were fighting for leave to afford adequate protection to the most vulnerable and important portion of the North-West Frontier—the Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan had arrived in India, bringing with him the Amir's reply to the letter in which the Indian Government had notified the intended despatch of a British Mission to Kabul. That reply, as telegraphed by Lord Lytton to the Secretary of State, ran as follows:—

“After compliments; your Excellency's despatch regarding the sending of a friendly message has been received through Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan; I understand its purport, but the Nawab had not yet had an audience, nor had your Excellency's letters been seen by me when a communication was received to the address of my servant Mirza Hubibullah Khan, from Commissioner, Peshawar, and was read. I am astonished and dismayed by this letter, written threateningly to a well-intentioned friend, replete with contentions, and yet nominally regarding a friendly Mission. Coming thus by force, what result, or profit, or fruit could come of it? Following this, three other letters from above-mentioned source, in the very same strain, addressed to my officials,

have been perused by me. Thus, during a period of a few days, several letters from that quarter have all been before me, and none of them have been free from harsh expressions and hard words, repugnant to courtesy and politeness, and in tone contrary to the ways of friendship and intercourse. Looking to the fact that I am at this time assaulted by affliction and grief at the hand of fate, and that great trouble has possessed my soul, in the officials of the British Government patience and silence would have been specially becoming. Let your Excellency take into consideration this harsh and breathless haste with which the desired object and place of conference have been seized upon, and how the officials of the Government have been led into discussion and subjection to reproach. There is some difference between this and the pure road of friendship and goodwill. In alluding to those writings of the officials of the opposite Government which have emanated from them, and are at this time in the possession of my own officials, the latter have in no respect desired to show enmity or opposition towards the British Government, nor, indeed, do they with any other Power desire enmity or strife; but when any other Power, without cause or reason, shows animosity towards this Government, the matter is left in the hands of God and to His will.”¹

A second telegram of the same date—19th October—
informed Lord Cranbrook that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Neville Chamberlain and Mr. Alfred Lyall, all considered the tone of the Amir’s letter intentionally

¹ Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), pages 252—253.

rude, and as conveying a direct challenge to the British Government; and that in his—Lord Lytton's—opinion a demand for an apology for the Ali Masjid incident would only cause the loss of valuable time, and diminish our prestige with the frontier tribes whilst adding to that of the Amir. The message ended with a request that the British Government would authorize the Indian Government to invade the Kuram and Pishin Valleys, if necessary to advance to Kandahar, and to turn the Afghan troops out of Ali Masjid. ¹

We know the terms of the letters which “astonished and dismayed” the Amir, and it is impossible to deny that they were not “free from harsh expressions and hard words;” we know how little consideration was shown to the grief and perplexity into which he had been plunged by the death of his son and heir; we know that the Viceroy had, indeed, acted in “harsh and breathless haste” in the matter of the Mission, and that his whole conduct towards Shere Ali had been such as to destroy that prince's confidence in his professions of goodwill—and knowing all this, it is difficult to see in this reply the “intentional rudeness, the direct challenge” which Mr. Philip Egerton, Sir Neville Chamberlain and Mr. Alfred Lyall discovered in it. It reads, rather, like the despairing cry of a man who, distracted between two evils, knows not which to choose, and still clings to the hope of escaping both:—The British Government, or the British People, might prove kinder than the Indian Government; the Czar to whom he was sending one appeal after another,

¹ Ibid.

might interfere to save him from the troubles into which Russian action had precipitated him ; winter was at hand to hinder military operations, and peace might be born of delay ; at the worst, he could but yield at the eleventh hour.

Such were Shere Ali's hopes, and such the fears of Lord Lytton and his private Secretary. "The Viceroy quite understands," so wrote Colley at this very time, "that to undertake operations in such weather (*i.e.*, in the winter rains) would be impossible, but trusts that 'the powers above' may be gracious to us and assist us in slaughtering a few mortals . Our principal anxiety now is lest the Amir should send in an apology, or the Home Government suddenly interfere."

To men animated by sentiments such as these, it must have been a great mortification to be informed that the British Government had decided to allow the Amir a *locus penitentiae*, and to be directed to prepare and submit for the Secretary of State's approval, a letter calling upon that prince to apologize for Faiz Mahomed's refusal to permit the Mission to enter the Khyber. Lord Cranbrook would sanction no infraction of Afghan territory until a reply to this letter had been received, or until the time had expired within which an apology could be accepted ; and meanwhile Lord Lytton was to devote himself to the massing of troops on the frontier, whilst his military advisers considered the measures to be taken in the event of Shere Ali's sending an unsatisfactory reply to the Indian Government's letter, or leaving it unanswered.

That document, as drafted by the Viceroy and accepted by the Secretary of State for India, was couched in the following terms :—

“I have received and read the letter which you have sent me by the hands of my Sirdar. It will be in your recollection that immediately on my arrival in India I proposed to send you a friendly Mission for the purpose of assuring you of the good will of the British Government, and of removing those past misunderstandings to which you have frequently alluded.

“After leaving this proposal long unanswered, you rejected it, on the grounds that you could not answer for the safety of any European Envoy in your country, and that the reception of a British Mission might afford Russia a pretext for forcing you to receive a Russian Mission. Such refusal to receive a friendly Mission was contrary to the practice of allied States, yet the British Government, unwilling to embarrass you, accepted your excuses.

“Nevertheless you have now received a Russian Envoy at your capital, at a time when a war was believed to be imminent, in which England and Russia would have been arrayed on opposite sides, thereby not only acting in contradiction to the reasons asserted by you for not receiving a British Mission, but giving to your conduct the appearance of being actuated by motives inimical to the British Government.

“In these circumstances, the British Government, remembering its former friendship with your father, and still desiring to maintain with you amicable relations, determined to send, after such delay as the domestic affliction you had suffered rendered fitting, a Mission to you under the charge of Sir Neville Chamberlain, a trusted and distinguished officer of the Government, who is personally known to you; the

escort attached to his Mission, not exceeding 200 men, was much less numerous than that which accompanied you into British territory, and was not more than was necessary for the dignity of my Envoy. Such Missions are customary between friendly neighbouring States, and are never refused except when hostility is intended.

“I despatched by a trusted messenger a letter informing you that the Mission accredited to you was of a friendly character; that its business was urgent, and that it must proceed without delay.

“Nevertheless, you, having received my letter, did not hesitate to instruct your authorities on the frontier to repel the Mission by force. For this act of enmity and indignity to the Empress of India in the person of her Envoy, your letter affords no explanation or apology, nor does it contain any answer to my proposal for a full and frank understanding between our two Governments.

“In consequence of this hostile action on your part, I have assembled Her Majesty’s forces on your frontier, but I desire to give you a last opportunity of averting the calamities of war.

“For this it is necessary that a full and suitable apology be offered by you in writing, and tendered on British territory by an officer of sufficient rank.

“Furthermore, as it has been found impossible to maintain satisfactory relations between the two States unless the British Government is adequately represented in Afghanistan, it will be necessary that you should consent to receive a permanent British Mission within your territory.

“It is further essential that you should undertake that no

injury shall be done by you to the tribes who acted as guides to my Mission, and that reparation shall be made for any damage they have suffered from you; and, if any injury be done by you to them, the British Government will at once take steps to protect them.

“Unless these conditions are accepted, fully and plainly, by you, and your acceptance received by me not later than the 20th November, I shall be compelled to consider your intentions as hostile, and to treat you as a declared enemy of the British Government.”¹

It will be in the recollection of the reader, to use Lord Lytton's phrase, that the Mission as originally announced by him was to be sent simply to communicate two facts—the new title of the Queen, and his own assumption of office; and that when the flimsy pretence was brushed aside by the Amir, and it became necessary to give some more adequate reason for a step which the British Government well knew to be obnoxious to the Afghan Government, the desire to give Shere Ali an opportunity of expressing his wishes—a friendly desire emphasized by most unfriendly threats—was substituted for the motive originally assigned. It will also be within his recollection that the misunderstandings mentioned in the Ultimatum had been assumed by Lord Lytton and denied by Shere Ali; and that they were skilfully used by the former as an argument for insisting on the latter's submission to proposals which were the true cause of the only anxiety from which he suffered; also, that while the “unwillingness to embarrass” the Amir had showed

¹ *Ibid.*, pages 254—255.

itself in raising up for him enemies on every side—the acceptance of his excuse for declining to receive a British Mission had taken the form of repudiating all British engagements towards him, of threatening him with the loss of Kandahar and Herat, whenever it should suit British interests to take possession of those provinces, and of breaking off all diplomatic intercourse with his Government. Further, he will remember that by its own agents and spies, the Indian Government had been made acquainted with the fact that Shere Ali had striven to hinder the journey of the Russian Mission, and that Stolietoff and his companions were kept in something very closely resembling imprisonment during their stay in Kabul, treatment which went far to confirm Atta Mahomed's statement that the Amir looked upon all Russian agents as an embarrassment; nor can he have forgotten that the consideration shown to that prince in his deep affliction was of the most perfunctory character;—and with all these facts fresh in his memory to assist his judgment of the document which was to furnish the Amir with a *locus penitentiæ*, he will be able to see how nicely calculated it was to relieve Lord Lytton of his “principal anxiety”—the fear lest, once again, Shere Ali should yield, “through helplessness,” to a demand which lapse of time and frequent repetition could not invest with the justice which it had lacked from the beginning. To say that it had been found impossible to maintain satisfactory relations between the two States unless the British Government were represented in Afghanistan by a British Envoy, when those relations had been of the most friendly description so long as there had been no question of sending such an Envoy to Kabul—was

too glaring a perversion of the truth for Shere Ali to be able to retain a shadow of respect for the Government that could be guilty of it; and the assertion that the refusal to receive a friendly Mission was contrary to the practice of civilized States, must have affected him even more painfully, since it denied the basis of the alliance it affirmed, and could be made to justify not only this one demand, but any other that Lord Lytton, or his successor, might think well to put forward. We have already seen that it could be made to cover the right to establish British telegraph lines throughout Afghanistan; the right of access for British subjects, official and unofficial, to all parts of that kingdom; and the right to expect protection for those subjects—in a word, the right to force a line of conduct, easy and natural to a civilized European State upon a less than half civilized Asiatic State, and to hold its Government responsible for the results of the experiment.

Still, however much we may condemn the tone of the Ultimatum and question its veracity, it was at least perfectly consistent with all Lord Lytton's previous conduct towards the Amir—but how had it come about that the British Government which had recently given its consent to the projected *coup-de-main* at Ali Masjid—an act only to be justified on the assumption that Great Britain and ¹Afghanistan were already at war¹—should now have repu-

¹ “To march an army into a neighbouring country by which we are not threatened, and without having endeavoured to obtain by reason and justice, an equitable reparation for the wrongs of which we complain, would be introducing a mode

diated that assumption, and claimed for Shere Ali a period of grace in which to make his submission?

The principal reason for this inconsistency must, no doubt, be sought in the agitation which had arisen in England when the news of the rebuff suffered by the Chamberlain Mission, had suddenly awakened her people to the fact that they were standing on the threshold of a second Afghan war; an agitation which, in the case of its leaders, must have been embittered by the consciousness that they had been lulled into an inaction, which it was now probably too late to repair, by false assurances as to the unchanged nature of our relations with the Amir.¹

The first note of warning and protest was sounded by Lord Lawrence in a letter of the 27th September to *The*

pregnant with evils to mankind, and sapping the foundations of the safety and tranquillity of States.”—Vattel, book III, chap. 4.

¹ On the 20th of April, 1877, the Peshawar Conference having been practically broken off in February and formally closed at the end of March, Lord George Hamilton assured the House of Commons that no change whatever had occurred in the relations between the British Government and the Amir; and on the 15th of June, Lord Lytton's despatch of the 10th of May, being then in his hands, Lord Salisbury told the House of Lords, that we had not tried to force an Envoy upon the Amir at Kabul, that the troops assembled on the North-West Frontier had been brought together without any reference to such a demand; that our relations with the Amir of Kabul had undergone no material change since the previous year; that he, the speaker, did not believe that Shere Ali was worse disposed towards us than hitherto, or that his feelings were in any way more embittered towards the British Government.

When the truth of these statements was challenged after the

Times, in which he had the courage to contend that the ill-advised step of assembling the Mission at Peshawar before ascertaining whether it would be allowed to proceed to Kabul, had brought upon us the affront under which we were smarting; that the Amir in declining to receive that Mission¹ was acting in accordance with an old policy, based upon grounds which we ourselves had formerly accepted as valid; that Great Britain could gain nothing, whilst India must lose much, by a war of which it was impossible to foresee the end; and that as, in many instances, we had been wrong in our policy towards the Amir, there could be no real dishonour in our coming to terms with him.

Other statesmen, notably Lord Grey and Lord North-

publication of the Afghan papers, their author defended himself by explaining that in using the expression "Amir at Kabul," he had referred to the "city," not to the "country," "state," or "Government" of Kabul; and that when he had said that the Amir's feelings were in no way "more embittered towards the British Government," he meant to imply that "they were already as hostile to us as they well could be." When it was retorted that he must have known that his hearers had accepted his statements not as he understood them, but in their simple, natural sense, as conveying assurances of the continued good understanding with the Amir for which the Duke of Argyll had asked—Lord Salisbury justified the deception he could not deny, by declaring that if he were to be expected to give no answer, except such as contained a complete revelation of the policy of the Government, the only inference he could draw was that, in future, such questions must receive no answer at all.

¹ The true facts with regard to the Mission were not known in England when Lord Lawrence wrote this letter.

brook, shared Lord Lawrence's views,¹ and pleaded for them with pen and voice; and on the 16th of November, an Afghan Committee, entirely unconnected with party, was formed whose chairman, Lord Lawrence, wrote at once to Lord Beaconsfield requesting him to receive a deputation from their body; its object in seeking the interview being to induce him to stop, by telegram, the immediate outbreak of war, and to ask for the publication of all papers bearing on Afghan and Central Asian affairs, from the 1st of April, 1876, onwards, and the immediate calling together of Parliament. The Prime Minister refused to receive the deputation; and Parliament was not summoned, nor the papers asked for published till the die had been cast, and there was nothing left to the members of either House but the opportunity of criticising a policy they could no longer hope to influence. Yet the agitation had not been altogether barren, since it had helped to restrain the British Government from plunging into war with the arbitrary haste which alone would have satisfied Lord Lytton, and so given time for his military advisers to make good the more glaring

¹ Among the supporters of Lord Lytton's policy who took up the cudgels for it in the columns of the *Times*, the first place must be assigned to Sir James Stephens; but that Journal was itself its chief and most persistent advocate. The leaders published by it on the subject well repay perusal, based as they are upon the letters of its Special Correspondent in India, which betray an intimate acquaintance with Lord Lytton's Minute, or, at least, with the views embodied in that document, containing, indeed, many passages which it is hard to believe were not written by the Viceroy's Private Secretary.

deficiencies in the equipment and organization of the troops who were to take part in it.

That salutary delay was due, however, in part to a second and more secret cause. It will be remembered that Stolietoff wrote to the Afghan Foreign Minister from Tashkent, on the 21st of September, that he was starting that day to see the Emperor. On the 8th of October he wrote to the same correspondent from Livadia, where Alexander II was staying, that "he was busy, day and night, in the Amir's affairs and that, thank God, his labours had not been without result. The great Emperor was a true friend to the Amir and to Afghanistan, and would do whatever he might think necessary."

These opening lines ran smoothly and pleasantly enough; the remainder of the letter must have been less easy to write. "Of course you have not forgotten," so it went on, "what I told you, that the affairs of Kingdoms are like a country which has many mountains, valleys and rivers. One who sits on a high mountain can see these things well. By the power and order of God there is no Empire equal to that of our great Emperor . . . Therefore whatever our Government advises you, you should give ear to . . . There are many things which you cannot understand, but our Government understands them well. It often appears that a thing which is unpleasant at first, is regarded as a blessing afterwards."

The unpleasant thing which was to prove a blessing in the end, though Stolietoff does not actually say so, was that he who sat on a high mountain—i. e. the Emperor—was not prepared to take up arms in the Amir's defence; and the advice to which Shere Ali was bidden to give ear, took the

form of a recommendation to make peace with the English publicly, whilst continuing in secret to prepare for war, unless he could look to his brothers on the other side of the river (Indus)—i. e. the Mahomedans of India—to come to his assistance, in which case he was to go on, in the name of God. ¹

On October the 9th, the day after Stolietoff had penned this letter, Shere Ali wrote to the Emperor informing him that the British were busy organizing expeditions to Afghanistan, and significantly reminding him that Dost Mahomed had preferred the friendship of the Emperor Nicholas to that of the English Government; and that, "in consequence, Afghanistan had suffered what it suffered." "I hope," so the letter ended, "that your Majesty will kindly send me friendly assistance, befitting the greatness of your Imperial Majesty, for the maintenance of the tranquillity of Afghanistan." ²

This letter was enclosed in one to General Von Kaufmann, warning him that he might shortly hear that the British and Afghan Governments were at war, and that the Amir expected him to lend his friendly aid in any way he—Kaufmann—might think proper.

On November the 4th, Kaufmann mentioned, in notifying to Shere Ali that an extract of his letter to the Emperor had been telegraphed to that monarch, that he had been informed, on good authority, that the English wanted to come to terms with him, and advised him to make peace with them if they gave him the chance; and three weeks

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1881), page 18.

² Ibid., page 19.

later he wrote, at the Emperor's desire, to inform him that the British Ministers had given a pledge to the Russian Ambassador in London that they would not interfere with the independence of Afghanistan.¹

Russian mediation, then, had been at work both in London and at Kabul; and the Emperor Alexander must be credited with an honest attempt to avert the dangers which he had brought upon Afghanistan, and with some share in securing to her sovereign a period of grace in which to make his submission to the offended majesty of England. It was not the Czar's fault that the distrust engendered by "the conduct and manners of the British Government," had sunk so deep into Shere Ali's mind that he felt convinced it would not "listen to any overtures for reconciliation and the removal of the misunderstanding, although no shots had yet been exchanged,"² and, in that conviction, delayed answering the Ultimatum till the respite granted to him had virtually expired.

¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

² *Ibid.*, 22.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RUSSO-AFGHAN CORRESPONDENCE. ¹

THE point at which this narrative has now arrived—a point at which the stream of events whose fatal flow it has been tracing, was temporarily arrested—is the most favourable that is likely to occur for reviewing the whole of the correspondence between the Amir and the Russian officials in Central Asia, some portions of which were discussed in the foregoing chapter.

It began with the letter from General Von Kaufmann, Governor of Russian Turkestan, containing phrases so disquieting to Shere Ali that he forwarded it with many anxious questions and comments of his own to Lord Mayo, who interpreted the ambiguous passages in a friendly sense, and bade the Amir answer it in courteous and neighbourly fashion. This communication was followed by another, excusing the friendly reception which Kaufmann had accorded to Abdur Rahman, the Amir's nephew and opponent. Each contained also warm expressions of good-will towards the people and ruler of Afghanistan;—expressions which Shere Ali politely acknowledged and reciprocated, whilst taking no notice of the explanation of the hospitality afforded to his rival at Tashkent.

¹ Central Asia, No. 1 (1881).

In the succeeding letters—all short—Kaufmann kept Shere Ali informed as to the movements of Russian troops in Central Asia, evidently with the object of dispelling any anxiety that those movements might be likely to awaken in his correspondent's breast; and at the same time displayed his own knowledge of the things that were happening in Afghanistan, and his interest in all that concerned the welfare of the Amir. In this way, Shere Ali received, at first hand, the news of the capture of Kuldja in 1871, and of the conquest of Khiva in 1873; and also congratulations on his reconciliation to his son, Yakub Khan, and the announcement of the approaching return to Kabul of a relation of his own, who had been for three years in the Czar's service, and for whom Kaufmann solicited his favour.

An allusion to the boundary between Afghanistan and Bokhara, in a letter of Von Kaufmann's, dated June 28, 1872, aroused the Amir's quick suspicions; and, on this and on a second, similar occasion, Lord Northbrook had to instruct the Kabul Agent to allay them by the assurance that the Government of India saw nothing to be alarmed at in the words to which he had taken exception. Eighteen months later, it was the Viceroy who was uneasy. In a letter written by General Kolpakovsky, acting Governor-General of Turkestan in Kaufmann's absence, mention had been made of some request of the Amir's, and Lord Northbrook asked the Secretary of State for India, if he knew what the expression referred to. The explanation, a very simple one, is contained in the Kabul Diary of November 8th to 11th, 1873. Abdur Rahman had been stirring up some of the Turkoman chiefs to rebellion, and the Amir had asked that

measures might be taken by the Russian officials at Tashkent to prevent such hostile action on the part of a man to whom they were granting an asylum.

On the 25th January, 1874, we come to the first letter written by the Amir to the Governor of Turkestan, which is not an answer to some communication from the latter. This contains simply a notification of the appointment of Abdulla Jan as heir-apparent. Von Kaufmann, being in St. Petersburg, Kolpakovsky acknowledged this announcement, and gave, in his turn, the news of the marriage of the Emperor's daughter to the second son of the Queen of England. Kolpakovsky's letter was dated February 25, 1874, and there seems to have been no other till July 12, 1875, when Kaufmann, having returned to his post, wrote to express his hope that the family alliance concluded between the two Royal Houses would be a favourable omen for all the countries under the protection of the two Sovereigns, thus brought into close relationship.

On the 29th October, 1875, Kaufmann briefly announced the occupation of Khokand, but followed up this letter by another, written in the month of February 1876, giving a detailed account of the circumstances under which that occupation had been effected, and justifying the step on the ground that it had been provoked by the quarrels of a number of rival claimants to the Khanship, and was taken, not in the interests of Russia, but at the request of the people of Khokand themselves, and to afford them tranquillity.

There is an undertone of doubt and dissatisfaction in the Amir's cautious and somewhat obscurely worded reply, dated

August 27, 1876. He offered no opinion on the merits of the particular case; but remarked, in a general way, that "if those persons who are in the neighbourhood, or propinquity of great and powerful States, for whom it is easy and feasible to undertake certain affairs in their country, or city, according to their capabilities and the customs and usages of that country and city, maintain (friendly) relations with (those) States, undoubtedly it is not politic or advisable that they should deviate from such relations."—In other words, that if persons, whom capacity and custom entitle to be the rulers of a country bordering on a Great State, are in political relations with that State, they will be wise to do nothing to injure those relations.—"But as the Government of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor, is great and powerful, and as it is customary for its neighbours and the people in its adjacent territories to expect kindness and rectitude from it, if such great and noted Government shows kindness and mercy to the people in its neighbouring, or adjacent territories, certainly, it will lead to the encouragement (*lit*: hopes) of neighbours, and the comfort of the people of God."

The first sentences, whilst conceding the wisdom of keeping on good terms with Russia, distinctly vindicated the rights of the princes of countries bordering on her dominions, and deprecated Russian interference in their dynastic quarrels; and the personal motive which dictated it, is apparent. Had not just such dissensions as were alleged as an excuse for the annexation of Khokand to Russia, occurred again and again in Afghanistan, practically at the death of each Amir? Would not such dissensions occur again, probably, at his—

Shere Ali's—own death; and might they not be made to cover the seizure by Russia of Herat, or Afghan Turkestan? The concluding sentence has in it the ironical ring which we have heard before. That Kaufmann felt the doubt and uneasiness troubling the Amir's mind, as he penned this letter, is shown by the haste with which he replied to it—on October 1st, and the skill with which, in repeating the Amir's words, he contrived to give to them a turn intended to rob them of their sting, and to vindicate the “kindness and rectitude” of Russia. “Your observations show,” so he writes, “that your Highness fully knows and understands the rules of friendship existing between the Governments alluded to by you. This friendship should not, however, be advantageous to one Power alone, or one Tribe, or one Party alone, but to (several) States, or to the People of the whole World. Should neighbouring States act on this principle or rule, no ill-feeling will ever spring up between them. The confidence which we have reposed in one another, will, I hope, make the friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan firm.”

The bearer of this letter, which reached Shere Ali on the 22nd November, 1876, a certain Mulla Saifullah, seems to have remained many months in Kabul; for when the Amir wrote on the 18th of October, 1877, acknowledging its receipt, he mentioned that he had just received another letter from Kaufmann, asking why he had kept his messenger so long. “The reason why I detained him the first five days,” he explained, “was that it was awfully cold when he arrived here; and afterwards, he fell ill, and, consequently, I could not dismiss him. You may rest assured that my object in

detaining him, was only to give him rest and show him hospitality.”

Kaufmann's letters of February and October the 1st, 1876, and a brief note written by him on the 6th of July of the same year, merely announcing his return from another journey to St. Petersburg, are the letters which excited such vehement suspicions in Lord Lytton's mind; yet we know that all had been opened in the presence of the British Agent, Atta Mahomed, and the former, at least, forwarded by him to the Indian Government, which, at the moment, made no pretence of discovering in it anything contrary to the understanding regarding Afghanistan arrived at by the British and Russian Governments in the year 1873. But supposing it *had* transgressed the agreement, that would not have been Shere Ali's fault. In fairness, he could only be judged by his answer to it, and this, as we have shown, betrayed no delight in Russia's progress in Central Asia, but rather anxiety, veiled, it is true, but yet discernible enough to him who cared to discern it. So far, indeed, as this correspondence is to be used as a means of determining the steadiness of the Amir's loyalty to the British alliance, *his* letters only must be the test applied. He could not prevent Kaufmann's writing to him; he would rather have been without his letters; he replied to them civilly, in the first instance, at Lord Mayo's desire; his own letters were as colourless as he could make them, mere echoes of his correspondent's sentiments; and, among them, there is but one spontaneous communication—the brief note announcing his choice of an heir. By these letters, Shere Ali might well have elected to stand or fall, for they furnish

the most complete vindication of him from the charge of having coquetted with Russia, whilst professing to distrust her, and to desire only the friendship of Great Britain.

Those written between the departure of Stolietoff and the expiration of the period of grace accorded to Shere Ali by the British Government, must be judged by a different standard. No one can expect to find *them* colourless and indifferent. Whilst he wrote them, the Amir's existence and that of his country were at stake, and they show him—despairingly distrustful of British professions of good intentions towards himself and his people, and conscious of his inability to cope with British enmity—turning, indeed, to Russia for help, but turning reluctantly, proudly; rather suggesting to the Emperor his duty towards the Sovereign and State he had helped to ruin, than asking him to do it. But, once again, there is nothing in them of which any honourable Englishman, knowing all the circumstances, could feel himself justified in complaining.

The letters written after the outbreak of hostilities, will be dealt with later; meantime, we will close this examination of the bulk of the correspondence by pointing out its most remarkable feature:—From first to last, it contains no hint of any desire on the Amir's part to make a bargain with the Russian Government; no trace, even in the letters written in his darkest days, of a readiness to barter away the independence of his country in exchange for any help to be rendered to himself.¹

¹ When I inquired of Yakub Khan what had become of the correspondence which must have been carried on between his

father and the Russians he declared that he had destroyed it all on his way to Gandamak; nevertheless, a certain number of letters from Generals Kaufmann and Stolietoff came into my possession." (Forty-One Years in India, Vol. 2, p. 248.)

The use of the expression "a certain number of letters" in this passage, implies that there were *other* letters which did not fall into Lord Roberts' hands. Of this, there is absolutely no external proof, and the internal evidence contained in the correspondence is directly opposed to such an assumption. One letter corresponds to another throughout, even where long intervals of time occur between them—the only break of continuity that can be detected being the absence of a letter written by Kaufmann on the 27th August, 1877, which, judging from Shere Ali's short reply to it, must have been of an entirely formal and complimentary nature. Further, the terms of the letter in which Kaufmann announced the despatch of the Russian Mission, imply no previous understanding between him and the Amir.

Instead, then, of these letters being a portion of those which passed between the Amir and the Governor of Russian Turkestan, it seems certain that they formed the entire correspondence. This view receives confirmation from the fact that when Prince Lobanoff, on the 24th January, 1881, brought to the British Foreign Office copies of the whole Russo-Afghan correspondence, furnished to the Emperor by General Von Kaufmann, they were found to differ from the English version of the same correspondence in a few unimportant particulars only—the discrepancies being due to imperfect translation.—See *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1881), page 29.

CHAPTER XIV

INDIA IN 1878.

SINCE India never had had anything to fear from Afghanistan, and the danger supposed to be threatening her from Russia, the illusory nature of which was now fully recognized by the British Government,¹ had passed away—it would seem natural to believe that Lord Lytton must have been encouraged to carry his original Instructions to their furthest consequences by the knowledge that the moment was singularly propitious for the realisation of the policy which they prescribed. A full treasury, a prosperous people, a thoroughly efficient army, too large for its legitimate duties and pining for action, have often been the determining cause of war; and, from the point of view of the ambitious soldier, they may certainly claim to be considered as its excuse.

¹ “One would suppose, from all we hear that our Indian Empire is on the eve of being invaded, and that we are about to enter into a struggle with some powerful and unknown foe. In the first place, my Lord Mayor, Her Majesty’s Government are by no means apprehensive of any invasion of India by our North-West Frontier. The base of operations of any possible foe is so remote, the communications are so difficult, the aspect of the country is so forbidding, that we do not believe under these circumstances any invasion of our North-Western Frontier is practicable.”—Lord Beaconsfield’s Speech at the Lord Mayor’s Banquet, on the 9th November, 1878.

If then it can be shown that those three elements of strength were present in India in the autumn of 1878, Lord Lytton must, at least, be acquitted of reckless imprudence in his selection of the time for forcing the hand of the Home Government, and precipitating a conflict with Afghanistan.¹ But what are the facts as revealed by the Financial Statements for 1876-77, 77-78, 78-79, and by the volumes of the "Statement of the Moral and Material Progress of India," compiled during the same period?

When Lord Lytton landed in India in April 1876, the shadow of famine had already fallen upon the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, and the Provinces which had escaped the scourge were being drained of their stores of grain to supply the needs of their starving neighbours; with the result that, when the winter rains of that year and the monsoon in 1877 failed throughout the greater part of India, the Punjab, the North-West and Oudh felt the pinch as acutely as did the districts where drought and scarcity were being experienced for the second time.² The distress in 1877 far exceeded that of 1876, and matters were little better in 1878, for not only was the character of the rainfall

¹ "Lord Beaconsfield had added that he had wished to temporize with Shere Ali, but that the hand of the Home Government had been forced by the inopportune haste of the Indian Government, who had precipitated the matter."—Despatch of Count Schouvaloff, reporting conversation between himself and Lord Beaconsfield in November 1878. See *Central Asia*, No. I (1881), page 31.

² *Statement of the Moral and Material Progress of India, 1877-78*, p. 35.

excessively capricious and unsatisfactory,¹ but the long continuance of the famine, by exhausting the local supplies, had increased the difficulty of ministering to the needs of the population, and had taken from the miserable sufferers all strength to resist the ravages of the diseases which had followed in its train.

In 1877, in the Bombay Presidency, 57,252 persons died from cholera, 27,369 from smallpox, 336,965 from fevers and 60,257 from bowel complaints, and the mortality from the same causes was equally high in the Madras Presidency. But the general health of the country was still worse in 1878; there were 170,524 deaths from smallpox in the North-West Provinces and Oudh, and 982,117 from fever, whilst in the Punjab, which was to be the base of the operations against Afghanistan, the death-rate was the highest on record since the introduction of registration.

To put the facts in their briefest form—during the first three years of Lord Lytton's administration, 5,750,000 natives of India perished from want, and an equal number, over and above the normal death-rate, died of diseases of all kinds;²

¹ *Ibid.*, 1878-79, p. 36, 37, 38.

Much damage was done to the crops on various parts of the Bombay Presidency by locusts, and those in the Deccan and Carnatic were ravaged by field rats. No less than 12,000,000 of these creatures were killed after the Government had offered a reward for their destruction.—*Ibid.*, p. 39.

² The Tables of mortality in the "Statements" do not give the whole number of deaths during the years with which we have been dealing, but only such as were due to cholera, smallpox, fevers and bowel complaints; but as the death-rate from

whilst £18,500,000¹ were spent on relief works and the gratuitous distribution of food, and in many districts the land tax had to be largely remitted.

During the two first years of dearth, the loss to the revenue from the deep agricultural distress was compensated, in some slight degree, by enhanced receipts from the customs' duties; but this improvement in trade, when carefully looked into, is seen to be only a fresh proof of the straits to which all classes in India were reduced.

Take the export trade:—India, too poor to consume her own wheat, sent it to England where, owing to a bad harvest, it sold at a high price; for the same reason, the high-class Indian sugars went to Europe, and the abnormal demand for grain and sugar bags advanced the value of jute, and encouraged its manufacture. The amount of rice exported fell off, indeed; but the enhanced price more than balanced the deficiency. The immense mortality among the live stock of the peasants gave a great impetus to the trade in hides and skins.

The Import Returns tell the same tale of need stimulating

these four causes in 1878 was 28·89 *per* thousand and the average death-rate from all causes, including accidents, in the ten years 1883-1892 was only 27·33 *per* thousand, the assumption that during the three famine years there were 5,000,000 deaths from sickness of all kinds, in excess of the usual mortality of such a period, cannot err on the side of exaggeration.

¹ The total estimated expenditure on famine relief during the years 1876-77 and 1877-78 was £18,550,336. Of this sum £8,600,336 were spent on re-productive works, many of which, however, owing to the conditions under which they were planned and executed, were utterly useless, or of little permanent value.

commerce:—The Persian Gulf sent large quantities of inferior grains, pulse and dates to take the place of the exported wheat, and the Mauritius, cheap sugar as a substitute for the better article which had gone abroad. In other words, the abnormal poverty of the Indian people compelled them to part with products which under ordinary circumstances would have remained in the country, and to accept inferior articles in their stead. Further, the enormous quantities of food which had to be distributed to the afflicted districts necessitated a large addition to the rolling stock of the various railways; and the increase in the amount of coal imported must have been due to the same cause, since there was a falling off in the imports of machinery for manufacturing purposes. In the spring of 1878, even this fictitious commercial activity died away, exports and imports alike declining so heavily that the National accounts, when they were made up in March 1879, revealed a loss in the private sea-borne trade of £15,610,212.¹

And if there was nothing in the trade of India and the state of her finances to encourage the Government in indulging in that most expensive of all luxuries—war: and if the miserable condition of her people cried aloud for the fostering hand which could only be extended to her in time of peace—neither did the state of her army afford any excuse for a cruel and wanton disregard of the pressing needs of the whole civil population.

That army had not, indeed, suffered from actual famine;

¹ *Statistical Abstract relating to British India from 1869-70 to 1878-79.*

but the Native soldiers had found their pay—often shared with starving relations—quite inadequate to procure for them food of good quality, and the inferior grains with which they had satisfied their hunger, had undermined their health. In every Presidency dysentery, cholera, small-pox and fever were rife among them, and the European troops were little less sickly than they.¹ Nor was this all:—Speaking of a former Afghan war, the Duke of Wellington had said that “the whole question was one of commissariat; that of commissariat, one of transport.” Judged by this dictum, the second Afghan war stood condemned before its birth; for not only had the famine enormously raised the price of the provisions which would have to be collected for the use of the troops, but it had decimated the people’s stocks of cattle, camels, ponies and mules, which would have to be drawn upon for transport purposes, and the Government’s own supply of these animals had been practically exhausted by the drain of an unusually protracted frontier war.

For many years the general condition of the North-West Frontier had been one of peace and good order, not a single punitive expedition having been sent against the Independent Tribes between 1872 and 1877.^{2 3} In 1875 the refusal of

¹ *Statement exhibiting Moral and Material Progress of India, 1878-79, pp. 114, 115, 116.*

² *Record of Expeditions against the North-West Frontier. Appendix IV.*

³ The credit of this peace and good order is due to the admirable system of border defence organized by Lord Lawrence when Chief Commissioner of the Punjab. What that policy was

some sections of the Afridi Tribe to repair the military road through the Kohat Pass, was punished by the blockade of the whole of the Pass Afridis, which blockade was continued during part of the year 1876 against such subdivisions of the Tribe as had not given in their submission.

But in the autumn of that year a fresh and far more serious dispute arose between the Indian Government and the Adam Khel branch of the Afridis. We have seen that Lord Lytton's lust of territory had been so inflamed by Lumsden's glowing picture of the political and military advantages

and how administered is thus described by Dr. Thornton in his *Life of Sir Robert Sandeman*.

"While the passes were carefully watched and the frontier roads patrolled, every means was taken for the promotion of friendly intercourse. Thus all the frontier customs were abolished, a capitation tax levied by the Sikhs on foreigners was discontinued, and the land-tax on the holdings of the independent tribesmen was reduced to a nominal sum; roads were made connecting the frontier passes with the market towns; free hospitals and dispensaries were established; steamers for the conveyance of passengers and goods were started on the Upper Indus, and inundation canals—a priceless boon in rainless tracts, extending cultivation and affording food and work to thousands—were vigorously developed in the Southern Derajat. So long as they were friendly, the Tribesmen had free access to British Territory; they were welcome to hold land, temporarily or permanently, to enlist in our army, and to make use of our markets, hospitals and dispensaries; and some of the wild spirits of the frontier, representatives of tribes, or sections of tribes, adjoining, were utilized as a local militia in aid of the regular troops."

which would accrue to India from the occupation of the Kuram, that he had made up his mind to possess himself of that valley; and a road, practicable for artillery, through the Kohat Pass seeming a necessary preliminary to this annexation, orders were given for the construction of such a highway.

The measure in itself, apart from its motive, was a good one, since it was important to the security of the then existing frontier that Kohat should have improved communications with Peshawar; but the time selected for its execution was ill-chosen. The occurrences of the preceding year had greatly exasperated the tribesmen of the Kohat District, and a wise statesman would have sought to allay their excitement before pressing upon them new demands. But Lord Lytton was not wise, nor had he wise counsellors at his elbow; so the road was begun, and when the Pass Afridis set themselves to hinder its construction, the blockade against them was re-imposed.

Their resistance collapsed in March 1877, but in July the Jowakis—another section of the same great clan, inhabiting the mountainous country between the Kohat Pass and the Indus, who had been heavily fined for aiding their kinsfolk—raided into British territory, cutting telegraph wires and attacking villages with surprising audacity. In August a force of 1,750 men, exclusive of levies, under the command of Colonel Mocatta, penetrated into Jowakiland; nevertheless the outrages continued, culminating in an attack on a body of Native Infantry, in which 14 sepoy were killed, or wounded.

Measures on a large scale had now become necessary; and

accordingly in November, Brigadier-Generals C. P. Keyes, C. B., and C. C. G. Ross, C. B., with a total force of 7,400 men, occupied the mountain fastnesses of the recalcitrant tribe, Keyes' column operating from Kohat, Ross's from Peshawar; even then it was March 1878 before the Jowakis submitted, and the Force could return to British territory. This little war ran away with the transport and stores that Lord Lytton had been sedulously collecting for the equipment of the Kuram Expedition; and all that he gained by it was "a very fair mountain road" *not* practicable for artillery, which a little management and a few thousand rupees would have given him without the expenditure of a single baggage animal.

It may seem strange that what was, after all, but a small affair, should have exhausted the transport resources of the Indian army, but a consideration of the constitution of that body dissipates the mystery. The old Anglo-Indian army which had gone to pieces in the Mutiny, had had, in time of peace, no transport except elephants; and though on its reorganisation by Sir Hugh Rose, (Lord Strathnairn) in 1861, this error was avoided, the new transport was only calculated to meet the requirements of a force, whose duties were expected to be confined to the defence of the then existing frontiers of India, and to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity within those limits. The Sepoy Rebellion had thrown into such strong relief the additional dangers and difficulties which the British Garrison of India would have had to encounter, had the schemes of General Jacob been adopted and carried out by Lord Canning, that the statesmen and

commanders of the succeeding decade may well be excused for believing that the Forward Policy had received its death-blow, and for founding their military arrangements on that belief. If Sir Hugh Rose and the Government he served had foreseen that, in less than twenty years' time, the Indian army would be engaged in a second abortive attempt to establish British authority in Afghanistan, it is possible that they might have organized it on different lines; but no such cloud darkened for them the political horizon, and they set themselves to solve the military questions of their day, within the conditions under which they presented themselves, in full confidence that those conditions would not vary to any great extent.

The strength of the Indian army on the 1st October, 1878,¹ differed but slightly² from what it had been in 1861, and the arrangements for rendering that army mobile were unchanged. Those arrangements were simple, inexpensive and effective. There was to be maintained at 43 cantonments, extending from Peshawar on the north to Trichinopoly on the south, and from Karachi on the west to Rangoon on the east, a supply of carriage, varying in kind and amount with the nature of the country, but, in each case, sufficient to permit of the mobilisation of a column for the prevention, or repression of disturbances in the district of which the cantonment was the military centre; and to make sure that this carriage should not be found

¹ Officers, 3,794; Men, 183,538; Horses, 82,172; Guns, 442.

² There had been an augmentation of about 4,500 men during the Abyssinian war.

wanting when the occasion for using it should occur, it was further directed that it was to be marched out of the station for a certain number of days in each year—a wise provision for efficiency which, after a time, was allowed to fall into disuse.

No means could have been better calculated to fulfil the purposes which Sir Hugh Rose had in view; but they did not lend themselves to the sudden mobilisation of a large transport train for use beyond the North-West Frontier. Setting aside the obvious fact that it was inexpedient to deprive any cantonment of the carriage which had been allotted to it, it is easy to see that only a small proportion of the whole was suited for service on the rough, steep roads and in the rigorous climate of Afghanistan, and the moving of camels by rail is, at all times, a costly and difficult undertaking.¹

The only existing transport, therefore, to which Lord Lytton could have looked for facilitating the advance of one, or more armies into Afghanistan, was that belonging to the military Stations on the North-West Frontier itself; and this, as we have seen, he had had to sacrifice to the requirements of the subordinate expeditions by which he hoped to pave the way for the occupation of the Kuram. The difficulty of replacing the transport thus expended would have been great under normal conditions of supply; and in India, after three famine years, those conditions were abnormal in the extreme. It was not only that where human workers had died by millions, the four-footed sharers of their toil had

¹ *Return, East India Army System. (Army Transport.) 1885.*

perished by hundreds of thousands,¹ but that those that had been preserved were, for the most part, so weakened by privation as to be unfit for the heavy labours of a peculiarly arduous campaign. But, fit or unfit, strong or feeble, immature or worn out,²—the Government, at its wits' end to move the forces it had pledged itself to put into the field, was obliged to purchase or hire every camel that the people of Sind and the Punjab could be induced to part with; and as double the number would have been required had grain been carried for those actually obtained, the military authorities decreed that some 60,000 of these luckless animals should live on what they could pick up along the narrowest and most barren tracks in the world.

Nor was the Indian army in much better case, as regarded the only kind of artillery which could be of much use to troops engaged in mountain warfare. In the whole of India

¹ "Cattle disease appeared in several districts of the Punjab during 1877-78, and was severely felt in some parts. There was, moreover, great loss of cattle, owing to the failure of the summer rains, and the consequent scarcity of fodder. In the Umballa district the deaths of cattle from starvation were estimated at *two-thirds of the stock of the district*, while in the Delhi and Hissar divisions, it was calculated that over 200,000 head died from the same cause."—Statement exhibiting Moral and Material Progress of India, 1877-78.

² Large numbers of the camels were mere colts, and, of the females, many were big with young. It is a notorious fact that whenever an order is issued to impress transport cattle for service beyond the frontier, the peasantry hide the best of their stock, or, by bribing the Native Transport Agents, induce them to content themselves with the weaklings.

there were only eight Mountain Batteries—two, of six guns each, manned by Europeans, and six, of four guns each, manned by Natives; and though, stored in the depôt of each native battery were two spare guns, with equipment and ammunition complete, the mules and men necessary for working them were lacking. To supplement these batteries—some of which had to be retained in India—Gatling guns were hastily despatched from England and forwarded, in equal haste, to the troops in the field; but when the cases containing them came to be opened, it was found that they had been sent out without duplicate parts, or the instruments needful for effecting repairs, and on being tested they proved to be quite unworkable. The Horse and Field batteries that were also sent up, were of little practical use except on the Kandahar side, and acted everywhere as a drag on the movements of the columns to which they were attached, even after their ammunition had been transferred from waggons to the backs of camels, packed in *seletahs*—canvas receptacles—improvised on the spot.¹ This same process of repacking had to be gone through with much of the rifle ammunition, which was sent to the front in big boxes quite unsuitable for mule carriage.²

The Medical Department was little less unfitted than the Transport Department for the strain to which it was about to be subjected. No special arrangements to meet the exig-

¹ The batteries were ill-provided with drag ropes and other appliances for helping the guns through the heavy desert tracts, and over the steep mountain paths.

² “*With the Kuram Field Force*”, p. 55, by Major J. A. S. Colquhoun, R.A.

encies of mountain warfare had been devised for the conveyance of the sick. The bulk of the dhandies issued to the Native troops were of so flimsy a nature, that they broke down under the weight of a sepoj of ordinary size, and the measures adopted to strengthen them attained their end at the expense of the comfort of the poor fellows to whose lot it fell to use them; whilst the Looshai dhandies, of which a certain proportion were issued to both European and Native troops, though serviceable and comfortable enough when properly braced up, were too heavy to be carried by only four bearers. This same drawback of excessive weight attached to all the old-fashioned doolies; and there were only a small number of the newer and lighter Burke and Hamilton patterns in stock; and whether heavy or light, of faulty or good construction, the vast majority of both the dhandies and the doolies would have to be carried by hastily impressed bearers, who, being quite new to their work, must necessarily perform it under conditions equally unfavourable to themselves and to the sick. But unreadiness was not confined to matters of detail—even so important an administrative question as whether the General Field Hospital, or the Regimental Hospital System should be adopted in the coming war, being still in debate whilst the Multan Force was on its march to Quetta.¹

The paucity of British officers in the Native Army—the one blot on the Military System² as it had been settled in

¹ Report on the Medical Administration of the Afghan Campaign, by Surgeon-General Alexander Smith, M.D., C.B.

² When this system was inaugurated there was still a large

1861—rendered the efficient mobilization of the very considerable forces destined to be employed across the North-West Frontier, a difficult and delicate matter; for it was impossible either to send the selected corps into the field with their full tale of officers—only seven, including the surgeon—or to fill the numerous appointments in connection with the General Staff, and the Supply and Transport Departments which war temporarily creates, without drawing upon other regiments all over India, to an extent very injurious to their discipline and *morale*.

But a still more serious defect in the constitution of those forces was the large number of Pathans and Baluchis included in their ranks. These men are good fighters and, under ordinary circumstances, good soldiers; but to rely upon them in a campaign which was to be directed against their friends and kinsfolk, was to commit an act of over-confident folly.¹ Luckily the danger from this source was neutralized, in some degree, by the fact that the system of class regiments

number of unemployed officers whose regiments had mutinied and who were available to replace casualties. In 1878 this reserve, practically, no longer existed.

¹ General John Jacob, the able administrator of the Sind Frontier, had long before warned the Indian Government of the danger of enlisting Pathans and Baluchis. "Were I," he wrote in his volume of "Views and Opinions", published in 1858,—"were I proceeding on service against the tribes bordering on our frontier, I should consider the real strength of any force to be increased by the absence of such soldiers. They could not be trusted without immense risk of failure or disgrace."

Lord Lawrence, Sir William Mansfield and Sir Henry Norman had recorded similar opinions.

prevailing prior to the Mutiny, had been almost universally superseded by that of class companies and squadrons, which insured that a proportion of each regiment should be free from this natural taint of disaffection.

It results from this brief inquiry into the condition of India and her Military Forces in the year 1878, that Lord Lytton, so far from being able to claim for his policy the excuse of opportunity, lies open to the charge of having forced on an unjust and unnecessary war at a singularly unfavourable moment; and the only possible explanation of his perverse obstinacy is to be found in the fact, to which attention has repeatedly been called, that he entirely underestimated the resistance with which he would meet, and consequently the length of time that the struggle would endure. Ignorance of military matters and of the character and past conduct of the Afghan Tribes, may, perhaps, be pleaded in extenuation of the Viceroy's lack of judgment; but this only shifts the blame of his infatuation from his shoulders to those of the men, to whom he owed his false impressions of the situation with which he would have to cope.

Those men were *not* the Commander-in-Chief, nor the Military Member of Council. Neither Sir Frederick Haines nor Sir Samuel Browne was under any delusion as to the character of the Afghans, and the probability of their acquiescing tamely in an invasion of their country, or as to the ease and celerity with which their opposition to the British advance could be overcome; and from the moment that they clearly understood whither Lord Lytton's ambition was hurrying his Government, they steadily pressed the true facts of the situation upon his notice. Both were distinguished

soldiers of great experience, and the latter had an almost unique acquaintance with border matters and border races, having spent nearly his whole service in the Punjab Frontier Force; but these qualifications had as little weight with Lord Lytton as the official positions, in virtue of which they had the right to demand that their advice should be accepted in all that concerned the preparations for, and conduct of war.

The Viceroy's real counsellors, in military as in political matters, were his Private Secretary, Colonel George Pomeroy Colley; the Quarter-Master-General, Major-General Frederick Roberts; and the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Major Louis Cavagnari; but though the military theories of the first agreed perfectly with the ambitious schemes of the two latter, and though all alike concurred in fostering the Viceroy's ignorant contempt for the dangers he was preparing to run—Roberts, whose whole life since the Mutiny, had been spent in the Quarter-Master-General's Department, who had filled the office of Deputy Quarter-Master-General for several years, and that of Quarter-Master-General for three, was in a far better position than a recent arrival in India like Colley, or a Political officer like Cavagnari, for judging of the fitness of the Indian Army for the task which they were seeking to impose upon it, and, to that extent, must be held to have been the more responsible of the three.

This official responsibility, however, he shares with the Adjutant-General, Major-General Peter Lumsden, and the Military Secretary to the Indian Government, Colonel H. K. Burne. The Departments over which these three officers presided, divided among them the control of all arrangements con-

nected with Intelligence, Plans of Operations, Mobilisation, Formation of Depôts, Movements of Troops, Supply and Transport, Followers, Ordnance, Clothing, Discipline and General Efficiency of the troops; and through one or other of them passed all the orders of Government and the Commander-in-Chief; and had the truth with regard to one and all of these important branches of the military service been laid before Lord Lytton, there can be no doubt, from what is known of his unwillingness to sanction the cost of making good the deficiencies of each, one by one, as they subsequently came to light, that he would have shrunk from the task of remedying the whole of their defects before giving the signal for hostilities, whilst it is not impossible that he might have refused to enter upon war with those defects unremedied.

The truth with regard to Transport, Ordnance, Medical equipment and arrangements and the constitution and health of the Native army has already been laid bare; and it only remains to show, in the present chapter, that the same inherent unfitness, or culpable unreadiness for the prosecution of aggressive war attached to all the arrangements connected with Intelligence, Followers, Clothing and Depôts; for the Plan of Campaign cannot be adequately considered till the Theatre of Operations has been described.

There was no lack of information bearing upon Afghanistan and its People in the possession of the Indian Military Authorities. The conditions under which a second Afghan war was to be prosecuted, were identical with those under which the first had been waged; and the pigeon-holes of the various Departments were filled with Reports in which the experiences of that prototype of all possible Afghan wars

were plainly chronicled. If it was too much trouble to go back to these, there was Colonel Charles Macgregor's Gazetteer which gave, in print and in the most convenient form, the very latest information with regard to all the routes connecting India with Central Asia, and the possibilities of supply along each. Had this work been made a text-book for the instruction of officers wishful to qualify for Staff employment beyond the Frontier, or for the duties of Transport and Commissariat Officers under conditions of which India furnished them with no example—a good deal would have been done to dissipate the dark cloud of ignorance which overshadowed the whole Afghan Question for most of those who were about to become actors in it. But the dust on the Afghan Reports remained undisturbed, and the Gazetteer was kept under lock and key, till, at the last moment, when the time for study had given place to the time for action, a few clerks were hurriedly set to work to copy out certain passages for distribution to the Staff Officers of the various columns.¹ But more surprising than this piece of stupid² official secretiveness, which has been defended on the

¹ If this Gazetteer could not be made public, there were other books from which useful information might have been obtained. "I have just secured Hough's Report on the progress of the Army of the Indus (1838), of which there is one copy in camp; and by snatches I have managed to read Lumsden's Mission to Kandahar. *Why the information in both these books has not been boiled down and circulated to officers is a mystery; a study of these reports would have saved us many mistakes.*"—"Kandahar in 1879", by Major A. le Messurier, R. E., Brigade Major.

² Stupid, because the Russian Central Staff Office at St. Peters-

ground that, if Englishmen were allowed free access to this rich source of knowledge, Russians might drink at the same fount, is the fact that there were no maps of Afghanistan ready to be issued to the troops—not even to their commanders, one of whom, at least, recrossed the Frontier at the end of the first phase of the war without having set eyes on such a thing.¹

It required no study of Afghan history and geography, but merely an acquaintance with the ordinary facts of Indian military service to know that the proportion of followers to troops is as 10 to 11½; yet there were no stores of warm clothing and blankets waiting to be distributed to the thousands of poor wretches who were shortly to be torn from their homes to drive the camels, carry the sick, and generally minister to the wants of three armies, and no steps had been considered for providing those thousands with adequate shelter. In the matter of warm clothing, all the transport animals, and many of the troops were to fare no better than the

burg contained in 1878 most accurate and exhaustive intelligence regarding the military strength and topography of Afghanistan, detailed information being given of all routes traversing the country and leading into India. Even had this not been so, all the knowledge in the world could not lessen the difficulties in the way of a Russian occupation of Afghanistan; besides, it is as true in war as in whist, that it is better to inform one's partner than to keep one's adversary in the dark—the partner in this case, being the whole body of British officers in the Anglo-Indian army, from whom the Departments withheld knowledge essential to the right discharge of their duties.

¹ Sir Frederick Maude.

followers, whole regiments marching to Kandahar in scanty underclothing and cotton coats; whilst on the Kandahar and Kuram sides, the Native soldiers were insufficiently supplied with tents.

With a view to an early advance on Kandahar, Quetta had been occupied in the autumn of 1876, but by so weak a force that, as we have seen, the first act of the Commander-in-Chief, after the repulse of the Chamberlain Mission, was to hurry off troops to its assistance; and although the distance between the new outpost and the nearest British Cantonment of any importance—Multan—by the shortest road, exceeded 500 miles, no depôts of provisions and fodder were established along this, or any other route; in fact, in the whole of Baluchistan, the only preparation for the coming struggle—viz., the collection of boosa (chopped straw), grain and sheepskin coats at Quetta—was undertaken by Major Sandeman on his own initiative. Neither was any attempt made to prepare for the march of troops through Baluchistan, by improving the water supply at the different halting-places, and by enlarging and clearing the old camping-grounds; and Sir Andrew Clarke's¹ recommendation, to lay a line of railway across the desert from Sukkur to Dadar, though strongly supported by Sir S. Browne, was rejected by the Government of which both were members.

There are two plausible, but mutually destructive explanations of the wholesale neglect of precautions and preparations which the facts just adduced attest—it may be urged either that Shere Ali's refusal to permit a British Mission to visit

¹ *Public Works Member of Council.*

Kabul, at the time and in the manner dictated by Lord Lytton, took the Indian Government and the military authorities by surprise, or that, long confidently anticipating an outbreak of hostilities, they thought it wise to abstain from measures which would have revealed those anticipations to the outside world, and have put the Amir on his guard. It is impossible, however, to accept either plea. Some military authorities, some members of the Indian Government may have been ignorant enough of the aims and illusions which were working to bring about a rupture between Great Britain and Afghanistan, to be astonished when it became apparent that war was imminent; but the Viceroy who shaped those aims and nourished those illusions, knew well whither events were tending—knew it from the day when the first attempt to put Lord Salisbury's Instructions into force, revealed the unchangeable nature of the Afghan spirit of independence; and men who took care, by threats in the Conference Chamber, and by military and political action on the Frontier, to leave Shere Ali in no doubt as to what those ends really were, and their determination to attain them, are debarred from pleading diplomatic caution in excuse of departmental carelessness and indifference.

CHAPTER XV

THE THEATRE OF OPERATIONS AND THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

To follow intelligently the history of any campaign, a preliminary acquaintance with what, in military parlance, is termed *the theatre of operations*, is indispensable. This knowledge is, however, doubly essential where the nature of the country in which the war to be studied was waged, and the character of the approaches to that country, were such as to exercise a far stronger influence on the movements of the attacking force, than the counter-movements of the regular army, opposing its advance. Owing to its physical and climatic peculiarities, the region now about to become the theatre of operations in a second Afghan war, offers enormous difficulties to the progress of forces equipped with all modern military appliances. Bounded on the North, by the Kabul river; on the West, by the Hazara Mountains and the river Helmand; on the South, by Baluchistan; on the East, by the Indus—this region, in shape an irregular four-sided figure, contains about 200,000 square miles, an area rather larger than that of France; and, within it, can be experienced every variety of climate, from torrid heat to almost arctic cold. It may be roughly divided into three zones—desert, mountain, and high table-land. The first, a strip of country varying in width from fifty to one hundred and sixty miles, lies either within British territory, or in the

territory of a British ally, the Khan of Khelat; the second is occupied by independent tribes, whose neutrality, or aid, Lord Lytton hoped to purchase; in the third, stand the few cities of Afghanistan, the only points where coercion can be successfully applied to the ruler of that country.

The war, then, as Lord Lytton conceived of it, was to begin in the, to him, improbable event of the Amir's power surviving the loss of his advanced positions in the Khyber and the Kuram, at from 180 to 300 miles beyond the Indian frontier, according to the route taken by the different forces. In reality, it began as soon as that frontier was crossed, and except by the Khyber route, the difficulties of the undertaking developed much earlier; for the march from Rawal Pindi to Thal, and that from Multan to the Indus, lay through rough and barren country; the transfer of troops, with their camp-followers, guns, horses, elephants, baggage, and stores, from the left to the right bank of that river, was a tremendous business, even in the cold weather, when its stream was confined to a channel 1,500 yards wide, and there were bridges of boats at Attock and Khushalgarh, and little steamers at Dera Ghazi Khan and Sukkur to facilitate the crossing; whilst the desert was to prove a still greater obstacle to the advance of the two divisions whose objective was Kandahar. There are few paths across that desert, each strictly marked out by wells and pools, and in those days, when there was no railway to Dadar, the distance between one well, or pool, and another—an interval in several instances of sixteen, in one of twenty-six and a half miles—determined the length of a day's march; whilst the amount of water which the shallowest among them yielded in the

twenty-four hours, fixed the number of men who could be despatched from the original starting-point day by day; a number so small, that the Bengal column of the Army of the Indus, consisting of only 9,500 men, which marched from Shikarpur to the Bolan in 1839, had to be broken up into eight detachments; the cavalry, into half regiments.

Nor is want of water this region's worst feature:—To quote the words of one who had a terrible personal experience of its dangers. ¹—“The heat in this part of the world is more deadly than the sword of a human enemy. Dust storms occur frequently at all seasons of the year, sometimes changing the light of mid-day to an intensity of darkness to which no ordinary night ever approaches; and this darkness, in severe storms, lasts one, two, or more hours. These dust storms are sometimes accompanied by a blast of the simoon, a poisonous wind which is equally destructive to vegetable and animal life.” ²

¹ General John Jacob.

² In June 1839, when the thermometer in the hospital at Sukkur stood at 130°, for several days at 140°, and one day at 143°, and the wind at midnight seemed like a blast from a furnace, Jacob and Lieutenant Cory of Her Majesty's 17th regiment, with forty European soldiers, marched from Sukkur to Shikarpur. On the first day's march of ten miles, seven of the men were struck dead by the sun, and four others with Lieutenant Cory, were sent back to Sukkur, all of whom died on the return journey, or the following day in hospital. On the second day's march, four more deaths occurred. About the same time, a wing of the 23rd Bombay Infantry, marching from Shikarpur in charge of treasure and stores, lost all its British officers; and in another detachment, a Native officer and nine sepoy died in one day.

Rising abruptly from the desert, begins the series of wild mountain ranges, pressing one upon another like waves of a petrified sea, where deep and narrow defiles, the homes of stifling heat, cholera and fever, alternate with high passes where, in winter, the temperature falls constantly below zero: defile and pass being alike destitute of food, forage and fuel. Five routes—the Khyber¹, the Kuram², the Gumal³, the Thal Chotiali⁴ and the Bolan⁵—run through these rugged wastes. Of these, the two former lead direct to Kabul; the two latter, to Kandahar; and the Gumal, to Ghazni, the central city of Afghanistan, situated on the road which connects the other two. All are difficult; all, unhealthy; but the Khyber route possesses the undoubted advantages of being the shortest, the only one practicable at all seasons of the year, and of starting from the very gates of Peshawar, the city which is the base of supply for the troops making use of it; whereas hundreds of miles separate the eastern end of the Bolan, the Thal Chotiali and the Gumal from their base—Multan; and the entrance of the Kuram Valley route is 150 miles distant from its base—Rawal Pindi.

Of these four routes, the Bolan is, after the Khyber, the main commercial and military road between India and Afghanistan; partly, as affording the best approach to Kandahar and Herat, and, partly, as lying nearest to the ports of the Indian Ocean. The depth of the mountain zone at this point is about 120 miles, and, of this distance, one half is the single defile which gives its name to the entire route. The path through this narrow gorge follows closely the bed of the stream, which turns in the rains, or during the melting of the snows, to a roaring rushing torrent,

sweeping all before it, and rendering the camping-grounds on its banks unfit for occupation. Those camping grounds are few, very restricted in extent, and owing to the fact that they are used, year after year, by the Kafilas on their way to and from India, their sanitary condition is always extremely bad. By this route, the limits of time during which military operations can be conducted, are determined by the desert, which stamps it as a winter road; whereas the Kuram, the third of the routes selected by Lord Lytton as a line of advance for British troops, is, on account of the great height of the Shutargardan Pass—11,500 feet—a summer road only. Under ordinary circumstances, the folly of prosecuting a war by lines which can only be used alternately, must strike even persons ignorant of strategy; but where, owing to the immense distances separating those lines, and the absence of all lateral communications between them, the forces using them can be of no service to each other, the question of summer and winter roads fails, naturally enough, to attract attention. It was not *one* war but *three* wars that were about to begin; and it mattered little whether they were all waged together, or one at a time.

To the Afghan mountains succeeds the Afghan Plateau—a somewhat misleading term; for this great stretch of country, 400 miles long, and from 100 to 200 miles wide, is not one big table-land, but a series of plains, rising by uneven steps from Kandahar on the south, and Kabul on the north, towards Ghazni, and broken by numerous ranges of hills, which push up from them to a height varying from 1,000 to 6,000 feet. The Kabul end of this so-called plateau is 6,500 feet; the Kandahar end, 3,500 feet; and its highest

part near Ghazni, 8,000 feet above the sea level. The Ghazni Highlands are the watershed of this region, sending its drainage, north-east, into the Kabul river, and, south-west, into the rivers Arghastan, Tarnak, and Arghandab, which, after mingling their waters, flow into the Helmand, and perish with it in the desert of Seistan. All Afghan rivers flow, for the greater part of their course, through deep ravines, and, consequently, are, in general, useless for irrigating purposes; and when, as in the case of the streams above named, they rise to the level of the surrounding country, and become wider and more sluggish, the evaporation from them is so great that they can fertilize only a narrow strip of land on either bank; and the whole country, however much it may differ in its other features, has this in common, that little or no addition can ever be made to its cultivated lands. These vary in extent, in productiveness, and in the nature of their crops. The lofty, pine-clad mountains of the Kingdom of Kabul, enclose little valleys and glens where fruit and vegetables grow in profusion, and where a small amount of cereals are raised. The Ghazni district also grows fruit; but its chief products are wheat and barley, with which, after providing for their own needs, the inhabitants supply those of the capital. The Province of Kandahar is either desert, or high pasture land, browsed by the sheep of the nomadic tribes, who live almost exclusively on their flesh. Famines—with their accompaniment—pestilence, are of frequent occurrence in Afghanistan;¹ and, in the best seasons, the country

¹ Dr. Bellew, in his *Journal of a Political Mission in Afghanistan*, tells us of one which he witnessed in Kandahar in the year

only just supports its population, and exports no food stuffs except fruit and a little honey.

As regards the population of the future theatre of operations,—that portion of it which was under the rule of Shere Ali contained about 4,500,000 inhabitants; and about 1,500,000 were scattered throughout Baluchistan and the territories of the Independent Afghan Tribes. Little or no cohesion existed among these peoples; not even among the clans recognising the sovereignty of the Amir;¹ and the direct authority of that prince was little felt outside the cities occupied by his regular troops. The chief difference between the tribes on the two sides of an ill-defined frontier, consisted in the fact that one set paid tribute to the Kabul Government, and the other was subsidised by

1857:—“Whilst traversing the filthy lanes of the city we had full and painful proof of the sufferings of the people from the combined effects of scarcity and pestilence... This terrible pestilence and famine continued with unabated severity for fully six weeks after our arrival, and the daily scenes of hideous suffering we encountered on our way to the open country proved a most painful ordeal... The sufferings and privations of the Kandaharis during this famine were really terrible... We had considerable difficulty in feeding our horses and baggage animals, and for several days could get no grain whatever, and but small supplies of fodder. The price of barley was four seers the rupee, wheat flour sold at two seers the rupee... At such prices, the poor could get no flour at all, and for several months subsisted on clover and lucern, wild herbs and mulberry leaves which they as often ate uncooked as cooked.”

¹ It is probable that Abdur Rahman exercises stricter sway over his subjects than Shere Ali ever pretended to enforce.

it.¹ In the Kingdom of Afghanistan, omitting the province of Turkestan, which lay outside the theatre of operations, several distinct races dwell side by side. The Tajiks, numbering about 500,000 souls, and the Kizzelbashis, numbering about 200,000 are both of Persian origin, and speak that tongue; but the former belong to the Sunni, the latter, to the Shiah branch of the Mahomedan religion; and whilst the first are addicted to agricultural pursuits, the second are, for the most part, physicians, merchants, and traders. Both enlist freely in the regular army; the bulk of the cavalry and artillery, in 1878, being Kizzelbashis. The 50,000 Hazaras living in Afghanistan proper, though also a Persian-speaking people, are of Tartar descent. Their stronghold is in the mountains of the same name, which they have always defended with extraordinary bravery; but the poverty of their home drives many of the able-bodied men to seek work elsewhere, and they are found scattered over the country as farm labourers and domestic servants. The 300,000 Hindus settled in Afghanistan transact all the banking business of the country, and hold its chief trade in their hands; and though, as aliens and infidels, they labour under many restrictions and disabilities, they are not actively persecuted, and appear to prosper.²

The 300,000 Jats—Mahomedans of the Sunni Sect, generally supposed to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the land—

¹ Many of the Independent Tribes once subsidised by the Amir of Kabul are now under British Sovereignty.

² According to Dr. Bellew, they occupy in the Afghan cities a position analogous to that of the Heathen in the cities of Israel.

earn their livelihood as farm servants, barbers, musicians etc., whilst 150,000 Kafirs, Kashmiris, Armenians, and other aliens inhabit Kabul and its neighbourhood, some settled on the land, others engaged in commerce. The 3,000,000 true Afghans—all speaking Pushtu, all belonging to the Sunni Sect—are divided by their mode of life into nomadic and settled tribes, the former, who are found chiefly in Khorassan, are tent dwellers, migrating with their families and flocks of camels and sheep from one place to another in search of pasture. The latter, constituting the bulk of the nation, form the village communities, and to some extent, the population of the towns. As a rule, they are the owners of land, which they either cultivate themselves or employ hired labourers to cultivate for them. They are the chief carriers of the country, but petty trade of all kinds they eschew. From them the infantry of the standing army is chiefly recruited.

Whether nomadic or settled in his habits, whether a subject of the Amir, or the member of an Independent Tribe, the Afghan bears an evil reputation. According to Dr. Bellew, who knew him well, “he is vain, bigoted in religious matters and national or tribal prejudices, revengeful of real or imaginary injuries, avaricious and penurious in the extreme, prone to deception which they fail to conceal, and wanting in courage and perseverance. . . . They are, moreover, by nature and profession, a race of robbers, and never fail to practise this peculiarly national calling on any and every opportunity. Among themselves, finally, the Afghans are quarrelsome, intriguing, and distrustful of each other, and by neighbouring nations they are considered faithless

and intractable.”¹ But Elphinstone’s account of the same people is more pleasing. “A traveller,” he wrote, “would find it difficult to comprehend how a nation could subsist in such disorder, and would pity those who were compelled to pass their days in such a scene, and whose minds were trained by their unhappy situation to fraud and violence, to rapine, deceit and revenge. Yet he would scarce fail to admire their martial and lofty spirit, their hospitality, and their bold and simple manners, equally removed from the suppleness of a citizen and the awkward rusticity of a clown; and he would, probably, before long, discover among so many qualities that excited his disgust, the rudiments of many virtues.”²

As is natural among men living always on the edge of starvation, the normal condition of the Afghan peoples is one of internecine strife; nevertheless, there is one passion common to all, which has proved itself strong enough to bring them, temporarily, into line—namely, hatred of the Kafir—the infidel stranger, who should threaten their turbulent independence, or tempt their poverty by the sight of convoys of provisions and arms, toiling slowly along their difficult roads. And, on their mountain sides, under their own leaders, fighting in order so loose that they can scatter and disappear in the twinkling of an eye, to reappear and reform with equal celerity—the Afghans are formidable foes; and their martial qualities make of them good soldiers

¹ *Journal of a Mission to Afghanistan in 1857.*

² To these two writers I am chiefly indebted for my account of the peoples of Afghanistan.

in the ranks of a well-disciplined, well-led regular army. Shere Ali's visit to India, in 1869, had shown him the value of such an army, and to its creation he had devoted, year after year, nearly a fourth of the whole revenue of his kingdom, with fair success so far as its numbers, arms and equipment were concerned. ¹

¹ The following was the estimated strength of the Amir's Regular Army in 1878:—

72 Battalions of Infantry	... ..	50,000
25 Regiments of Cavalry	... ..	10,000

A special militia who were in receipt of a small salary and enjoyed other privileges, numbered:—

Infantry	... ..	60,000
Cavalry	... ..	95,000

Besides the above there was a general levy; every adult male inhabitant being expected to take up arms at a moment's notice, a call which they obeyed with remarkably alacrity. In the first Afghan war it was estimated that one-eighth of the entire population were at one time under arms.—Records in the Russian Central Staff-Office at St. Petersburg.

Mr. G. Hensman, in his *Afghan War, 1879-80* gives the following details regarding the armament of the Amir's forces in 1878:—

English Siege Train (Elephant)	6									
Cabuli	„ „ „	10									
„	„ „ (Bullock)	18									
Horsed guns	<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Breech loaders</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">89</td> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding-left: 10px;">... ..</td> <td rowspan="2" style="text-align: right; vertical-align: middle;">145</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brass guns</td> <td>56</td> </tr> </table>	Breech loaders	89	}	145	Brass guns	56			
		Breech loaders	89				}	145		
Brass guns	56										
Mountain guns	<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Breech loaders</td> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">6</td> <td rowspan="3" style="font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="3" style="padding-left: 10px;">... ..</td> <td rowspan="3" style="text-align: right; vertical-align: middle;">150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muzzle</td> <td>„ 48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brass</td> <td>„ 96</td> </tr> </table>	Breech loaders	6	}	150	Muzzle	„ 48	Brass	„ 96	
		Breech loaders	6				}	150		
		Muzzle	„ 48								
Brass	„ 96										
Various small guns of position	50									
Total ... 379											

But it lacked the first essential of an organised military force—an intelligent, energetic and highly educated body of officers—and it was, consequently, to play a far smaller part in the coming struggle than the Tribal Militia, in which every male subject of the Amir, between the ages of sixteen and sixty, was enrolled.

It was easy to foresee that the natural characteristics of the inhabitants of Afghanistan, coupled with the absence of all surplus food along the different lines of advance, must greatly affect the movements of the British invaders. Large quantities of provisions for man and beast must, necessarily, accompany each force, greatly retarding progress. Convoy

Number of Rifles entered in the Government books as having been issued to the troops:—

English Sniders	5,000
„ Enfields	15,000
„ Rifled Carbines	1,200
Brunswick Rifles	1,400
Tower Muskets	1,000
Cavalry Pistols	1,045
Cabuli Sniders...	2,189
„ Enfields	8,212
„ Rifled Carbines	589
Kandahar Enfields	453
Herati	516
Various kinds for Cavalry (double-barrelled etc.)	1,553
Smooth bores (probably many Tower Muskets)	1,418
Flint Muskets...	1,300
Total	49,875

The manufacture of gunpowder was entrusted to contractors, and in war-time, doubtless, a ton of powder could have been supplied every day, as long as funds were forthcoming.

after convoy would have to follow, to ensure whose safety ever lengthening lines of communication must be strongly held. Attempts might be made to buy the neutrality of the Natives, but, divided as they were into numerous tribes and sub-tribes, rendering scant obedience to their chiefs, or recognising rival claimants to the office of Head-man, no reliance could be placed upon agreements concluded with them, and incessant vigilance would have to be practised against nominal allies, no less than against open enemies. Such vigilance, extending over long distances and maintained under most trying climatic conditions, drains the strength of an army, and wears away its spirit and temper.

Under these circumstances, what ought to have been the aim of the Indian Authorities when they sat down to settle the best way of punishing Shere Ali for the affront suffered by the British Mission? Clearly, to diminish to the utmost the opportunities of friction with the Independent Tribes. Instead of *three lines of advance*, each giving birth to its own swarms of ubiquitous, intangible, troublesome foes, and calling for three armies and three sets of transport, commissariat and hospital arrangements—*one line of advance* should have been adopted, and the choice of that one, political considerations should have decided. If territorial aggrandisement was held to be the fittest satisfaction for wounded British honour, 10,000 men could have driven the Amir's troops across the Shutargardan, and have permanently annexed the Kuram. If the object desired was to keep Russia at arm's length by going half way to meet her, then 25,000 men could have occupied Kandahar, and effectually over-awed the tribes along the road. But if the

blow was to be dealt direct at the offender himself, the Khyber line was the one to select, for, by this, a like force—10,000 men to do the work and 15,000 to hold their communications—might have taken his capital, broken up his army, destroyed his stores of arms and ammunition, and marched back again to India between the beginning of February and the end of April.¹ For the execution of any one of these schemes there was ample transport procurable in India, without the necessity of starving it by the way; and two additional months devoted to preparations would have sent the troops into the field thoroughly equipped at all points; whilst none but regiments in good health need have been employed. In this way, we should have come into contact with the tribes along one route only, in dealing with whom much annoyance and waste of time might have been saved by substituting for unsatisfactory negotiations a simple proclamation of our aims and intentions, backed up by a display of force too great for the Afridis, or Ghilzais to venture on opposing, or harassing, our movements, and by a scrupulous avoidance of all conduct likely to irritate and annoy men whom it was not our interest to convert into foes:—conduct, such as the sending of expeditions off the main road to pry into the secrets of, hitherto, unvisited valleys. Such a definite, limited plan of campaign would have reduced to a minimum the expense and risks of the war, and must, certainly, have attained the aim

¹ Since those days many conditions in the problem of an invasion of Afghanistan have changed; and it is probable that a much larger force would now be required, even for a temporary occupation of Kabul.

that its authors had in view; whereas, the plan adopted, which embraced, in a half-hearted, uncertain sort of way, the three schemes between which a choice should have been made, imposed a maximum of sacrifice on India and her army, with no result save the confused and weary fighting recorded in the second volume of this history. That plan threw one army into the Kuram and another into the Khyber, at the beginning of winter, under instructions not to press forward to Kabul; and sent a third force to demonstrate at Kandahar, dragging with it heavy cannon for the capture of Herat, a city which it was too weak ever to dream of approaching.

CHAPTER XVI

THE QUETTA REINFORCEMENTS AND THE MULTAN FIELD FORCE.

THE Quetta reinforcements, to the command of which Major-General Michael A. S. Biddulph, C.B.,¹ had been appointed, were drawn from various quarters:—

E. Battery, 4th Brigade Royal Artillery, the 70th Foot, the 19th Bengal Infantry and a company of Sappers and Miners from Multan; the 26th Bengal Infantry from Mian Mir; the 1st Punjab Cavalry from Dera Ghazi Khan;² the 2nd Punjab Cavalry from Rajanpur; the Sind Frontier Force from Jacobabad; and the 27th and 29th Bombay

¹ Michael Anthony Sharpnel Biddulph, born in 1823, entered the army in 1843, and served with distinction in the Crimea. He had seen no active service in India, but had filled several important posts in that country, and had acquired a considerable knowledge of native character. That he had no personal acquaintance with the service conditions of the land into which he was about to penetrate, was a disadvantage which he shared with too many officers, and, if this ignorance, in the early part of the war, led him into some mistakes, especially into expecting more from his troops than, under those conditions, they could possibly perform, he was quick to see his errors and resourceful in repairing them.

² This regiment was temporarily replaced at Dera Ghazi Khan by the 8th Bengal Cavalry from Multan, thus leaving the latter station without any garrison.

Infantry, and No. 2 Bombay Mountain Battery from the Bombay Presidency.

Starting from different points, the various corps were to cross the desert as separate units, except the 70th, the Battery of Royal Artillery and the company of Sappers and Miners who, under the immediate command of the General, were to march together to Dadar by the Dera Bughti route, which had been adopted as the shortest road from Multan to Quetta, in spite of the fact that no British troops had hitherto ever made use of it, and that Captain North, R.E., who traversed it with a company of Sappers, in 1876, had reported it to be impassable for guns and very badly supplied with water. That, under such circumstances, it should have been selected by the military authorities as the line of march for a British regiment and a battery of artillery, is the best proof that those authorities could have given of their deep sense of the dangers to which the small garrison at Quetta was exposed.¹ These troops left Multan, in advance of their leader, on the 25th September, and bivouacked for the night at Sher Shah, where a steamer and a number of flat-bottomed country-boats were waiting to convey them, their camp-followers, guns, cattle, camels, baggage and stores, to the right bank of the Chenab. The river being in flood, the passage occupied two days; and the hard work and the exposure to the sun told so severely upon men weakened already by a summer spent in one of the hottest stations in India, that, on the

¹ The first 45 miles of the alternative route by Sukkur and Dadar were still closed by the Indus floods.

second day, a considerable number had to be sent back sick to Multan.

Crossing the Indus, four days later, proved an equally tedious operation; and on the march from Dera Ghazi Khan to Rajanpur—a distance of seventy-eight miles—with the surging river on one hand, and the burning desert on the other, the hospitals began to fill in a very ominous manner. All the more welcome, therefore, was the cool shade of Rajanpur, when that pretty, bowery little station was reached on the 13th October; and the week spent in its shady avenues, waiting for the arrival of the General and his Staff, worked a most satisfactory change in the health of the Force.

Biddulph had arrived in Multan, on the 8th October, to learn that his troops had left that station very poorly equipped, and he spent some days there in trying to make good the more serious deficiencies. But very little was to be procured locally, and the arsenal of Firozpur, the base of supply for all troops moving on Kandahar, not being in railway communication with Multan, it would have taken too long for his indents on that place to be complied with. Leaving, therefore, Captain W. G. Nicholson, R. E., to organise an Engineers' Park, for which no provision had as yet been made, with orders to follow him as quickly as possible,¹ the General embarked, on the 13th October, on

¹ Nicholson rejoined Biddulph at Quetta in November, bringing with him a mule train which he had formed with remarkable celerity, and loaded up with entrenching tools, implements for blasting operations, and large quantities of cordage and hauling ropes, which proved quite invaluable.

one of the river steamers, accompanied by Major G. B. Wolseley, Assistant Adjutant-General, Captain H. B. Hanna, Quarter-Master-General's Staff, and Captain W. S. S. Bisset, Field-Engineer, and taking with him such stores and commissariat supplies as he had been able to collect. Mithankot, a village twelve miles south of Rajanpur, just below the confluence of the Chenab and the Indus, where, at this time, there was talk of throwing a bridge over the latter river, for the convenience of the column that was to follow in the wake of the Quetta reinforcements, was reached on the 16th. Here the General and his Staff mounted horses that were in waiting for them, and rode to Rajanpur, where four busy days were spent in completing the arrangements for the desert march and the advance through the Bolan Pass to the Highlands of Quetta, where, as they well knew, they should find winter already begun. No zeal and forethought, however, could compensate for the lack of articles of the first necessity; and they had to submit to the mortification and anxiety of seeing the 70th enter on its long march with no clothing save the cotton coats and trousers in which they had left Multan, and of knowing that the camp-followers were in still more pitiable case. Fortunately, the night before the march began, a consignment of blankets intended for Quetta arrived by steamer at Rajanpur, on which, notwithstanding the protest of the commissariat officer in charge of the convoy, the Assistant Quarter-Master-General at once laid hands for distribution to these unhappy creatures; a proceeding for which he had afterwards to account to the Military Authorities at Head Quarters, who were, however, sensible enough to perceive that to employ trans-

port to carry up these coverings to Quetta, when hundreds of human beings were in danger of dying for want of them, would have been a cruel waste both of camels and blankets. The only thing to be regretted was the consignment's not being large enough to provide rugs for the transport animals also.

On the 20th October the troops bade farewell to Rajanpur, and plunged into the desert, moving with all military precautions, as if in the presence of an enemy. The first two marches were short, and the road fairly practicable, but, on the third day, the difficulties of the route were encountered in full force. To avoid the worst heat, the camp broke up from Lalgoshi long before dawn; but the progress of the column, hampered not only by its baggage and by a month's supply of all food, down to grain for the horses and cattle, but also by the charge of a large commissariat convoy and of a drove of horned cattle to be consumed *en route*—was so slow that, when the sun rose crimson above the horizon, shedding a ruddy light over the desert, the next halting-place, Bandowali, was still miles away. With the sun came a curious phenomenon; hundreds of fickle little winds flickered about in every direction, carrying up with them, high in air, slender columns of hot sand, which waltzed and whirled, and rose and sank as if invisible sprites were engaged in a great top-spinning contest. After a while, these died away, to be succeeded by dense clouds of sand which completely enveloped the moving mass of men and animals, filling mouth and nostrils, eyes and ears, with fine, sharp dust. Through rents in these clouds, the figures of the camels, viewed at a distance, grew strangely elongated,

broken and spectral; and, on the far horizon, great reaches of calm water mocked the thirst of man and beast; for the contents of the pakhals¹ had been consumed in the stifling night hours, or had gradually leaked away. As the sun rose higher and higher in the cloudless sky, man after man fell senseless, or gasping, to the ground. The wearied horses and bullocks could scarcely pull the guns and wagons through the soft, deep sand, though men, equally wearied, hauled at the drag-ropes, or literally, put their shoulders to the wheel; only the camels, children of the desert, plodded patiently and unconcernedly along. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the main body reached the little fort of Bandowali, held by a detachment of the Frontier Cavalry, having taken ten hours in marching sixteen miles. A few spare camels and the tired hospital carriage, after depositing the sick, had to go back to pick up, one by one, the men who had fallen by the way, and it was five p.m. before the rear-guard marched in.² The same evening, the General, who had been detained by business at Rajanpur, overtook the Force, and gave orders that it should spend the following day in rest, preparatory to facing a still more formidable march, there being no water and, consequently, no halting-place between Bandowali and Kabradani, a distance of twenty-three miles. With Biddulph came the Political Officer to his

¹ Leathern bags made out of bullock hides; they were quite new, unseasoned and very leaky.

² Throughout that trying day, all the officers, though suffering severely themselves, did their best to cheer and help the men; but Dr. M. Knox of the 70th, always energetic and devoted, surpassed himself in his unwearied attention to the sick.

Force, Mr. F. Fryer,¹ Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan, and three Baluchi chiefs—Nawab Iman Buksh, Nawab Jemal Khan, and Sirdar Miram Khan. The Political Officer, whose knowledge of the Baluchi tribes was second only to Sandeman's, proved of great assistance to the Force, and the three Chiefs, who, in consequence of possessing land both in Sind and Baluchistan, had great influence over the border tribes, rendered priceless service to the British cause.²

The 23rd was an anxious day for the General and his officers, both staff and regimental. It was not only that they had to prepare for an exceptionally long march, and that the road was reported to be very heavy and cut by several stony nullahs, but that, in addition to the sick in hospital, there were a hundred men of the 70th regiment unable to walk, and the artillery horses and draught bullocks were in an exhausted condition. It was therefore clear that unless some means could be found to relieve the latter and to increase the amount of carriage at the disposal of the troops, the march must end in a disaster.

A commissariat convoy, as has been mentioned, accompanied the Force; this, Biddulph now broke up, handing over the provisions and all extra baggage to Nawab Iman Buksh—who undertook to convey them safely to Quetta, and faithfully performed what he had promised—and appropriating the camels partly to the use of the sick and

¹ Now Sir Frederick Fryer, Lieutenant-Governor of Burma.

² Months later, Biddulph wrote of these chiefs:—"They have thrown in all the power of their influence to assist us, and this they have done with a steadiness of purpose and an ability which merit the highest consideration and praise."

footsore, and partly for the carriage of the ammunition, which was transferred from four of the wagons to hastily improvised canvas bags. The wagons themselves were placed in the fort; the bullocks that had drawn them being thus set free to lighten the labours of their fellows attached to the wagons that were still to accompany the Force. The arrangement, especially that part of it which gave the future food supply of the Quetta garrison into the hands of the Chief of what had but very recently been a robber tribe, would have been unjustifiable had the pressure of circumstances been less urgent; but as General Biddulph's choice lay between this act of supreme trust and the collapse of the expedition, he deserves only praise for having conceived the plan and boldly carried it through.

At 8 p.m. on the 24th, the column moved off once more, the Battery leading, escorted by 200 picked men of the 70th Regiment. The night was pitch dark, and there were no lanterns to throw light on the inequalities of the hummocky, undulating ground. The loose, deep sand slipped and slid beneath the hoofs of the struggling horses and swallowed up the wheels of the gun-carriages and wagons to the very axle-trees, and at the end of the first mile the whole Force had to halt whilst the battery forge was being extricated. To save unnecessary fatigue and exposure, the order of march was now reversed, the main body of the infantry and all the sick being placed in front and bidden make the best of their way to Kabradani. The General and his Staff remained with the Battery which, for a time, toiled painfully on. Again and again, first one wagon and then another stuck fast, and the horses had to be sent back to

the assistance of the bullocks; whilst the desperate straining of the poor beasts often broke the harness, and much time was lost in effecting repairs.

At sunrise, after ten hours of incessant and killing toil in which only nine miles had been accomplished, the General halted the wagons, and leaving a small detachment of infantry, a few gunners and some of the Baluchi guides to guard them, rode on with his Staff to Kabradani, where his first care was to send back food and water to the men whom he had left behind. About 2 p.m. the guns came crawling painfully in, and when the teams had been fed, watered and rested, they were sent back to bring in the wagons, which arrived safely next day.

After the experience of the 24th and 25th of October, there were no more night marches, and the column was split up into three bodies which advanced at the distance of a march apart:—First, the Head-Quarters with an escort; then, the 70th Regiment; last, the Field Battery and the Sappers and Miners.

The character of the country now began to change, wild, stony ridges taking the place of the flat, sandy desert. The rough, jagged, flint-strewn track running through these hills tore and bruised the feet of the bullocks and transport animals, and much labour had to be expended on it before it could be made practicable for the guns. The days and nights were still oppressively hot, but there was a slight touch of crispness in the air at dawn. The scenery was magnificent, especially at sunrise and sunset, when the stony valleys were filled with golden light and the hill tops stood out rose-coloured against the cloudless sky; but the beauty

was terrible in its loneliness and silence; nowhere was there a sign of animal or vegetable life—no house, no tree, no hum of insect, no twitter of bird.¹

The country through which the Force was now marching belonged to the Dera Bughtis, a tribe whose raiding propensities had made them equally troublesome to the British authorities in Sind, and to their nominal sovereign the Khan of Khelat. Adjoining the Dera Bughti territory, a few marches to the north-east of Biddulph's line of advance, were the lands of the Marris, a tribe which in the first Afghan war had distinguished itself as much by the vigour of the opposition offered by it to the invading army, whose regular troops it more than once defeated, as by its chivalrous generosity in its hour of triumph. Since the year 1875, the Indian Government had dealt with these tribes independently of the Khan of Khelat, and by granting them a substantial subsidy and encouraging them to enlist in the Frontier Force, had gained a considerable influence over them, of which Biddulph was now to receive the proof, for on his arrival at Songsila, the chief village of the Bughtis, he found a number of chiefs assembled to receive him and profuse in offers of assistance, which were well kept till the disaster at Maiwand in 1880 proved too strong a strain on their new-born loyalty to British rule.

At Lehri, Biddulph overtook the 1st Punjab Cavalry,

¹ These ridges are intersected in places by wide nullahs in which, after rain, water flows and grass springs up; but as the whole rainfall of the district is little more than an inch per annum, the vegetation is but skin deep and dies quickly away.

which had started some days before his column, but had lost itself in the desert,¹ and a detachment of that regiment under Captain Corrie Bird was added to the General's escort, Bird remaining on the Staff for the remainder of the campaign.

On the 31st October, the Head Quarters arrived at Dadar, a town of some size for Baluchistan, and during the campaign an important link in the line of communications between Quetta and the Indus. It lies three miles to the south-east of the mouth of the Bolan, on the river of the same name, or rather, on one of the channels into which that stream breaks up on issuing from the mountains. At certain seasons these fill and overflow, making cultivation, on a limited scale, possible; but they are dry for so large a part of the year that the town has to depend for water upon tanks and wells, which yield none that is not brackish and unwholesome. According to Thornton, the lexicographer, "its heat probably exceeds that of any other place on earth in the same parallel of latitude;" a fact which its situation—shut in on three sides by bare rocky hills and open on the fourth to the desert—fully explains.²

Whilst waiting here for the 70th to march in, General

¹ Guides themselves sometimes lose their way in these pathless wastes.

² "The Brahuis have a proverbial saying to the effect that no other place of final torment was needed after the formation of Dadar. The descriptions given of it by those who have passed a hot season there, are most painful. Men by no means given to exaggeration assured me that they envied the dead, and that they would rather die than pass another season there; that the thermometer in tents stood at 130°, with an entire stagnation of air."—Diary of the Rev. T. N. Allen in 1842.

Biddulph found food for anxious thought in the reports furnished to him by Captain F. S. Reynolds, the political officer who had been sent to collect and stack fuel and fodder at different points in the Bolan. He and his voluntary assistant, Mr. Pitman of the Telegraph Department, had done their best, but with very poor results. The treeless desert and equally treeless Pass yielded no fire-wood, and the small quantity of forage which had sprung into life on the banks of the irrigation channels was not yet ready for cutting. There was still sufficient grain in the provision columns for the horses and bullocks, but none could be spared for the camels, whom the long marches through the rugged Dera Bughti country, on bad water and insufficient food, had already reduced to a miserable condition. That vast numbers of them must die between Dadar and Quetta admitted of no question; yet the General's orders to push on as rapidly as possible were peremptory; delay could have done nothing to improve matters; and the quicker the wretched creatures' failing strength was turned to account, the better for the troops. They, too, arrived at Dadar in evil case. What with foot-sores and sun-fever, numbers had broken down on the march; at one time, half the 70th were being carried, and the regiment presented the aspect of a sick convoy rather than that of the advance guard of an invading army. Conditions, however, that were to prove fatal to the camels, were in some respects favourable to the troops. The mere change from the glare of the desert to the shade of the deep defile was a relief to weary eyes, and the rush of the river, a refreshment to men who, for many days, had been tormented by thirst, and forced to slake it with water

impregnated with salt, or, worse still, with sulphate of soda which caused excruciating pain and weakening diarrhœa. There was still plenty of work to be done in helping to drag the guns up the steeper parts of the Pass—the 70th waited for the Battery to come up before resuming its march—but there were intervals of pleasant strolling along by the river side, and of fishing and bathing in its clear cool stream, which was just then in one of its friendly moods, not foaming, and raging, and sweeping all before it, as was to be the case later on.¹ But for the artillery horses and bullocks, and for the transport animals, there were no such restful interludes. Loaded up often for ten hours at a stretch, day by day they stumbled along over stones and small boulders, at the rate of a mile an hour, their feet cut and torn by the shingle and grit of the precipitous path. Numbers fell by the road-side, or lay down at night never to rise again, leaving their loads to swell the burdens of the hapless survivors, and their bodies to taint the air and poison the water all along the road, for to bury them in the rocky ground was impossible, and in those barren regions there were no birds of prey and no wild beasts, except hyenas, to act as scavengers. For the time being, indeed, winter robbed them of their power to harm; frozen hard to the ground, they lay as inert as the stones among which they had fallen. But with the return of spring, they woke

¹ On one occasion in the first Afghan war, a flood in the Bolan river carried away the camp of the Engineers and Sappers and Miners. The water rose suddenly ten feet, filling the entire valley, and forty-five men and all the tents, baggage, and cattle were lost.

to the activity of decay, and became the fertile parent of typhoid and cholera.

Apart from this source of disease, the halting-places used by the Kafilas on their way to and from India, and recently occupied by the regiments from Bombay and Jacobabad, which had gone singly up the Pass, were in a very unsanitary state. It was still, however, found possible to encamp Biddulph's men on fresh ground, though only at the cost of widening the area of dirt for their successors—the conservancy establishment of the Force being quite inadequate to maintain cleanliness and decency.

Near the summit of the Pass, the nights became very cold, and over the barren, waterless Dasht-i-Badaulat—the Plain without Wealth—the bitter wind, which in winter blasts even the hardy southernwood, had already begun to blow down from the distant, cloud-capped mountains.¹ The effect of this sudden change of temperature upon ill-clad men was what had been expected. Cases of pneumonia became common, first, among the Native and, afterwards, among the European troops; and once again, large numbers had to be carried. Yet the soldiers had, at least, shelter, and food, and hospital care when sick; but the camp-followers had no shelter, insufficient food, and no one to carry them when too ill to walk; so they, too, dropped out and died; their fate differing from that of their camels only in this—

¹ This wealthless plain is lovely in spring, when the southernwood and wild thyme burst into new life, filling the air with fragrance, and the ground is ablaze with tulips, irises, and the yellow crocus.

that, as a rule, some kind of rude burial was accorded to their bodies.¹

At Sir-i-ab, on the further side of this desolate plain, the river Shahdazai Lora gushes, crystal-clear, out of a hill side, and flows through a high upland valley² 5,600 feet above sea level, twelve miles long and from three to four wide, bounded by many-tinted mountains of bold and fantastic shape. In the very centre of this valley stands Quetta, now a great fortress, but, in 1878, a mere mud fort, crowning a little detached hill about 80 feet high, round which clustered a small town, shut in by mud walls, containing about 4,500 inhabitants, one half Baluchis, the other half Pathans. The low-lying parts of the Quetta valley being well watered by numerous springs, yield fair crops of corn, lucerne, and

¹ "The special knowledge of the military expert is not needed to detect the terrible neglect which could have allowed troops and camp-followers born and bred under a tropical sun, to proceed to Quetta without the simplest means of protection from the rigours of an almost arctic climate, though those means were available in abundance in, or near the places from which they started. The consequences that have followed are of a kind at which humanity would shudder even if they were unavoidable—hospitals filled with soldiers crippled for life by exposure; the line of march marked by the skeletons of half-naked coolies, literally frozen to death."—Extract from article in *Calcutta Englishman*.

There may have been "means of protection" in abundance for this little force, but certainly there was neither time for their collection, nor transport for their conveyance.

² The valley of Shal, or Quetta.—"Shal is the more ancient name, and is traced by Rawlinson as far back as the tenth century A.D."—Dr. T. H. Thornton.

vegetables, and are dotted over with apple, pear, and apricot trees; but the parts near the hills are stony and barren. Owing to the nearness of water to the surface the richer tract is very unhealthy, and the great variations of temperature which prevail over the entire area, give birth to pneumonia, dysentery, and a very bad type of fever, from which the Native troops were soon to suffer severely.¹

Biddulph, who had left Dadar on the 2nd of November, rode into Quetta with his Staff on the 9th, and assumed command of all the troops in the district. His coming had been anxiously awaited; for, though the Jacobabad and Bombay regiments had got in before him, the situation was still a very critical one. Khandahari spies in British pay, had sent in word that the large Afghan garrison of that city had been reinforced from Herat by three cavalry, three infantry regiments, and six guns, and that the Commander-in-Chief, Safdar Ali Khan, with the approval of the Governor, Sirdar Meer Afzal Khan, was about to send forward troops to occupy the Pishin valley.²

To meet this threatened advance, Colonel H. S. Keene, the officer in command, had only a Mountain Battery, one squadron of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, six companies of the 1st Punjab Infantry, one company of Sappers and Miners,

¹ Although drainage works and other improvements have been made at Quetta since 1878, it still bears an evil reputation. A regiment of Native Infantry which two or three years ago moved up there from the plains, had 300 men in hospital very soon after its arrival, 50 of whom died.

² These reports were confirmed by the British Minister at the Persian Court. [See Central Asia, No. 1 (1879), p. 9.]

the 32nd Pioneers (Musbi Sikhs), and, at Khelat, 30 miles away, two companies of the 1st Punjab Infantry; and of this small force, barely numbering 1,500 men, one regiment—the Punjab Infantry—was composed exclusively of Pathans, in whose fidelity, if called upon to fight against their own kinsfolk, it was impossible to place implicit trust; and of the other—the Musbi Sikhs—twenty per cent were on the sick-list.

Foreseeing danger, Colonel J. Browne, R.E., the Executive Engineer, had been for some time busy in strengthening the fortifications of Quetta; and Sandeman and his assistant, Mr. Bruce, had strained every nerve to gather in supplies from the surrounding districts; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, there can be no doubt that had the signal for war been given early in October, instead of late in November, the weakly garrison would have been overwhelmed by the large Afghan force assembled at Kandahar. The attack on Ali Masjid would have been such a signal; and soldiers of wide outlook, like Sir Neville Chamberlain, Sir Frederick Haines, and Sir Samuel Browne, saw the necessary connection between the intended *coup-de-main* at one extremity of the frontier, and the fate of a British force at the other, and pressed it on the Viceroy's notice; but Lord Lytton was incapable of looking beyond the one object which happened to have fired his fancy, and, as we know, the attack upon the Khyber fortress would actually have been made, but for Shere Ali's action in reinforcing its defenders.

All anxiety for the safety of Quetta disappeared with the arrival of Biddulph's division, but the increase in the strength of its garrison added, in other directions, to the difficulties

and dangers of the situation. The year had been exceptionally unhealthy, even for that unhealthy region. Among the troops there had been no less than 3,242 admissions to hospital per thousand—in other words, each man on the average had been admitted $3\frac{1}{4}$ times—and it had been found impossible to grapple effectually with the causes of the sickness—defective drainage and a vast accumulation of decaying matter of all sorts, including the bodies of many camels. As these could neither be burned nor buried, the General did all that could be done in ordering that they should be dragged as far as possible from the vicinity of the town and camps; but the heavy mortality among his own transport rapidly increased the evil, and the sickly, half-frozen camp-followers were quite inadequate, both in numbers and strength to the performance of their ever growing duties. Among the newly arrived soldiers, also, a large proportion were sick, and as the existing hospital accommodation was barely sufficient for the needs of the original garrison, it became necessary to provide fresh, by hastily roofing in some unfinished barracks, and fitting them up temporarily for hospital purposes.

On the 13th of November, whilst the condition of Quetta was engaging General Biddulph's full attention, he received from the Indian Government a warning to hold his Division in readiness to advance into Afghan territory, a warning which he, at once, set to work to obey, though never, surely, was a force less fitted to assume the offensive. Not only were the troops on the spot very sickly, ill-clad and badly equipped, but some of the corps were still in the Bolan, and from every regiment numbers of men were absent on leave in India. The transport was in a miserable condition;

a large part of it had already perished; the remainder was worn out with fatigue and hunger; there was no grain in Quetta that could be spared for its use, and the southern-wood which clothed the hills, though food for the hill-camel, was poison to the camel of the plains. There were no transport officers to exercise any supervision over the unskilled drivers; no veterinary surgeons to minister to the diseases of the animals; and if the surgeons had been forthcoming, they could have done nothing, for even the simplest medicines and surgical instruments were lacking; so that the system of working the wretched creatures, ill or well, fed or hungry, till they fell down dead, had, perforce, to be continued.

The General's own position was perplexing in the extreme. Instead of the proper complement of Staff and Departmental Officers, who ought to have been at his disposal, he still had with him only the three officers who had accompanied him from Multan, and Captain Corrie Bird. There was no Commissariat Officer to be responsible for the feeding of the troops; and, but for the supplies collected by Sandeman and Bruce, the experience of Sir John Keane's Force in the First Afghan War, when, for twenty-eight days, the men were on half, the followers on quarter rations, and the horses without grain—would have been repeated at Quetta in 1878. As it was, the Cavalry had to be sent back to Mastung, where forage was less scarce than at the front. There was no Principal Medical Officer to consult with on matters connected with the health of the troops, and the arrangements that would have to be made for the conveyance and treatment of the sick and wounded during the impending campaign; the Artillery and the Engineers were without their command-

ing officers; and, to crown all, the Generals who were to command the Cavalry Brigade and the two Infantry Brigades, with their respective Staffs, had not yet left India.

Such a state of things might almost have justified a General in declaring that the orders of the Government were unreasonable, and could not be complied with; but Biddulph was not the man to be daunted by difficulties, and though many details which ought to have been attended to, had to be neglected, the preparations for the advance were pushed forward with the greatest energy, and the Sappers and 32nd Pioneers were set to work to improve the road over the Murghi Pass, leading northward out of the Quetta valley. Along this road, on the 18th and 19th of November, the General, accompanied by Sandeman, reconnoitred as far as the village of Kushlak, in the valley of the same name, where a good supply of water was found, and some grazing for the hill-camels. On returning from this expedition, Biddulph was cheered by the news that Colonel H. Moore and Captain R. M. Stewart, both of the Quarter-Master-General's Staff; Lientenant-Colonel C. B. Le Messurier, commanding Royal Artillery; Lieutenant-Colonel W. Hichens, commanding Royal Engineers; Deputy Surgeon-General T. Hendley, Principal Medical Officer, and Surgeon W. E. Manley, V. C.; and lastly, Lieutenant-Colonel C. S. Lane, Principal Commissariat Officer had arrived in his absence. Not an hour too soon, for the same evening a cypher telegram brought the expected order for the concentration of the Division on the Afghan frontier; and the next day, leaving behind it a garrison consisting of the 30th Bombay Native Infantry, two Mountain guns, and a Squadron of cavalry under the

command of Colonel W. G. Mainwaring, the Force, still without its Brigadier-Generals and Brigade Staff Officers, marched from Quetta and Mastung, in successive detachments, for the convenience of supply, carrying with them seven days' food and firewood. The movement was covered by a column of observation under Colonel Clay, consisting of a battalion of infantry, two guns and two squadrons of cavalry, which pushed forward to the north-east of Kushlak to secure the safety of the right flank of the Division, and to guard its communications with Quetta. On the 20th, the troops that had left India two months before to strengthen the Quetta garrison, together with a part of that garrison, were echeloned along the roads leading into Southern Afghanistan, ready, on the morrow, to cross the frontier, and eager to press on to Kandahar.

Whilst the Quetta reinforcements were marching through the desert and up the Bolan, a Field Force also destined for Kandahar, was assembling at Multan. The following Table shows its composition:—

TABLE SHOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE MULTAN FIELD FORCE.

ENGINEER DEPARTMENT.

Three Companies of Sappers and Miners.
Engineer Field Park.

ARTILLERY.

A Battery,	B Brigade,	Royal Horse Artillery
I „	1st „	Royal Artillery.
D „	2nd „	„ „
G „	4th „	„ „

No. 13	Battery,	8th	Brigade,	Royal	Artillery.	} With Siege Train.
„ 16	„	8th	„	„	„	
„ 5	„	11th	„	„	„	} Heavy.
„ 6	„	11th	„	„	„	
„ 8	„	11th	„	„	„	With Siege Train.
„ 11	„	11th	„	„	„	Mountain.

Ordnance Park.

CAVALRY.

15th Hussars.

8th Bengal Cavalry.

19th Bengal Lancers.

INFANTRY

1ST BRIGADE.

2nd Battalion 60th Rifles.

15th Sikhs.

25th Punjab Infantry.

2ND BRIGADE.

59th Foot.

1st Gurkhas.

3rd Gurkhas.

12th (Khelat-i-Ghilzai) Regiment.

Approximate effective strength of Force after it had passed through the ordeal of inspection by Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith, who rigorously eliminated every weakling:—200 officers, 6,600 men of all ranks, 1,800 horses and 42 guns.¹

¹ Staff and Departmental Officers of the Multan Field Force:—Lieutenant N. R. Stewart, Aide-de-Camp; Captain E. Molloy, Interpreter; Colonel J. Hills, V. C., C. B., Assistant Adjutant-General; Major E. F. Chapman, Assistant Quartermaster-General; Major G. U. Prior and Captain A. Gaselee, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-Generals; Captain R. F. C. A. Tytler, Deputy Judge Advocate; Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith, Principal Medical Officer; Colonel T. H. Sibley, Chief Commissariat Officer;

The camp-followers of all kinds who formed a second army of nearly equal size, were subjected to a like medical scrutiny, and many among them—especially among the dhoolie bearers who required to be exceptionally strong and hardy men—were rejected as unfit for the heavy duties in store for them. Of the bearers selected, only a very small proportion were trained carriers, and until the majority had acquired by practice some knowledge of their work, they were a source of trouble and anxiety to the medical officers, and of suffering to the sick.

The command of the Division, and ultimately the supreme control of all the troops in Southern Afghanistan, had been given to Lieutenant-General D. M. Stewart,¹ C.B. No

Colonel M. J. Brander, Assistant Commissary-General; Colonel R. H. Sankey, Commanding Engineer; Major A. le Messurier, Brigade-Major; Lieutenants C. F. Call and E. S. E. Childers, Assistant Field Engineers; Lieutenant G. R. R. Savage, Superintendent of Field Telegraphs; Brigadier-General C. G. Arburthnot, C. B., Commanding Artillery; Captain A. D. Anderson, Brigade-Major; Colonel E. J. Bruce, Commanding the Siege Train; Major W. H. Noble, Staff Officer of the Siege Train; Captain A. B. Lanning, Adjutant of Artillery; Major C. Cowie, in charge of Ordnance Field Park; Brigadier-General W. Fane, C. B., Commanding Cavalry Brigade; Captain H. H. F. Gifford, Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General R. Barter, Commanding 1st Infantry Brigade; Captain C. M. Stockley, Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General R. J. Hughes, Commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade; Major A. G. Handcock, Brigade-Major.

¹ Donald Martin Stewart. Born, 1824. Entered the Army 1840. Distinguished himself greatly in the Mutiny by his daring ride from Agra to Delhi, in charge of despatches, through the most disaffected district in India, swarming at the time with mu-

better selection could have been made for either post, but the combination of the two, in one person, was a mistake of which it was easy to foresee the probable evil consequences; for either the care of his own special corps must absorb the General's entire attention to the detriment, real or imaginary, of its sister division, and to the neglect of the higher duties, political and military, devolving upon him as commander of the whole force—or else those higher duties must interfere with the effectual supervision of the troops under his immediate command. In any case, the relation in which the dual nature of his own office placed General Stewart towards General Biddulph, was one in which harmonious co-operation between the two could only be maintained by the exercise of the most delicate tact on the part of the superior, and of the most cheerful subordination on the part of the inferior officer, and, unfortunately, both the tact and the subordination were, in the sequel, occasionally lacking.

It had been intended that the Second Division should

tineers. On his arrival before that city he was appointed to the Adjutant-General's Department, and continued to serve for many years on the army Head Quarters' Staff. Commanded a Brigade in the Abyssinian campaign, and in 1878 was in command of the Lahore Division. Shrewd, sagacious, quick of understanding, patient in listening to other men's views and fair-minded to profit by them—Stewart had not the ready sympathy and genial manner which have sometimes won for very inferior commanders the enthusiastic devotion of their troops, and in his desire to be just to the Government and to spare the public purse, he was credited with abstaining too scrupulously from pressing the claims of his officers and men.

follow in the steps of the First; but Biddulph's report of the Dera Bughti route was so unfavourable that, at the eleventh hour, the Government ordered it to proceed to Dadar *viâ* Sukkur and Jacobabad, with the exception of the 15th Hussars, the 8th Bengal Cavalry, and the 12th Bengal Infantry, which were to adhere to the road originally selected. This change of plans enormously increased the strain upon the Military and Civil authorities. Had the railway from Multan to Sukkur been completed, the troops would have been moved from the former to the latter station with comparative ease and speed; but the railway was not complete, though Lord Lytton must have been well aware of the need there would be for it in the war to which his policy had so long been tending. Now, in breathless haste, and at greatly enhanced cost, the making of this line was pushed on; and it was actually opened for the conveyance of troops and stores whilst the trains could only travel at the rate of six miles an hour, and several of the hastily improvised bridges collapsed when taken into use. But an efficient railway would only have simplified matters as far as Sukkur; from that point camel transport was essential, and how to get the 20,000 that would be required, at so short a notice, was a difficult problem for the civil authorities in Sind to solve; not for lack of camels—there were plenty of them in the country engaged in the carrying trade—but because their owners, remembering what had been the fate of the transport animals in the First Afghan War, were reluctant to hire them to Government, even at the very high price that its pressing needs compelled it to offer. In the end, however, on the receipt of a solemn promise that their beasts

should not be required to go beyond Dadar, where hill transport was supposed to be awaiting the arrival of the Force—they yielded, and camels began slowly to come in. The arrangements for their collection and for providing, so far as possible, in other ways for the wants of the great force which was about to cross the desert of Baluchistan, were entrusted to a Bombay civilian, Mr. C. E. Biddulph,¹ who rendered excellent service throughout both phases of the war.

On the 17th of November, most of the troops having preceded him, Sir Donald Stewart, accompanied by his principal Staff Officers, left Multan for Sukkur. The sights which met his eye all along the railway were not reassuring. Baggage and stores blocked the stations; and at Rohri, opposite Sukkur, there was a great accumulation of men and supplies of every description, waiting to be ferried across the Indus—a difficult and tedious business where the means of transport were so limited that not more than forty, or fifty tons could be passed over the river in the course of a day. On the 20th, Stewart rode into Shikarpur, where he inspected D. 2 and I. 1 Royal Artillery; and here, on the eve of the day which was to decide the question of war or peace, we must leave him for a while, whilst we turn our attention to the movements of the troops at the other extremity of the North-West Frontier.

¹ The author of a number of interesting pamphlets and articles bearing on the Central Asian Question, on which subject he writes with the authority of an experienced traveller and administrator.

CHAPTER XVII

THE KURAM VALLEY FIELD FORCE.

MAJOR-GENERAL F. S. Roberts, V.C., C.B., on whom the command of the Kuram Field Force had been bestowed, arrived at Kohat on the 9th of October¹ to find the arrangements for the advance of his Force in a very backward state, and the Force itself inadequate to the work it was expected to perform. That work included, in the first place, the occupation of the Kuram Valley and the expulsion of all Afghan garrisons south of the Shutargardan Pass; in the second, as opportunity might offer, the pushing of reconnaissances into the Khost Valley, whence, if military considerations would admit, the Amir's Administrator was

¹ Frederick Sleigh Roberts. Born 1832. Entered army 1851. Greatly distinguished himself in the Mutiny. Served in Abyssinia on the Staff, and, at close of campaign, superintended the re-embarkation of troops. Spent many years on the Army Head Quarters' Staff at Simla, and acquired in the Quarter-Master-General's Department, of which, at the time of the outbreak of the war, he was the head, an almost unique knowledge of the requirements of an army. A man of great energy, and endowed with the temperament and manner which attract and dominate soldiers, Roberts had no experience of command, and his constitutional daring and his contempt for an uncivilized foe, predisposed him to rash resolves, and hasty action.

to be dislodged; and finally, the exploration of the roads leading into the unknown region beyond Khost.

It was not as if the theatre of operations were close at hand. The Peiwar Kotal, where the Amir's troops were likely to make their stand against the British invader, was seventy-three miles from Thal; Thal, where a strongly entrenched post would have to be established, sixty-three miles from Kohat;¹ and though the road between these two last named places was entirely in British territory, it lay so near hills inhabited by tribes in whose peaceful intentions it was unsafe to place implicit confidence, that it would have to be guarded almost as though it ran through an enemy's country. Kohat itself had but a weak garrison; and that station was separated from Rawal Pindi, its base of supply and nearest support, by the Indus,² and by one hundred and

¹ Peshawar, only thirty-six miles from Kohat, and on the same side of the Indus, could not serve as the primary base of the troops concentrating at Kohat, because practically cut off from the latter station by a mass of rugged hills, inhabited by the Pass Afridis with a section of whom the Indian Government had recently been at war, on whose submission it was unsafe to reckon, and a rupture with whom might have exercised an unfavourable influence on the negotiations which Cavagnari was carrying on with other sections of the same Tribe.

² It will be remembered that with a view to the movements which were about to begin, a bridge of boats had, for the first time, been thrown across the Indus at Kushalgarh, in the cold weather of 1876; but as that bridge had to be dismantled when the snow began to melt, and could not be restored till after the rains, communication between Rawal Pindi and Kohat had, and has still, to be maintained, by country boats during half the year.

eight miles of wild country, traversed by the worst of roads. To defeat a strong enemy at a point one hundred and thirty-six miles from his base, and, at the same time, to guard his communications, with only six Native and one British infantry regiments, two regiments of Native and one squadron British cavalry, a single battery Royal Horse Artillery and two mountain batteries—seemed to Roberts an almost impossible task; and his consciousness of its difficulty was deepened by the discovery that the Pathan soldiers, of whom there were many in four out of the six Native regiments, were reluctant to fight against their co-religionist, the Amir, and that the one British infantry regiment—the 2nd Battalion of the 8th King's—was so saturated with fever that a great portion of it was quite unfit for service.

And not only was the Kuram Field Force weak in numbers and in internal strength, it was poorly equipped, and its transport, though procured at enormous cost, unequal to hard work in a mountainous country. Fortunately, however, its commander was in closest touch with the Military Departments at Simla, and enjoyed Lord Lytton's special favour, so that the representations he at once addressed to Head Quarters, met with prompter attention than was accorded to those of officers who had even greater reason to complain. Many deficiencies in the equipment of his troops were made good. He was allowed to retain the 23rd Pioneers whom it had been intended to transfer to the Khyber Column; and the 72nd Highlanders, a battery of Field Artillery, and the 28th Punjab Infantry, were sent to Kohat;—half the battery and half the British regiment to strengthen that

station; the other half of each to accompany the advance; and the Native regiment to form part of the Thal garrison. The thirty elephants, for which he asked to carry his field guns, were also granted; and, though they were long in appearing, they overtook the column in time to do good service at the attack on the Peiwar Kotal. In the matter of other transport Simla was powerless; but Roberts was a man who not only knew where to turn for help, but how to help himself; and, if he could not get better mules and ponies, he could, and did, see that those he had to accept were properly cared for, and not overladen, though he never stinted his soldiers in the matter of baggage and diet, rightly feeling that it was poor economy to have, in the end, to carry sick men instead of blankets and tents and larger supplies of food.

From the hour of General Robert's arrival at Kohat, the work of organizing and moving the troops went on apace. On the 10th of October, the 5th Punjab Infantry and a wing of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, under the command of Colonel J. J. Gordon, were despatched to Thal, followed, on the 11th, by F.A Royal Horse Artillery and the 29th Punjab Native Infantry, and on subsequent days by other regiments, as their equipment was completed. Meanwhile, the 7th Company of Sappers and Miners were busily engaged in connecting Kohat and Thal by a telegraph wire; and the 23rd Pioneers, assisted by 800 of the inhabitants of the district, who had been placed at the disposal of the military authorities by the Deputy Commissioner, Major Plowden,¹

¹ Major Plowden was on this and many other occasions of

were making good progress with a cart-road. By the 19th of November both telegraph and cart-road were finished, and materials for a trestle bridge lay ready for use at Thal, where two months' supply of provisions, collected by the commissariat, had been housed in large tents; whilst at Kohat, the roomy lines vacated by the 5th Punjab Cavalry had been converted into a Commissariat Dépôt.

The hospital arrangements, to which General Roberts devoted much attention, were admirably organised by Deputy Surgeon-General F. F. Allen. The Kohat Station Hospital, containing fifty-six beds, supplemented by seven European tents, the whole under the care of Surgeon-Major Martin, was set apart as a Base Hospital for British troops; and a Base Hospital for Native troops, with one hundred and fifty beds, Surgeon-Major Costello in charge, was likewise, established at Kohat. Attached to each regiment¹ was a small hospital in which slight wounds and mild cases of sickness were to be treated; and a Divisional Hospital for the re-

great service to the Force. One way in which he earned its gratitude was by furnishing "badraggas," or small armed escorts, to protect the grass-cutters and the camels when grazing. These escorts, drawn from the people of the district, relieved the troops of a harassing duty.

¹ The 8th King's, thanks to the foresight of the regimental authorities and of the Principal Medical Officer of the Rawal Pindi Division, Dr. Alexander Smith, entered on the campaign so well stocked with medicines and medical appliances as to be in a position to give great assistance in furnishing the Base Hospital at Kohat and the Field Hospital at Thal, and, had still something to spare to the Native regiments, which were, as a rule, badly provided with drugs and medical instruments.

ception of more serious cases, for the service of which fifteen European tents were allotted, was to accompany the column as far as the Kuram Forts.

Being invested with full political as well as with full military powers, General Roberts gave much anxious thought to the problem of how to gain and keep the goodwill of the inhabitants of the Kuram, and of the warlike tribes bordering on that valley, whilst asserting his right to take any measures that might seem to him essential to the success of his enterprise. His political adviser, Colonel Waterfield, Commissioner of Peshawar, whose jurisdiction extended to Kohat, was able to assure him that the Turis, the principal people of the Kuram, had suffered so much from the tyranny of their Afghan rulers that, if certain of good treatment and permanent protection, they were little likely to regard the British advance with hostility; and after repeated interviews with many chiefs who had come down from their hills to meet him, and with a number of Native gentlemen—British subjects, but, from one cause or another, possessed of influence beyond our border—whom Waterfield had summoned to Kohat, Roberts felt so convinced that all that was needed to secure the steady co-operation of the Tribes was to relieve their minds of the fear of being abandoned to the vengeance of the Amir at the close of the war, that he applied to the Indian Government for leave to assure all whom it might concern, that British authority, once established throughout the region in which he was about to operate, would never be withdrawn. This request was at once granted; but the suggestion that convoys should be allowed to make use of the road to the Kuram Forts, running

through country belonging to the Zaimukhts, was rejected, in deference to the strong protests of the Foreign Department; and supplies had to follow the circuitous route *viâ* Thal by which the troops had advanced, until it was found possible to construct a road up the left bank of the Kuram River, outside the territory of that tribe.

It is impossible to speak too highly of the energy, clear-headedness and practical knowledge displayed by General Roberts during those busy weeks of preparation. That his Force took the field fully equipped is, in itself, the highest possible testimony to the quality and quantity of his work; but, in comparing the results obtained by him with those that rewarded the labours of other commanders, it is only fair to remember, not only the peculiarly favourable relation in which he stood to the authorities at Simla, but, also, the fact that, from the first, he was furnished with an adequate Staff—several transport officers, for instance, where Biddulph had none—some of the members of which he had been permitted to select, a privilege not accorded to every General Officer.

By the 15th of November, the Kuram Field Force, organized in two Brigades, the First under Brigadier-General A. H. Cobbe, the Second under Brigadier-General J. B. Thelwall, C.B., as well as the troops who, under Major J. C. Stewart, 5th Punjab Cavalry, were to occupy Thal, had assembled at that fort, where, on the 18th, they were joined by their Commander. On the following day Roberts having reconnoitred the river, selected a site for the trestle bridge, a simple but serviceable structure with a twelve foot roadway, which the Engineers immediately began throwing across

the fair-weather channel of that stream; the enemy at Fort Kapiang on the opposite bank, watching, but not hindering the work. By the evening of the 20th the bridge was in its place, and yet another British Force stood ready to enter Afghan territory on the day appointed by Lord Lytton for the commencement of hostilities.

TABLE SHOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
KURAM VALLEY FIELD FORCE.

ENGINEER DEPARTMENT.

7th Company Bengal Sappers and Miners.
Engineer Field Park.

ARTILLERY.

F Battery A Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery.
Half of G Battery 3rd Brigade, Royal Artillery.
No. 1 Mountain Battery, Punjab Frontier Force.
Ordnance Field Park.

CAVALRY.

One Squadron 10th Hussars.
12th Bengal Cavalry.

INFANTRY.

1ST BRIGADE.

2nd Battalion, 8th Foot.
29th Punjab Infantry.
5th Punjab Infantry, Punjab Frontier Force.

2ND BRIGADE.

Wing of 72nd Highlanders.
2nd Punjab Infantry, Punjab Frontier Force.
5th Gurkhas, Punjab Frontier Force.
23rd Pioneers. (Musbi Sikhs.)

GARRISON OF THAL.

No. 2 Mountain Battery, Punjab Frontier Force.

Wing of 15th Punjab Cavalry, Punjab Frontier Force.

21st Punjab Infantry.

On Line of Communications between Thal and Kohat.

Wing of 5th Punjab Cavalry, Punjab Frontier Force.

Approximate effective strength:—150 officers, 5,500 men of all ranks, 950 horses and 17 guns. ¹

¹ Staff and Departmental Officers of the Kuram Valley Field Force:—Captain G. T. Pretymann, Aide-de-Camp; Lieutenant N. F. Chamberlain and Lieutenant-Colonel George Villiers, Orderly-Officers; Major Galbraith, Assistant Adjutant-General; Major H. Collett, Assistant Quartermaster-General; Captain R. G. Kennedy and Captain F. S. Carr, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-Generals; Deputy Surgeon-General F. F. Allen, C.B., Principal Medical Officer; Captain A. R. Badcock, Chief Commissariat-Officer; Lieutenant-Colonel Æneas Perkins, Commanding Engineer; Lieutenant F. T. N. Spratt and Lieutenant S. Grant, Assistant Field-Engineers; Captain A. S. Wynne, Superintendent of Field-Telegraphs; Lieutenant-Colonel A. H. Lindsay, Commanding Artillery; Lieutenant E. G. Osborne, Adjutant Artillery; Captain J. A. S. Colquhoun, In charge of Ordnance Field Park; Colonel Hugh Gough, V.C., C.B., Commanding Cavalry; Brigadier-General A. H. Cobbe, Commanding 1st Infantry Brigade; Captain A. Scott, V.C., Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General J. B. Thelwall, C.B., Commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade; Captain G. de C. Morton, Brigade-Major; Major J. C. Stewart, Commanding Garrison of Thal; Captain R. Woodthorpe, Superintendent of Surveys; Major D. Moriarty, Superintendent of Transport; Captain H. Goad and Lieutenant A. Maisey, Assistant Superintendents; Rev. J. W. Adams, Chaplain.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PESHAWAR VALLEY FIELD FORCE.

It will be remembered that, early in October, the Viceroy had given consent to the formation of a Reserve Force for the support of the garrison of Peshawar. At the end of that month, when a partial advance upon Kabul by the Khyber route had been added to the general plan of operations which were to break the power of the Amir, it was decided to raise this force, the command of which was bestowed upon Lieutenant-General F. F. Maude, V.C., C.B.,¹ from

¹ Frederick Francis Maude. Born 1821; died 1897. Entered the Army in 1840. Served throughout the Gwalior campaign. Was present with his regiment, the 3rd Buffs, at the battle of Puniar. Served with the same regiment in the Crimea. Commanded the ladder party in the attack on the Redan, on which occasion he was dangerously wounded, and won the Victoria Cross. In 1878 was commanding the Rawal Pindi Division, the largest and most important in India. Maude was a man of fine physique and noble nature, of great energy and sound judgment; devoted to his profession, of which he had made himself a thorough master. A strict disciplinarian, his justice won for him the respect, and his kindness, the love of his officers and men, to whom, in war, he set a fine example of self-denial and simplicity of life, refusing all luxuries and sharing the hardships of his troops. His firmness and independence of character made him less popular with the Army Head-Quarters' Staff, from whom

6,000 to 10,000 men, and to assign to it the task of clearing the Afghan troops out of the Pass, and of occupying Dakka. A week or two later, this plan was again modified: instead of one division, the Peshawar Valley Field Force was to consist of two, of which the first was to advance on Dakka, whilst the second safeguarded its communications.

Since there were to be two Divisions, Maude, not unnaturally, expected to receive the command of the First, and he actually learned privately from an officer of the Head Quarters' Staff, that he had been nominated to it by Sir F. Haines, and the nomination accepted by the Indian Government; yet, in the end, it was the Second Division that fell to his share, whilst the command of the First went to Sir Samuel Browne, V.C., C.B., K.C.S.I.;¹ and when he remonstrated, it was only to be told by the Commander-in-Chief that strong political reasons had rendered the change of which he complained, imperative. In reality, there was only one reason for it; viz., Lord Lytton's desire to substitute Sir N. Chamberlain for Sir S. Browne, as Military

he was not always to receive the support and consideration to which his position and experience entitled him.

¹ Samuel James Browne. Born 1824. Entered the army 1840. Saw service first in the Punjab campaign, 1848-49. In the Mutiny lost his arm and won the Victoria Cross. Having been for many years in the Punjab Frontier Force, he had far more knowledge of the border and its tribes than any of the other Generals employed in the war; and for this reason, as well as on account of his kindly nature and upright character, his appointment to the command of the First Division of the Peshawar Valley Field Force was hailed with great satisfaction by the Indian army.

Member of Council, in the hope that from the former he should receive more support and less criticism than he had met with at the hands of the latter. A very short experience was to convince the Viceroy that his new military adviser was just as little likely as the old one to lend his sanction to immature schemes, and methods ill-adapted to the conditions under which they were to be applied; but, by that time, the injustice to Maude had been committed.

Fortunately for the public service, the disappointed General was a man who never allowed private feeling to interfere with the performance of public duty, and to whose delicate sense of honour it would have seemed disgraceful to suffer a wrong done to himself by the Government, to prejudice the terms on which he stood with the old friend who profited by his loss. As a consequence of this magnanimity of mind, the relations between him and Browne throughout the campaign were of the most cordial nature; a fact all the more to the credit of both generals that, in themselves, those relations tended to friction and discord.

On the Kandahar line of advance, where two Divisions were also employed, the chief command, as we have seen, was vested in the commander of one of them; and the difficulties that resulted from this arrangement were such as sprang from the natural inclination of that General to favour the troops with which he was more particularly connected, and to take too little account of the difficulties of those with whom he was seldom brought into personal contact; or from the inclination, equally natural in the subordinate officer, to believe in the existence of favouritism or neglect. In the Khyber, there was neither superior

nor subordinate, but two co-ordinate authorities, with no tie between them save the duty of working for a common end; a bond which did not necessarily insure harmony of action, since there was always the possibility of differences of opinion as to the best way of attaining that end.¹ The dangers of this arrangement were so clear to General Maude that he openly expressed the opinion that he and his Division should have been placed under Browne's orders, and throughout the whole campaign he acted as though this had been the case.

The real remedy, both in the Khyber and at Kandahar, as none knew better than Sir F. Haines, would have lain in amalgamating the two Divisions and their Reserve Forces, and placing their Generals under the orders of the Commander of the Army Corps thus created; but an Army Corps Commander would have meant an Army Corps Commander's Staff, and Lord Lytton, who did not understand that, in war, efficiency is the only possible economy, could not be induced to face the expense which such a body would involve.²

¹ All readers of Napier's History of the Peninsular War will remember how narrowly Crauford's Division escaped destruction, in an engagement on the river Coa, for lack of the help which Picton, who saw his rival's peril, refused to render, and which the former General could only ask as a favour, not demand as a right.

² "The Commander-in-Chief is fully aware of the difficulty in which Sir S. Browne and yourself are suddenly placed with regard to your relations to each other. Sir F. Haines always contemplated the two Divisions being under superior control as an

Meanwhile, the Force, whose constitution and destination had been so long in debate, was rapidly assembling at Lawrencepur. It consisted of:—

ARTILLERY.

D Battery,	A Brigade,	Royal Horse Artillery.
H ,,	C Brigade,	,, ,, ,,
C ,,	3	Royal Artillery.

CAVALRY.

9th Lancers.
13th Bengal Lancers.

BRITISH INFANTRY.

5th Fusiliers.
25th King's Own Borderers.

NATIVE INFANTRY.

6th Bengal Infantry.
24th ,, ,,
2nd Gurkhas.
Mainwarra Battalion.
2 Companies Sappers and Miners.

Army Corps, but the Government would not have the arrangement; consequently, the practical inconvenience. However, there is nothing for it but for both to act for the furtherance of the public service. As he will most probably advance to Jelalabad and must be able to call upon you for such support and assistance as he may require in furtherance of his project, His Excellency feels confident you will use your utmost endeavour to respond to the same." (Letter from the Adjutant-General, P. Lumsden, to General Maude. At its foot appears the following characteristic note:—"As if he were writing to an ill-disciplined ensign! F. F. Maude".)

Its approximate strength was 6,000 men with 18 guns, and, thanks to its Commander's energy and power of organisation, to the resources of Rawal Pindi, on which it was able to draw, and to the fact that the troops composing it had spent the summer in comparatively healthy stations—one of the British regiments had just come down from the Hills—when the time came for it to move, except in the matter of Staff officers,¹ its efficiency left little to be desired. On the 18th of November it was at Attock; on the 19th it crossed the Indus by the bridge of boats which then spanned that river; and on the 20th it reached Naushahra, a small cantonment on the Kabul River, which, with Hoti Mardan, the home of the celebrated Guide Corps,² and the small forts of Abazai, Shabkadar and Michni, protected Peshawar against attack from the north and north-west. Here, however, Maude's advance was arrested by the loss of his transport, which was hastily withdrawn, its services being required elsewhere.

¹ A list of these will be given later on; in the meanwhile it is sufficient to say that they were drawn principally from the Rawal Pindi Division.

² Perhaps the most noteworthy passage in the Guides' fine record occurred in the Mutiny in 1857, when they left Murdan at six hours' notice; were at Attock, 30 miles off, the next morning, fully equipped for service, and thence pushed on to Delhi, a distance of 580 miles, or 50 regular marches, which they accomplished in 21 with only 3 intervening halts, and those made by order; and after thus marching 27 miles a day for three weeks, in the hot weather, engaged the enemy hand to hand, and had every one of its officers, more or less, wounded three hours after joining Anson's Force. See Punjab Mutiny Report.

It is difficult to conceive of the confusion which reigned from Jhelam to the Frontier, whilst Browne's Division was being brought together and pushed forward towards the position from which it was to take the offensive. Half the troops assigned to it belonged, indeed, to the Peshawar District and were, so to say, on the spot, but its other half and all its equipment, transport and stores had to be brought from down country, Peshawar having been swept bare to meet the demands of the Kuram Valley Field Force.¹ Into Jhelam—in those days the terminus of the North-Western Railway—trains were hourly pouring supplies in such enormous quantities, that the short-handed Commissariat was quite unable to deal with them; and, as there were no proper sidings, laden trucks thronged the station—not a few of them crowded with dead and dying mules, ponies and donkeys deserted by their drivers—piles of stores blocked the platforms, and, for miles on either side the line, grain and other perishable goods lay exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather, and the depredations of the *badmashes*² of the neighbouring villages.

Beyond Jhelam, the primitive, unwieldy bullock carts of the country had chiefly to be relied on for transport; and these, collected under harsh pressure from the reluctant ryots, came slowly crawling into the town from south, east, and

¹ Macpherson managed to unearth some tent material and a few blankets in the Native city, which he purchased for the camp-followers of his Brigade, but the commissariat got nothing in Peshawar.

² Bad characters.

west, to leave it, still more slowly, going northward by the Grand Trunk Road. That road was literally choked with heavily laden carts, camels, mules and ponies, through which Cavalry and Infantry regiments, Staff and Medical officers, even Generals of Brigade, in palki-garis, ekkas, or any sort of conveyance they could procure, struggled and fought their way to the front, leaving their baggage to follow when and how it could.¹

The sights he witnessed on his way from the Hills to Peshawar must have prepared Sir S. Browne to be informed, on reaching that city, by the Chief Commissariat officer of his Division, Colonel Hunter, that it was impossible to say when the boots, warm clothing, and other articles required by the troops would arrive; and to be told, a day or two

¹ Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson tells in one of his letters home, how, at Attock, he took the wife of a Sergeant-Major, sick of fever, out of a bullock cart in which she was travelling, and putting her into his gari (carriage) sat himself in the doorway, with his feet on the step, and in this position passed his own regiment, the 2nd Gurkhas, and had great fun in watching the men, as he gravely salaamed to them, grinning as they tried to salute; and Surgeon-Major Evatt tells a story of an officer's wife, who, having had the good luck to procure a carriage to take her from Jhelam to Rawal Pindi, was asked by the post-master at the former place to allow a Native officer to travel on the top of her carriage. On her acceding to the request, the officer, in his gratitude, held out his sword for her to touch, and she, fancying he offered it to her as a guarantee that he would do her no harm, took it and placed it under the cushions, returning it to its astonished owner on arriving the next day at Rawal Pindi.

later, that it was vain to dream of getting the Force properly equipped by the 21st, and that to take thousands of weakly, half-clad camp-followers into the Khyber in such weather as already prevailed, would be to condemn a large number of them to certain death. As a humane man and a general experienced in hill-warfare, Browne must have felt the truth and force of these representations, but the power to act upon them was not his. Lord Lytton had decreed that hostilities were to begin on a certain day, and his orders must be carried out, however strongly those on whom their execution devolved might feel that, in fixing the date, the efficiency and health of the different Divisions had been sacrificed to the desire to forestall any yielding on Shere Ali's part.

The Commissariat was not the only department at its wits' end to know how to complete the most necessary preparations for a hostile advance in the few days still at its disposal. Ordnance stores were deficient, and the hospital arrangements were not finally settled until the Principal Medical Officer, Surgeon-General John Gibbons, arrived at Peshawar with directions to substitute Field Hospitals for Regimental Hospitals, and "it became necessary, in accordance with this new scheme, in three days, and practically in the face of the enemy, to remove all the medical officers and all the medical subordinates from their battalions; to transfer all the Native hospital establishments from their regiments to the little understood new creations called "field-hospitals;" to hand over every grain of medicine, all instruments and technical equipment, tents, books and documents; to give and receive receipts on both sides; and finally, to

draw from the Commissariat, Barrack, Ordnance, and Transport Departments the various equipments needed for the same units, the very existence of which was unknown outside the Medical Department.”¹ The tents for these new hospitals were not issued to the medical officers in charge till 9 p.m. on the 18th, and even then no steps had been taken to provide them with mule carriage, and with equipment suitable for mountain warfare.²

Yet it was only too apparent that these disorganised and insufficient hospitals would soon be overflowing, for the troops drawn from the Peshawar Valley garrison entered upon the campaign with constitutions weakened by the malarial fever peculiar to that swampy district, a fever that is always liable to return in cold weather, and which predisposes those who suffer from it to pneumonia, the most fatal of all maladies to the Sepoy and camp-follower, and only little less dangerous in the case of the better fed and better clad European soldier.³

¹ Surgeon-Major G. J. H. Evatt's Recollections of the Afghan War.

² “Early in the campaign one could see how hopelessly unfit our heavy plains' hospital equipment was for mountain warfare. In the first place, the tents, like those of all the European troops, were the huge European Private pattern, heavy, cumbersome, and unfit for mule, or camel-carriage in the highlands. Again, all the equipment was packed in unwieldy camel trunks, difficult to load, difficult to unload, crushing a fallen camel to the earth, and in which it was impossible to get at any small article.” —Evatt's Recollections.

³ Men who came from malarious stations like Peshawar and Mian Mir at once fell victims, and it seems true that malarial

Whilst Sir S. Browne was struggling with the difficulties attendant on the hasty assembling of a large Anglo-Indian force, on the borders of a wild and savage country,¹ his political officer, Major Cavagnari was continuing the negotiations by which it was hoped to smooth the way for a British advance upon Dakka. The Kuki Khels, whose lands lay close to the Indian border, on whom therefore it would be easy to bring military pressure to bear, had early yielded to the promises of liberal payment for all services to be rendered to the British troops, with which he supplemented his original assurances that the Indian Government would assume full responsibility for the subsidy which the Afridis would forfeit by siding with the Amir's enemies, and that the occupation of the Khyber should not be permanent, but cease as soon as the object of the war had been attained. It was not till the beginning of November, however, that

fever so diminishes the vital energy of a man that he succumbs easily to lung inflammation in these mountain climates.' (Evatt's Recollections.)

The men of the 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade, who had been quartered at Naushahra, and those of the 81st Foot, who came from Peshawar, literally went sick by hundreds; whilst the 17th and the 51st Regiments, who had spent the summer in the Hills, marched into Jamrud in splendid condition, and, except for one outbreak of pneumonia in the former regiment, due to bivouacking without tents, maintained a very high level of health throughout the campaign.

¹ The Commander-in-Chief must have been very anxious as to the condition of Browne's Force, for on the 15th Nov., though overwhelmed with work, he made a flying visit to Peshawar to see for himself what progress was being made.

the Zakka Khels, the most powerful and most inaccessible section of that great tribe, followed the example thus set them; and in succumbing, at last, to the inducements held out, they may not have been altogether uninfluenced by the thought that the enjoyment of a British subsidy, need not debar them from plundering their ally's straggling convoys and ill-protected baggage trains; certainly, their acquiescence in the terms offered them was largely due to the anger and alarm, with which they viewed the occupation of their fortress of Ali Masjid by the Afghan troops.

But the political difficulties of the situation on the Peshawar frontier did not cease to exist when the tribe in possession of the Khyber had been conciliated; for, immediately behind the Afridis, to the north of that Pass, lay the territory of the Mohmands, a people who had always acknowledged the authority of the Amir, whose chief villages and most fertile valleys lay open to Afghan attack, and whose present chief, Mahomed Shah, owed his position to Shere Ali's favour. For them and him, it was a very serious matter to repudiate their allegiance to Afghanistan; and the British promise to evacuate the Khyber at the close of the war, which had done much to reconcile the Afridis to its temporary occupation, was the contrary of reassuring to their neighbours. Whilst the negotiations for the journey of the British Mission had been in progress, Mahomed Shah had sent a contingent to the support of Ali Masjid, and, probably with the sanction of the Afridi headmen, had occupied the Rotas Heights, a long, lofty, precipitous ridge, overlooking and commanding that fortress. Cavagnari met these measures by a clever political move. He invited to his

camp the sons of the late Governor—that Naroz Shah who had fled from Lalpura when Shere Ali was trying to bring the assassins of Major Macdonald to justice, and had been killed in exile—and treated them with ostentatious respect. The presence of his rivals, under such powerful protection, so near the Mohmand border, had so far the desired effect that Mahomed Shah made advances to the Indian Government's representative; but, distracted between the dangers threatening him from one side and the other, he allowed the negotiations to drag on from week to week, and it was not till two days before the outbreak of hostilities that, alarmed at the sight of the large British force mustering round Jamrud, he made up his mind to throw in his lot with the Power more immediately in a position to injure him, and withdrew from the Rotas Heights, leaving only a small post of observation on their crest, thus relieving Browne of all anxiety as to Mohmand interference with his plans for the capture of Ali Masjid.¹

These plans, in their general outline, had been determined by that General's knowledge of the certain heavy loss of life and probable failure that would be the consequences of a front attack upon Ali Masjid, and by the Indian Government's anxiety not to alienate the Afridis by penetrating into valleys which they prided themselves on having always preserved inviolate; for, whilst the first of these considera-

¹ Subsequent events showed that Mahomed Shah again wavered, for the Mohmands returned to the Rotas Heights, where their presence added greatly to the difficulties of the turning parties.

tions made a turning movement imperative, the second dictated the line which that movement must follow.¹ In the absence of maps, however, more knowledge of the country to be operated in was urgently required, and Captain G. Stewart of the Guides, and Mr. G. B. Scott of the Survey Department, had been busy all through the latter half of October, reconnoitring and collecting information as to the dispositions and strength of the enemy. Early in November, to confirm the results thus obtained, a small party consisting of Colonel Jenkins, Wigram Battye and Stewart of the Guides, Cavagnari and Scott, started from Jamrud before dawn one morning, and rode cautiously across the Jam plain to the foot of the Sarkai Hill.² Here, they dis-

¹ It has been suggested by some critics that Browne should have boldly pushed a portion of his force past Ali Masjid, and by cutting its communications with Dakka compelled its evacuation. But that fortress occupies a position of such extraordinary strength that to pass its guns by daylight, whilst every rock and bush and cave hid a resolute and well-armed foe, would have been impossible; and to slip by under cover of night, as Napoleon slipped by Bard, in the Val d'Aosta, would have been no less hazardous, for the garrison was on the alert, the road carefully watched by outlying pickets, and the Afridis, who were lying about as thick as bees, could not be trusted to keep their hands off their allies should misfortune overtake the latter.

² This ridge lies $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the Jamrud fort. It runs north and south and occupies the ground lying between the narrow gorge known as the Shadi Bagiar (Wolf's Cave) and the true Khyber Pass, through which the river Khyber flows into the Jam plain. When Sir George Pollock forced the Khyber in 1842, his troops advanced through the Shadi Bagiar Pass, and the Sikh contingent up the Khyber stream.

mounted, and climbed up some five hundred feet to a ridge where a magnificent view suddenly opened before them. About ten miles away, and a little to the left, looking in the direction of Ali Masjid, stretched a long line of hills, from the eastern extremity of which a cataract of crags fell with terrible abruptness to the narrow gorge, scarce fifty yards across, through which the Khyber River cuts its course eastward, and, facing this declivity, rose the equally precipitous Rotas Heights. Between these mountains and the point occupied by the British officers lay a tangled mass of hills and ravines. In the dim light, Jenkins and his companions swept this mass, again and again, with their field-glasses; but it was not till the rising sun glinted upon its guns, that Ali Masjid became visible about four miles off, crowning a conical hill that peeped over a rugged ridge, on which breast-works and their defenders could now be clearly discerned, whilst the tents of a cavalry encampment, nestling at its base, started into view as the sunlight streamed down its side. From this encampment, a small body of horsemen was presently seen to emerge, ascend the Shahgai plateau, and ride leisurely across it to a small tower, just off the Mackeson road. Fearing discovery—for the picket was not more than two miles away—Jenkins withdrew his party to the back of the ridge and returned to Jamrud without mishap.

On the 16th of November, from the same point, Sir S. Browne himself reconnoitred the enemy, who were found to be still busy building stone breast-works; and on the 19th, just before transferring his Head Quarters to Jamrud, he laid the plans which these reconnais-

sances¹ had enabled him to correct and perfect, before the General Officers commanding Brigades and their respective Staffs. Those plans included a front attack and a turning movement. The latter—all operations to the left of the British position being barred—had necessarily to follow the narrow, rugged path to the right, or north, of the Khyber, which, skirting, but not actually touching Mohmand territory, led, first, northward up a drainage line in the heart of the hills, and, then, westward to the high plateau of Sapparai, where it divided into two tracks, one of which descended sharply to the Khyber, which it struck at Kata Kushtia, two miles beyond Ali Masjid; whilst the other, doubling back to the south, ran along the watershed till it terminated on the summit of the^{*} Rotas Heights, exactly above that fortress.

The front attack was to be led by Browne himself; the two columns selected to take part in the turning movement, by Brigadier-Generals Tytler and Macpherson, respectively; and, so far as it was possible to calculate the time needed for their march, it was arranged that the direct assault on Ali Masjid was to coincide with Tytler's appearance in the Khyber, and Macpherson's on the Rotas Heights—the latter commander dominating the enemy's position, whilst the former cut off his retreat.

By 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the 20th, the last troops of the First Division of the Peshawar Valley Field Force had marched into Jamrud, and by sunset, the leading

¹ The fruit of these reconnaissances was an admirable map by Mr. G. B. Scott, and some useful sketches by Captain G. Stewart.

Brigade of the Turning Force was under arms, ready to begin its adventurous march. Thus, under circumstances of almost inconceivable difficulty, Lord Lytton's orders had been obeyed, and, at three widely separated points, Anglo-Indian armies stood ready to cross the Afghan frontier; the advance of each being heralded by a Proclamation, in which the Viceroy threw the responsibility for the war that was about to commence, on the Amir, and assured the Sirdars and People of Afghanistan that with them the British Government had no quarrel, and that, having given no offence, they would not be lightly injured, or interfered with.¹

TABLE SHOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 1ST
DIVISION PESHAWAR VALLEY FIELD FORCE.

ENGINEERS.

Head-Quarters of Royal Engineers in India.

4 Companies of Sappers and Miners.

Engineer Field Park.

ARTILLERY.

I	Battery, C	Brigade,	Royal Horse	Artillery.
E	"	3rd	"	Royal Artillery.
No. 11	"	9th	"	(Mountain).
No. 13	"	9th	"	(Heavy Battery).
No. 4	Mountain Battery, Punjab Frontier Force.			
	Ordnance Field Park.			

CAVALRY.

10th Hussars—(Two Squadrons).

11th Bengal Lancers.

Cavalry of Guide Corps.

¹ *Vide* Proclamation, Appendix II.

INFANTRY.

1ST BRIGADE.

4th Battalion Rifle Brigade.
20th Punjab Infantry.
4th Gurkhas.

2ND BRIGADE.

17th Foot.
1st Sikhs (Punjab Field Force).
Infantry of the Guide Corps.

3RD BRIGADE.

81st Foot.
14th Sikhs.
27th Punjab Infantry.

4TH BRIGADE.

51st Light Infantry.
45th Sikhs.
Sappers and Miners attached to this Brigade.

Approximate effective strength: 200 officers, 7,600 men of all ranks, 1,300 horses and 26 guns.¹

¹ Staff and Departmental Officers, 1st Division Peshawar Valley Field Force:—Lieutenant G. T. Campbell, Aide-de-Camp; Captain Lord William Beresford, Orderly-Officer; Major G. W. Smith, Assistant Adjutant-General; Major G. E. L. S. Sanford, Assistant Quartermaster-General; Major A. A. A. Kinlock and Captain J. Davidson, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-Generals; Deputy Surgeon-General S. Gibbons, Principal Medical Officer; Lieutenant-Colonel J. V. Hunt, Chief Commissariat Officer; Colonel H. R. Mannsell, C.B., Commanding Engineer; Captain B. Lovett, C.S.I., Brigade-Major; Major H. F. Blair, Field-Engineer; Lieutenant W. Peacock, Assistant Field-Engineer; Colonel W. J. Williams, C.B., Commanding Artillery; Captain G. W. C. Rothe, Adjutant

Artillery; Captain W. G. Knox, Orderly-Officer; Brigadier-General C. J. S. Gough, V.C., C.B., Commanding Cavalry Brigade; Captain B. A. Combe, Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson, V.C., C.B., Commanding 1st Infantry Brigade; Major H. T. Jones, Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General J. A. Tytler, V.C., C.B., Commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade; A. H. A. Gordon, Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General F. E. Appleyard, C.B., Commanding 3rd Infantry Brigade; Captain W. C. Farwell, Brigade-Major; Brigadier-General Brown, Commanding 4th Infantry Brigade; Major R. A. Wauchope, Brigade-Major; Major J. C. T. Humphry, In charge of Treasure Chest; Captain W. Hill, Provost-Marshal.

APPENDIX I

TRANSLATION of a Letter from His Excellency the CABUL ENVOY
to COLONEL SIR LEWIS PELLY, Envoy Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary, dated Saturday, the 3rd March, 1877.

After Compliments.

The letter, dated 27th February, 1877, which you sent by hand to Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan, reached my residence in Peshawar Cantonment on Tuesday, the 13th of the month of Safar (begins Tuesday evening), and the tenor of your friendly writing is ascertained.

It is true that either through Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan or personally you have stated that reports have reached you from many quarters, to the effect that the Ameer was exciting a Jihad against the British Government. Kind friend! I at that time told Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan that during the time I was there these matters had not place, and even now I am unaware as to what sort of matter this is. Secondly, I verbally told yourself (that kind friend) that this sort of matters pass in a variety of forms from mouth to mouth of the public till at length the news-writers write all sorts of things. Further, I place no reliance upon such statements. How can one rely upon the statements of the common people (public)? For when Captain Cavagnari, Deputy Commissioner, came to the frontier of his own limits on the road to Koorum, what papers and statements did not trustworthy men write, viz., that such a large army is coming to Koorum, and that the British Government has such and such designs? The most noble Ruler (the Ameer)

placed no reliance upon them. In what manner, then, can the authorities of the British Government place reliance upon such statements? Kind friend! I again write that I have no knowledge of these affairs.

In case, however, there should be something of the kind, whether the Government be a great one or a small one, and such an impossible measure be desired by a great Government, then every Government takes counsel for itself of the royal family, and also of the nobles and learned men, as well as of the chiefs of tribes and camps. Therefore, in such a matter, the carrying out of which is recorded upon the responsibility of that people, it is incumbent on the King that he should consult with every tribe in this matter. With every tribe which may be consulted, it is the custom that each one, in consultation, should separately express his own opinion. And those persons, when they return to their own audience-halls, are questioned by their people; for each has his own tribe and people, and each tells them that he advised such and such. And when the matter is talked of in those counsel-chambers, it becomes altered and changed, and then these people, when they go to their own homes, again say something else which produces another alteration. Besides this, there are interested persons who, for purposes of their own, add other matters to it, and send it off to news-writers in a different character. To believe in such sort of statements is far from friendship.

Again, you have written that "it now rests with His Highness the Ameer to accept or to reject the most friendly proposal of His Excellency the Viceroy which I had hoped to have had the honour of discussing with you, his Envoy, in these negotiations." Kind friend! With much deference I beg to say that, from the day I arrived, in the nine conferences, I have veiled nothing of the true state of the case. Whatever has been said in those nine conferences, and especially in the last conference on Monday, the 19th February, no change in that can be accorded.

That which you have written that "I feel bound you are

professedly conducting friendly negotiations at Peshawar.”* I repeat those very words of that kind one. From the day that I came to Peshawar with what varied arguments have I endeavoured to strengthen the customary friendship on the old footing! And in what manner did I bring it to an end in the last paragraph on Monday, the 19th February? Therefore, it is also surprising to me why you should not trust my word, but rely upon that of news-writers.

In the matter of the accusations you have written of †—Kind friend! From the day that I arrived, if there be a single matter on which it can be adduced that it was based on accusation, be pleased to make it clear. It is expected that that kind one will pay attention to my conversations and not to the absurdities of news-writers.

And that which you have written in regard to the Russian Government. This a very great question (*amriazim*), and I am also not instructed in this question that I should say anything. But since I am sorry at the mention of such a matter, I will, by reason of right, say, briefly from myself in a friendly manner, that from the day the most noble Ruler (Ameer) returned from Umballa to his capital of Cabul, the paper that came from the Russian Officers was opened, and the wax and seal removed in the presence of this very Agent of the British Government who is now present here, and who was summoned nightly for the purpose. After two or three days' consultation, that very paper, in the original English, Persian, and Russian, was forwarded to Lord Mayo, and by his advice a paper was written

* Sentence incomplete.—This imperfect passage is a quotation from Sir L. Pelly's letter, and should read:—“But I must protest against misrepresentations wilfully and publicly made, and against the Amir's preaching a Jihad at Kabul, whilst his Highness's Envoy Plenipotentiary is professing to negotiate on friendly terms at Peshawar.”

† Public accusations, said by Sir Lewis Pelly, to have been brought by the Amir against the British Government.

to the Officer of the Russian Government. From that day to the present day, what paper has come from the Russian Government a copy of which is not in the record office of the British Government? And what paper from the Ameer has been sent to them which is contrary to the tenor of that first paper which was written in consultation with Lord Mayo? You advance objection to those very writings which in this particular were from the British Government.

As to the Russian Agents: Will you (please) prove when a Russian Agent came into Afghanistan? Couriers of the Russian Officer, who are Mussulmans of the Syud and Sahibzada clan (both religious classes), do come for the purpose of delivering letters. If from the accident of winter, etc., he should remain five days or so, nobody has said to a guest, "Get thee out of my house." Since this matter of the Russian Government is a very great question, I cannot say more than this.

When I become honoured by returning to the most noble Ruler the Ameer, having thoroughly informed him of the views of the British Government in this particular, this point will become very well and satisfactorily cleared up. And that which you have written in respect to your own Agent, your Agent is present here, with the Ameer none of the nobles or chiefs are more respected and honoured than he has been. And what is the matter that they have kept concealed from him?

That which you have written that "the people of the city of Cabul have been publicly prohibited by the Mayor of the city of Cabul from going to the Embassy quarters." I have no belief in this.

In the matter that "there is not the slightest intention of attacking the Ameer." My friend! From the day that this friendship has continued, especially in these present discussions at Peshawar, in which the whole discourse has been full of this, that the British Government (has declared that it) will in no manner interfere with or aggress upon the territories of the Ameer and of Afghanistan in which there should be displeasure to the Ameer or his successor, or there should be a decline in

the independence of that Government. Neither has the Ameer at any time shown any reliance upon the sayings of people with interested motives in respect to the British Government. The regard has always been and will be for the friendship of the British Government.

And that which you have written, viz., "Retract these libels in the same public manner that they have been promulgated." My friend! I will never admit that anybody can have made an accusation against the British Government. But in the particular of a proclamation in respect to the matters which have come to pass between us—when I have reached the Ameer's presence, and there informed him of the friendly views of the British Government, so far as I have seen and known, and also of these matters of contrary dispositions as to what is the reality of them and what their nature; having there weighed all these matters together with minuteness, it will be promulgated in a highly satisfactory manner as may be suited to the case, so that those proclamations shall openly reach the British Government.

Written on Saturday, 3rd March, 1877.

APPENDIX II

PROCLAMATION issued by the VICEROY, in English, Persian, and Urdu, on the 21st November, 1878.

THE Viceroy of India to the Ameer Sher Ali Khan, of Kabul, to his Sirdars and subjects, and to all the people of Afghanistan. It is now 10 years since the Ameer Sher Ali Khan, after a prolonged struggle, had at last succeeded in placing himself upon the throne of Kabul; at that time his dominion still needed consolidation, and the extent of it was still undefined. In these circumstances the Ameer, who had already been assisted by the British Government with money and with arms, expressed a wish to meet the Viceroy of India; his wish was cordially complied with; he was courteously received and honourably entertained by the Viceroy at Umballa; the countenance and support he had come to seek were then assured to him; he at the same time obtained further unconditional assistance in arms and money.* These tokens of the good-will of the British Government, which he gratefully acknowledged, materially aided the Ameer after his return to his own country in securing his position and extending his authority; since then the Ameer Sher Ali Khan has received from the British Government, in confirmation of its good-will, large additional gifts of arms; the powerful influence of the British Government has secured for him formal recognition by the Emperor of Russia of a fixed boundary between the Kingdom of Kabul and the Khanates of Bokhara and Kokand; the Amir's sovereignty over Wakhan and Badakshan was thereby

* Lord Mayo gave no money to Shere Ali.

admitted and made sure, a sovereignty which had till then been disputed by the Russian Government; his subjects have been allowed to pass freely throughout the Indian Empire, to carry on trade, and to enjoy all the protection afforded by the British Government to its own subjects; in no single instance have they been unjustly or inhospitably treated within British jurisdiction; for all these gracious acts the Ameer Sher Ali Khan has rendered no return, on the contrary he has requited them with active ill-will and open discourtesy. The authority over Badakshan, acquired for him by the influence of the British Government, was used by him to forbid passage through that province to a British officer of rank returning from a mission to a neighbouring State; he has closed, against free passage to British subjects and their commerce, the roads between India and Afghanistan; he has maltreated British subjects, and permitted British traders to be plundered within his jurisdiction, giving them neither protection nor redress; he has used cruelty and put to death subjects of his own on the mere suspicion that they were in communication with the British Government; he has openly and assiduously endeavoured by words and deeds to stir up religious hatred against the English, and incited war against the Empire of India. Having previously excluded British officers from every part of his dominions, and refused to receive a British mission; having left unanswered friendly communication addressed to him by the Viceroy, and repelled all efforts towards amicable intercourse between the British Government and himself, he has, nevertheless, received formally and entertained publicly at Kabul an embassy from Russia; this he has done at a time when such an act derived special significance from the character of contemporaneous events in Europe, and the attitude of England and Russia in relation thereto. Furthermore, he has done it well knowing that the Russian Government stands pledged by engagements with England to regard his territories as completely beyond the sphere of Russian influence. Finally, while this Russian embassy is still at his capital, the Ameer has forcibly repulsed at his outpost

an English envoy of high rank, of whose coming he had formal and timely announcement by a letter from the Viceroy, attesting the importance and urgency of the envoy's Mission. Even then the British Government, still anxious to avert the calamities of war, deferred hostile action, and proffered to the Ameer a last opportunity of escaping the punishment merited by his acts. Of this opportunity the Ameer has refused to avail himself. It has been the wish of the British Government to find the best security for its Indian frontier in the friendship of a State whose independence it seeks to confirm, and of a Prince whose throne it has helped to support. Animated by this wish, the British Government has made repeated efforts to establish with the Ameer Sher Ali Khan those close and cordial relations which are necessary to the interests of the two neighbouring countries, but its efforts, after being persistently repulsed, have now been met with open indignity and defiance. The Ameer Sher Ali Khan, mistaking for weakness the long forbearance of the British Government, has thus deliberately incurred its just resentment. With the Sirdars and people of Afghanistan this Government has still no quarrel, and desires none. They are absolved from all responsibility for the recent acts of the Ameer, and as they have given no offence, so the British Government, wishing to respect their independence, will not willingly injure or interfere with them, nor will the British Government tolerate interference on the part of any other power in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Upon the Ameer Sher Ali Khan alone rests the responsibility of having exchanged the friendship for the hostility of the Empress of India.

INDIAN PROBLEMS.

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Can Russia Invade India?

No. II.

India's Scientific Frontier.

No. III.

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BY

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I N D E X

I N D E X

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THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

‘ You say my roads are bad, and country is impassable. It is well ; I am pleased to hear you speak as you do. Now you understand how the powerful Tsar, who will not submit to three kings, can still do nothing with me, though he never ceases to send his armies against me. I do not venture to compare myself to those powerful sovereigns. I am Shamyl, a common Tartar ; but my bad roads, my woods, and my defiles make me much stronger than a good many monarchs. I ought to anoint all my trees with oil, and mix my mud with fragrant honey, so much do they tend to the salvation of my country.’—*Words spoken by Shamyl, the great Circassian leader, who held Russia in check for thirty-five years.*

“ Triumph you may ; confident you may be, as I am, in the gallantry of your troops ; but when through these gallantries the victory has been gained, and you have succeeded, then will come your difficulties.”—*The Duke of Wellington on the Invasion of Afghanistan, in 1838.*

“ If we pass into Afghanistan and occupy Kabul and Kandahar, and, as some say, we are going to do, occupy Herat—and I can see no limits to these operations—everything of that kind means a necessity for more money, and means a necessity for more men. From whence are the money and men to come ? What do you mean by this sort of strengthening of the Empire ? It is simply loading the Empire.”—*Mr. Gladstone’s second Midlothian Speech, 1879.*

“ Articles of provisions are not to be trifled with, or left to chance ; and there is nothing more clear than that the subsistence of the troops must be certain upon the proposed service, or the service must be relinquished.”—*The Duke of Wellington.*

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

1878-79-80

ITS CAUSES, ITS CONDUCT, AND
ITS CONSEQUENCES

BY

COLONEL H. B. HANNA

Formerly belonging to the Punjab Frontier
Force and late Commanding at Delhi
Author of "Indian Problems," etc.

MAPS

- I. STRATEGICAL MAP OF THEATRE OF WAR
- II. RECONNAISSANCE SKETCH OF ALI MASJID
- III. SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE ACTION ON THE PEIWAR MOUNTAIN

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CHAPTER I

The Taking of Ali Masjid

THE TURNING MOVEMENT

JUST before sunset, on the 20th November, 1878, the 2nd Brigade of the Peshawar Valley Field Force,¹ consisting of the Guides' Infantry, the 1st Sikhs, and the 17th Foot² under Brigadier-General J. A. Tytler, left its camp at Jamrud to begin the flank march, which was to ensure the completeness of Sir S. Browne's victory over the garrison of Ali Masjid. Speed being essential to success, and the difficulties presented by the country to be traversed very great—tents, bedding and baggage were left behind, to be sent up later through the Pass; and the troops took with them only a small hospital establishment, a reserve of ammunition, two days'cooked rations, and a supply of water stored in big leathern bags, known as pukkals,³ in addition to their great-coats, seventy rounds of ammunition, and one day's cooked rations carried by each man. Unfortunately, the greater part of the transport allotted to the Brigade consisted of bullocks instead of mules

¹ Approximate strength—40 British officers, 1,700 men, of whom 600 were Europeans.

² This regiment had spent the summer in the Murree Hills, where it had been carefully trained for the work that lay before it. Evatt, in his *Recollections*, says "that it was about the last of the long-service battalions of that army which was just then disappearing before the short-service system, and better specimens of that old régime could not be seen than the men of the 17th, who, for weight and space occupied per man, were probably 30 per cent. heavier, and much broader than the younger soldiers of to-day."

³ These bags vary in size according to the nature of the animal on which they are placed, but every camel, mule, or bullock carries one on each side, and the *bheestis* have to exercise much discretion in drawing water, so that the two pukkals may continue to balance each other to the end.

—a mistake which was to leave the men without food for over twenty-four hours. Darkness soon closed in upon the column, and when the comparatively easy road across the Jam plain gave place to an ill-defined track running up a deep ravine, sometimes on one side of a mountain stream, sometimes on the other, sometimes in its very bed, even the Native guides, men of the district, familiar with its every rock and stone, were often at fault; the transport animals blundered into the midst of the troops; one corps lost touch with another; a large part of the 17th Regiment wandered away from the path, and was with difficulty brought back to it by the shouting and whistling of its commander; and there was so much confusion and so many delays that it was ten o'clock before the force, tired and cold, the men's boots and putties¹ soaked through and through, from frequent crossing and re-crossing of the Lashora River, arrived at the little hamlet of the same name. Here it settled down to such rest as could be obtained under these uncomfortable conditions, for fires were out of the question, where there was no certainty that hidden foes might not be lurking close at hand.²

The 1st Brigade, consisting of the 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade, the 4th Gurkhas, the 20th Punjab Infantry, and the Hazara Mountain Battery,³ fared even worse than the 2nd, for it had to begin the day with marching from Hari Singh-ka-Burj to Jamrud, where it arrived to find, to the disgust of its commander, Brigadier-General

¹ "All the troops on this occasion wore woollen putties, or bandages, round the legs in place of gaiters. Now, these are excellent in the snows where they were first worn; but after being wetted, they dry on the legs, tighten, and cause stiffness and cramp. I have no doubt many men, both of the 1st and 2nd Brigades, were hampered and hurt by these bandages during the long marches of November 21st and 22nd, without knowing the cause."—G. B. SCOTT.

² In the recent Tirah Campaign, the men suffered terribly from the enforcement of this essential precaution.

³ Approximate strength—45 British officers, 1,900 men, of whom 600 were Europeans, and four guns.

Macpherson, that the supplies and transport which ought to have been awaiting it, were not ready, and to be kept hanging about till eleven p.m. before it could make a fresh start. What with the darkness,¹ what with the practical absence of a road, and what with the difficulty of getting the laden bullocks along, the subsequent march proved very trying, and the position of the troops throughout the night was, potentially, one of great peril, for, if the Mohmands had come down the eastern slopes of the Rotas Heights, and fallen upon them as they stumbled and groped their way along the Lashora ravine, Macpherson would have had to choose between a retreat or an advance up the steep mountain side, three thousand feet high, in pursuit of an invisible enemy, and exposed to a shower of rocks and stones—missiles which every hill-man knows well how to handle. Fortunately, no such alternative was presented to him, and the head of the column—the rear-guard being still far behind—reached Lashora between six and seven o'clock on the morning of the 21st, just as the 2nd Brigade was preparing to leave it, and halted to lock up and give Tytler a fair start.

The latter did his best to get and keep well ahead, but though his Brigade, led by that active and energetic officer, Colonel F. H. Jenkins, pushed on as fast as it could, its progress was painfully slow. The column, advancing in single file, extended over a distance of nearly three miles, and, as the sun rose high in the heavens, the reflected heat from the bare, slaty rocks became almost insupportable, and there were no trees to give the men shade, or springs to slake their thirst. For the first four miles, the road continued to ascend the Lashora ravine, between low hills on the right hand, and rocky, overhanging spurs a thousand feet high, on the left; on issuing thence, it dwindled to a mere goat-track, which ran uphill and downhill,

¹ The escort in charge of the mules carrying the reserve ammunition of two of the regiments lost their way in the dark, and after vainly trying to regain the track, returned to Jamrud.

scaling cliffs and dropping into gorges, the shaly soil at every step slipping away from under the feet of men, mules and bullocks, retarding the advance of the two former, and almost bringing the latter to a standstill, so that it was two o'clock in the afternoon when the column, having crossed the Sapparai, or Grassy Flats, leading up to the watershed, arrived at Pani Pal, at the foot of the Pass connecting the Rotas Heights with the Tartara Mountain, the highest peak in this group of hills. Here a wide and varied view became suddenly visible. Far away to the north, the snowcapped Himalayas gleamed in the sunshine; to the south, the broad Indus washed the base of Fort Attock, and wound through the salt hills and plains of the Derajat; whilst to the west, almost immediately below the wilderness of rocks in which the invaders had halted, lay, in deep shadow, the yawning chasm of the Khyber. A magnificent prospect; but a spring of cool, fresh water which was soon discovered, had more attractions for the hot and thirsty troops; and Tytler's whole attention was absorbed in scanning the country for a possible enemy, and trying to trace the course of the three paths which branch off from this commanding point. One of these runs, northward by a circuitous and comparatively easy route, through Mohmand territory to the Khyber; the second descends abruptly to the same Pass through the gorge which separates the Tartara Mountain from the Rotas Heights; and the third follows the crest of those heights to their highest point, just over Ali Masjid. It was by the second of these roads that the column was to find its way down to Kata Kushtia, and Tytler, though hard pressed for time, felt so strongly that he must not entangle his troops in such difficult ground without first ascertaining whether danger would threaten their left flank and rear, that he decided to halt his Force, whilst Jenkins and a Company of the Guides reconnoitred towards the heights. Scarcely had this party left Pani Pal when a strange reverberation filled the air, which Jenkins, on laying his ear to the ground, at once pronounced to be the booming of heavy guns;

and as the reconnoiters drew near to the edge of the ridge overlooking Ali Masjid, the sound of Artillery fire became more and more clear and distinct. So far, though cave-dwellings and patches of cultivation had occasionally been passed, with, here and there, the tower of some robber chieftain, the country, but for one small band of marauders, which exchanged shots with the head of the column, had appeared to be entirely deserted by its inhabitants; now a large number of armed Mohmands came, suddenly, into sight, rushing down the hillside, and Jenkins fell back upon Pani Pal to report what he had heard and seen.

The news that the main body of the Division was engaged with the enemy, quickly spread through the ranks, and the men, forgetting fatigue and hunger—the last of the food carried by them had been eaten before leaving Lashora, and the bullocks carrying the rest of the rations had long since parted company with the troops—were eager to push on. But Tytler saw clearly that the circumstances in which he now found himself, demanded a change in the original plan, by which the whole of his force was to take up its position across the Khyber defile. As the Mohmands were evidently present in great strength and hostilely inclined, as his hospital establishment and commissariat were six miles in rear, and the Brigade which ought to have covered his left flank, was also behind—by abandoning Pani Pal, he would not only lose his communications with the latter and expose the former to the risk of being cut off and captured, but would leave open the road by which the Mohmand contingent in Ali Masjid might retire from that fortress after its fall, or by which it could be reinforced in case that fall should be delayed. Very reluctantly, therefore, though with soldier-like promptness, he made up his mind to send Jenkins with the Guides and the major portion of the 1st ¶ Sikhs, to Kata Kushtia, whilst he himself, with a detachment of the latter corps and Her Majesty's 17th Regiment, remained at Pani ¶ Pal to guard Jenkins's rear and keep in touch with Macpherson.

That General, having detached the 20th Punjab Infantry, under Major H. W. Gordon, to cover his left, had resumed his march at 8 a.m., and, following in Tytler's wake, had soon overtaken that officer's commissariat bullocks, which so blocked the narrow path that the troops had considerable difficulty in forcing their way through them. Between two and three o'clock, the column arrived at the lower edge of the Flats (Sapparai), previously mentioned, where it was fortunate enough to find a little water. By this time the men, who had been over thirty hours under arms, were so worn out that Colonels Newdigate and Turton reported their respective regiments, the Rifle Brigade and the 4th Gurkhas, unfit to go further,¹ and Macpherson, like Tytler, had to accept the responsibility of modifying the part assigned to him in the common programme and, to some extent, for the same reason, viz., the danger to which his hospital and commissariat transport would be exposed if, by pushing on to the summit of the Rotas Heights, he were to put it out of his power to protect them during the dark hours which were close at hand. On the Flats, then, the main body of the turning party bivouacked on the evening of the 21st of November; whilst the flanking regiment, after many hours of stiff climbing, during the course of which it had been threatened by a large number of Mohmands, established itself at dusk on the top of Turhai, a ridge parallel to, and immediately under the Rotas Heights.

¹ "I asked Colonel Newdigate and Colonel Turton if their men could go on, and they said they were quite exhausted. There was no water further on, and the whole of the baggage might have been carried off and the escort cut up if we had deserted it, and Tytler's baggage was all behind my Brigade."

Extract from General Macpherson's *Journal*.

CHAPTER II

The Taking of Ali Masjid

THE FRONT ATTACK

THE arrangements for the advance of the main body of the Peshawar Valley Field Force¹ had been completed on the evening of November 20th, by the issuing of an order that no baggage should accompany the column to add to its responsibilities and hamper its movements, nor any transport animals other than the mules set apart to carry the three days' cooked rations, which were to suffice for the needs of the troops till, Ali Masjid having fallen, the Pass would be open to the free passage of impedimenta of all kinds, which, meantime, were to remain at Jamrud in charge of the 45th Sikhs.

Before daybreak on the 21st, Sir Samuel Browne and his Staff had taken up a position on some high ground a little beyond the British camp, and, as the sun rose, it showed them all the hill-tops crowned by groups of Afridis, intently watching the movements of the long column, which was already winding its way through the Jam plain towards the entrance of the Shadi Bagiar defile.² Two companies of Sappers and Miners led the van, accompanied by their regimental mules carrying intrenching and road-making tools, also by a wing of the 81st Foot, and one of the 14th Sikhs, furnished by the 3rd Brigade to protect and assist them in the work of smoothing and widening the stony track so as to render it practicable for the heavy guns drawn by

¹ Approximate strength—110 British officers, 4,500 men, of whom 1,700 were Europeans, and 22 guns.

² Shadi Bagiar—Wolf's mouth.

elephants, and of ramping the sides of the numerous drainage lines which intersect this stretch of comparatively open country. The advanced guard was followed by the Artillery ; that, by the 3rd Brigade, the 4th Brigade bringing up the rear ; whilst a signalling party, under Major H. B. Pearson, which had been detached to occupy the Sarkai Hill, succeeded, later in the day, in establishing heliographic communication with Jamrud.

In the Shadi Bagiar ravine, the troops struck the road built during the first Afghan War by Colonel Mackeson, Commissioner of Peshawar. It was found to be in a fair state of preservation, except in a few places where it had been damaged by floods. These were easily repaired, and, after a flanking party consisting of detachments of the 81st Foot, 14th Sikhs, and a Mountain Battery, had been sent up a gully to occupy some heights from which they could cover its advance, the column pushed steadily on. About 10 a.m., the advanced guard reached the summit of the long, low, stony Shahgai Ridge, where it quickly deployed, and threw out skirmishers, who exchanged shots with the Afghan pickets and forced them to retire on Ali Masjid, which had now come into sight, about two thousand five hundred yards distant, in a northerly direction. The Khyber River, which here takes a sudden turn to westward, flows sixty feet below the ridge, and on its right bank, between Browne's Force and the Afghan fortress, lay a tangled maze of hills and ravines, clothed with low shrubs and tall coarse grass, in which any number of tribesmen might be lurking ; whilst, on its left bank, advance was rendered excessively difficult, and the dispositions of the enemy were effectually concealed from view by a series of rocky spurs, thrown off from the precipitous south-western face of the Rotas Heights. Those dispositions did credit to their author—possibly some British pensioner or deserter from the Indian Army, who had acquired his knowledge of the art of fortification when serving in the Sappers and Miners. The Afghan position stretched right across the valley of the Khyber River, and embraced not only

the isolated hill on which Ali Masjid is perched,¹ but two other eminences. The first of these—a semicircular ridge eight hundred yards long, broken by three peaks—stretches from the Khyber River in the direction of the Bazar Valley, its southern face five hundred yards in advance, and a little to westward of the Ali Masjid Hill, from which its northern side is separated by a rocky gorge. This ridge, two hundred feet higher than the Fort which it completely dominates, is extremely difficult of access, its upper slopes being excessively precipitous; and the Afghans had shown that they recognized its tactical importance by erecting stone breastworks along its crest, and small redoubts on each of the three peaks, the whole line being defended by eight light guns.

The gorge, previously mentioned, divides after running back some little distance; one branch of it sweeping round to the north-west, the other, to the north-east. Between them, facing east and completely hidden from the Shahgai Plateau by the ridge just described, rises the second hill, covering the western front of Ali Masjid, and commanding from its summit the whole length of the gorge; here two breastworks had been thrown up to shelter the Afghan riflemen.

Ali Masjid itself, hardly distinguishable from the grey rock on which it rests, was, at that time, an oblong building a hundred and sixty feet long by sixty broad, with circular towers connected by curtain walls, standing on the flat summit of a detached hill, which rises to a height of three hundred and fifty feet above the river that washes its eastern base. On the southern face of the Fort which looks to the Shahgai Ridge, eight heavy cannon had been mounted; two more had been placed in position behind breastworks constructed in the face of the cliff, a hundred and fifty feet below the walls; and, lower still, a single gun swept with its fire the right bank of the Khyber River. Nor had the left bank of that stream been omitted from the

¹ Ali Masjid is about six miles from the eastern mouth of the Khyber Pass, and nine miles from Jamrud.

Afghan engineer's plan of defence; for, on precipitous cliffs, near the foot of the Rotas Heights, joined together by entrenchments and a rough covered way, more stone works had been built up, and armed with five guns, to command the approaches on that side of the river, and enfilade the low ground in the vicinity of the three fortified hills.¹ The garrison of this great fortress, consisting of three thousand regular infantry, six hundred militia, twenty-four guns, and two hundred cavalry, was, in point of numbers, adequate to its defence, and it had in Faiz Mahomed a brave and determined commander; but its strength had been weakened by sickness, and the *morale* of the troops impaired by the knowledge that they stood alone, with no supports or reserves within reach, surrounded by tribes who, though of the same blood as themselves, regarded them with jealous eyes, and were as certain to fall upon them, in the event of defeat, as to snatch from them a large share of the spoils of victory, should they succeed in repelling the British attack.

Sir Samuel Browne having secured the safety of his flanks by placing strong observation parties on suitable ground, proceeded to examine the Afghan position so far as it could be seen from the Shahgai Ridge. As the result of this examination, he ordered Appleyard, with the 3rd Brigade, to drop down into the valley of the Khyber, which here flows in a broad and shingly bed, and to occupy the abandoned village of Lala Chena, ready, the moment Macpherson's Brigade came into sight on Rotas, to advance and carry by assault the semicircular hill which has been shown to be the key of the Afghan position. In

¹ Mr. Archibald Forbes, the well-known war-correspondent, who was present with the Force during the action and who carefully examined the position afterwards, writes:—"The excessive labour which must have been expended in arming the position moved one's surprise and admiration. Guns had been hauled up precipices, and great stores of ammunition accumulated about them. One three-gun battery on the proper left of the Khyber River was perched on a mere ledge about half-way up the face of a beetling crag, and its guns covered the level sweep along which lay the only line of approach to the Afghan camp at the mouth of the defile commencing at Ali Masjid."

the meanwhile, the sappers and miners, under the protection of a wing of the 14th Sikhs, were set to work to render the steep and rugged path leading down to the valley, practicable for artillery, and detachments of the 81st and 51st Foot were directed to take possession of the nearest of the Rotas spurs, in order to cover Appleyard's right flank and to watch the enemy holding the true left of the Afghan position; whilst the Cavalry Brigade, under Brigadier-General C. Gough, was drawn up on the reverse slope of the Shahgai Heights. While these movements were in progress, the two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery, with elephant equipment which had come up with the advanced guard, opened fire, at a distance of two thousand eight hundred yards, on the enemy's fortifications. Their guns promptly replied, and, as the Afghan gunners had previously ascertained the correct ranges all round Ali Masjid, their practice was admirable; and had they used live shell instead of round shot, the British losses would have been heavy. At noon, the Elephant Battery, consisting of three 40-pounder B.L. Armstrongs, under Major C. W. Wilson, and the 3rd Battery under Major T. M. Hazlerigg, came into action, the latter a few hundred yards in advance of, and to the right of the former. At first their fire was not very accurate, the shells either dashing against the great mass of rock that rises close behind Ali Masjid, or falling into the deep gorge between the two hills; but, the correct range once found, the parapets of the Fort were quickly reduced to ruins and considerable loss inflicted on their defenders. Yet, the enemy's artillery was only partially silenced, and the Afghan gunners stuck with remarkable tenacity to their guns. At two o'clock, the British ammunition began to run short, the wagons carrying the spare powder and shot were far in the rear, and there was still no sign of Macpherson's Brigade. The situation, from the political point of view, was, in Cavagnari's opinion, growing critical; for he feared that, unless the Afghans were attacked, the Afridis and Mohmands would go over to them in a body, a secession which might oblige Sir S. Browne to remain on the defensive till reinforcements

could reach him. Influenced by the Political Officer's opinion, the General took up a more commanding position on high ground beyond Lala Chena, and ordered Appleyard to press forward without waiting for Macpherson's co-operation; the Mountain Battery, 11.9 Royal Artillery, to establish itself at a point from which it could support him by shelling the fortifications he was about to attack; and the 4th Brigade, under Brigadier-General W. B. Brown, consisting of the 51st Light Infantry and the 6th Bengal Infantry, to cover his right flank by advancing along the rocks under Rotas, and driving the enemy from its spurs. Hardly had these orders been given than the Afghan fire which had slackened for a time, burst forth with renewed energy, whilst the British guns on the ridge, owing to the threatened failure of their ammunition, were unable to reply with corresponding vigour. Major T. C. Manderson's troop of horse-artillery, however, with an escort of the 10th Hussars and a company of Sappers, found its way down to the bed of the river, where, at a range of a thousand yards, it took up a good position for shelling the Afghan works on the semicircular hill, though not without drawing on itself a rather heavy fire from the enemy's guns.

The movement along the base of Rotas was soon brought to a standstill by a precipitous cliff crowned by the enemy's skirmishers; and, though Appleyard did his best to carry out his instructions, progress, owing to the intricate nature of the ground, was so slow that Sir S. Browne, seeing the impossibility of pushing the attack home before dusk, and feeling certain that, by morning, the movements of Tytler and Macpherson would have shaken the enemy's confidence, determined to postpone the assault till daybreak. Unfortunately, before Lord William Beresford to whom he entrusted the dangerous task of conveying a message to Appleyard, could reach the 3rd Brigade, part of its troops were already in action. Very injudiciously, the 27th Punjab Infantry, commanded by Major H. Birch, and a detachment of the 14th Sikhs, under Lieutenant F. G. Maclean, had been allowed

to get far ahead of the rest of the Brigade;¹ and, unconscious that the bulk of the troops had ceased to afford them support, these isolated bodies continued to fight their way up the steep sides of the ridge, Maclean leading, on the right, with his Sikhs; Birch, on the left, with a portion of his Punjabis; and the remainder of the 27th, under Captain Swetenham, some distance in the rear.² Suddenly, issuing from thick jungle, the Sikhs found themselves under a heavy fire. Pressing boldly on, they succeeded in getting within sixty yards of the breastworks, but here, Maclean having been shot through the shoulder, they had to seek temporary shelter under a cliff and to call back for assistance to the Punjabis. Birch, with a few of his men, rushed to their aid, to be shot dead before he could reach them.³ His lieutenant, Fitzgerald, seeing him fall, dashed forward with fifteen of the Sikhs to try to recover his body, but the enemy's fire proved too deadly. Fitzgerald, twice wounded in the rush, was struck for the third time and killed outright in the very act of raising Birch, and most of his men shared his fate.⁴

¹ "The point in doubt is whether the 81st Foot were ordered to attack at the same time as the 14th Sikhs and the 27th Punjabis, or whether they were held in reserve to support the attack as it developed. It seems, however, that they did in part advance and were recalled. The accounts vary so far, as I am aware, but this I know, that no European soldier came back wounded from the assault, nor was any dead European soldier found on the hillside next morning, so that it is evident that the brunt of the attack did not come on them, but on the Native regiments of the Brigade."—Evatt's *Recollections*.

² Mr. Archibald Forbes says that "Swetenham heard the call, but, with an acceptance of responsibility which does him perhaps more credit than would the successful command of a forlorn hope, he dared to disobey it, for the sound had not reached Birch and Maclean, out there to his front, on the steep slope trending up to the Afghan position. Had Swetenham obeyed the recall, he would have left them to their fate, and he held that his higher duty was to disobey and follow the fortunes of his advance."

³ "Whilst examining the bullet wound of Captain Birch, which was in the region of the heart, it was found that a locket containing a picture of his wife had been carried into the wound by the bullet."—Evatt's *Recollections*.

⁴ During the night several men of the 27th Punjab Infantry crept up to the

The position of the assaulting party was now extremely critical, but, fortunately, the Commanding Engineer, Colonel F. R. Mannsell, who arrived, at this juncture, at the foot of the slopes and assumed command of all the troops in the neighbourhood, prevented the enemy from improving his success by pushing forward a company of sappers, and ordering up every available man from the rear ; and at nightfall, when hostilities had ceased all over the field of operations, Maclean and his Sikhs stole from the shelter of the cliffs, and fell back on the 27th Punjab Infantry.¹

Sir S. Browne, who had spent an anxious day, was destined to spend a yet more anxious night. Of the 1st and 2nd Brigades, he had still no tidings ; the 3rd Brigade, broken up into various small bodies, was in a dangerous position, scattered over a difficult and intricate country, where low scrub and high grass offered the enemy every advantage, in case the Afridis and Mohmands should combine with the Amir's troops in a night attack ; the 4th Brigade was cut off from rendering assistance to the 3rd by the river and the numerous drainage lines which intersect the valley ; the artillery ammunition was nearly exhausted, and the wagons with fresh supplies were still in the Pass, struggling painfully forward in the face of the difficulties unavoidable where crowds of undisciplined camp followers, commissariat animals and vehicles are cooped up in a narrow and steep defile.

bodies of their officers, and, with the devotion so often displayed by the Native soldier towards his British leader, sat by them till dawn, when they were removed and sent to Peshawar for burial.

¹ It had seemed for a time as if Sir S. Browne's force would be left without any hospital establishment, for the order issued on the evening of the 20th, forbidding any but mule transport to enter the Pass, paralysed the action of a department to which only camels had been allotted. Fortunately, Surgeon-Major Evatt was a man of resource. He obtained permission from the principal medical officer at Jamrud to pack a number of doolies with blankets, brandy, beef-tea and dressings, and he and Surgeon-Major Creagh managed to force their way to the front, where they arrived just as the men wounded in the assault, were being carried down to the river.

ETAT-DE-SITUATION ¹ OF SIR S. BROWNE'S DIVISION ON THE
NIGHT OF NOVEMBER THE 22ND, 1878.²

MAIN BODY.

On the Shahgai Heights—

- E Battery, 3rd Brigade Royal Artillery.
- 13th Battery, 9th Brigade Royal Artillery (heavy guns).
- 3 Troops 10th Hussars.
- 2 Squadrons 11th Bengal Lancers.
- 2 Squadrons Guides Cavalry.

In front of Shahgai Heights on right bank of Khyber River—

Brown's Brigade.

- 81st Foot.
- 14th Sikhs.
- 27th Punjab Infantry.

In the bed of the Khyber River below Shahgai Heights—

- I Battery, C Brigade Royal Horse Artillery, escorted by a troop 10th Hussars, and covered by the 2nd and 3rd Companies of Sappers and Miners.

On a spur of the Rotas Heights, to the right, overlooking the Khyber River—

- Appleyard's Brigade.
- 11th Battery, 9th Brigade Royal Artillery (mountain guns).
- 51st Light Infantry.
- 6th Bengal Infantry.

Troops belonging to Main Body had cooked rations, but no warm clothing.

TURNING FORCE.

Macpherson's Brigade—

On Sapparai Plateau, its left flank covered by four companies 20th Punjab Infantry.

Tytler's Brigade—

Part at Pani Pal ; part at Kata Khustia, commanding the road through the Khyber Pass.

The troops belonging to Turning Force had neither food nor warm clothing.

With the dawn came relief from anxiety. Just after Sir. S. Browne had ordered an assault in force, and whilst he was awaiting the occu-

¹ Technical phrase used by Napoleon to denote strength, position, and condition of a Force.

² See sketch of dispositions for the attack on Ali Masjid.

pation of some commanding ground on his right preparatory to the advance, news was brought in by a Kashmere trader that, on the previous evening, the enemy had heard that Tytler had crossed the Sapparai, and that he himself had seen the Afghan cavalry escaping up the Khyber defile. A little later, Lieutenant J. J. S. Chisholme of the 9th Lancers, rode up to report that he had just spoken with Captain Beresford, R.E., who, with another engineer officer and a small party of men, had crept forward at peep of day, to reconnoitre Ali Masjid, and had discovered that the place had been evacuated during the night. On this confirmation of the welcome news—for an assault would have entailed a great loss of life—the General and his Staff scrambled down to the enemy's encampment, which they found in a state of the utmost confusion, and of indescribable filth. Food and clothing, arms and ammunition, lay scattered about in every direction, and in the tents were many sick and wounded men. From the camp, General Browne ascended to the Fort, where, amid the ruins created by his guns, many more wounded were found, abandoned by their comrades in their hasty flight. All were removed as soon as possible to the field hospital, and later on to Peshawar.

The portion of Tytler's Brigade which had given Ali Masjid so easily into Sir S. Browne's hands, had begun the descent to Kata Kushtia about three o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st. The way lay down a deep, dark, narrow ravine, sometimes in the bed of the torrent, sometimes through thorny acacia scrub. Climbing over boulders, scrambling through difficult places on hands and knees, sliding down rocks so steep and high that return would have been impossible, each man, in turn, handing down his rifle to the comrade in front of him—the Guide Infantry and the 1st Sikhs made such despatch, that by 4.30, they had reached a rocky ledge a hundred feet above the little hamlet of Kata Kushtia, and about two miles in rear of Ali Masjid. Here, Jenkins decided to await the result of the engagement which he knew to be still proceeding. His force was too small and too exhausted

with fatigue and hunger to assume the offensive, whilst its presence in the strong defensive position he had taken up, might be expected to realize the hopes which had been built on its advance. News of its arrival in the Khyber was certain to reach the garrison of Ali Masjid before long, and, unless the day had gone against Sir S. Browne's main body, the fear of being taken between two fires and having their retreat cut off, would exercise its usual dispiriting influence on the Afghans.

Such a contingency as a failure of the front attack on Ali Masjid, was not so utterly impossible that it could be left entirely out of account, and Jenkins and his men must have had some very uneasy moments when they recalled the frightful difficulties of the road by which they had come, the swarms of Mohmands and Afridis whom they had seen on the hill tops, and had to tell themselves that no help could be looked for from the comrades whom they had left behind them at Pani Pal. At first, however, they had small time for such reflections, for hardly had they lined the rocks commanding the defile than a party of Afghan cavalry came leisurely trotting up the Pass. A volley from eight hundred rifles, at a distance of from three to five hundred yards, startled them out of their security, and sent some of them galloping back to Ali Masjid, whilst others dashed boldly forward and made good their escape. Presently, a second body of cavalry trotted round the spur close to Jenkins's position. Catching sight of his troops, they hesitated for a moment, then, urging their horses to their utmost speed, they, too, rushed past under a storm of bullets, leaving, like their predecessors, several of their number on the ground. When they had disappeared, Captain A. G. Hammond, of the Guides, proposed to take a company and occupy Kata Kushtia, thus completely blocking the Pass, but Jenkins refused to entertain the proposal. Darkness was falling; the sound of firing beyond Ali Masjid had died away. What had been the result of the engagement he had no means of knowing; and to weaken his force by dividing it, and expose a small body of his men to a possible attack under conditions

which would prevent his coming to their assistance, seemed to him unjustifiable. Therefore, as there was no further chance of work that night, and no hope of food before morning, the troops lay down among the rocks, whilst their commander wrote the following letter to Sir S. Browne which he entrusted to one of his own men, with orders to find his way, as best he could, to Head Quarters, accompanied by one of the prisoners just taken.

KATA KUSHTIA,

November 21st, 1878.

MY DEAR SIR SAM,—

I am here with Guides and 1st Sikhs. The enemy's cavalry came under our fire from three to five hundred yards, and after considerable loss galloped up the valley in disorder. No infantry and guns have come our way.

1st Brigade and rest of 2nd are at Pani Pal; the road between that place and this is very difficult, and our mules could not come down, consequently we are very hungry, both officers and men. If you can signal to 2nd Brigade, I should like the mules with our food to come down to Tor Tang and then on to us; the road between that place and Pani Pal is very easy, I believe. I presume, of course, that the Rotas mountain is in our hands. I send a prisoner, a cavalry man—he at one time belonged to the Indian army—who may give you information.

I shall hunt for flour in Kata Kustia as soon as it is daylight, but I expect these fellows have cleaned the place right out; you have no flour to send me, I suppose ??? I hardly think the men could march without some food.

Yours sincerely,

F. H. JENKINS.

Early the following morning three hundred Afghan Infantry, led by an officer on horseback, approached Jenkins's position, but, seeing the troops drawn up to receive them, they broke their ranks and tried to make good their escape up the rocky sides of the defile. It would have been easy to shoot them all down, but Jenkins, unwilling to kill brave men caught in a trap, sent one of the captured horsemen to assure them that, if they surrendered, they would be well treated. On receipt of this message, the Afghan officer recalled the fugitives, and, forming them up, made them pile arms, at the same time tendering his own sword to Jenkins, who courteously returned it to him. Then, much to the astonishment and delight of the prisoners, they were allowed to sit down and eat the food they carried with them. This detachment had held the outlying pickets of Ali Masjid during the night of the 21st, and only at daybreak of the 22nd, had its commander discovered that he and his men had been deserted by the rest of the garrison, who, finding the Khyber closed against them, had hastily decided to retire on Jellalabad by the Bazar Valley.

Tytler and Macpherson had been undisturbed during the night, but with the return of day numerous bodies of Mohmands and Afridis were seen moving about the hills ; and the former general, fearing lest they should cut his communications with his lieutenant at Kata Kushtia, determined to descend at once into the Khyber with the 17th Regiment, leaving the Sikhs strongly entrenched at Pani Pal. In their joy at this decision the troops forgot their hunger—successive messengers despatched during the night had failed to bring up the commissariat train—and they achieved the descent of the ravine in high spirits, to be met on issuing from it by the good news of Sir S. Browne's success. In a surprisingly short time, they fraternized with the Afghan prisoners, who were quite willing to share their cakes with such friendly foes ; indeed, it was well for the whole Brigade that the retreating Afghans had been amply supplied with provisions, as, but for what they could spare, the men of this column had no food till midnight of the

22nd, when a half ration sent from Ali Masjid was served out to them.

Macpherson's Brigade had been even earlier afoot than Tytler's. Crossing the Flats, and turning southward at Pani Pal, it followed the track along which Jenkins had reconnoitred the previous day; first, over rolling, grassy downs, and then, over broken, rocky ground, thickly strewn with boulders. Before reaching the Rotas Heights it fell in with the messenger carrying Jenkins's letter to Sir S. Browne. A little further on, the 20th Punjab Infantry, their special task accomplished, rejoined the Brigade, bringing with them fifty prisoners whom they had captured after a brush with a body of two hundred Mohmand fugitives, upon whom they had unexpectedly stumbled.¹ Satisfied by the information he had now received, that he should meet with no opposition, Macpherson ordered the 20th, the Gurkhas and guns to await his return, and pressed forward with the Rifle Brigade to the summit of the heights, where he found the *sangars* defending the Mohmands' late position intact, but deserted. From that commanding point, the course of events in the valley at their feet had been clearly visible to the tribesmen, and the moment they perceived that Ali Masjid had changed hands, they abandoned all thought of resisting the invaders and dispersed to their villages.

After enjoying for a brief moment the sight of the British flag floating on the ruined walls of the Afghan stronghold, Macpherson retraced his steps to the spot where he had left the bulk of his force, and thence led the whole of the 1st Brigade down to the Khyber by the Tor Tangi, or Black Defile, a gully in what the General himself characterized as "the most curious pile of mountains ever traversed by soldiers." Night soon overtook it on its perilous way, and only by setting fire to the bushes and grass could the men keep the track, any deviation from which meant certain death. Food, of course, they had none, and, what was far worse, they met with little or no

¹ The command of the detachment had devolved on Captain W. H. Meiklejohn, as Major Gordon had been disabled by a fall.

water on the day's march. Yet nothing could have exceeded their cheerfulness and alacrity. Even when after hours of "slipping down rocks and floundering about in the dark" they had to bivouack at midnight, hungry and thirsty, without shelter or warm clothing, not a grumble was to be heard, and their commander might well declare that he "was delighted with his men."

As Sir S. Browne was forbidden by his instructions to operate in the country lying to the south of the Khyber, it was impossible for him to follow up the Afghan Infantry in their retreat through the Bazar Valley, but the fate of these unfortunates was far harder than that which would have awaited them had they fallen into his hands; for, though the Afridis spared their lives, they robbed them of their arms, supplies and clothing, and left them, starving and naked, to find their way, as best they could, across the mountains to Jellalabad; whereas the sick whom they had left behind at Ali Masjid, and the men captured by Jenkins, many of whom were in a very weakly state, were well nursed and kindly treated during their short captivity. Yet these prisoners, in the end, fared badly too; for, on being dismissed—each man with the gift of a blanket and a couple of rupees, but without arms—they were waylaid by the Mohmands, who stripped them of all they possessed and turned them back to Peshawar. Here, many of them took service under the Engineer officers, and did excellent work in making the new Khyber Road. Being well paid, they saved a good deal of money, and, on the conclusion of peace, got safely back to their homes.

The capture of Ali Masjid, with its twenty-four pieces of ordnance, was achieved at a cost of:—

- 2 British officers killed.
- 1 British officer wounded.
- 2 British soldiers killed.
- 10 British soldiers wounded.
- 12 Native soldiers killed.
- 23 Native soldiers wounded.

Owing to the great extent and rugged nature of the field of operations, the number of the enemy's killed and wounded was never accurately ascertained; but, with their whole position exposed for many hours to a crushing artillery and rifle fire,¹ their losses must have been heavy, even without counting the men who perished in the retreat through the Bazar Valley.

The Afghan troops having disappeared from the scene and the Tribesmen showing themselves, for the moment, friendly towards the winning side, all the four Brigades composing the First Division of the Peshawar Valley Field Force, were permitted to enjoy twenty-four hours well earned and much needed rest in the positions taken up by them on the 22nd of November; only the Commissariat and Transport Departments were busy, working hard to bring up supplies in preparation for a further forward movement.²

OBSERVATIONS.

Observation 1. The Viceroy's peremptory order to attack Ali Masjid on the 21st of November, nearly wrecked Sir S. Browne's careful and well-thought-out plan for the reduction of that fortress. Time was an essential element of its success, since a long détour had to be made by the Brigades engaged in the turning movement; yet this order, coupled with the prohibition to cross the frontier till sundown on the 20th, gave them only a twelve hours' start of the main body of the Division—a quite inadequate advantage considering the nature of the country into which they were about to penetrate. Their march furnishes a striking example of the danger of interfering with a general when he is once in the presence of the enemy, and the futility of trying to conduct a campaign at a distance from the scene

¹ The Artillery expended 539 rounds of ammunition, the Infantry, 11,250.

² Tytler's and Macpherson's belated transport rejoined them in the Khyber, having followed the longer and easier of the two roads which branch off at Pani Pal.

of operations. Even Napoleon who, of all men, was the one who might most safely have assumed such a responsibility, always refused to accept it. To Massena, he wrote, in 1810 :—" I am too far off and the position of the enemy changes too often for me to give advice as to the way in which the attack should be conducted " ; and, again, in 1813, to Soult :—" I have no orders to send ; it is impossible to give orders from such a distance." Had Browne, like Biddulph and Roberts, been simply directed to cross the Frontier on the 21st, full discretion being left to him as to the day on which he was to deliver the attack on Ali Masjid, it is highly probable that he would have delayed it till the 22nd, and have detained the 1st and 2nd Brigades at Jamrud till the 21st, when, starting at dawn, with the whole day before them, they and their Transport and Hospital Establishment would have had no difficulty in reaching the Flats (Sapparai) before dark, and there, having entrenched themselves, they would have spent the night in perfect security and comparative comfort. The troops belonging to the Main Body would meantime have occupied the Shahgai Heights—or, better still, after seizing the Bagiar Pass, they might have spent the day in improving the road for the passage of the Artillery on the morrow and in reconnoitring as far as Shahgai. On the 22nd, all four Brigades would have started out well fed and fresh, and the combined movement have been executed with absolute precision, and, in all probability, without loss of life. Hampered by a time-limit imposed by persons who had no means of judging of the difficulties to be overcome, such precision was unattainable—Macpherson, at least, knew this from the beginning. " I saw," he wrote, " that the task given me was an impossibility in one day, and I begged for two. Ross¹ at Peshawar was quite of my opinion, and the result proved that we were right."

Observation II. The sending of large bodies of troops, accompanied

¹ Brigadier-General C. C. Ross, commanding at Peshawar.

by a transport train and hampered by camp followers, into the mountains after daylight, is a measure greatly to be deprecated, because :—

(a) It is impossible to secure the front, flanks, and rear of such a column, and, in this unprotected state, a well planned ambuscade, or a determined attack by a handful of men, must create a panic among the followers and a stampede among the cattle, in which the soldiers themselves may become involved.

(b) Progress at night in wild mountainous regions will always be very painful and slow, and, as a consequence, the troops must suffer so severely from exposure and fatigue as to render them incapable of long-sustained effort next day, just when such effort is most needed.

(c) The difficulty of maintaining touch in a long straggling column often advancing in single file, great in broad daylight, is nearly insuperable at night, for, even when the moon is at its full, the narrow gorges, shut in by high steep hills, through which the pathways chiefly run, are intensely dark.

Sir S. Browne, as was to be expected in an officer experienced in frontier warfare, had no love for night marches; though unable on account of his instructions to avoid one altogether, he did his best to secure that the troops engaged in the turning movement should reach their camping ground as early as possible on the night of the 20th; but a miscalculation of the distance from Jamrud, the mistake made in the nature of the transport of both Brigades, and the delay in providing Macpherson with rations, frustrated his intentions in this respect. Such miscalculations and delays, however, must always be reckoned with at the beginning of a campaign before things have properly shaken down into their places; a fact which adds emphasis to what has been said above as to the folly of tying a commander down to any particular date. To expect an unwieldy machine like an army, carrying all its provisions and equipped with every variety of pack animal, to manœuvre with as little friction as a company,

argues an astonishing ignorance of war ; yet, such an expectation must have been in Lord Lytton's mind, when he ordered Sir S. Browne to take Ali Masjid within twenty-four hours of crossing the Frontier.

Night marches are usually undertaken with a view to surprising an enemy, and may be successful when the distance to be traversed is short, the route known, the troops unimpeded by transport, and when the enemy has no reason to expect an attack. In mountainous countries, however, they are no less futile than dangerous. The hill-man, ever on the alert, hidden among his native rocks, dogs every step of the invaders, who may think themselves lucky if, before dawn, they do not exchange the character of surprisers for that of the surprised. In the particular case under consideration, not only was it impossible to conceal the flanking movement, but nothing would have been gained by concealing it, for, as Browne was forbidden to enter Afridi territory, a way of escape through the Bazar Valley was always open to the garrison of Ali Masjid, and, this being so, the sooner the Afghan troops realized that their position was untenable, the better for both sides.

A fine example of a night march justified by the conditions under which it was undertaken and crowned by full success, occurred in 1878, a few months before the Afghan War, when, to punish a raid of the Utman Khels on British territory, Captain Wigram Battye with a detachment of the Guides, consisting of one British and ten Native officers, and two hundred and sixty-six men, started after dusk for Sapri, a village belonging to the offenders. To deceive the Tribesmen as to his real destination he made a long *détour*, yet he reached Sapri before daylight, taking its inhabitants entirely by surprise, and capturing it without loss. In this case success was due to the correctness of the intelligence furnished by the Political Officer ; to Battye's own knowledge of the district and its people ; to the close proximity of his objective to the British Frontier, which made it possible to dispense with baggage and commissariat ; to the secrecy

of his preparations ; and to the rapidity with which his men, all mounted on handy ponies, were able to move.

Observation III. The Staff, rather than the Commissariat Department, must be held responsible for the blunder of equipping the 1st and 2nd Brigades with bullocks instead of mules. It is the duty of the latter to collect every kind of animal likely to be needed in a campaign, and to provide for its maintenance and efficiency ; it is for the former to decide what particular transport shall be used on each occasion, according to the nature of the country to be traversed and the character of the force to be employed—knowledge which the Staff alone can justly be expected to possess.

These observations apply less to Macpherson's Staff than to Tytler's, since the 1st Brigade only reached Jamrud on the 20th, whilst the 2nd had been encamped there quite long enough for its Staff officers to see the Transport and to insist on its being adapted to the work in prospect.

Observation IV. Political considerations may modify a plan of campaign, but they should never be allowed to interfere with a general's dispositions and movements when once fighting has begun. There was only a remote chance that a postponement of the attack on the Afghan position, would bring about a temporary coalition of the Tribesmen with the garrison of Ali Masjid, but such attack, prematurely delivered, was pretty certain to fail, and, in failing, to jeopardize the safety of all four British Brigades. In the end, Browne had to recall the orders which Cavagnari's reading of the situation on the afternoon of the 21st of November, had induced him to issue, and the result proved the groundlessness of the Political Officer's fears.

Observation V. The following letter from Colonel R. G. Waterfield to Sir S. Browne, presents a vivid picture of the perplexities and uncertainties attendant on all operations in wild and mountainous countries, especially when these operations include movements in

which the connection between the various corps engaged in them, is temporarily broken :—

JAMRUD,

November 21st, 1878. 6 P.M.

MY DEAR SIR SAM,—

I will just tell you how I have acted on your orders so that you may understand and counteract any mistakes. I gave your orders for the Heavy Battery to encamp and protect themselves for the night to Major Wilson—then to Stewart of the Guides and Colonel C Gough, and I told them how matters stood. I also told Hazelrigg of the Field Battery exactly how matters were, and that he and Wilson were to look out and not hit Appleyard and his men if they took the hill. I rather suspect they will not take it, and will have a rough night of it.

I then went on and found that the ammunition was not up and that Hazelrigg was sending back wagons for it.

From Mackeson's Bridge along the causeway, to the foot of the slope, is one line of ammunition wagons under Churchward, which cannot move, and yet there are plenty of elephants. I advised him to put in the elephants and walk up the wagons, *crowds of grass-cutters and some grain*. I advised all this to push up, and I think it will.

I told all the ammunition to push along, and I think it will all get up all right and in good time, but I doubt if your artillery ammunition will.

Then, at the foot of the slope up to Mackeson's Bridge, I met the officer commanding the rearguard. He was intelligent, and I told him to make a cheerful night of it, and to protect all that could not get up to the heavy guns on the upper ground.

From the rearguard to Jamrud, nothing is on the road—all clear.

At Jamrud, Colonel Armstrong appears quite clear on all points, and I have told him the orders given by you.

He will at once push on the second line of ammunition, understanding from me that this is the one thing wanted. It will push on to you and I hope arrive before morning. Armstrong seems very good and intelligent and I should bring him forward.

Now about the other columns. Colonel Armstrong says that about 12 o'clock the party in charge of the ammunition, 4th Rifles, returned to Jamrud, saying that they had lost their way. I flashed for instructions and got none. I then tried to push the ammunition through, but could get no guide. It is supposed that the two Brigades (Tytler's and Macpherson's) on the right have all their ammunition, and that of the first line, except the Rifle Battalion and Gurkhas. The ammunition of the latter was brought back by Beatson, who followed in the track of the two Brigades with a party of men to pick up sick men. They will therefore be a little short of ammunition.

The question is whether Colonel Armstrong can push on any ammunition after the two regiments—I say decidedly not. They will lose their way, and the only way is to send their ammunition up the Pass in the hopes that you will meet at Ali Masjid.

Nobody seems to know the route taken by the Brigades, and it would be impossible to follow them, and so I think that the only thing for the ammunition is to go up to you.

I would use my elephants in helping up ammunition wagons.

Now I'm off. 7.30.

Yours truly,

R. G. WATERFIELD,

Commissioner.

No baggage moving until further orders.

CHAPTER III

The Occupation of Dakka

SIR S. BROWNE'S position at Ali Masjid, in November, 1878, bore a close resemblance to that of Sir G. Pollock at Peshawar, in 1841, and, looking to the sickly condition of his troops and their lack of equipment and transport, he would have been justified in following his predecessor's example, and refusing to take a single step in advance till his Division had been placed in all respects on a proper footing ; for if, on the one hand, his men, 'in the first flush of military enthusiasm, were as eager to press forward as Pollock's, after three years of weary, disastrous warfare, were reluctant to stir ; on the other, the motives and considerations urging to prompt action in the last phase of the first Afghan War, were entirely absent in the first phase of the second. No one now questions Pollock's wisdom in withstanding the pressure put upon him by public opinion, at home and in India, to induce him to rush forward to the relief of Jellalabad, nor doubts that, if, in the end, he not only reached that city, but entered Kabul and rescued the English men and women held captive at Bamian, his success was due to the two months' delay which he turned to such good account in reorganizing his forces and restoring the health and spirits of his troops. A similar period devoted to preparation in the winter of 1878, would have endangered not a single British or Native life, nor have affected the amount and nature of the resistance to be encountered ; and if Browne, a man of good judgment and much independence of character, did not insist upon such delay, it was simply because he had no inkling of the magnitude

of the task that was to be imposed upon him. His instructions assumed that, Ali Masjid once captured, his work would be confined to clearing the Khyber of the Amir's forces, and that as soon as the necessary troops—to be selected for local knowledge and frontier experience—had been established at its western extremity, he might safely withdraw the bulk of his Division to British territory, leaving Colonel Jenkins in military, and Major Cavagnari in political charge of the Pass ; and it was in full reliance upon these instructions, in the confident expectation that the policy embodied in them would undergo no material change, that he embarked upon an advance which was to carry him to Gandamak, and narrowly to escape landing him at Kabul.

Leaving Appleyard with the remaining troops of the 3rd and 4th Brigades at Ali Masjid, whilst the 1st and 2nd Brigades were concentrated at Kata Kushtia, under the command of Macpherson as senior officer on the spot—the General started for Dakka on the morning of the 24th November, with the 10th Hussars, Manderson's troop of Horse Artillery, the 14th Sikhs, and a company of Sappers. The Guides Cavalry joined him at Kata Kushtia, which lies just where the gorge of the Khyber proper expands from fifty to six hundred yards in width,¹ and where the Khyber River takes its rise in a spring whose crystal waters, impregnated with sulphuret of antimony, had been one of the chief causes of the sickness and mortality that prevailed amongst the troops occupying Ali Masjid in the first Afghan War, and were to prove no less fatal to the regiments holding that position in the second.² At Lala Beg, three-quarters of a mile beyond Kata Kushtia, the Pass widens out once more, and the advancing Force sighted a good many hamlets, each with loop-holed walls and

¹ The rugged, precipitous sides of this gorge rise from the river at an angle of 75°, and in places actually overhang it, shutting out the day.

² Between the 1st September and 27th October, 1839, the garrison of Ali Masjid lost 243 men, more than one-tenth of its total strength.

one or two towers so substantially built of clay, mixed with chopped straw, as to be capable of resisting the fire of field guns. The number of these hamlets gives an air of fictitious prosperity to this little valley, which in dry seasons is often entirely deserted by its inhabitants.¹ A little further on, the road, a mere tortuous track, became steep and difficult, and, at an awkward corner, one of the Artillery guns overturned, and three of its horses were flung over the side of the cliff, where they hung suspended in mid-air, their weight threatening at every moment to drag the gun and the remaining horses after them. There was nothing to be done but to cut their harness, and let them fall eighty feet into the stony bed of a dry water-course. One was killed on the spot; one so severely injured that it had to be shot; but the third, strange to say, escaped with a few bruises. Leaving the Sappers to improve the road, and the 10th Hussars to guard them whilst they worked, Sir S. Browne continued his march over the Lundi Kotal—a *col* three thousand five hundred feet above sea level, two thousand three hundred above Peshawar—and down a steep road, cut shelf-like in the face of the precipice, to Lundi Khana, a village lying a thousand feet below the summit of the Pass on its western side. Here, where the whole Brigade was to have bivouacked, he heard that the Afghan troops had retired from Dakka, and realizing that the place would be in danger of destruction at the hands of its neighbours, the Mohmands, whose chief village, Lalpura, lies facing it on the other side of the broad and rapid Kabul River, he sent on Jenkins and Cavagnari with the Guides to occupy it that night. The little party pushed on as quickly as the deepening darkness and the roughness of the road would permit; but the Mohmand thieves had been beforehand with them, and they

¹ Irrigation is impossible in this valley, whose inhabitants have to depend upon tanks for their own water supply; and as the rainfall never exceeds a few inches in the year, it is no unusual thing for the fields to yield no crops.

emerged from the Pass to find Dakka swept bare of all its contents, and its despoilers safe on the other side of the river. On the following day, Sir S. Browne and the rest of the troops arrived, and took possession of the Fort, a large walled enclosure, flanked by sixteen towers, containing the barracks lately occupied by the Afghan garrison, and the house and garden where the Amir lodged when visiting this outpost of his dominions. The Khan of Lalpura, a big, broad-shouldered man of unprepossessing appearance, very soon came into camp to pay his respects to the British General and his Political Officer; and the ostentatious cordiality with which he was received by the latter, may be regarded as a gauge of the political and military difficulties of the situation which a too hasty advance had created. Cavagnari was not the man to show undue consideration to Native potentates, great or small, and this particular potentate, whose troops had been on the way to reinforce Ali Masjid when that fortress was evacuated by its garrison, had little claim on his forbearance. But Mahomed Shah could put twenty thousand armed men in the field, his territory commanded Browne's line of communications, and if these were to be kept open and his troops provisioned, the Mohmands, as a tribe, must not take sides against him; so the offences of their chief were politely ignored, and his reception so framed as to relieve his mind of the fear that Cavagnari still harboured the intention of superseding him by one of the sons of Nuroz Shah, his predecessor in the Khanship.

Though the attitude of the Afridis and Mohmands during the operations of the 21st and 22nd, had been threatening enough to add considerably to Browne's anxieties, they had not openly opposed his advance. It was one thing, however, to conciliate this or that chief, or to secure the momentary good-will of this or that section of a tribe, but quite another to induce its individual members to respect the peace of the Pass. On the advance from Ali Masjid to Dakka no opposition had been met with, but loiterers or stragglers

had been cut off by unseen foes, and it was clear to Browne that, so far from being able to leave the protection of the Pass to a weak Brigade, it would be all he could do to keep it open with the whole of his Division, however skilful the dispositions by which he might seek to add to their strength and lighten their labours. It is curious to note how completely the simple programme in which Lord Lytton's views of the probable course of events in Afghanistan had found expression, went to pieces at the first contact with hard facts. There was no revocation or alteration of Sir S. Browne's instructions, but those clauses which were to come into force upon the capture of Ali Masjid, dropped silently away, leaving that General to adapt himself to the changing circumstances of the situation, as might seem best, from day to day. His first act was to strengthen his own position by calling up Macpherson's and Tytler's Brigades from Kata Kushtia, and Gough's Cavalry Brigade from Ali Masjid; to order the formation of a really mobile frontier Brigade, consisting of No. 4 Peshawar Mountain Battery, the 3rd Sikhs, and the Guides, with Jenkins in command; and to give greater unity to the troops holding the Shahgai Heights and Ali Masjid, by breaking up the 4th Brigade (Brown's), and transferring its regiments to the 3rd (Appleyard's). At the same time, he pushed forward Cavalry reconnaissance parties in every direction, to ascertain the resources of the country in food and forage, and to get wind of any hostile gatherings of Tribesmen that might need to be summarily dispersed. He kept the Engineer officers and Sappers and Miners busy improving the road over the Lundi Kotal; constructing strong posts to shelter his outlying pickets; fortifying the ridge overlooking Dakka Fort; and building two boats of considerable carrying capacity to secure his connexion with the northern bank of the Kabul River. He caused the high grass in the vicinity of the road between Lundi Khana and Dakka to be burned; he placed, by day, strong pickets on the knolls adjacent to the Fort, withdrawing them at night, and he ordered that all marauders caught

red-handed should be shot there and then ;—in a word, he took every precaution which his wide experience of frontier warfare could suggest to protect the traffic created by the presence of a large British force at Dakka, but with only partial success. The whole country swarmed with robbers. Bands of them hung about Dakka and infested the Pass. They lay in wait for, and cut up camp followers and stragglers ; they fired upon small parties of soldiers ; they were ever on the watch to steal horses, mules, or cattle watering in the river. Invisible and ubiquitous, they gave the troops no rest. Escorts and covering parties had to be doubled to enable the most necessary functions of camp life to be carried on at all, and the strain grew daily more severe as fatigue and sickness reduced the number of men fit for duty. Bad, however, as things were around Dakka, they were far worse round Ali Masjid. Not a yard of the road between Jamrud and Lundi Kotal was safe, although diligently patrolled by strong bodies of troops. The camps were fired into by night, and by day ; the Artillery men employed in removing the Afghan guns from the Fort were attacked at their work ; strongly guarded convoys, *en route* to Dakka, were boldly intercepted in the Khyber, grain and stores carried off, and the transport animals themselves hurried away into the hills. Emboldened by repeated isolated successes, the Afridis occupying the upper part of the Pass, very shortly persuaded their kinsfolk inhabiting its lower end, who had, so far, been comparatively quiet, to combine with them in still more daring measures. The united Tribesmen attacked the outlying pickets and advanced posts at Ali Masjid, seized the Shahgai Heights—thus severing Dakka from its base at Peshawar—and drove Major Pearson and his signalling party from their station on the Sarkai Hill, killing one signaller, three followers, and several mules, a loss which might have been much heavier had not the firing been heard in Jamrud, and the 45th Sikhs, supported by a company of the 9th Foot, been hurriedly despatched to the scene of action. Appleyard quickly recaptured

the Shahgai Heights, and, on the 30th, retaliated on his assailants by sending three companies of Infantry, a Mountain Battery, and a small body of "Friendlies" to destroy Kadam, a village overlooking the Jam plain, whose inhabitants were known to have taken a chief part in the recent outrages. Cavagnari, who had hurried down from Dakka to try what his influence could do towards checking the disaffection that was spreading through the Tribe which he had been at such pains to detach from its allegiance to the Amir, accompanied the expedition; but the Afridis, who had removed their women and children and their household goods to a place of safety, would neither negotiate nor fight, and, as the troops had forgotten to bring a supply of powder, they had to content themselves with burning the roofs of the houses, leaving their walls and watch-towers standing unharmed.

Appleyard's prompt action somewhat relieved the tension of the situation. The convoys that had returned to Jamrud, started out once more, and there was no longer reason to fear that the troops at Dakka would be left without food; but, between Ali Masjid and Dakka, the marauders were as active as ever, and every convoy paid its toll to the wild lords of the land. Up and down the Pass, hundreds of hapless transport animals were ever on the move; yet, toil as they might, it seemed impossible to do more than keep the troops fed from day to day.¹ In the hope of obtaining local supplies, if only of forage for the horses, Browne, on the 1st of December, threw forward portions of Macpherson's, Jenkins's and Gough's Brigades to Basawal, ten miles west of Dakka. To connect this ad-

¹ On the 7th December, Colonel J. Hunt, Principal Commissariat Officer, wrote to Sir S. Browne that he feared little progress was being made with the collecting of supplies at Peshawar, for the stores at Jamrud had decreased. A few days later, Hunt reported that the camels were going to ruin in the Pass, and unless he could get them back to the plains for a fortnight's grazing, a fresh lot would be wanted in the spring, and the rotting carcases of the thousands that would die in the Pass must breed a pestilence.

vanced guard with the main body of his force, he entrenched a detachment of Infantry on the summit of the narrow rocky Khud Khyber Defile.¹ Still further to reduce the strain on his Commissariat, he sent his most sickly regiment, the 14th Sikhs, back to India. But the same causes which led him to desire to diminish the number of mouths for which he must provide, forced him to add to their number, and ten days' experience having convinced him that, although the Amir's troops had disappeared for good, he was none the less encamped in an enemy's country, he telegraphed, on the 1st of December, to the Government of India for reinforcements. That night, General Maude at Nowshera was roused from sleep by an aide-de-camp, bringing a telegram which directed him to despatch instantly two Infantry regiments in support of Browne's communications. The selected regiments—the 5th Fusiliers and the Mhairwarra Battalion—started at daybreak of the 2nd, and marched with such goodwill that they reached Hari Singh-ka-Burj, half-way between Peshawar and Jamrud, the same evening, the distance being thirty-one miles. But whilst asking for help, Browne continued to take vigorous measures for clearing his communications. On the day that he telegraphed for reinforcements, he had sent a column under General Tytler to cooperate with a smaller force, furnished by Appleyard, in punishing the Zakka Khel, the most troublesome section of the Afridis. The

¹ The disposition of the troops west of the Khyber Pass after the advance to Basawal, was as follows :—

Basawal.

Half Battery R.H. Artillery.
 No. 2 Peshawar Mountain Battery.
 10th Hussars.
 Guides Cavalry.
 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade.
 4th Gurkhas.

Dakka Forts.

Half Battery R.H. Artillery.
 Guides Infantry.
 1st Sikhs.

two columns entered the Lala Beg Valley from either end, and, between them, levelled the fortified walls of its numerous hamlets to the ground ; but, as had been the case at Kadam, the inhabitants were forewarned, and only empty huts remained to suffer the vengeance of the harassed and embittered invaders. Large numbers of armed Tribesmen watched from the hills the destruction of their homes, and exchanged shots with the troops ; but the casualties on either side were few, and the Zakka Khel soon resumed their troublesome tactics, with appetite for plunder whetted by the desire to make good their losses.

It was well for the troops in Dakka at this time that casualties were few, for if many wounded had been added to the rapidly growing number of the sick, the hospital arrangements there must have completely broken down. As it was, they were inadequate enough, consisting, for the first fortnight, merely of a temporary hospital organized by Surgeon-Major Creagh from his Battery equipment ; and, when, on the 8th of December, a fifty-bed Division of the Field Hospital, under Surgeon-Major Evatt and Surgeon Shaw, Medical Staff, arrived from Ali Masjid, as regards service it was quite defective, being without hospital sergeant, writer, and European orderlies, whilst to use Evatt's own words, "its Native establishment was wretchedly bad—literally and actually the lame, the halt, and the blind ; as Falstaffian a corps as any man could ever see." The diseases to which this imperfect instrument had to minister, were due in part, of course, to exposure and incessant harassing work, but still more to the nature of the valley in which Dakka is situated. A low-lying basin, surrounded by peaked hills from two to four thousand feet in height, it is fiercely hot in summer, cruelly cold in winter, and subject to floods, which have not even the grace to impart fertility to the lands they devastate, but, in subsiding, leave nothing behind them but fever, and an efflorescence of soda (*reh*) that sterilizes and impoverishes the soil.

CHAPTER IV

The Occupation of Jellalabad

ADVANCE OF THE SECOND DIVISION

THE Commander-in-Chief, Sir F. Haines, had no intention of limiting the response made to Sir S. Browne's request for reinforcements to the despatch of a couple of regiments, and his arguments in favour of moving up the whole of the 2nd Division of the Peshawar Valley Field Force, prevailed over the Viceroy's unwillingness to recognize the necessity of a measure so far exceeding the limits of the programme to which he had given his sanction some weeks before. Lord Lytton's consent once obtained, no time was lost in giving effect to it. A very few hours after the departure of the 5th Fusiliers and the Mhairwarra Battalion from Nowshera, Maude received a second telegram from the Adjutant-General at Lahore directing him to assume command of all troops in the field, as far as and including the Ali Masjid garrison, in addition to those of the Second Division; to endeavour to keep open the Pass, strengthening the troops in advance if required, and fortifying all commanding positions and posts with *sangars* (breast-works); to act in conformity with the views of the Political Authorities, and, if considered advisable by the Political Officer, to attack Chura or other locality; to clear the Pass of all animals not required, also cavalry not actually employed, whilst the heavy artillery might be placed in position; to urge on the supply of provisions and stores for the front; to telegraph daily to the Adjutant-General; and, lastly, to keep down all unnecessary excitement.

On the 5th of December, General Maude with Head Quarters of Division, arrived at Jamrud, where his first business was to re-organize his Force. The following table shows its composition after that process had been completed, and the various changes which took place in it during the campaign.

TABLE SHOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE PESHAWAR VALLEY FIELD FORCE

Lieutenant - General F. F. Maude, V.C., C.B.	Commanding Division
Captain F. W. Hemming	Aide-de-Camp
Captain A. Leslie	Orderly Officer
Major G. Hatchell	Assistant Adjutant-General
Lieutenant-Colonel M. Heathcote (joined 15th December, taken away 6th February).	Assistant Quarter-Master-General
Major A. A. Kinloch	Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master- General
Captain S. Brownrigg	Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master- General
Colonel Hon. D. Fraser, C.B.	Commanding Royal Artillery
Major C. A. Sim (officiating till end of January)	Commanding Royal Engineers
Lieutenant-Colonel Limond (from beginning of February)	Commanding Royal Engineers
Colonel C. M. Macgregor, C.S.I., C.I.E.	Deputy Quarter-Master-General in charge of communications
Major Dyson Laurie	Assistant in charge of communications
Surgeon-Major J. A. Hanbury (joined in January, 1879)	Principal Medical Officer
Colonel W. C. R. Mylne (health broke down about April)	Principal Commissariat Officer
Major N. R. Burlton (succeeded Colonel Mylne)	Principal Commissariat Officer
Rev. A. N. W. Spens (joined 15th March)	Chaplain
Colonel B. Soady	Superintendent Transport
Lieutenant B. E. Spragge	Superintendent Army Signalling
Major P. FitzGerald Gallwey	In charge of Field Park
Captain W. F. Longbourne	Provost Marshal
Lieutenant C. J. R. Hearsay	Field Treasure Chest

Brigadier-General J. E. Michell, C.B.	Commanding Cavalry Brigade and second in command of Division
Lieutenant C. T. W. Trower	Aide-de-Camp
Captain M. G. Gerard	Brigade Major
Brigadier-General F. S. Blyth	Commanding 1st Infantry Brigade
Captain W. C. Farwell	Brigade Major
Brigadier-General J. Doran, C.B.	Commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade
Lieutenant H. Gall	Aide-de-Camp
Captain X. Gwynne	Brigade Major
Brigadier-General F. E. Appleyard, C.B.	Commanding 3rd Infantry Brigade

CORPS AND REGIMENTS

ROYAL ARTILLERY

D—A Royal Horse Artillery	Major P. E. Hill
H—C Royal Horse Artillery	Major C. E. Nairne. (This Battery sent back 6th May in consequence of difficulty in bringing up forage)
C—3 Royal Artillery	Major H. C. Magenis
11—9 Mountain Battery	Major J. R. Dyce

BRITISH CAVALRY

9th Lancers	Colonel H. Marshall, part of time; Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland remainder
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BRITISH INFANTRY

5th Fusiliers	Lieutenant-Colonel T. Rowland
12th Foot	Lieutenant-Colonel G. F. Walker (Regiment came up in April)
25th „	Colonel J. A. Ruddell
51st „	Colonel S. A. Madden (Regiment transferred to 1st Division in March)
81st „	Colonel R. B. Chichester (Regiment sent back in December on account of general bad health)

NATIVE TROOPS

10th Bengal Lancers	Major O. Barnes (Regiment joined Division in April)
13th „ „	Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Low

NATIVE INFANTRY

6th Bengal Native Infantry	Colonel G. H. Thompson
24th Punjab Infantry	Colonel F. B. Norman
2nd Gurkhas	Colonel D. Macintyre, V.C.
Mhairwarra Battalion	Major F. W. Boileau
Bhopal Battalion	Colonel Forbes (half the Battalion came up in the middle of the campaign, and the other half later)
Two companies Madras Sappers and Miners	Major C. A. Sim

The number of troops at Maude's disposal seems never to have exceeded 6,000. He had, indeed, at one time three Brigades under his command, but these lacked their full complement of regiments ; and though, at the outset of the campaign, the Second Division was fairly healthy, yet there soon was sickness enough among the men, owing to the malarial nature of the country, and the arduous and monotonous character of their duties, to keep the real strength of the Division considerably below its nominal strength. Yet, this curtailed Force had to maintain its own communications and those of the First Division from Peshawar to Lundi Kotal, and, subsequently, as far as Jellalabad, a distance of eighty-one miles ; to furnish, from the first, a strong garrison for a partly entrenched camp at Lundi Kotal, later on, a second for the Fort at Dakka, where there was a large depôt of commissariat and ordnance stores to guard, and a third for the partially entrenched position at Basawal ; to hold a number of small fortified posts erected, at intervals, along the whole line of communications for the protection of the numerous convoys traversing the Pass ; to provide escorts for the said convoys, which were daily moving up from Peshawar to the front¹ ; to perform very

¹ Between Ali Masjid and Lundi Kotal there were no troops, consequently the escorts for convoys daily provided by the garrison of the former place were relieved half-way by detachments from the latter. "The convoy duties were very severe, commencing at daylight and lasting till dusk during the winter months. The camels were over-worked and constantly broke down, and the

heavy fatigue duties, including, amongst other things, the construction of a good cart road from Jamrud to Dakka, a service of much labour and difficulty—at Ali Masjid the bed of a river had to be turned and the road carried along a gallery in the rock¹; and, lastly, to be always in readiness to carry out the views of the Political Officers, by attacking any Tribe which those officials might consider deserving of punishment.

The actual date of the order to occupy Jellalabad, was determined by the news that the Afghan troops had evacuated that town; but the advance of the Second Division, by aggravating the supply difficulty, tended inevitably to push on the First. The hope of substantial additions to food and forage, disappointed at Dakka and Basawal, turned to the district lying around Jellalabad. Political considerations had, however, much to do with the forward movement. Winter which had now set in, by closing the road over the Shutargardan, had put an end to all thought of exercising pressure at Kabul from the Kuram side, and, if the war was not to degenerate into a fatal farce, the influence of our vast military preparations must be brought to bear upon the Amir and his Durbar from some other quarter.

To prepare the way for the advance which he saw to be inevitable, Browne despatched Tytler on the 9th of December to punish the Shin-

troops in charge of them had to do the best they could to bring them on, or to divide the loads amongst some of the stronger camels. All this took time. The escorts had nothing but badly cooked rations with them, and they arrived in camp so jaded that they had no appetite, and there was not much food to tempt them when they got in. The night duties—guards, pickets, etc.—were numerous and trying. The stations were liable to constant attack, and therefore the sentries guarding the camp, whether furnished by the guards round camp, or by the pickets at some distance in advance, generally on high ground commanding the camp, were liable to be attacked at any moment by the Afridis, more or fewer in number according to circumstances, who crept up to the sentries and tried (sometimes successfully) to wound or kill them.”—General Maude.

¹ “This was a most creditable performance carried out under Colonel Limond, R.E.”—General Maude.

waris, a powerful clan inhabiting the upper end of the Khyber, and the valleys in the western slopes of the Safed Koh, which, at the instigation of the Mir Akhor, had been making itself extremely obnoxious to the troops. About the same time, he sent across the Kabul River a reconnaissance party consisting of Major H. F. Blair, R.E., Captains Wigram Battye, and G. Stewart of the Guides, and Mr. G. A. Scott, of the Survey Department, to seek for a second road to the plains for the use of the convoys, in case the disaffection of the Afridis should grow so serious as virtually to close the Khyber against them, and also to ascertain exactly how he was likely to stand with the Mohmands, when their power to harm him would be increased by a movement which must place them in his rear, as well as on his flank.

Tytler's expedition met with no resistance, and though it failed to capture the Mir Akhor, the destruction of the strongly fortified village of Chenar quieted the Shinwaris for a time. The reconnaissance party, after an absence of several days, returned with the news that the Mohmands were apparently well disposed towards the British Government, and that an alternative route debouching at Michni, had been discovered, but one so circuitous, difficult, and dangerous that nothing would be gained by substituting it for the Khyber as a line of communication, even apart from the obvious consideration that such a change would necessitate the transfer to Michni of the great depôt, so laboriously formed at Jamrud.

These and many other preliminaries accomplished, Sir Samuel Browne handed over the command at Dakka to Tytler, and started for Jellalabad on the 17th of December, with Macpherson's, Jenkins's and Gough's Brigades. His march was unopposed and uneventful. The road as far as Chardeh was fairly good, but between Chardeh and Ali Baghan almost impassable, so thickly was it strewn with boulders; water, too, proved scarce, and the great variation in temperature—60° between daybreak and midday—told severely both on the troops and the transport animals. The final march from Ali Baghan to

Jellalabad, was short and comparatively easy, the last three miles, over partially cultivated plains.

The impression produced by Jellalabad on its new garrison was not favourable. Though the capital of a district, the houses were small, mean, and wretchedly built of sunburnt bricks; the streets nothing better than badly paved lanes, filthy and malodorous. The fortifications destroyed by General Pollock's order in 1842, still lay in the ruins to which he had reduced them. Trade and manufactures there were none, and the resident population did not exceed three thousand, though it had been recently swelled to a much larger figure by the return of numerous shepherd families from their summer quarters in the hills. The scenery, sternly grand at the time of year when the invaders first beheld it, grew into unsurpassable beauty a few months later, when spring had added the charm of blossom and tender green to the wilder features of the landscape—towering mountains, vast snow fields, broad belts of dark-hued pine—but from the Commissariat Officer's point of view the valley was disappointing, its cultivated area being pretty strictly confined to a broad flat band on either side of the rapid Kabul River, and to similar, narrower strips, bordering the water-courses that drain the lateral valleys, formed by the spurs thrown off by the Safed Koh. The climate for the first few weeks, showed the new-comers its better side; the temperature, though cold at night, being just pleasantly warm by day; but in January severer weather set in, accompanied by snowstorms that brought much suffering to the shelterless followers and transport animals, whilst, at uncertain intervals throughout the period of the British occupation, dense clouds of dust, blown from the sandy wastes at the eastern end of the valley by the terrible Simoom, involved the whole camp in darkness and misery.

The very day of his arrival at Jellalabad, Sir S. Browne entered upon a repetition of the labours which had engrossed him at *Dakka*. Once again, sanitary conditions had to be introduced into a town which

knew nothing of sanitation, and a camp to be fortified and drained. Once again, there was a hospital to organize, cavalry posts to establish, great sheds for the shelter of stores to erect, and communication between the two banks of the Kabul River to secure, this time by the construction of a wooden bridge, four hundred and seventy-two feet long. And, over and above all these things, there lay upon the Commander of a Force, now encamped at a point eighty-one miles from its base, the responsibility of providing the daily bread of a large body of men and animals, and of filling the store sheds with the reserve of food without which the further advance that might one day be demanded of him, would be an impossibility. Upon this ceaseless round of duties which distant critics eager for news of battles fought, too often characterize as inaction, the year 1878 closed for Sir S. Browne, and the Staff which shared his anxieties and his work, the only military movement in which the First Division took part during the interval, being one to which Browne had given his sanction before leaving Dakka, and in which a column under Tytler co-operated with a larger force belonging to the Second Division.

OBSERVATION

There can be no doubt that the Second Division of the Peshawar Valley Field Force was too weak for the work expected of it, and its Commander was right in pointing this out and in asking for reinforcements; his requests, nevertheless, were persistently refused by the Government, sometimes on the score of expense, sometimes on the plea that there were no regiments available. Now, war is always a costly game, and it is quite possible that there were no troops to spare; but the validity of the excuses offered only accentuates two truths which have already been insisted on: the first, that Lord Lytton rushed into a big war without counting its cost, and without making the needful preparations for bringing it to a successful issue; ¹¹

the second, that he frittered away upon three long lines of advance the troops and transport which would not have been too numerous if concentrated on one.^{1 2}

¹ The *minimum* number of troops required to properly guard the communications of an army, in a mountainous country, is 100 men per mile, and Maude's force was, at least, two thousand short of that *minimum*.—H.B.H.

² Though there may have been no reinforcements to send, Government certainly had at its disposal officers qualified to fill Staff appointments, and its poverty did not justify it in leaving General Maude without his full authorised Staff, under circumstances which called for a large addition to its strength.—H.B.H.

CHAPTER V

The First Bazar Expedition

THERE was one part of his Instructions which General Maude viewed with grave dissatisfaction. He would have welcomed the advice of a capable and experienced *civil* officer, such as Mr. Donald Macnabb, but he felt very strongly the impropriety of subordinating him, in matters involving field operations, to a young *military* officer in civil employ ; more especially, as the latter was not on the spot for discussion and consultation, but many miles away and absorbed in other matters. He had grave doubts, too, as to the wisdom of undertaking expeditions into unknown valleys whilst the daily routine work of keeping the Passes open was so heavy ; nevertheless, he loyally accepted the restriction imposed upon his freedom of initiative, and before leaving Nowshera, forwarded to Cavagnari a copy of the Adjutant-General's telegram of December 2nd, and asked to be favoured with the Political Officer's views as to the advisability of attacking " Chura, or any other locality." On the 11th of December, he received a reply in which Major Cavagnari, after referring him to his assistants, Mr. A. F. D. Cunningham at Jamrud and Captain L. H. E. Tucker at Ali Masjid, for information and assistance, expressed the opinion that the conduct of the Zakka Khel of the Bazar and Bara Valleys, called for their punishment, as soon as the military arrangements would allow of the work being taken in hand, but that the Malikdin Khel of Chura were professedly friendly, and he could see no reason for meddling with them. The following day, General Maude asked for further particulars as to the proposed expedition, and received by heliograph the reply

that he was to invade Bazar in co-operation with a column from the First Division under Tytler, and this plan, after some misunderstandings and uncertainties, was finally carried out.

Being still without any map of the country, Maude had to rely for information as to the road into Bazar, partly on Native reports—always misleading so far as times and distances are concerned—and partly on Captain Tucker's memory, that officer having visited the valley in disguise some years before. From these two sources the General had obtained the impression that, by leaving Ali Masjid on the evening of one day, he should reach the first village in Bazar by dawn of the next, and as the Assistant Political Officer was very anxious to take the Zakka Khel at unawares, he determined on a night march. The manœuvre was not one which, as a general rule, approved itself to his judgment, but, in this particular instance, there were reasons which led him to feel that it might legitimately be adopted. The road to be followed during the hours of darkness ran, not through the enemy's country, but through the territory of the friendly Malikdin Khel, and the guides of the expeditionary force were to be furnished by the same tribe, so there was little risk of its being led astray, or exchanging the part of the surpriser for that of the surprised.

Bazar, into which British troops were now about to penetrate from two sides, is situated sixteen miles west of Jamrud and a somewhat less distance south of Dakka, and is one of those comparatively fruitful upland valleys which occasionally vary the savage desolation of the Afghan hills. It is about ten miles long, by three wide. Mountains six and seven thousand feet high shut it in on every side, their lateral spurs terminating sometimes in a single detached hill. The ground, generally level, but, in parts, much cut up by deep nullahs or ravines, is drained by the Chura, an affluent of the Khyber River. The villages, of which there are many, are of two kinds : in the open plain, ordinary collections of mud huts, roofed with wood and shingle, surrounded by

walls and defended by one or more loop-holed towers ; along the edges of the valley, nests of cave dwellings, hewed into, or scooped out of, the hill sides, with wooden porticoes over their entrances : in the former, live the settled, in the latter, the nomadic portion of the tribe. Lying to the south of Bazar are the valleys of Bara and Tirah, in both of which no European had ever set foot.

At five o'clock on the evening of the 19th of December, the troops noted below,¹ under the personal leadership of Lieutenant-General Maude—Brigadier-General Doran, C.B., being his second in command—assembled near Ali Masjid, and began their march to Bazar by the road that led past the village of Chura. The night being dark—the moon did not rise till 3 a.m.—and the path a mere mountain-track, so narrow and choked with thorny bushes that much of the way the men had to move in single file, and seldom could see more than ten yards ahead—progress was necessarily very slow, but in other respects the march was perfectly performed. Communication between all parts of the long line was well maintained, and the advance was delayed by none of those untoward accidents which had marred the night march of Generals Macpherson and Tytler ; yet, at four o'clock next morning, the column was still half a mile short of Chura, and Captain Tucker had to report that his memory and his guides had alike misled him as to the distance, that Bazar was still eight miles off, and that, as the road to it lay in the bed of the Chura stream which would have to be frequently forded by the infantry, there was no longer any hope of taking the inhabitants of the valley by surprise. Under these circumstances, General Maude ordered a halt, that the troops, especially that portion of them which had started from Jamrud and been, more or less, under arms since 9 a.m. the previous day, might have a breathing space for rest and food.

¹ Two guns, R.H.A., on elephants ; 4 mountain guns 11.9 R.A. ; 1 Troop 13th Bengal Lancers ; 300 men 5th Fusiliers ; 200, 51st Light Infantry ; 560, 2nd Gurkhas ; and 400, Mhairwarras.

When the march was resumed by daylight and the village of Chura had been passed, orders were given to crown the heights on both sides of the river, and Lieutenant-Colonel Heathcote, Assistant-Quarter-Master-General, was sent forward with a troop of the 13th Bengal Lancers to reconnoitre. That officer reporting that he could discover no sign of an enemy, the column moved on unopposed except by the firing of an occasional shot from the hills, till it reached Wallai, the first village in the Bazar Valley. This proved to have been abandoned by its inhabitants, and here, about 2 p.m., the troops bivouacked, waiting for news of Tytler, with whom, before evening, communication was opened up. That officer had moved from Dakka, on the 18th of December, with 300 men of the 17th Foot. On the 19th, he was joined at the western end of the Khyber Pass, by two guns 11.9 Royal Artillery (Mountain Battery) and 250 rifles of the 27th Punjab Infantry, and the united Force—22 officers, 768 men, and 2 guns—continuing its march past Chenar, the village which General Tytler had destroyed only ten days before, arrived early on the morning of the 20th, at the foot of the Sisobi Pass. Traversing this by a zig-zag path, leading upwards between oak-clad slopes, and downwards through a narrow gorge, the troops descended without hindrance into the Bazar Valley, and halted for the night near Kwar, a cave village, three miles north-west of Wallai, where not a living creature was to be found. *En route*, Tytler had received the submission of the five villages of the Sisobi region, whose headmen made offers of help, and furnished him with guides.

In Major Cavagnari's arrangements with the Khyber clans, wherever he could not prevail upon the whole of the headmen of a tribe to come in and accept their share of the subsidy, he came to terms with such of them as presented themselves—generally the leaders of the weaker of the two factions into which every clan was split. Among the Zakka Khel, a tribe even more divided by internal feuds than their neighbours, such a minority had given in their adhesion to the British

Government. The chief of this party was Malik Khwas, whom Tucker describes as a "tall, handsome, delicate-featured man," who "dresses well, and will promise to do anything who is considered by his own countrymen rapacious, stingy, and absolutely treacherous. His word is never believed; and to these qualities he adds the shamelessness of a beggar." This Khwas had accompanied the expedition into Bazar for a purpose which became apparent when, in the afternoon of the 20th of December, the Maliks of the hostile sections of the Zakka Khel came into Maude's camp, to learn from the Political Officer's lips, on what conditions their submission would be accepted, and their past offences condoned. Tucker was prostrate with fever at the time, but Mr. Cunningham, who had volunteered to accompany him, acted as his spokesman. The terms to be imposed were as follows—

First, the payment of a fine of one thousand rupees.

Second, the providing of six hostages to be named by the Political Agent.

Third, the acceptance of Malik Khwas as their chief.

The fine might be paid in cash, in arms, or in cattle. Matchlocks to be taken at fifteen rupees, rifles, at forty rupees, and cattle, at the Commissariat Officer's valuation; or if the chief, who was to be placed over them, considered that their being indebted to him would rivet their allegiance, then his security would be accepted for the whole sum. These terms were so easy, except as regards the clause appointing Khwas chief of the whole Zakka Khel clan, which ran counter to all Afridi custom—that General Maude might well feel indignant at having been called upon to make such a display of force for so small an object, yet, to Tucker's great surprise, the Jirga left camp without accepting them. The explanation of the mystery lies in the fact that the deputation, alarmed at sight of the troops, had retreated into a cave and left it to Khwas Khan and his friend Afridi Khan to negotiate for them. The conference—a lengthy one—took place round a camp fire, and, at its conclusion, the two

chiefs went back to the cave, ostensibly to communicate Cavagnari's terms to the expectant headmen. What passed there may be guessed from the Jirgah's hasty departure, taken in conjunction with an incident that occurred later on in the night. Mr. G. B. Scott, of the Survey Department, perhaps the only man in the expedition versed in the Afridi tongue, lying awake in the darkness, overheard Khwas Khan tell his ally that he had not brought the British into Bazar to impose thousand-rupee fines, but to blow up the towers of China, which had long been his bane. Khwas had his wish. At nine o'clock on the morning of the 21st December, the troops paraded, ready to enter on the work of destruction marked out for them by the Political Authorities. At the same moment Tytler appeared on the ground and had a short interview with Maude, in which it was settled that the former should return to Kwar, complete the destruction of that place, which his troops had already begun, treat Nikai, a village two miles from his position, in a similar manner, and then return to Dakka ; whilst the latter was to deal with the remainder of the valley.¹ Tytler accomplished his share of the programme by 2 p.m., but even that early hour was far too late to admit of his re-crossing the Sisobi Pass before dark ; and, as on its southern side no water was to be met with, he determined to return by the hitherto unexplored Tabai Pass. A suitable camping ground, half-way up a wooded valley, was reached by 4.30 p.m., where the column bivouacked for the night² in tolerable

¹ General Maude was opposed to the indiscriminate destruction of the tribesmen's villages. "As a general rule," he wrote, "the towers only were destroyed by the troops under my immediate command ; an odd dwelling-house or so may also have been burned, but that was an exceptional case. My own feelings have always been opposed to destruction of this sort, its natural tendency being to exasperation against us."

² "It is highly interesting to note the result of this expedition for a few days without tents on the Khyber Hills. The 17th were a singularly fit regiment, and for several days after their return did exceedingly well ; but when the excitement passed off, the wear and tear and the exposure to the biting cold began to tell, and thirty-one cases of pneumonia resulted with eleven deaths. This

tranquillity, owing to the skilful way in which the pickets had been placed ; but, by the following morning, the news of the invasion of Bazar had spread far and wide, and the tribesmen had gathered in such large numbers that Tytler had to fight his way for miles, first up a steep winding road to the top of the Pass, and then down the other side along a torrent's rugged bed till, on nearing a small cultivated plain owned by friendly Shinwaris, the enemy at last desisted from opposition and withdrew.

General Maude's force had a longer day's work before it. Whilst the Infantry, with the exception of a strong guard left in charge of the camp, advanced upon China, a large cave-village in the side of the mountain of the same name, a troop of the 18th Bengal Lancers, under Major W. H. Macnaughten, which had been despatched in advance by a different road to cut off stragglers, penetrated to the extreme west of the valley and destroyed the towers of Halwai a village at the foot of the Pass leading into Bara. At China, both the towers and the porticoes of the cave-dwellings were blown up, and stacks of fodder burned to the ground. Later in the day, Maude sent the 2nd Gurkhas, under Lieutenant-Colonel D. Macintyre, V.C., to the south of the valley, and a detachment of the Mhairwarra Battalion, under Captain O'M. Creagh, to scour the country lying to the east of China. When every part of Bazar had been visited, the whole force returned to Wallai for the night, and the next day re-crossed the mountains to Ali Masjid. The enemy showed themselves as the troops retired, and followed them up at a distance till they entered the limits of the Malikdin Khel, who turned out to cover Maude's retirement.

Except in as far as it failed to surprise the valley, the First Bazar Expedition was quite successful, and attended by

was amongst the European soldiers only. But the mortality in the ranks of the Native Army and among the wretched followers was much greater."

Evatt's Personal Recollections.

hardly any loss, only one man, a private of the 17th Foot, being killed, and two British and seven Native soldiers wounded, two of the latter subsequently dying. The loss of the Zakka Khel must also have been small, as, everywhere, they had disappeared before the troops could reach their villages, carrying off their families, cattle, and household goods to inaccessible refuges amongst the hills. One untoward incident, however, marred the satisfaction with which the Political Officer regarded this punitive raid into the territory of the most troublesome of the Khyber tribes. The Kadah (families and cattle) of the nomadic portion of the Malakdin Khel, which clan had excited the anger of the Zakka Khel by entering into alliance with the invading force, had been waiting for a favourable opportunity to pass through Bazar, on their way from their summer quarters in Tirah to their winter homes near Kajurai, and, counting on the presence of the British troops for protection, they tried, on the 21st of December, to rush through the valley. Mistaken for a party of the enemy, they were pursued and captured by a detachment out in search of cattle, one man being unfortunately shot. As soon as Captain Tucker discovered the mistake that had been made, he released the captives, ordered their arms and possessions to be returned to them, and gave three hundred rupees to the family of the dead man. Not content with this reparation, though it seems to have contented the Malakdin Khel, he suggested to Cavagnari that a further sum of two hundred rupees should be divided among the party as compensation for the loss of any little articles that the troops might have taken from them, and failed to give back; and as an acknowledgment of the friendly spirit displayed by the whole tribe, he also advised that three hundred rupees should be given to its chief, and another three hundred to the inhabitants of Chura. These recommendations were sanctioned by Major Cavagnari who, in reporting the occurrence to Government, called attention to the "strange coincidence that during the advance through the Khyber in 1837 a similar mistake

occurred, and a relative of Khan Bahadur Khan, the friendly chief of this very same tribe, was shot by some of our troops."

OBSERVATION

On his return march, Tytler adopted the unusual course of giving to each regiment the charge of its own baggage, thus interposing camp followers and baggage animals between the different units of the column, a disposition which must have interfered with the mobility of his troops and with his power of control over them as a united body. In his report, Tytler mentioned that the 17th Regiment and the 27th Native Infantry emerged from a portion of the Pass only five or six feet wide, "in some confusion," and were met, at the outlet, by a heavy fire from Afridis hidden in a gorge. Such confusion was inseparable from the formation he had given to his Force; and had a large body of the enemy, instead of only a hundred men, been posted at this point, disaster might have ensued.

When an enemy has been dislodged from the entrance to a defile by the leading troops, the heights crowned by strong flanking parties, and tactical points in the Pass itself occupied (and all these things Tytler had done), there need be little fear for the baggage if each regiment has furnished a detachment for the supervision of its own and the column is covered by a strong rearguard, for it will then be in the centre of a hollow square, two sides of which are the flanking parties, and the other two the advanced and rearguards—the safest position it could possibly occupy.

CHAPTER VI

The Occupation of the Kuram Forts

THE Kuram Valley, the scene of General Roberts's advance, is separated, on the north, from the Khyber and the Valley of Jellalabad where General Maude and Sir Sam Browne were operating, by the impassable barrier of the Safed Koh. To the south lies the smaller Valley of Khost, embedded in savage hills which no Englishman had yet explored, and to the west, thrown off from Sika Ram, the highest peak of the Safed Koh, rises the Peiwar Mountain, a formidable spur with flanking buttresses and intersecting ravines, clothed from base to summit with cedars, pine and oak, interlaced by an almost impenetrable undergrowth.

The valley is about sixty miles long, and from three to twelve miles wide. The river from which it takes its name, rushes out of a deep rocky chasm a few miles above the Kuram Forts, and broadens out almost immediately to a width of four hundred and fifty feet. Twenty miles below the Forts, its bed measures seven hundred and fifty feet, and at Badish Khel, eighteen miles further on, twelve hundred. From this point, it continues to widen slowly till it reaches the hilly country near Thal where it contracts, opening out again four miles above that village, opposite which its bed attains to a width of fifteen hundred feet, though its water-channel in the cold weather, is barely a hundred feet wide and three feet deep.

There are villages on its banks, and in the open country between Badish Khel and Keraiah. These are surrounded by orchards, and the land in their neighbourhood has been elaborately terraced and irrigated by channels brought from higher up the stream ; but, except for these oases, the creation of man's toil, the Kuram Valley is a stony waste, offering a striking contrast to the pretty, green glens lying between the well wooded offshoots of the Safed Koh. Its upper part is inhabited by the Turis, and the lower, by the Bungash, a clan that once owned the whole district, but has gradually been dispossessed and driven lower down the river by the former people, who, in their turn, live in constant terror of the tribes dwelling among the hill-ranges to the West and South.

There were paths up the valley on either side the river, but that on the right bank, although it entailed a two-fold crossing of its bed, was the one selected by General Roberts for the advance of his Force, on account of its greater openness and comparative immunity from the raids of the marauding Zymukhts, whose territory marches with the Kuram Valley on the east. This route starts from Kapiyang, the fortified Afghan Customs' Post, whose mud walls and round corner towers had, for many days past, been an object of curious attention to the British and Native troops collecting at Thal. Afghan soldiers had been seen going in and out of its gates : were they few or many, and what were the chances of their allowing themselves to be surprised and made prisoners ? The little fort was no Ali Masjid, and there would be small glory in taking it ; but every man in Roberts's command felt that it would be pleasant to fire a few shots on the first day of the campaign, and trusted that the Afghans would stick to their defences.

This very natural hope was, however, doomed to disappointment. The Afghans knew perfectly well that the 21st of November would see the war begin, and, although the vanguard of the Kuram Field Force was afoot long before day, and the passage of the river was rapidly

effected, the only prisoners taken were three little children left behind by their people in the confusion of a hasty retirement.

That retirement, however, had evidently been so recent that there seemed reason to believe that the fugitives might still be overtaken on the road, or at Ahmed-i-Shama, a second Afghan post, the exact counterpart of the first, eight miles higher up the valley. So the 10th Hussars and the 12th Bengal Cavalry—the former regiments had forded the river a mile below the trestle bridge, and two companies of the 29th Punjab Infantry a mile above it¹—rushed off in pursuit, and rode at break-neck pace, up hill and down hill, over the roughest of rough ground, past position after position, where resolute foes with rifles in their hands could literally have annihilated them; but not a glimpse did they catch of any living soul, and the fort at Ahmed-i-Shama they found deserted. Here, therefore, the cavalry rested for the day, and here, in the evening, they were joined by the remainder of the vanguard, under Colonel J. J. H. Gordon, which had waited at Kapiyang till Cobbe's Brigade had crossed the Kuram.

The following day, Thelwall's Brigade being still detained at Thal, Cobbe's Brigade had to be split up into two detachments, one of which under the Brigadier himself, continued to occupy Kapiyang, and the other under Colonel Stirling, its progress impeded by the Horse Artillery Battery, and the Commissariat camels, carrying twelve days' provisions for the whole Force, moved slowly and painfully up to Ahmed-i-Shama to replace the advanced guard, which had pushed on to Hazir Pir Ziarat, sixteen miles beyond its first halting-place.

For the first four miles of this second day's march, the narrow, tortuous track, thickly strewn with boulders, ran, once again, through a silent wilderness; but, on emerging from a forest of dwarf-palm, the troops entered on a belt of cultivation half a mile broad and twelve

¹ The fords were only three feet deep; but, according to the Regimental Records of the 10th Hussars, the current was so rapid that several horses were swept down stream, their riders narrowly escaping drowning.

miles long, where villages were numerous, and welcome supplies and some information as to the whereabouts of the enemy, who were reported to be still at the Kuram Forts, could be obtained.

Gordon's party spent the 23rd of November at Hazir Pir in waiting for Stirling's detachment to come up; but those first four miles out of Ahmed-i-Shama presented such difficulties to the advance of the Artillery—the Engineers were kept busy blowing up boulders to clear the way for the guns—that the latter had to halt for the night at Esoar, four miles short of its destination. The same day, Thelwall's Brigade, bringing with it the Divisional Reserve ammunition, at last crossed the river, thus setting Cobbe free to move up to Ahmed-i-Shama, and Headquarters to push on to Hazir Pir, where General Roberts held a Durbar, to which all the headmen of the valley were invited to receive, from his own lips, the assurance of the British Government's benevolent intentions towards the inhabitants, so long as they offered no resistance and abstained from plundering.

On the 24th, there was movement all along the line: Thelwall's Brigade marching to Ahmed-i-Shama, Cobbe's two detachments coming together at Hazir Pir, and the vanguard re-inforced by a wing of the 5th Punjab Infantry, escorting Headquarters to a camping ground at the southern end of the Darwaza Pass. Here, for the first time, real cold was experienced, the thermometer falling at night several degrees below freezing-point; luckily, however, the air was dry and still, and even the camp followers suffered little from the low temperature.

On the 25th, news having been brought in that the last of the Amir's troops had evacuated the Kuram Forts, Headquarters, escorted as before, marched through the Darwaza Pass, crossed the river, and pitched their camp in an open plain well supplied with water, half a mile below the Forts. That night was spent by the 1st Brigade at the entrance to the Darwaza Pass, and by the 2nd, at Hazir Pir. The former was to have joined General Roberts the next day, but the Horse

Artillery Battery once again acted as a drag, and it got no further than Koh Mangi. As a consequence of this delay, both Brigades crossed on the 27th of November, when all the separate units of General Roberts's command were united for the first time on Afghan soil, and the first object of the campaign had been accomplished—in six days, and without the striking of a blow.

OBSERVATION

The advance from Thal to the Kuram Forts was conducted throughout on the assumption that the Afghans would make no use of the many opportunities for falling unexpectedly on the invading Force, afforded to them by the nature of the ground through which the narrow, stony track threaded its difficult way. From the first, the column was divided into four, afterwards, into three detachments, and these, again, were separated by marches so long that each body was completely isolated. Hazir Pir Ziarat was sixteen miles from Ahmed-i-Shama; yet the vanguard, numbering hardly eight hundred men, lay two nights at the former village, awaiting the arrival of the leading detachment of Cobbe's Brigade, which found it impossible to accomplish the march from the latter place in a single day. Again, the same body, re-inforced only by a wing of the 5th Punjab Infantry, the General and his Staff being with it, spent two days and nights outside the Kuram Forts, two thousand regular Afghan troops with twelve cannon, and an unknown number of warlike tribesmen in its front, a river at its back, and, for the greater part of the time, twelve miles of exceptionally difficult country between it and its nearest support.

CHAPTER VII

Preliminary Operations on the Peiwar Mountain

GENERAL ROBERTS'S first act after crossing the Kuram, was to inspect the Forts ; his second, to reconnoitre the enemy's position. Accompanied by two squadrons of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, he rode forward twelve miles to a point near the village of Peiwar, from which, through field-glasses, the Afghans could be observed retiring in the direction of the Kotal, a *col* eight thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea, three thousand eight hundred and twenty above the Forts, over which runs the road that connects the Kuram Valley with Kabul. Turi spies reported that the movements of the retreating troops, consisting of three infantry regiments, were much hampered by the twelve field-guns they had with them. Later on this rumour took a more definite form—the twelve gun-carriages had stuck in the ravine at the foot of the Pass—and in this shape it was so frequently and so positively repeated, that, in the end, General Roberts was fully convinced of its truth, and based upon it the plan of attack which he attempted to carry out two days later. At the moment, no advantage could be taken of the supposed difficulties of the enemy, so the reconnoitring party returned to camp to await the arrival of Cobbe's and Thelwall's Brigades.¹

¹ It was rather hard to retire, and one could see that Colonel H. Gough was dying to make a dash at the enemy. But General Roberts wisely restrained him, and after a good look, we returned to camp with the firm belief that the guns would fall into our hands whenever we were prepared to take them. (*Times* Correspondent, November 29th, 1878.)

The 27th was a busy day for the sappers, who were set to work at the Kuram Forts, improving gateways, re-roofing sheds, and generally repairing the damage done by the Turies during the interval which elapsed between the withdrawal of the Afghan and the arrival of the British troops. Both the upper and the lower forts were in too ruinous a condition to be rendered defensible, but a little labour adapted them to the purpose for which they were required. The least dilapidated buildings were set aside as hospitals and storehouses for surplus stores of all kinds, and a small garrison, consisting of two guns F.A Royal Horse Artillery, a squadron of the 10th Hussars, three guns G.3 Royal Artillery, the 7th Company Sappers and Miners, and the sick and weakly men of all regiments were detailed for their protection. With these exceptions, all the troops under General Roberts's command were to take part in the advance on the Peiwar Mountain, which had been arranged for the following day. In order to march lightly through the difficult hill-country in which the force was about to operate, the already low scale of baggage, both for officers and men, was ordered to be still further cut down; only seven days' supplies were to accompany the expedition, and commanding officers were directed to dispense, as far as possible, with camp-followers; even then, there were nearly three thousand of these necessary evils, owing to the number of dandies and doolies which, with severe fighting in prospect, it was impossible to leave behind.

The troops were under arms by five o'clock, on the morning of the 28th, formed up in two columns :—

LEFT COLUMN.

Brigadier-General Cobbe,
commanding.

Advanced Guard.

- 1 Squadron 12th Bengal Cavalry.
- 2 guns No. 1 Mountain Battery.
- 4 Companies 5th Punjab Infantry.

RIGHT COLUMN.

Brigadier-General Thelwall,
commanding.

Advanced Guard.

- 1 Squadron 12th Bengal Cavalry.
- 2 Guns No. 1 Mountain Battery.
- 4 Companies 5th Gurkhas.

MAIN BODY

5th Punjab Infantry.	5th Gurkhas.
23rd Pioneers.	72 Highlanders.
29th Punjab Infantry.	2nd Punjab Infantry.
8th "King's."	2 Guns F.A., Royal Horse Artillery,
2 guns, F.A., Royal Horse Ar-	on elephants.
tillery, on elephants.	

It was bitterly cold, and so dark that some of the regiments had hardly left their respective camping grounds before they became entangled in a net-work of ravines and watercourses, in which they wandered about, lost and bewildered, till the dawning of light enabled them to discover the direction of the appointed *rendezvous*.¹ By six o'clock order had been restored, except that all the four guns carried on elephants, attached themselves to Thelwall's Brigade, with which they remained during the day, and the two columns moved off parallel to each other.² As a whole, the force moved but slowly, for the banks of numerous drainage lines had to be ramped before the guns and baggage could pass over them, but the head of the left column with which were the General and his Staff, pressed on in front and reached Habib Killa, fourteen miles from the Kuram Forts, soon after 10 a.m. Here, Roberts halted the Cavalry; but, deceived anew by fresh reports that the Afghans were retreating in disorder, he determined to push forward the Infantry in the hope of capturing the guns which he believed to be within his grasp. Accordingly, as soon as

¹ "On the 28th November, at 3.30, the regiment (8th King's) paraded, its tents being by this time struck and loaded on mules We had a hard day's marching before us, so the men were obliged to parade as lightly clothed as possible. The morning was dark and bitterly cold, and for the best part of three hours we shivered about, greatcoatless, on our parade or close to it!" (*Kuram, Kabal, Kandahar*, page 25, by Lieutenant C. G. Robertson, 8th, the King's Regiment.)

² "The stars were still shining when we started, but it was very dark, and we were chilled to the bone by a breeze blowing straight off the snows of the Safaid Koh; towards sunrise it died away, and was followed by oppressive heat and clouds of dust." (*Forty-one Years in India*, page 131.)

the left column had closed up, he directed Cobbe to turn the spur that overlooks the ascent to the Peiwar Kotal, and to seize Turrai, a village lying at the base of that spur about a mile in a straight line from the summit of the pass, to follow up closely any body of troops they might come across¹; at the same time, orders were despatched to Thelwall to support Cobbe's movement by marching on Turrai by the direct road that traverses the village of Peiwar.

In the thickets of prickly oak through which the 1st Brigade had now to struggle, it was an easy thing to miss the direction, and for one corps to lose touch of another; and thus it happened that, though Cobbe with the 5th and 29th Punjab Infantry and two guns, carried out his instructions, the 8th King's and the 23rd Pioneers went astray, and, keeping on the northern side of the spur eventually fell in with Thelwall's column. Seeing nothing of the enemy on the southern slope of the hill, Cobbe struck across it by a track which appeared to lead straight to Turrai, but which brought him instead to the entrance of a narrow gorge opening into a small valley, since known as "The Devil's Punch Bowl." Hardly had the leading files set foot in this passage, when, high above their heads, crowning inaccessible heights, the Afghans started into view. A glance at their numbers and the formidable position they had taken up, convinced Cobbe that the only course open to him was instantly to withdraw his tired and weakened force from the defile, and to fall back upon Turrai which now lay a quarter of a mile in his rear, though whether he should find that village abandoned or held by the enemy, he had no means of knowing. The order to retire was accordingly given, but no sooner had the retreat begun than a number of Afghans rushed down the steep mountain-side, and the troops had to turn to meet their attack. Some sharp fighting followed, in which a driver was killed, and one British officer—Captain A. J. F. Reid—and one Native officer and eight sepoy wounded. The

¹ *With the Kuram Field Force*, page 89, by Major Colquhoun.

two mountain-guns were brought into action, but the shells they threw did little harm to the enemy; and though the 29th, supported by a wing of the 5th Punjab Infantry, drove back their assailants, and even pursued them up the hill for a short distance, Cobbe would have had great difficulty in making good his retreat to Turrai, if, at 2 p.m., General Roberts had not come up with Thelwall's column, and instantly sent forward the 5th Gurkhas who, from behind some sheltering rocks, poured a deadly fire into the advancing Afghans, under cover of which the 29th were safely withdrawn out of action. Fighting now ceased; the enemy retired to the hill-tops from which they had descended, whilst Roberts, recognizing, at last, that nothing could be successfully attempted against them without far better information as to their strength and position than he had hitherto possessed, and perceiving that his men, who had been on foot and almost constantly in motion for ten consecutive hours, were utterly worn out, gave the order to encamp. Unluckily, in selecting a site for the camp on the terraces below Turrai, he reckoned without the Afghans, who were not slow to discover that the British position was commanded by one of the many spurs of the Peiwar Mountain, and, being as fresh as their adversary was jaded, had soon dragged a gun to its summit.

About 4 p.m., shells began unexpectedly to drop among the groups of British and Native soldiers who, having piled arms, had thrown themselves on the ground to rest, and it became apparent that safer quarters must be sought, and sought quickly, since the short winter's day was already near its close.¹ The neighbourhood of Turrai

¹ "One shell burst on the ground within six or seven yards of Villiers, N. Chamberlain, Perkins and myself, sending the pebbles and stones flying all round my ears. Several about the same range burst at a place where some two hundred Gurkhas were standing, but curiously enough only two or three were hit." ("Old Memories," by General Sir Hugh Gough, V.C., G.C.B.; the May number of the *Pall Mall Magazine* for 1898, page 45.)

afforded no position out of range of the Afghan fire ; further advance was impossible ; there was therefore no alternative but to fall back along the road by which Thelwall's column had marched, and up which the baggage was still advancing. On the rough, narrow track, in the gathering darkness, troops and baggage met, and soon men and animals, soldiers and camp-followers were mingled in one confused and struggling mass. And when, at last, the troops succeeded in forcing their way through the living stream opposed to them, and reached the new camping-place which meanwhile had been hastily selected, about a mile and a quarter to the west of Turrai, they found it strewn with rocks and stones, dotted over with dwarf oak and thorny bushes, and shut in on three sides by jungle and broken ground in which a scattered enemy might lurk unobserved, whilst a deep ravine running along the remaining side, afforded cover in which they might have collected in large numbers, to rush the camp. The spot was utterly unsuitable as a resting-place, and yet the best that could be found, short of falling back another three miles to the more open country near the village of Peiwar.

Little by little, as the strayed mules and camels were recovered and brought in, tents were pitched and the different regiments sought and found their baggage ; but so great were the difficulties of the situation and the hour that, in the end, many a man " went supperless to bed or to the strong pickets which were placed on the adjoining heights." ¹

OBSERVATION.

General Roberts, in his despatch of the 5th of December, calls the operations of the 28th of November a Reconnaissance in Force, but, looking carefully at all the events of the day and taking special note of the order given to Cobbe to attack and follow up the enemy, it is impossible to accord to them this

¹ *With the Kuram Field Force, 1878-79, by Major Colquhoun, page 92.*

misleading name.¹ It is contrary to all military precedent for a Commander to make a reconnaissance with the whole of his force, including guns on elephants; and no General would direct his subordinates, at the end of a twenty-one miles' march, to attack, with hungry and exhausted men, an unknown enemy in a position of extraordinary natural strength, except in the hope of snatching a success by the very irregularity and temerity of his tactics. There can be no doubt that Roberts, misled by the Turi spies, who were probably employed by the Afghans to deceive him,² imagined that he could make himself master of the Peiwar Kotal by a *coup-de-main*, and started from the Kuram Forts with this object in view. The retreating enemy proved to be calmly awaiting his approach, protected by the cannon which were supposed to be lying bogged at the foot of the pass; Cobbe's troops, that had been pushed forward into the very heart of the Afghan position, were for a time in extreme peril; and that the whole Division escaped an overwhelming disaster in withdrawing from their first untenable camping-ground, was due entirely to the lack of judgment displayed by the adversary.³

¹ "One Brigade, under Brigadier-General Cobbe, was sent skirmishing over the hills overlooking the pass on the left, to seek for the enemy *and make a strong demonstration on his right flank*; and General Thelwall's Brigade somewhat in *échelon* by the right; *with this latter column the General proposed making a direct attack through the pass.*" (Italics not in original text.) ("Old Memories," page 44, by Sir Hugh Gough in *Pall Mall Magazine*, May, 1898.)

² "In war, spies and their information count for nothing. To trust to them is to risk men's lives on trifling grounds." (Napoleon.)

³ "The eagerness of the Afghans to commence hostilities, was the salvation of the force. If, knowing the range as they did, and being in an inaccessible position, they had been content to wait till the camp was pitched at Turrai and had commenced to shell the camp with all their mountain-guns after dark had set in, the consequence would have been most serious. Nothing could then have been done, except to withdraw from the camp; but, in all probability, there would have been a stampede among the mules and their owners, who, with the other camp-followers, would have taken themselves well out of reach of danger. The camp, with all the bedding and baggage, might have been burned down, and the Kuram Field Force have been rendered *hors de combat* for some time." (*With the Kuram Field Force*, page 92, by Major Colquhoun.)

CHAPTER VIII

Reconnoitring the Peiwar Mountain

ON the morning of the 29th of November, having again slightly shifted his camp which took the name of Gubazan from an adjacent hamlet, and taken steps to improve its approaches and to render it somewhat less open to attack, General Roberts, taught caution by the events of the preceding day, went to work to reconnoitre the Peiwar Mountain; but the parties he sent out were too weak to venture into the vicinity of the enemy, and the reports they brought back were, in consequence, incorrect in more than one particular.¹

There were three reconnoitring parties. The first, consisting of two companies of the 23rd Pioneers, under Colonel Æ. Perkins, Commanding Engineer, was directed to investigate the ridge lying immediately to the north of the camp; the second, one company of the 29th Punjab Infantry, Colonel J. H. Gordon commanding, was dispatched to the southernmost spur of the Peiwar, the foot of which approaches the Kuram River; to the third, consisting, like the first, of two companies of the Pioneers, under Major H. Collett, who was accompanied by Captain F. S. Carr, Captain R. G. Woodthorpe, R.E., and Lieutenant Manners-Smith—the two latter officers belonging to

¹ “ We halted the two following days. Men and cattle were exhausted from their fatiguing marches, and supplies had to be brought up before we could advance further; besides, I required time to look about me before making up my mind how the Peiwar Kotal could most advantageously be attacked.” (*Forty-One Years in India*,” p. 133.) Napoleon bitterly complained that Wellington had been attacked at Talavera without first ascertaining whether his position could be carried. “ So long as these errors are committed,” he said, “ my men will be led on to destruction and to no good purpose.”

the Survey Department—was allotted the task of examining the alternative road over the Peiwar Mountain, known as the Spin Gawai, or White Cow Pass, which starts from the village of Peiwar and crosses the main ridge about two miles to the north-east of the Peiwar Kotal.

Perkins reported unfavourably of the spur north of the camp : it did not run up direct to the main ridge, but dipped suddenly into a deep valley, to descend into and to emerge from which under the fire of a strongly posted enemy, must necessarily entail heavy loss on a flanking party. Colonel Gordon, on the contrary, was satisfied that the southern spur was really a continuation of the main ridge, and practicable for a turning movement, an opinion which proved to be well grounded. The third reconnoitring party, which had scaled a hill overlooking the Spin Gawai Ravine, a mile and a half south-east of the Spin Gawai Kotal, also brought back a favourable report ; but in this case the judgment formed by Major H. Collett, based as it was on a bird's-eye view of a very rugged and thickly wooded country, was vitiated by several errors. He pronounced the Spin Gawai Pass practicable for all arms ; and in this he was right. But when he gave it as his opinion that an unbroken ridge connected the two kotals, and that the Spin Gawai position was held only by a picket and two guns, he was mistaken ; nor was he more happy in his estimate of the time required to reach the Peiwar Kotal by this route, which he set down at seven hours.

The following day, Gordon again reconnoitred the southern spur of the Peiwar Mountain, and Roberts went over the ground that Perkins had examined, whilst Collett and Carr, this time without any escort, succeeded in getting, once again, within a mile and a half of the Spin Gawai Kotal, and returned to camp with the opinions they had previously formed so strengthened that the former officer laid a plan for surprising the Spin Gawai position, and then advancing along the ridge to the storming of the Peiwar Kotal, before the General who

adopted it, under the erroneous impression that the Afghan strength which he would have to encounter, did not exceed the 1,800 men, with five field and six mountain guns, that had occupied the Kuram Valley, and withdrawn from it, at the approach of the British. This was, indeed, the case on the 30th of November ; but by the evening of December 1st, the Afghan force holding the Peiwar Mountain, had been increased to 4,800 men with seventeen guns, by the arrival of four regiments and six guns from Kabul ; and there is the best authority for saying that this force was no untrained rabble. " I may be permitted to point out," wrote General Roberts in his despatch of the 5th of December, " that no similarity exists between the Afghan army of the former war and that which has now been put into the field. The men are now armed with excellent rifles, and provided with abundance of ammunition . . . Their shooting is good ; their men are of large stature and great physical strength and courage, and are well clothed. The Afghan artillery is well served and efficiently equipped."¹ The military knowledge and ability of the generals in command of this excellent material—Kerim Khan and his Brigadiers, Gool Mahomed Khan and Abdul Ali—is attested by their choice of a position and their dispositions for defending it. Its only defect was its length—four miles from the end of the spur reconnoitred by Gordon on its extreme right, to the Spin Gawai Kotal on its extreme left ; but the whole of the ridge was so difficult of access, and so completely dominated at various points by knolls and peaks, which had been carefully fortified, that they were justified in believing it to be practically safe against attack.

This long ridge extends from south-west to north-east, the suc-

¹ General Roberts's comparison, so far as it implies that the Afghans were more on an equality with their invaders in the matter of weapons in the second war than in the first, is incorrect, as the jazails of the Tribesmen who shot down Elphinstone's men like sheep, were better arms, carrying farther than the muskets of the British and native troops.—H.B.H.

cessive hills that rise from it, increasing in height as they recede from the Kuram River till they culminate in the mountain above the Spin Gawai Kotal—that kotal being itself nine thousand four hundred feet above sea-level—from which point a spur runs nearly due north to the majestic peak of Sikka Ram. The Afghan position on the Peiwar Kotal, was crescent-shaped, facing south-east—more east than south—its horns threatening the British camp. Guarding the head of the pass on its northern side, rises a conical hill, and beyond this, a little to eastward, running from south-east to north-west and forming a right angle with the true front of the position, stretches a ridge a mile and a half long, afterwards known as Afghan Hill. The north-eastern face of this ridge dips suddenly into a deep hollow with precipitous sides, which hollow falls away at either end, leaving as the only traversable ground, a narrow strip of land, overlapped by Afghan Hill for a mile on the left, and half a mile on the right. This neck connects that hill with a higher peak, to which, on the 2nd December, General Roberts's troops gave the name of Pic-nic Hill. Looked at from the spot reached by Major Collett, these two hills would seem to spring from an unbroken ridge; but between them, in reality, lies this deep and difficult hollow, cutting the Peiwar Mountain into two distinct halves, only united by the narrow strip of land between the points where the drainage lines, to either side, begin their precipitous descent. Between Pic-nic Hill and the Spin Gawai Kotal stretches a plateau, or, more properly speaking, an upland valley, about a mile long and three-quarters of a mile broad, bordered by a succession of wooded hillocks. Afghan Hill is covered with dense forest, laced together by tangled undergrowth, whilst the south-eastern slope of Pic-nic Hill is comparatively open. From this latter, spring two spurs, one flanking the Peiwar Ravine, the other abutting on the valley close to Gubazan. The direct road to the Peiwar Kotal is exceedingly difficult—rough, narrow, steep—especially for the last half-mile. At the summit it turns away to the left, and descends towards Zabar-

dust Killa through a deep defile, at the entrance of which, unseen from below, the Afghans had pitched their camp.

Although possessing seventeen guns, the Afghans, on the 2nd December, only brought nine into action—three field and six mountain-guns—probably for lack of trained artillerymen to work the other eight ; but those nine were most judiciously placed. The three field-pieces—two twelve-pounder Howitzers and one six-pounder—were ranged thirty yards apart on the reverse slope of the Peiwar Kotal, where they completely commanded the pass, and were well protected against fire from below. The mountain-gun which had shelled the British camp on the evening of the 28th of November, was still on the edge of the hill overlooking the village of Turrai, christened “One Gun Spur” by Roberts’s men, out of compliment to that weapon ; whilst a second was placed half-way up the same hill, in a rocky hiding-place, known subsequently as the “Crow’s Nest.” The former swept the road leading up to the kotal from Turrai, and the latter, the series of spurs which branch off from the hill bounding the valley on its north-eastern side. Two mountain-guns were posted to the right of the Peiwar Kotal to guard against attack from the south-west, whilst two more were employed in the defence of the Spin Gawai Kotal. The approach to this last-named summit being somewhat less difficult than that to the Peiwar Kotal, what was deficient in the natural defensibility of the position, had been artificially supplied. The Afghans, like all hill-tribes, excel in the construction of *sangars* or breastworks. These are usually formed of large trees, placed lengthwise one above the other, or, where timber is scarce, of stones and brushwood, and give excellent cover to their defenders. Three such lines of defence had been erected on the spur up which the road runs in zig-zags to the top of the Spin Gawai Pass. The lowest breastwork spanned the ridge, completely blocking the pathway ; the second, two hundred and fifty feet higher up, extended only partially across the spur which had widened out ; behind the third, three hundred feet above the second, and parallel with the last

zig-zag, the two mountain-guns had been posted. The kotal itself was dotted over with knolls, and beyond these to the north-east rose thickly wooded slopes.

Such was the enemy and such the position which General Roberts, acting on the information laid before him by Major Collett on the 30th of November, had determined to attack at daybreak of the 2nd December, with thirteen guns and three thousand three hundred and fourteen troops of all arms ; meantime, however, he kept his own counsel, deceiving the Amir's commanders and the "friendly" natives as to his intentions and his strength, by marking out sites for batteries near Turrai, and parading his reinforcements of Cavalry and Artillery brought up from Habib Killa and the Kuram Forts, in full view of the Afghans, whilst secretly working out the details of the plan which, at 4 p.m. on the 1st of December, he laid before his staff and the senior regimental officers.¹

The main body of the British force, consisting of the 29th Punjab Infantry, 5th Gurkhas, Wing 72 Highlanders, 2nd Punjab Infantry, 23rd Pioneers, No. 1 Mountain Battery and four guns F.A. Royal Horse Artillery on elephants, under the General's own command, were to start from camp Gubazan at ten o'clock that night ; and he calculated that, allowing for one halt, it would reach the Spin Gawai Kotal at dawn the next day. This it was to storm, and then to press on along the Spin Gawai Plateau to attack the left of the Peiwar Kotal position. The troops and artillery left with Cobbe, namely, the 5th Punjab Infantry, a wing of the 2/8, "King's," two guns F/A Royal Horse Artillery, three guns G/3 Royal Artillery, and two squadrons 12th Bengal Cavalry, were to steal out of camp very early on the morning of the 2nd, and to establish themselves at the foot of the Peiwar Pass. As soon as it was light enough to distinguish the enemy's guns, the British guns were to open upon them, and when their fire had

¹ Despatch of December the 5th, 1878.

begun to tell, the Infantry was to push its way along the hills on the right of the valley, so as to be in readiness to assault the Kotal in front, when the turning party should attack it in flank ; meanwhile Major A. P. Palmer was to lead five hundred friendly Turis up Gordon's Spur, to threaten the true right of the Afghan position. The turning party was to consist of two thousand two hundred and sixty-three officers and men and eight guns ; whilst with Cobbe, who would have to perform the threefold duty of protecting the camp, keeping open the communications with Thal, and making the front attack, there were to remain but five guns and one thousand and fifty-one men of all ranks, of whom eight hundred and sixty-eight were to be employed in the advance on the Kotal.

CHAPTER IX

Action on the Peiwar Mountain

THE TURNING MOVEMENT

At dusk, on the evening of the 1st of December, the troops selected to take part in the night-march, were warned, and at 10 p.m. the Turning Party started, each regiment being followed by its own ammunition mules, and by its hospital doolies and dandies. Those belonging to the 29th Punjab Infantry, who, with the 5th Gurkhas, formed the advanced guard under Colonel Gordon, Brigadier-General Thelwall commanding the main body, went astray almost at once, and proceeded up the valley towards Turrui. The challenge of an outlying piquet showed them their mistake, and they hurried back in time to take up their proper place in the column.

The first stage of the march lay over ground already known to many of the men; the road also was fairly good; yet, so slow was the movement of the long line of troops, hampered as they were by the intervening mules and litters, that it was midnight before they passed the village of Peiwar and arrived at the edge of the Spin Gawai Nullah. Here they were to have rested, but as by this time it had become clear that, if the Spin Gawai Kotal was to be attacked at dawn, no time must be lost by the way, the leading regiments at once plunged down into the ravine. The descent was twenty feet deep, rough with projecting ledges, and slippery with frost, so that great difficulty was experienced in getting the mules safely to the bottom. As the Force advanced the cold grew more and more severe; the darkness, too, deepened, for though the waning moon had risen, its light hardly

penetrated into the nullah, and it was no easy matter to keep the regiments in touch. At one point, where there was a turn in the track, the 2nd Punjab Infantry lost their way, and, as their lead was followed by the 23rd Pioneers, the four guns on elephants and all the animals and camp-followers belonging to both corps, nearly half the column had gone two miles in a wrong direction, actually heading back to the village of Peiwar, before it was overtaken and recalled by Lieutenant G. V. Turner, who had been sent by Thelwall to look for them. Further on, the 72nd Highlanders halted in perplexity, vainly straining their eyes to discover what had become of the 5th Gurkhas, which was immediately in their front. It turned out that one regiment had gone to the right, the other to the left of a wooded island lying in mid-channel. Still, progress was made. Very slowly, and in profound silence, the men moved upwards, climbing over ridges of loosely heaped-up stones, stumbling over boulders, splashing through icy water, avoiding the deep holes of dried-up pools, or falling into them, as the case might be. Every ear was on the alert to catch the faintest sound that might betray the proximity of an enemy, or reveal that their march had been discovered. Suddenly, about a mile and a half up the nullah, there rang out the sharp report of a rifle, and this first report was instantly followed by a second. The sounds came from the head of the column, and clearly issued from the ranks of the 29th Punjab Infantry. There was no mistaking their meaning: the regiment consisted largely of Pathans, the kinsmen and friends of the Afghans, and the shots had been fired to warn the garrison of the Spin Gawai Kotal of the approach of their foes, thus justifying the fear which had been present to General Roberts's mind ever since his arrival at Kohat.¹ In

¹ "I had chosen the 29th Punjab Infantry to lead the way on account of the high reputation of Colonel John Gordon, who commanded it, and because of the excellent character the regiment had always borne; but on overtaking it, my suspicions were excited by the unnecessarily straggling manner in which the men were marching, and to which I called Gordon's attention. No sooner

the darkness it was impossible to discover the culprits, so all that could be done was to put the 5th Gurkhas and one company of the 72nd Highlanders in the place of the 29th, and to trust that the disaffection which had manifested itself would go no further.¹

Again, the long line of now wearied men and beasts got under weigh, and by 3 a.m. the point where the track leaves the Spin Gawai Nullah and enters a side ravine, had been reached. As the troops moved upwards in the darkness, they could see fires blazing in a village on the edge of the plateau, overlooking the nullah they had just quitted, but whether, or not, they were signal fires, it was impossible to tell. At last, the path issued from the gorge and entered the woods which clothe the spur leading up to the top of the pass. It was six o'clock and day was at hand, but in the shadow of the pines it was still quite dark. Feeling their way, step by step, the Gurkhas had come within a very short distance of the lower of the three breast-works, when a sentry, posted one hundred and fifty yards in advance of it, became aware of their approach, and fired off his rifle to give the alarm.

In a moment, the Afghans were afoot, and as the Gurkhas, led by Major A. Fitzhugh and Captain J. Cook, rushed forward, they were met by a volley which failed, however, to check their onslaught. In a moment they were pouring over the barricade, and, after a brief hand-to-hand struggle, the Amir's troops were driven back upon their second line of defence. Here, again the stand they made was short; the Gurkhas and one company of the Highlanders, who had hurried forward

had I done so than a shot was fired from one of the Pathan companies, followed in a few seconds by another. The Sikh companies of the regiment immediately closed up, and Gordon's Sikh orderly whispered in his ear that there was treachery among the Pathans." (*Forty-one Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 138.)

¹ It transpired later that the reports were heard by an Afghan sentry on the hill above, who reported the occurrence to his officer; but this latter, apparently, thought little of it, for he took no steps to find out by whom, and for what purpose the shots had been fired.—H.B.H.

at the first sound of the firing, outflanked the *sangars* and compelled its defenders to take refuge behind the third and last stockade. The two mountain-guns posted there, came immediately into action, but, owing to the darkness, with very little result. The three remaining companies of the Highlanders who, finding the path blocked by the mules and dandies of the Gurkhas, had pushed their way up through the woods on its right, now reinforced the ranks of the assailants, and all pressing forward up the zig-zag track, which led over open ground to the Kotal, this breastwork also had soon changed hands. But on a knoll above it, the Afghans were still strongly posted, and they swarmed in the woods and on the Spin Gawai Plateau. The Highlanders, with whom were the General and his Staff, soon dislodged them from the knoll, and orders were sent back to Captain J. A. Kelso, R.A., to bring up one of two mountain-guns which had already established themselves in the abandoned battery, and were firing on its recent occupants. Kelso hastened to obey; but, on issuing from the battery, he was shot through the head; the mule carrying the wheels of the gun-carriage broke away, and was never seen again; the mule with the spare wheels could not be found; and the gun was disabled for the rest of the day. Its help could ill be spared. Even after the knoll had been captured, the Afghans twice issued from the woods into which they had been swept by the impetuous advance of the Highlanders, and charged down upon the kotal, where the Native troops, broken up and dispersed by the nature of the ground, and deficient in officers to hold them together and lead them on, were perilously open to attack. The first charge was repulsed by Major Galbraith, Assistant Adjutant-General, and by Captain J. Cook. The former collected a few stragglers, whose fire checked the Afghan rush, and the latter, after rescuing Galbraith from great danger, put himself at the head of twenty men and drove back the assailants at the point of the bayonet.¹

¹ For this gallant act Cook received the Victoria Cross.

The second charge was defeated by the Sikh companies of the 29th Punjab Infantry ; but the Pathan companies hung back, showing the greatest reluctance to turn their weapons against men of their own blood, eighteen of them actually deserting the field and returning to Camp Gubazan, as was discovered when the roll was called over at night.

This skirmish, in which Lieutenant S. C. H. Munro was wounded, proved the enemy's last attempt to retain possession of the Spin Gawai position, and by 7 a.m., after barely an hour's fighting, they were in full retreat towards the Peiwar Kotal, unpursued, but harassed so long as they were within range, by the fire of the mountain-guns. At 7.30 a.m. the news of the capture of the left of the Afghan position was heliographed to Cobbe, who was instructed "to co-operate vigorously from below in attacking the Kotal."¹ This message, owing to some mistake on the part of the intervening signalling party, who failed to take up the position selected for them by the Signalling Officer, Captain A. S. Wynne, was the only one which passed that day between the two portions of the Kuram Field Force.

Unwilling to allow the Afghans time to recover from their defeat, Roberts determined not to await the arrival of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, the 23rd Pioneers and the Elephant Battery, which were still far behind, but to press forward to the storming of the Peiwar Kotal with the troops under his hand ; so, after a very brief interval of rest, the little column of about twelve hundred and fifty men was again in motion, led, as at the beginning of the night march, by the 29th Punjab Infantry, the three mountain-guns, the command of which had now devolved on Lieutenant J. C. Sherries, bringing up the rear. The sun had now risen above the hill-tops diffusing a genial warmth very pleasant to the tired men after the bitter cold of the previous night, and lighting up a scene of exquisite loveliness. On either side, the Spin Gawai Plateau was bordered by picturesque knolls and grassy

¹ Roberts's Despatch of the 5th December, 1878.

undulations, crowned by spreading deodars and lofty pines between which, to the north-west, many glades sloped away to the Harriab Valley, through which the road over the Spin Gawai Kotal runs down to Zabardust Killa.

The troops quickly crossed the plateau, and began to ascend the peak at its south-western extremity. The difficulties opposed to their advance by the steep hill-side, by the dense forest, by tangled brushwood, by trunks of fallen trees, by rocks and stones, were enormous; but, urged on to ever greater exertions by the fiery impatience of their leader, General Roberts himself, the 29th Punjab Infantry—now creeping, now climbing—worked their way upwards till, at the end of two hours, they gained the summit, to find that there was no continuous ridge between the two kotals; for at their feet, lay the deep hollow mentioned in the description of the Afghan position, and opposite them rose another hill, its precipitous face clothed with dense woods, whose dark recesses they felt, rather than saw, to be alive with the enemy. The disappointment to the General was of the keenest, but the anxieties of the moment left him no time to dwell upon it,—all his thought, all his energy, were needed to cope with the situation which revealed itself, when, turning to organize his Troops, he discovered that he and his Staff were alone with the untrustworthy 29th, face to face with an enemy of unknown strength; Highlanders, Gurkhas, and guns had all disappeared, and the pathless forest upon which he looked back, gave no hint of their whereabouts.

Many men would have withdrawn instantly from a position fraught with such great and pressing danger, but Roberts's indomitable courage and resolution saved him from what would have been a fatal error; for a backward movement on his part must have drawn the enemy after him, and shown them the possibility of destroying, singly, the scattered members of his Force. With imperturbable *sangfroid* he stuck to the summit of the hill, and had he had an army-corps at his back, instead of a single regiment, one half of which was in a state of incipient mutiny,

he could not have shown a bolder front to friend and foe. Though lost to view, the missing troops must, he knew, be close at hand, and, at first, he hoped that the Afghan fire, which had begun as soon as the 29th had shown itself on the crest of Pic-nic Hill, and which was growing momentarily heavier and heavier, might give them the direction, and bring them to the spot where their presence was so urgently needed; but when a little while had elapsed, and still there was no sign of their approach, he sent off one Staff-officer after another in search of them. The last to leave him, was the Rev. J. W. Adams, the Chaplain of the Force, who had accompanied him that day in the capacity of aide de camp; and when, after an interval of cruel suspense, he returned with no news of those he had gone to seek, the tension of the situation had become so great that Roberts felt it safer to break it himself than to stand idle any longer, waiting for it to be broken for him by some act of treachery on the part of his own men, or by an overwhelming rush of the Afghans, who must, by this time, have discovered the weakness of their adversary. Accordingly, after starting Adams off in a new direction, he turned to the 29th, and, in a few brief sentences, bade them seize the opportunity now afforded them to retrieve the honour they had lost the previous night; but though Captain G. N. Channer, the officer in command, was able instantly to answer for the loyalty of the Sikh companies which had never been in question, the Pathan companies stood silent and sullen, and it was evident that the utmost to be hoped from them, was that they would not turn their weapons against their officers and comrades. Relying on this chance, the General now ordered Captain Channer and Lieutenant H. P. Picot to lead the Sikhs cautiously down into the hollow, he himself following a short distance behind to judge, with his own eyes, of the feasibility of the enterprise on which he had bidden them embark. That it was an impossible one, he had soon to confess, and the whole party returned to the crest of the hill, where good news awaited them: Adams had returned, having found not only the

Gurkhas, Highlanders and mountain-guns, but also the 2nd Punjab Infantry, and the 23rd Pioneers. The elephants with the Horse Artillery guns, were also close behind.

Great must have been the relief to the General and the handful of British officers who had shared his suspense, with courage and coolness only second to his own, when, one after another, the eagerly expected reinforcements were seen to issue from the woods ; and, as soon as the Pioneers had been substituted for the 29th, confidence and hope took the place of a sense of insecurity and helplessness. Yet, beyond a strengthening of the British power of defence, no change had come over the position of affairs. Broken up into groups to take advantage of the cover afforded by the trees and crags, Roberts's men could do little more than keep up a rifle duel with the Afghans on the other side of the chasm. The latter were armed with Enfield rifles, the gifts of Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook to Shere Ali, which, at close range—and the two hills were only from a hundred to one hundred and fifty yards apart—were but slightly inferior, except in being muzzle-loaders, to the Sneyders of the Native troops, and they were amply provided with ammunition, supplies of which were distributed at convenient points all along their line. Time after time, the enemy made determined charges from behind the barricades with which they had obstructed the narrow causeway in front of their position, only to be driven back. But when Roberts ordered a party of the 23rd Pioneers to deliver a counter-attack, they, in their turn, were repulsed, losing their leader, Major A. D. Anderson, and a havildar and two sepoy who tried to recover his body. A second party of the same regiment, led by its commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Currie, after some hand-to-hand fighting, was likewise compelled to retire, with the loss of one havildar and three men killed, and seven wounded. It seemed as if the two forces might continue facing each other and firing into each other's ranks till the ammunition of one side, or both, ran short ; but an event was at hand which was to

change this state of things and give victory to the British arms, though not to the troops under General Roberts's immediate command.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. Turning movements have always played a great part in war, but no sound strategist has ever undertaken one with the bulk of his force, nor under circumstances which isolated each detachment, and left both, in case of disaster—a contingency which should never be lost sight of—without any safe line of retreat. At Aroza del Morino, General Girard, having made a flank movement which severed his force entirely from its base, was surprised and overthrown by General Hill, on the 18th of October, 1811. Napoleon characterized the manœuvre as “so ill managed that the enemy might have cut him off at any time.” “Remind him,” he wrote to Berthier, “that when one has to fight one must not divide one's forces, but collect them and present imposing numbers, as all the troops which are left behind run the risk of being beaten in detail, or forced to abandon their positions.” General Roberts fell into the very error here condemned. He divided his troops in the presence of the enemy, thus jeopardizing the safety both of those under his command, and those left behind in camp. He himself has admitted that, unless he could reach the Spin Gawai Kotal while his approach was still concealed by the darkness, “the turning movement would in all probability end in disaster” (see *Forty-One Years in India*,” vol. ii. page 139). It is also not only probable, but certain, that if the Afghans had poured down from the hills whilst the Turning Party was struggling up the Spin Gawai Nullah—and this had really been their intention, though on account of the fatigued state of the newly arrived reinforcements the projected attack was put off for twenty-four hours¹—the little body of men occupying Gubazan

¹ “If we could have looked behind the wall of rock that rose in our front, we should have seen that the enemy also had received their reinforcements, four regiments of infantry with a mountain battery, and, on their side too, were

must have been overwhelmed, the camp and all it contained captured, and General Roberts would have found himself shut up in the nullah, with one half of the enemy on the heights above him, and the other half attacking his rear.

Out of innumerable instances of successful turning movements which will occur to every student of military history, none more clearly illustrates the conditions subject to which such a manœuvre may legitimately be resorted to, than Sir Arthur Wellesley's double flank movement at the actions of Roriça and Vimeiro, fought, like the action of the Peiwar, in a wild, mountainous country.¹ Wellesley's army, consisting of thirteen thousand four hundred and eighty British Infantry, four hundred and twenty Cavalry, eighteen guns, and a contingent of Portuguese, divided, almost immediately on issuing from the town of Obidos, into three columns. The left, commanded by Major-General Ferguson, was composed of four thousand nine hundred British troops of all arms, and six guns; the right, under Colonel Trant, of one thousand and fifty Portuguese, and the centre, led by Sir Arthur in person, of nine thousand men with twelve guns. The advance of the flanking parties, *neither of which was ever more than a mile and a half distant from the main body*, and the vigorous attack delivered by the latter, compelled the French general, Laborde, to retreat; and when, with admirable skill, he secured a second strong position, one

meditating an attack on the camp; but though they had the will, by not attacking on the night of the 1st, but postponing the assault to the 2nd, they lost their opportunity for ever. Their reinforcements may have been tired, and probably were, as the garrisons of the Peiwar and Spin Gawai Kotals were not very much on the alert on the morning of the 2nd December; but whatever may have been the cause of the delay it was fatal to the Afghans." (*With the Kuram Field Force*, by Major Colquhoun, p. 97.)

¹ The Duke of Wellington in his Dispatches uses the generic name of Vimeiro for the two actions, of which he wrote:—"The action of Vimeiro is the only one I have ever been in, in which everything passed as was directed, and no mistake was made by any of the officers charged with its conduct." (Dispatch of August 22nd, 1808.)

and a quarter miles in rear of the first, a repetition of the triple movement, carried out with the same caution and precision, soon rendered that, too, untenable.

OBSERVATION II. No commander is justified in pushing forward one portion of his force into a pathless wilderness in such a manner as to separate it entirely from the remaining portion ; still less, in accompanying that advanced guard, and thus allowing himself to lose all knowledge of and control over his main body. The imprudence in General Roberts's case was doubly reprehensible, as the regiment whose leader he constituted himself, had just given proof of disloyalty.

CHAPTER X

Action on the Peiwar Kotal

THE FRONT ATTACK

AT 5 a.m. on the morning of the 2nd December, Major Palmer and his Turis set out to endeavour to turn the right of the enemy's position, and the two Horse Artillery and three Field guns, escorted by one hundred men of the 8th "King's," under Captain J. Dawson, Major S. Parry commanding the whole body, moved out of camp and took up a position about a mile higher up the valley, waiting for day to dawn to open fire upon the gun half-way up One Gun Spur. At 6.15 a.m., when it was just light enough for them to come into action, the 5th Punjab Infantry and the 2/8th "King's"—the two regiments combined only numbering seven hundred and sixty-three officers and men, including the one hundred men of the 8th, detailed to protect the guns—left Camp Gubazan and, passing the Artillery, took ground to the right amidst sheltering jungle, behind a lateral spur, one of many which descend from the ridge flanking the valley on its north-eastern side. There they remained till 8 a.m., when two companies of the "King's," under Lieutenant-Colonel E. Tanner, and the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Major J. M. McQueen, secured a position three hundred and fifty yards nearer to the enemy. Meantime, the guns had been turned upon the Afghan battery on the Kotal which replied vigorously, until, about eleven o'clock, two of its pieces were silenced. Whilst this fierce Artillery duel was raging, the Infantry

pressed steadily on, crossing spur after spur—the 8th “King’s” on the left, the 5th Punjab Infantry on the right—working their way towards the ridge from which, as from a backbone, these spurs descend. Once, about ten o’clock, the enemy made a movement to cross the ravine and come to close quarters, but the two squadrons of the 12th Bengal Cavalry which, so far, had been drawn up out of range in front of the camp, undeterred by the frightful nature of the ground—a perfect wilderness of rocks and stones—led by Captain J. H. Green, charged up the valley, and the Afghans fell back; and, though the Cavalry also retired, their watchful attitude at the foot of the pass prevented any renewal of the attempt to take the Infantry in flank.

About noon, the 8th “King’s” came out upon the crest of a spur distant only fourteen hundred yards from the kotal, and just opposite the ridge running up to it from the “Crow’s Nest,” the summit and slopes of which were held by the enemy in considerable strength. Here, where the regiment was exposed not only to a direct, but also to an enfilade fire, the chief losses of the day occurred, the drum-major being killed, and two sergeants and several men wounded, whilst Brigadier-General Cobbe received a bullet in the thigh which obliged him to resign the command to Colonel F. Barry Drew. The change of command made no difference to the vigour with which the “King’s” returned the Afghan fire; but for so small a force, in the presence of a strongly posted and unshaken enemy, the position was a critical one, all the more so because the 5th Punjab Infantry, whose duty it was to cover their right flank, had failed to do so.¹ The incident has never been explained, but a study of the geography of the Peiwar Mountain throws light upon what occurred. Up to a certain point, the two regiments kept in touch with each other, so far as the violent accidents of the ground would permit; but, entangled among ravines and scrub jungle, they drew apart; and, in the end, the 5th, bearing more and more away

¹ See Sketch of Operations on the Peiwar Mountain.

to the right, came out in the rear of Pic-nic Hill.¹ As, under the enemy's fire, it pushed up the last ascent, through a narrow opening in the pine-woods, its commander, Major McQueen, caught a glimpse of the Afghan camp with all its followers and baggage-animals, lying, in fancied security, at the entrance to the defile behind the Kotal. McQueen instantly realized that it was possible, from this point, to carry confusion and dismay into the very heart of the enemy's position, and pointed this out to Colonel Perkins, the Commanding Engineer, who, on joining the Turning Party, reported the matter to General Roberts. Lieutenant Sherries was at once directed to take two of his mountain-guns to the spot indicated, and, a few minutes later, their shells were bursting in the camp and among the crowded transport animals. The shells set fire to some of the tents; the conflagration spread; the terrified mules, camels and ponies, and their no less terrified drivers fled in hot haste, hurrying away to westward in the direction of Zabardust Killa. The panic communicated itself to the Afghans on the conical hill a little to the left of the camp, and these, fancying themselves in danger of being cut off, abandoned their post and joined in the flight. Their retreat exposed the right of the enemy's position on Afghan Hill, and some, at least, of its defenders must very quickly have followed the example thus set them, for the withering fire to which General Roberts's men had been so long exposed, began to slacken. About the same time, the Horse Artillery guns on elephants came up and fired a few rounds into the dense woods in which the Afghan left lay concealed. Whether they did any execution it was impossible to discover, but they probably contributed to the enemy's discomfiture.

General Roberts and his Staff now crossed the neck of land con-

¹ "The 5th Punjab Infantry had worked away we knew not whither (they eventually joined Roberts's column), and we began to think we should really have to storm the Kotal with the weak battalion of the King's." ("Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough; *Pall Mall Magazine* for May, 1898, p. 47.)

necting the two hills, and pushed a little way up the opposite slope. The reconnoissance only proved that it was vain to attempt to reach the Peiwar Kotal from this side. The trees and undergrowth with which the mountain was thickly covered, formed a barrier too strong to be broken through, even if no other resistance were to be feared; and of this there could be no certainty, for although the enemy had disappeared from Roberts's left, they were still firing away on his right, and it was impossible to know in what direction and for what purpose they had withdrawn. It was already one o'clock; only a few hours of daylight remained; and the men who had been marching and fighting for fifteen hours, were, for the most part, without food, and all, without water, none having been met with since leaving the Spin Gawai Kotal. Under these circumstances, his communications being already lost, General Roberts decided on separating himself still further from the troops he had left behind, by entering on a second turning movement in the direction of Zabardust Killa, with the object of getting in rear of the Afghans' position, and, supposing them to be really retiring, of cutting off their retreat.¹

After a short interval of rest, during which the men who were lucky enough to have any food remaining in their haversacks, shared that little with less fortunate comrades, and British lightheartedness gave to the scene of this scanty repast the name by which, in anticipation, it has already been designated—General Roberts's troops, with the exception of the 2nd Punjab Infantry which stayed behind to guard against a possible return of the enemy, retraced their steps to the edge of the Spin Gawai Plateau. Here, after parting from the 29th Punjab Infantry ordered back to the kotal to watch over the Field Hospital established there, they dropped down into a nullah on the northern side of the plateau, crossed its frozen stream, pushed up

¹ "I asked Perkins to return and tell Drew to press on to the kotal in the hopes that Sherries's fire and the turning movement I was about to make would cause the enemy to retreat." (*Forty-One Years*, vol. ii. p. 145.)

its further bank and came out upon high ground, over which they dragged along, their progress constantly delayed by precautions which the fear of surprise imperatively demanded, till, at last, the resolution of their Commander had to yield to their utter weariness and the lateness of the hour.

Since it was clearly impossible to cut off the Afghans' retreat by occupying Zabardust Killa before dark, there would be nothing gained by lessening the distance between the two forces, so, at 4 p.m., the order to halt was given, and, on the open hill-side, nine thousand four hundred feet above the sea, in bitter frost, without tents, warm clothing, or food, in ignorance of the fate of their comrades scattered in small parties over an area of many miles, in doubt as to what the morrow had in store for themselves—the Turning Party settled down for the night.¹ Luckily, there was an abundance of pine-trees on the spot, and when the Pioneers had felled a few, large fires were lighted, round which the tired and hungry men gathered to get what comfort they could from the cheerful light and heat. At 8 p.m. the anxiety

¹ In his despatch of the 5th December, 1878, General Roberts describes this second movement thus—“Having ascertained, at one o'clock, from a reconnaissance that the Peiwar Kotal was practically inaccessible from the northern side on which I was operating, I resolved to withdraw the troops from this line of attack altogether, and ordered the following disposition: A column formed as follows to march under my command in the Zabardust Killa direction, so as to threaten the enemy's line of retreat.” (See Map.)

In *Forty-One Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 145, he says—“The enemy's position, it was found, could only be reached by a narrow causeway, which was swept by direct and cross-fire, and obstructed by trunks of trees and a series of barricades. It was evident to me that under these circumstances the enemy could not be cleared out of their entrenchments by direct attack without entailing heavy loss, which I could ill afford, and was most anxious to avoid. I therefore reconnoitred both flanks to find, if possible, a way round the hill. On our left front was a sheer precipice; on the right, however, I discovered, to my infinite satisfaction, that we could not only avoid the hill which had defeated us, but could get almost in rear of the Peiwar Kotal itself, and threaten the enemy's retreat from that position.”

The reader, to understand the movement, should consult the map. The line by which Roberts retired is marked by arrow-heads.

which had lain heavy on every heart, was set at rest by the arrival of a messenger bearing a pencilled note from Colonel Barry Drew, which told that the Peiwar Kotal had been captured by the 8th "King's" at 2.30 p.m., just after Roberts had turned back from Pic-nic Hill.

It was very shortly after taking over the command from General Cobbe that Barry Drew had ordered a further advance, and, after a desperate scramble up an almost precipitous hill, his gallant little band had gained a point only eight hundred yards from the Kotal, whence Martini-Henry rifles could be brought to bear on the Afghan gunners, who were picked off, one by one, as they bravely served their guns. No men could have behaved better, but the fire of the 8th was too much for them, and, about 2 p.m., the battery was abandoned. By this time the effects of the destruction of the Afghan camp had made themselves felt on the Kotal, and Colonel Barry Drew, perceiving that the enemy were much shaken, though ignorant of the cause of the confusion that reigned among them, judged that the moment for the crowning effort had arrived. He therefore directed the Artillery, supported by the 12th Bengal Cavalry, under Colonel Hugh Gough, to take up a more advantageous position for covering the attack, and called up the two companies of his own regiment which, so far, had protected the guns, to co-operate with their comrades in the final advance. Two deep and difficult ravines still lay between the companies on the ridge and the road leading up to the kotal. These were crossed under a dropping fire, and then, behind the shoulder of a projecting spur, the men were re-formed and pushed rapidly up the rough, steep path to the summit of the pass.¹ There was no resistance, and by 2.30 p.m. the Afghan position on the Kotal had been occupied, and eighteen guns and a large amount of ammunition captured. The

¹ "The reputation of our young soldiers was bravely sustained by the 'King's' at the battle of the Peiwar Kotal. The average age of the men of this regiment is about twenty-two, but on this day in powers of endurance, in resolute courage, in a cheerful bravery and contempt of fatigue, they nobly sustained the honour of the British Army." (*Civil and Military Gazette.*)

enemy's flight had evidently been very sudden, for they had left their tents standing, their food ready cooked, and a number of their dead lying near the guns. The 12th Bengal Cavalry which had followed the 8th up the pass, the men leading their horses, now remounted and started off in pursuit. But neither in the deep, dark defile immediately behind the kotal, nor yet in the open country beyond, was any body of troops to be discerned, only, here and there, a solitary fugitive or a wounded man ; so, bringing with them a complete mule battery which they had found in the pass, the Cavalry returned to the Kotal.¹

When all the fighting was over, the left Turning Party appeared in the nick of time to take an active share in the looting of the Afghan camp ; a congenial work in which they were ably seconded by crowds of fellow-tribesmen who had hovered round the scene of war whilst the contest was going on, ready, with perfect impartiality, to fall upon the defeated side whichever it might prove to be, and who now swarmed up the pass, with their ponies and camels, at the heels of the victorious " King's," and swooped down upon the abandoned position like hungry wolves, hacking the bodies of the slain, ripping up tents, tearing the prey from each other's hands, striking at each other with their long, sharp knives, and smashing and destroying what they could not carry off. The 8th were not well pleased to see what they held to be their well earned spoil snatched from them, under their very eyes, by men who had contributed nothing to the success of the day ; but the Political Officer, Colonel Waterfield, thought it politic to allow those who, at least, professed to be friendly to profit by the British victory, and to carry away to the villages conclusive proofs of the defeat of their former rulers. Still, some share of the plunder was secured by the troops, who, in particular,

¹ " We went through an extremely narrow gorge for about three miles, over ground so broken and frozen that it was impossible to move except at a walk single file. Though still early in the day—about three o'clock—it was dark as night, the gorge being so shut in that the sun could never penetrate." (" Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough ; *Pall Mall Magazine*, May 1898, p. 49.)

laid hands on every "pushteen"—sheepskin coat—they could find, in which, however dirty, they were glad to wrap themselves as a defence against the bitter cold.

Looting, however, was not allowed for long; day was declining, and order must be restored before dark. Strong piquets had been thrown out as soon as the kotal had been occupied; now, Colonel Barry Drew recalled the rest of the men to duty, and gave orders to clear the camp of all intruders. Turis and Jagis were summarily ejected, and when the baggage came up the 8th "King's" encamped in the position they had won, and the 12th Bengal Cavalry returned to camp Gubazan, where their presence was all the more welcome as, for some time, wounded men and stragglers had been dropping in with the news that, after severe fighting, the Right Turning Party had been driven back.¹

Early on the morning of the 3rd December, General Roberts rode over to the Peiwar Kotal; the troops with whom he had bivouacked during the previous night, moved nearer to Zabardust Killa; and the Kuram Field Force was once more practically united.

*ÉTAT DE SITUATION*² OF THE KURAM FIELD FORCE ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER THE 2ND, 1878³

(1) PEIWAR KOTAL.

Wing 8th King's } Tents and rations arrived before dark.

(2) GUBAZAN.

Two Squadrons 12th Bengal Cavalry } Provided with everything.
Five Guns Royal Artillery }

¹ "On reaching camp news came in gradually of Roberts's force by stragglers and wounded men, whose account showed that he had had severe fighting. Many of the stragglers in question were Pathan sepoys of the 29th Punjab Infantry, who had treacherously left their regiment at the commencement of the attack, and whose false reports that we had been beaten back caused for a time much alarm amongst the camp-followers and others." ("Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough; *Pall Mall Magazine*, May 1898, p. 49.)

² Technical phrase used by Napoleon to denote strength, position and condition of a Force.

³ See Sketch of Operations on the Peiwar Mountain.

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

(3) PIC-NIC HILL.

2nd Punjab Infantry Bivouacking without food, water, or warm clothing.

(4) SPIN GAWAI PLATEAU.

29th Punjab Infantry In charge of Field Hospital. Bivouacking without food, or warm clothing.

(5) MIDWAY BETWEEN SPIN GAWAI KOTAL AND ZABARDUST KILLA.

Four guns Royal Horse Artillery	} Bivouacking without food, water, or warm clothing.
(Elephant Equipment)	
Four guns No. 1 Mountain Battery	
72nd Highlanders	
5th Gurkhas	
23rd Pioneers	
5th Punjab Infantry (originally belonging to Cobbe's Brigade)	

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. The march to Zabardust Killa was as ill-advised as the turning movement by the Spin Gawai Kotal. It was begun too late—two o'clock in the afternoon, at a season of the year when the sun has set by five ; it followed a track nearly three times as long as the line of retreat open to the enemy ; and, with night in prospect, it took the main body of the Kuram Field Force farther and farther away from the troops on the Peiwar Mountain, and the handful of men guarding the camp at Gubazan. General Roberts's proper course, when he found that "the Peiwar Kotal was practically inaccessible on its northern side,"¹ was to entrench an Infantry regiment and the Horse Artillery guns in an impregnable position on the brink of the chasm which had checked his advance, and to return to camp by the track up which McQueen had led the 5th Punjab Infantry, thus placing the safety of every portion of his Force on a perfectly secure basis, and sparing his own men much unnecessary suffering.

OBSERVATION II. The Kuram Campaign was marked throughout

¹ General Roberts's Despatch of December 5th, 1878.

by haste and rashness, and there was no need for the first, and no excuse for the second. Its object was the occupation of the valleys of Kuram and Khost with a view to their incorporation into the Indian Empire, *not* the capture of Kabul; there was no question, therefore, of rushing on in order to cross the passes before snow had closed them for the winter; and though General Roberts's instructions directed him to clear the gorge between the Peiwar and the Shutargardan of the enemy, the time and manner of that clearance was left to his discretion. From a political, as well as from a *general* military standpoint, General Roberts's aim, on discovering that the Peiwar was strongly held by the Afghans, should have been to facilitate the advance of the Khyber Force by keeping the largest possible number of the Amir's troops at a distance from Kabul, and neither in his Despatch of December the 5th nor yet in his autobiography, has he shown any *local* military necessity for attacking those troops in an almost impregnable position.¹ On the contrary, military science demanded that General Roberts, bearing in mind the axiom that a commander should always try to fight under circumstances the most favourable to his own troops and the least favourable to those opposed to them,² should have manœuvred to draw down the Afghans from their fastnesses, as Lord Kitchener drew the Dervishes from their stronghold at Omdurman. By such tactics, the chances of success which were largely against the British and in favour of the Afghans, would have been reversed, and the victory that must have ensued, though a little later in time, would have been complete—no body of troops escaping to strengthen the Amir's position elsewhere.

¹ "I confess to a feeling very nearly akin to despair when I gazed at the apparently impregnable position towering above us, occupied, as I could discern through my telescope, by crowds of soldiers and a large number of guns." (*Forty-One Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 133.)

² Napoleon issued the following order in August, 1809:—"A battle should never be risked unless the chances are 70 per cent. in favour of success; in fact, a battle ought always to be the last resource, as, from the nature of things, its result is always doubtful."

CHAPTER XI

The Reconnaissance of the Shutargardan Pass

THE PASSAGE OF THE MANJIAR DEFILE

THE three days which followed on the reunion of the Peiwar Expeditionary Force, were spent in making arrangements for the security and comfort of the European troops who were to pass the winter on that mountain. Three guns, G.3 Royal Artillery, were got into position for the defence of the Kotal; the 8th "King's," set to work to lower the cannon abandoned by the Afghans down the steep hillside and to collect the enemy's scattered ammunition; the Sappers, called up from the Kuram Forts to erect huts for officers and men; the treacherous 29th Punjab Infantry, sent back to Gubazan; whilst the other regiments that had borne the fatigues and anxieties of the 1st and 2nd of December, were permitted to enjoy a well-earned rest in the position near Zabardust Killa to which they had been transferred on the morning of the 3rd. In its neighbourhood, luckily for them, were discovered sufficient stores of rice and grain left behind by the Amir's army, to stay the hunger of men and animals, till, on the 4th, Lieutenant Buckland appeared with a convoy of provisions.

On the 6th, everything being in train, and his presence no longer necessary on the Peiwar Mountain, General Roberts started off to complete the first part of his work by reconnoitring the Shutargardan, taking with him No. 1 Mountain Battery, a detachment of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, a wing of the 72nd Highlanders, the 2nd and 5th Punjab Infantry, and the 5th Gurkhas, the whole under the command of Colonel Barry Drew. That day, the Force marched twelve miles, and

halted for the night at the village of Alikhel. On the the 7th, Roberts with an escort of two hundred and fifty Highlanders and two hundred and fifty men of the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow, encamped at Rokian three and a half miles west of Alikhel. On the 8th, he and his escort pushed on through the Hazar Darakht¹ defile to Jaji Tanna, where Ghilzai territory begins; whilst two mountain guns and the 2nd and 5th Punjab Infantry, Colonel Tyndall commanding, moved up to Rokian to be at hand to cover the General's retreat should the Shutargardan prove to be strongly occupied by the enemy. On the 9th, leaving its camp standing, the reconnoitring party crossed the Surkai Kotal and descended to the plateau on its further side. Here, Roberts halted his escort whilst he himself, accompanied by a few officers and some Ghilzais, ascended to the summit of the Shutargardan Pass, from whence the fertile valleys of the Logar and Kabul rivers could clearly be discerned, though enshrouding mist hid the Amir's capital from view. An abandoned battery of mountain-guns was observed at no great distance—a tempting prize—but, for lack of means of transport, it had to be left where it lay, the Afghans subsequently recovering and removing it.²

The features of each day's march had been the same—a boulder-strewn pathway, running, for the most part, up the bed of a frozen stream at the bottom of a deep ravine, above whose precipitous banks, steep hill-sides, dark with deodar and pine, sloped boldly upward, but emerging, here and there, on to open spaces where a village or two and patches of cultivated ground might be seen, and whence the eye could roam over an endless maze of mountains. Day by day, too, the cold had deepened, bitterest at dawn when icy winds swept down

¹ "Hazar Darakht or the Thousand-Tree Defile, so named from a forest of pines and yew-trees near its centre." (Bellew.)

² According to the *Times* Correspondent (Dec. 9, 1878), the guns had already been carried away, and the six gun-carriages and four limbers were discovered "thrown down a steep ravine and irredeemably smashed."

the narrow gorges ; ¹ and everywhere the inhabitants, though anxious to conciliate the invaders whom they had so recently helped to oppose, had had nothing but their services as carriers to offer ; for the country, which yielded them a bare subsistence, could furnish neither food nor forage to the strangers who had so unexpectedly intruded on its remote solitudes.

Having convinced himself that there were no Afghan troops remaining on the eastern side of the Shutargardan, General Roberts returned on the 10th of December, to Alikhel, to arrange for the withdrawal of the troops to lower ground before the advent of snow should render the mountain-roads impassable. Judging, however, that it was important to exercise some supervision during the winter over the region lying between the two Kotals, he invested Captain R. H. F. Rennick, an officer of much resolution and well versed in the language and habits of the frontier tribes, with political powers, selected a house dominating the village as his residence, and ordered up a company of the 29th Punjab Infantry for his protection.²

On the 11th, the 2nd and 5th Punjab Infantry, and the four guns Royal Horse Artillery, started for the Kuram Valley *via* the Peiwar Kotal, and, next morning, the Highlanders, Gurkhas, Pioneers and the Mountain Battery, with a long transport train consisting of baggage, ordnance stores and a commissariat column,³ marched for

¹ " Letter-writing was a difficulty, as the ink froze in the bottles, and washing was out of the question, as sponges and water were alike blocks of ice." (" Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough ; *Pall Mall Magazine*, June 1898, p. 200.)

" The sun was completely hidden by the hills on each side, and there was a cutting wind sweeping down the gorges. I thought I should never feel warm again." (Ibid. p. 202.)

² " A small body of troops would have been useless unless Captain Rennick had been able to keep his position by force of character instead of force of arms, and that he was able to do this, is, in itself, sufficient praise." (Major Colquhoun.)

³ " The baggage of four regiments, even on the reduced scale, made a tolerably long column, and the Commissariat camels added somewhat to the length to be protected." (*With the Kuram Field Force*, by Major Colquhoun, p. 130.)

the same goal by the more southerly path that traverses the difficult tangle of hills lying between the Peiwar Mountain and the Kuram River. This path first followed the Harriab to its confluence with the Kuram River, and then, after crossing and recrossing the latter stream, turned sharply away to the left, and ascended a narrow, thickly wooded glen till it came out into an upland valley on the further side of which stood the village of Sappari, against whose people—Mangals by race—General Roberts had been warned by the headmen of a hamlet previously passed through.¹ As, however, day was declining when Sappari came in sight, he thought it better to spend the night on open ground than to tempt, in the dark, the perils of the terrible Manjiar defile, which he knew to lie two and a half miles ahead; and accordingly, though he sent on the Pioneers to secure the summit of the Sappari Pass overlooking the defile, he encamped the remainder of the troops in the vicinity of the village, whose inhabitants showed much alacrity in bringing in supplies, and seemed altogether friendly and harmless. At 1 a.m., however, orders were suddenly issued to strike tents and load up the camels which were at once sent forward in charge of the Transport Officer, Captain F. T. Goad, in advance of the main column, which marched an hour later.

No doubt Roberts's idea in making this sudden move, was to frustrate any treacherous plans which the villagers might have laid, by getting through the defile hours before they expected him to enter it, and had the road and the hour lent themselves to a rapid march, he would probably have succeeded in outwitting them; unfortunately, the night was dark, and the path steep, rugged and fearfully slippery,

¹ "When I arrived at the village of Kamana, about three miles from Ali Khel, the headmen came to pay their respects, and informed me that it was probable the force would be annoyed by the men of the Mangal tribe when passing through the defile which lay between Sappari and the next halting-place, Keraiah, on the Kuram River. Although I was anxious not to come to blows with the Mangals, yet it was now too late to turn back." (Despatch of General Roberts, dated 18th December, 1878.)

having been converted into a succession of ice-slides by the recent overflowing of a mountain stream.¹ On these the laden camels slipped and fell, and soon the track was strewn with frightened animals struggling vainly in the darkness to regain their footing. Forcing their way, as best they could, through this helpless mass, Roberts and his troops left the miserable beasts and their miserable drivers behind, and, toiling up the pass, joined the Pioneers on its summit. The morning light showed many small groups of herdsmen scattered among the rocks, but their peaceful demeanor² apparently laid the General's suspicions to rest,³ for leaving the Gurkhas as an escort for the camels when they should come up, and giving the mules in charge of a wing of the Pioneers, he started off with the remainder of the troops and the Artillery,⁴ and descending the broken, rocky staircase which constitutes the reverse side of the Sappari Pass, threaded his way through the Manjjar Defile, and came safely down to Keraiah on the Kuram River, where he encamped.

Matters went less smoothly with the Transport Train and its

¹ Roberts attributes this unexpected difficulty "to the machinations of our false friends in the village (Sappari), who directed on to the precipitous path we had to ascend a stream of water which soon turned into a sheet of ice." (*Forty-One Years in India*, vol. ii. ; p. 153.)

² "It was believed that these few men were shepherds herding their flocks, and so no further notice was taken of them or their movements." (*With the Kuram Field Force*, by Major Colquhoun, p. 140.)

"In fact so peaceful did it all seem that Brabazon and I, preferring walking to riding on a cold morning, entered occasionally into conversation with some of the groups, though, our knowledge of their lingo being limited, we did not gain much information." ("Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough ; *The Pall Mall Magazine*, June 1898, p. 203.)

³ Roberts himself mentions that they had cut down two camp-followers who had lingered behind, but he probably learnt this fact later in the day.

⁴ "The troops, with the exception of the 5th Gurkhas, were allowed to push ahead of the baggage, and to make their way to camp, which was pitched at a place called Keraiah." (*With the Kuram Field Force*, by Major Colquhoun, pp. 140, 141.)

guard. "The ruined staircase, with its missing steps,"¹ which had no terrors for active men and sure-footed mules, was a fearful trial to the camels. Slowly, painfully, with many halts and mishaps, they stumbled down it, and, as the last weary beast disappeared into the shadow of the defile, the peaceful herdsmen who for hours had sat quietly watching their movements, sprang to their feet, the hidden weapons flashed out, and a sudden rush was made to seize the stores that had so long tempted their cupidity; at the same time, from every projecting crag commanding the road—deep-sunken between towering rock-walls, and so narrow that the camels had to squeeze their way along—bullets flew down into the gorge; for there were no flankers, no pickets holding the heights above the defile to make such vantage-points untenable by the foe.² Captain Goad did his utmost to keep order among the animals, and the Gurkhas, distributed in strong parties along the column, protected its rear and warded off flank attacks from the side ravines which, running far back into the hills, gave the Mangals access to the defile at many points. Fighting and running, now turning to fire a volley, now charging back with the bayonet, leading with their own hands the camels whose drivers had deserted—for five long miles, the gallant regiment covered the Transport Train's advance. Captain C. F. Powell, commanding the rear-guard, was twice hit, and both he and Captain Goad, who was shot through both legs, and only saved from falling into the enemy's hands by the courage and devotion of Sergeant William Greer³ and three men of the 72nd Highlanders in charge of the regimental baggage—subsequently succumbed to their wounds. At last, the rocky

¹ See *Forty-One Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 152.

² "The Commissioner, Colonel Waterfield, who had gone on with the advance guard, had assured the General that no resistance was likely, hence there was some relaxation of the extra precautions taken in clearing the defile, nor were the heights crowned as had been first intended by the General." (See *Times* Correspondent's letter, dated January 5, 1879.)

³ A Commission in the army was subsequently conferred upon this gallant non-commissioned officer.

walls receded, the pathway widened out, and the harassed column issued from the defile in which, in addition to the two British officers mortally wounded, it had lost three Gurkhas and two camp-followers, killed, and eleven Gurkhas wounded, but, to its honour be it spoken, not a single baggage-animal.¹

That it should have escaped from such a trap at so small a cost was due primarily, of course, to the courage and coolness of the troops, but also, in part, to the superiority of their weapons,² and, in part, to the difficulty experienced by the Mangals in firing from the top of lofty perpendicular rocks into the narrow cutting below; luckily, they did not resort to the hillman's usual habit of hurling down stones, which would have done far more damage than their bullets.

News that fighting was going on in the defile, reached Roberts early in the afternoon, and he at once sent back two hundred Highlanders and two hundred Pioneers; but the column had extricated itself from its difficulties before this relief-party came on the scene.³ Tribesmen were still, indeed, following it at a respectful distance, who disappeared at sight of reinforcements, but attacks on the baggage-train had ceased as soon as the gorge had been left behind.

On the 14th, the General and his staff rode on twenty-one miles

¹ In his despatch of the 18th December, Roberts showed his sense of obligation to the 5th Gurkhas for saving him from the discredit of losing a large part of his baggage, by warmly praising the gallantry of the whole regiment, and by naming, individually, every officer who had been present with it at the Manjjar Defile, viz. : Major A. Fitzhugh, Captain T. Cook, Captain C. F. Powell, Lieutenant A. R. Martin, Lieutenant C. C. St. E. Lucas, and Surgeon-Major G. Farrell.

² "To the fact that the Mangals are but scantily furnished with fire-arms must be attributed the smallness of our loss." (*The Times Correspondent*, January 10, 1879.)

³ "We passed on, and had barely reached camp when the alarm was raised that the Mangals had attacked the baggage and rear-guard, consisting of the 5th Gurkhas. Heavy firing was heard, and reinforcements were at once sent back. As soon as they appeared in sight the Mangals retired. ("Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough; *The Pall Mall Magazine*, June 1898, p. 203.)

to the Kuram Forts, following a track on the left bank of the river, which proved to be impracticable for wheeled carriage. The troops remained for a day or two longer at Kerariah whilst Captain R. G. Kennedy reconnoitred the adjacent country with a view to discovering whether it would be possible to punish the Mangals for their treacherous conduct ;¹ but as soon as it had been ascertained that the offenders possessed no property to confiscate and no villages to destroy, except one in an inaccessible nook of the Laggi Glen, all thoughts of retribution were abandoned, and the little force rejoined its Commander ; the whole result of the difficult and dangerous march thus brought to a conclusion, being the certainty attained to that there was no alternative road to the Shutargardan, and that, in the event of an advance on Kabul, both troops and convoys must keep to the Peiwar route.²

¹ It was said that the Mangals were assisted by the Jajis and Chakmanis and some of the Amir's soldiers who had remained in hiding near the Peiwar. As regards the presence of regular troops on this occasion, the only evidence consists in the fact that an Enfield rifle was picked up, and a few men partially dressed in uniform were seen.

² Much dissatisfaction was rife in camp owing to the way in which the whole affair had been mismanaged. Writing on December 19th, the Special Correspondent of the *Standard* says :—" I heard such questions as these asked over and over again—' Why did we recklessly expose our small force in an unknown country, the inhabitants of which might have massacred nearly every soul ? Why, if it was considered necessary, for deep political reasons, that we should brave the Mangal in his den, were inquiries not made about the character of the road, so that it might have been seen whether it would not be desirable to send the convoy round, easily and safely, by Alikhel and the Peiwar ? And why, above all things, were proper precautions not taken to have the convoy protected the whole way through the defile, instead of leaving it solely to the care of a rear-guard, in a declared hostile country ? ' It is the absence of any satisfactory answer to questions like these, that makes attached friends use such violent language as ' down-right murder,' when talking of the death of those unfortunate officers who were killed by the Mangals."

" Although men were seen perched on the crags, beetling over the river below, in a position described by an eye-witness as the ' nastiest one many of us had ever seen,' no steps were taken by the General to cover the retreat of the rear-guard, because he had been assured that resistance was unlikely. There was, in fact, a relaxation of the usual precautions adopted in hill warfare ; the heights covering the pass were not even crowned This affair calls for searching

On his return to Kuram, General Roberts convened two Courts;—the one, a Court of Inquiry to investigate an unpleasant incident which had occurred in his absence, the stealing of all the Government's bank-notes from the field treasury chest, whilst in the charge of a guard furnished by the 29th Punjab Infantry; the other, a Court-Martial for the trial of a Native officer and twenty men of the same regiment for the crime of treachery committed on the night-march to the Spin Gawai Kotal, and at the subsequent storming of the Afghan position. The Court of Inquiry reported that the notes had been kept in an ordinary mule-trunk instead of in a proper treasure-chest, but came to no conclusion as to how and by whom they had been abstracted; subsequently, however, they were traced to the Native non-commissioned officer in command of the guard, some, if not all, of the men composing which must have been privy to the theft. The Court-Martial found 'all the accused guilty, and the severity of the sentences it passed on the offenders, marked its sense of the extreme gravity of their crime. Sepoy Hazrat Shah, the man who had fired the first of the two shots which so nearly betrayed the approach of a British force to the garrison of the Spin Gawai Kotal, was condemned to death, and Razan Shah—the officer who had failed at the time to point out the offender, and had continued to screen him till he became aware that a wounded sepoy had given evidence by which he himself was inculpated—to seven years' transportation. The remaining nineteen men were sentenced to punishments varying from one year's imprisonment to fourteen years' transportation. Sepoy Mira Baz, who had fired the second shot, pleaded that he had done so without criminal intent in the surprise caused by hearing a rifle go off close to his ear, and as he had shown conspicuous bravery investigation. The commonest rules of hill warfare were neglected. An unknown defile, with a hostile population, was traversed as if an ordinary route march were being executed. . . Hurrying on with the main body, he (Roberts) had actually reached the camp, eight miles from the defile, when his rear-guard was heavily attacked." (The *Times* Correspondent, January 8, 1878.)

in the fighting of the 28th November, he escaped with the comparatively slight penalty of two years' imprisonment with hard labour. The sentences were confirmed by General Roberts, who declared that the Court-Martial would have been justified in condemning every one of the prisoners to death, and Hazrat Shah was hanged in the presence of all the troops who could be brought together to witness his execution.

Affairs had now assumed such an aspect in the Kuram as appeared to Roberts to justify him in carrying out that portion of his instructions which related to the occupation of the adjacent Khost Valley; but, before entering on a second campaign, he desired to mark, in an official manner, the successful conclusion of the first. He, accordingly, called together the chief men of the tribes whose lands he had traversed or had overrun, and announced to them the definite and unalterable substitution of British for Afghan rule in the whole country lying between Thal and the Shutargardan, and the determination of the Indian Government to permit no further meddling, on the part of the Amir of Kabul, with the Independent Tribes bordering on the annexed territory. To allay any alarm that these declarations might arouse in the minds of his hearers, he enumerated the blessings that they would enjoy under a British administration, and assured them that their religion would never be interfered with, that their prejudices would be respected, and that they would be allowed as much liberty as was compatible with good order. For evildoers, he had words of warning: headmen were reminded of the punishments that had been inflicted on two villages which, trusting to the remoteness of their situation, had dared to connive, the one, at the cutting of the telegraph line, the other, at an attack upon a cavalry post; priests were told that the undertaking not to interfere with the religion of the people contained no promise to tolerate attempts on the part of their religious instructors "to preach politics and oppose the ruling power." "Government," so General Roberts

went on to declare, " must prevent the ignorant from being misled," and, in proof of its power to do so, he cited the case of a Mulla¹ who was in confinement to keep him from doing harm, and of another, " notorious as an ill-wisher of the British Government," who, having failed to pay his respects when called upon to do so, and having left his home, " had had his house burned as a warning to others." " Mullas," he added in conclusion, " who are dissatisfied with British rule, should leave the country." ²

With the distribution of presents which followed this address, the gathering came to an end; and the political annexation of the Kuram was thenceforward an accomplished fact.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. That General Roberts should have wished to examine the Sappari Pass with a view to ascertaining if it could serve as an alternative route to Kabul, was natural and right; but to encumber the exploring column with a large commissariat convoy, especially as the transport animals consisted of camels, was most unwise and played into the enemy's hands. As the expedition was only to last a few days, the regimental transport should have been cut down to a minimum, and the surplus baggage, together with the convoy, should have been sent round by the Peiwar route.

OBSERVATION II. The occupation of the Sappari Pass by the Pioneers on the afternoon of the 12th of December, was a serious error. To break up a small force in a country known to be ill-disposed was, in itself, a dangerous thing to do, but to break it up at night and under local conditions that rendered it equally impossible for the main body to hasten forward to the relief of the advanced guard, or for the advanced guard to hurry back to the assistance of the main body, was to run a great risk for no useful end; and the measure deserves condemnation on the further ground of having exposed the troops to intense cold without shelter of any kind.

¹ Mulla, Priest.

² *Afghanistan*, No. 4 of 1879.

The despatch of the baggage in advance of the troops, on the morning of the 13th, was a no less faulty disposition. Had the Mangals showed as much enterprise when the convoy was struggling up the slippery ascent to the top of the pass, as they displayed later in the day, they would undoubtedly have stampeded a number of camels and secured a considerable amount of loot.

To abstain from crowning the heights was a yet more serious mistake; and to march away with the main body, leaving the transport train and the rear-guard without support, showed either an ignorant contempt for the warlike aptitudes of the tribesmen, or an equally ignorant trustfulness in their goodwill. The loss of life on this occasion, was entirely due to the omission of military precautions which are always imperative when troops are acting in a hostile, or semi-hostile, country. Colquhoun excuses this neglect on the ground that it would have been difficult to crown the heights on each side, as these, in their turn, were commanded by successive ridges or spurs, running parallel to the ravine, on all of which it would have been necessary to place troops; but such is almost always the case in mountain warfare, and however difficult the duty of securing the flanks of a force may be, it must be done before troops, especially if encumbered with a convoy, should be permitted to enter any narrow defile.

To the non-performance of this duty was due the destruction of the Italian army by the Abyssinians a few years ago, and the fatal consequences of its neglect were shown, on a smaller scale, during General Sale's retreat to Jellalabad, in October 1841. That officer did, indeed, picket the heights overlooking the defile between Jagdalak and the river Surkhab; but, that done, he and his main body marched on, leaving the posts and rear-guard to withstand the whole force of the enemy, now concentrated at the exit of the pass. The pickets, finding themselves unsupported, soon fell back on the rear-guard, which, seized with panic, rushed blindly forward, while

the Ghilzais fired into the fugitives from above, and pressed them in rear. "During this scene of terror all who fell wounded were abandoned, the enemy, as they came up, falling upon them in heaps like hounds on a fox."¹ In the Manjiar Defile it may have been impossible, owing to lateral ravines, to move flanking parties along the cliffs overlooking it; but there was no reason why pickets, protected by *sangars*, should not have been established on those cliffs at convenient points, such pickets eventually falling back on the rear-guard; and the main body should have held the lower end of the pass until the baggage and rear-guard were clear of the hills.²

¹ *The Career of Major Broadfoot, C.B.*, by his son, Major W. Broadfoot, R.E., p. 36 That the disaster was not greater was largely due to the courage and skill of that officer, who was afterwards the moving spirit in the defence of Jellalabad.—H. B. H.

² *Lord Roberts, in Forty-One Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 153, thus describes the passage of the Manjiar Defile:—"It was important to secure the exit from this gorge without delay, and for this purpose I pushed on four companies of the 23rd Pioneers, and, in support, when the ravine began to widen out a little, I hurried on the Highlanders and the Mountain Battery, leaving the Gurkhas to protect the baggage and bring up the rear. We only got possession of the exit just in time. The Pioneers, by occupying commanding positions on either side of the opening, effectually checkmated several large bodies of armed men who were approaching from different directions, and whose leaders now declared they had only come to help us! Later on, we discovered still more formidable gatherings, which, doubtless, would all have combined to attack us had they been able to catch us in the ravine." But *General Roberts*, in his despatch of the 18th December, 1878, says not a word about seizing the exit of the defile, and omits all reference to the Pioneers and Highlanders in connexion with the action; while the evidence of the witnesses present establishes, beyond all dispute, the fact that he and the main body marched straight away to the new encamping ground, leaving the rear-guard unsupported, and that it was not until the middle of the afternoon, when news reached the camp of the perilous position of the Gurkhas, that re-inforcements of Highlanders and Pioneers were hastily prepared and sent to the rescue of that gallant regiment, which meanwhile had succeeded in extricating itself from its difficulties.

To re-write despatches, after a lapse of nearly twenty years, is a dangerous thing. Memory is not always trustworthy; and moved by the desire to meet or to forestall criticism, a man is apt to write not what he did, but what he now sees he ought to have done.—H. B. H.

CHAPTER XII

Occupation of the Khojak Pass

AT dawn on the 21st November, just when Sir S. Browne's Division was starting from Jamrud, and Roberts's troops were crossing the Kuram River, a portion of the Force which Major-General Biddulph had succeeded in échelonning along the Quetta-Pishin road, issued from Kuchlak under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H. Fellowes, passed the Anglo-Afghan frontier into the wilderness of sandhills lying on its further side, and, after an unopposed but heavy march of eight miles, pitched its camp near the village of Haramzai on the Kakar River where, on the morrow, it was joined by the General with the remainder of the Infantry. The advance, however, was merely a nominal one, intended to satisfy Lord Lytton's dramatic instinct, by carrying out, to the letter, his programme of a threefold invasion of Afghanistan, on one and the same day ; for the Cavalry which had been sent back to Mustang in search of grass had to rejoin, and supplies of food, forage and fuel to be procured before any serious forward movement could be begun. The small reserve of those necessities of existence with which Biddulph had entered Quetta had soon run out—all the sooner, because, in the first instance, he had with him not a single Commissariat Officer to check waste by organizing a proper system of distribution ; and when the Principal Commissariat Officer did appear on the scene, being without assistants, subordinates and clerical staff, he could do but little to mend matters. Fortunately, the Governor-General's Agent in Beluchistan—Major R.

Sandeman—whose activity in collecting supplies has already been mentioned¹—was able to furnish the reinforcements with seven days' rations and two days' fuel; and the foraging parties that scoured the country in all directions, accompanied by officers acquainted with the language of the inhabitants, succeeded in purchasing, at exorbitant rates, sufficient grain and bousa (chopped straw) to save the Cavalry and Artillery horses from actual starvation.² But as no price, however high, could induce the people to part with their own winter-stores, and as General Biddulph was too wise and too humane a man to sanction their being deprived of them by force, the troops that were hurried forward into Afghanistan, would have been in evil case if Sandeman had not again come to their assistance by stacking at Kuchlak, out of his Quetta magazine, just sufficient supplies to meet their more pressing needs till the provision convoys from India should begin to arrive—a very considerable interval, as the first of these convoys came up the Bolan in the wake of Stewart's Division.

On the 25th November, the British camp was shifted to the further side of the Kakar River, and, on the 27th, the whole force crossed the Anjeran range of hills into Pishin. A more desolate spot for a winter sojourn can scarcely be conceived than this upland valley. Of considerable extent—thirty miles broad by sixty long—its treeless surface is intersected in all directions by formidable gullies. Down these, when the snows melt in the encircling hills, raging torrents rush along to swell the Kakar Lora River, chafing against its high restraining banks; but, at all other seasons of the year, main streams and tributaries are alike empty of water, save for a few standing pools all more or less impregnated with medicinal salts. Irrigation being

¹ Vol. i. p. 316.

² "In 1839 the Cavalry and Artillery horses belonging to Keane's Army had no grain for twenty-seven days, and were in such a state of weakness on arriving at Kandahar that not a single troop was fit for detached duty." (*The March of the Indus Army*, by Major Hough.)

thus nearly everywhere impracticable, and the rainfall light, but few of the inhabitants are cultivators of the soil, and the traders and shepherds who resort thither in the summer-time disappear before the icy winds which blast all vegetation and make life almost impossible for man, and quite impossible for his herds and flocks. How deadly their breath, the British invaders learnt to know, when, day after day, scores of famished camels were found of a morning dead, frozen fast to the ground on which they had sunk down the previous evening.

The site of the new camp was close to the village of Haikalzai, a spot of much historic interest, since on the hills overlooking it could be discerned the *sangars*, still in a fair state of preservation, which, in the year 1840, the Afghans defended so stubbornly against General England that that Commander fell back upon Quetta, and refused to renew the attack, though well aware that the ammunition and treasure he was escorting, were urgently needed by General Nott at Kandahar.¹ Here, on the 28th of November, Biddulph made over the command of the Division to Colonel H. de R. Pigott, the senior officer present at the time, and joined Clay's column which, so far, had been covering the right flank of the main body. With this he proceeded to reconnoitre towards the territory of the Kakars, lying some thirty miles to the east of Haikalzai, with the object, as he has himself stated, of "making our presence felt on the Kakar border, of examining the passes leading towards Sibi and to the historic Thal-Chotiali route, and at the same time of defining the limits of the plains of the province along the east and north-east."

The movements of the column were kept within the limits of the Afghan province of Pishin, whose inhabitants, even in the more remote

¹ During the halt of Biddulph's Division at Haikalzai, the scene of this action was a favourite resort of officers and men. It was easy to trace the broken track by which the gallant Apthorpe advanced to the attack, in which he fell, and a hundred of his men were killed or wounded.—H. B. H.

districts, gave the troops a more friendly welcome than had been anticipated. Nowhere was their march impeded, and the only baggage plundered had been left all night unguarded among the hills, and may well have appeared to the inhabitants legitimate treasure-trove. Its owners, however, took a different view of its character, and as the two villages implicated in the theft failed, after notice given, to restore the stolen property, their cattle were driven in and sold to adjust the loss. The fort of Khushdil Khan-Ka-Killa, 40 miles north of Quetta, which appeared to General Biddulph a point of sufficient strategic importance to warrant its being put in repair, and garrisoned by a company of native troops, was, a few months later, to be the point of assembly for his Division on its return march to India.

Whilst this expedition which occupied a week, was in progress, Major H. B. Hanna and Captain C. A. de N. Lucas, with fifty sabres 3rd Sind Horse, reconnoitred the Khojak Pass, and Colonel T. G. Kennedy, with the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, the Rogani and Gwaja Passes, with a view to determining the best route, or routes, for the impending advance on Kandahar. The first of these reconnoitring parties rode one afternoon across the valley to Arambikarcz, fifteen miles north-west of Haikalzai, where the Political Agent had pitched his tents; and the following morning, accompanied by Sandeman and some of his Baluchi chiefs, it entered the long defile at the lower end of the Khojak Pass, exchanging, in a moment, warmth and sunshine for darkness and cold. Not a ray of light fell across the path, which lay in the bed of a rapid brook, shut in by towering cliffs devoid of all vegetation, save where a weather-beaten olive, with spectral foliage and gnarled and twisted trunk, grew out of some narrow cleft. Now and again, a pair of magpies flew from among the rocks, and alighted on a boulder a few hundred feet ahead of the column, but no other living creature was to be seen, and the rush of the water and the crunching of the shingle

under the horses' hoofs were the only sounds. As, however, any number of Afghans might be lurking near, the advance was made with great caution, and, at every mile or so, on some projecting crag, a couple of videttes took up a position whence to watch the defile and give notice to the reconnoiters of the approach of an enemy from the rear, or down some side ravine.

After a five or six miles' ride, the party, now considerably reduced in numbers, emerged from the defile, and saw before them the rugged hillside up which the track rose steeply to the summit of the Khojak Pass, seven thousand three hundred and eighty feet above sea-level. Dismounting and leaving their escort and horses in the bed of the stream which here widens out sufficiently to form a good camping-ground, the three officers and their native companions climbed to the kotal and looked down over the vast, treeless waste broken, here and there, by fantastic-shaped hills of marvellous hues, their jagged outlines standing out sharply against the cloudless sky, which constitutes the major portion of the Province of Kandahar. Looked at from above, that wide plain seemed to the beholders as lifeless as the mountains among which they stood, for the few hamlets scattered over its surface, were too small to be distinguishable, and one of those weird ranges hid the embattled walls of the city of Kandahar from view.

Turning from the contemplation of this strangely varied and beautiful desert—for desert it may be termed, since its intermittent rivers and scanty rainfall can endow it with but brief and fitful life—the English officers carefully examined the reverse side of the pass, and convinced themselves that, with time and labour, the long abandoned track could be fitted for the use of the troops, baggage and guns, but not for that of a siege-train. Luckily, however, Colonel Kennedy's reconnaissances showed that, although the Rogani Pass could only be used by Infantry and dismounted Cavalry, the Gwaja Pass, owing to its easier gradients, would admit of the passage of

the heavy cannon which were coming up with General Stewart, and in expectation of which Biddulph's men had been busily at work improving the road from Quetta into the Pishin Valley, *viâ* the Ghazaband Pass.

When the reports of the three reconnaissances were laid before General Biddulph on his return to camp, he had no hesitation in deciding that the advance of his Division should be made by the Khojak, as the most direct and best watered road to Kandahar, and he at once hurried forward a strong detachment to occupy the pass. On the resumption of the advance, on the 12th of December, the Force was somewhat better off in the matter of superior officers than had hitherto been the case, for Brigadier-General C. H. Palliser, C.B., commanding the Cavalry, and the two Infantry Brigade Commanders, R. Lacy and T. Nuttall, had arrived in camp during Biddulph's absence, and, though each was without his proper Staff, they had been able to do something towards putting the organization of their respective Brigades on a proper footing.

On the 12th of December, Biddulph took up a new position at Abdulla Khan-ka-Killa, a well watered spot about three miles from the mouth of the Khojak Defile; Clay's column, which he had left at Khushdil Khan-Ka-Killa,¹ covering his right flank, whilst at Gulistan Karez, on his left, General Palliser watched the outlets of the Gwaja and Rogani Passes. Thus protected, the 5th and 9th Companies of Bengal Sappers and Miners, the 32nd Pioneers, the 26th Punjab Infantry and a gang of Ghilzai labourers, set to work to restore the nearly obliterated path on both sides of the pass, and, notwithstanding a heavy fall of snow and the extensive blasting operations rendered necessary by the hardness of the rock, on the 14th, the Engineers were able to report that, though impracticable for the Field Battery, the road could safely be used for the passage of the Mountain Guns,

¹ At this place Colonel Clay discovered and seized a large quantity of barley and corn belonging to the Amir—a great windfall for the troops.

Cavalry and loaded transport. The following day, Colonel Kennedy, with two Mountain Guns, the 2nd Punjab Cavalry and the 26th Punjab Infantry, crossed the Pass, and occupied Chaman on the western side of the Khwaja Amran Mountains, pushing out examining parties well to his front and flanks.

General Biddulph, in consultation with his principal Engineer and Artillery Officers, Colonels W. Hichens and C. B. Le Messurier, now decided to form a ramp, or slide, on the further side of the pass, and down this, on the 18th December, the guns were successfully lowered by the ropes which Captain W. G. Nicholson's foresight had provided;¹ but as the slide was, at best, but a temporary expedient, and provision would ultimately have to be made for the passage of wheeled carriage, the Commanding Engineer was directed to select a good alignment for a new road; and when a thirteen-foot track, with a maximum gradient of 1' in 10', had been properly traced, Lieutenant H. L. Wells, R.E., came up from Quetta with a gang of Ghilzai labourers, to complete the work.²

The lowering of the guns down the ramp, and the initiation of the permanent roadway which was to supersede it, were the last acts of General Biddulph's independent command, for General Stewart had now arrived at Quetta, and assumed supreme control of all the British Forces in Southern Afghanistan.

OBSERVATION

Though the reconnaissance of the Kakar country doubtless added to our geographical knowledge of Afghanistan, it was not demanded by the circumstances of the moment, and it had the worst possible effect on the neighbouring tribes, rousing in their minds well founded

¹ Vol. i. p. 302.

² General Biddulph had the satisfaction of inspecting this road on his return to India, in March 1879, and of seeing the first wheeled carriages—a train of carts laden with telegraph material—safely cross the pass.—H. B. H.

suspicious of ulterior objects inimical to their independence; and if it had been an absolutely necessary operation, it was not one which the General should have undertaken in person. The proper place of a Commander moving in an enemy's country, especially if ignorant of that enemy's whereabouts and intentions, is with his main body. Not only was Biddulph quite in the dark as to whether the mountains in his front were held by the enemy and as to hostile gatherings beyond them, but his communications with Quetta were none of the surest, and an enterprising foe might have cut them at any moment by occupying the Gazaband Pass.

CHAPTER XIII

Concentration of the Kandahar Field Force in Pishin

THE truth that the real difficulty and danger of the war lay, not in the organized resistance which the Amir could offer to the British advance, but in the extent and nature of the country to be traversed, and in the character and habits of the tribes distributed over its vast surface, was destined to be as fully realized by the troops belonging to Stewart's Division as by those who, under Browne, Roberts and Biddulph, had preceded them into Afghanistan. At Rohri, on the left bank of the Indus, they had been delayed for a considerable time by the scanty provision made for conveying them and their stores to the opposite shore, and at Sukkur, on the right bank, by the unwillingness of the Sind camel-owners to furnish the transport needed to enable them to take the next step towards their distant objective—Kandahar—an unwillingness only overcome by the Sind Government's solemn promise that their animals should not be required to go beyond Dadar, where hill-camels would be waiting to take their place. As the reluctantly accorded supply came slowly in, the troops were moved forward in small bodies, across a fœtid swamp reeking with poisonous emanations from millions of dead fish left behind by the subsiding floods, to Jacobabad (forty-five miles); through a belt of jungle

interspersed with slimy pools, to Nusserabad (eleven miles); and lastly through the horrible Kachi desert,¹ where dust storms often obliterate the only track, and where the length of each day's march—twenty-eight miles in one instance—is regulated by the wells and pools of brackish, turbid water scattered, at irregular intervals, along its course, to Dadar (one hundred and thirteen miles), that “hell upon earth” already described in Chapter XVI., Vol. I.

Starting a month later than Biddulph's Force, they had less to suffer from heat, but more from cold, the thermometer often falling below freezing-point at night; and though they had no single experience to be compared to the terrible march from Bandowali to Kabradani, their trials were of longer duration and their daily fatigues even greater, for, early and late,² they were engaged in helping forward the Heavy Guns, whose carriages and ammunition waggons were perpetually sticking fast in swamps and pools, lying helpless at the bottom of the deep nullahs with which the flat surface of the desert is intersected, breaking through that desert's hard upper crust, known locally as pāt, and sinking up to their axles in the loose sand below.³ So great were the delays thus occasioned, that rear-guards had hardly

¹ “It,”—the Kachi desert—“is, in the hotter and drier months, a plain of arid sand, but is converted by the first heavy fall of rain into a salt marsh. The whole of it is swept at periods by the fatal *simoon*; it is pestilential amidst the extreme heats of April and May; not less so when its sands have been converted into swamps by the rains of June, July, August and September, or when the exhalations rise in dense vapour from it a month later.” (Havelock's *History of the First Afghan War*).

² Asked by a comrade in the Infantry why his Battery—a heavy one—was called 5-11, a gunner promptly replied, “Why, to be sure, we march at five o'clock in the morning, and don't get into camp till eleven at night.”

³ “The siege-train I have given up as hopeless for the next two months, but if I can get on the two elephant batteries, I hope to be in a position to take Ghazni as well as Khelat-i-Ghilzai before the spring. Men and officers have been employed in hauling guns through the sand, and the officers themselves had to put their hands to the rope and pull. I must say all have shown the best spirit.” (Elmie's *Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 233.)

arrived in camp before they were called upon to load up again, and resume their march. Over-work soon bore its natural fruits. Many men went sick, and each day showed larger gaps in the ranks of the camp-followers and transport-animals. The mortality among the latter filled their drivers with angry alarm; and when rumours reached them that no hill-camels had been collected at Dadar, and they began to understand that they and their exhausted and over-laden beasts would have to go on through the pass, in which, just forty years earlier, so many of their fathers had perished, they took every opportunity of stealing away from the line of march by day, or from the camping-grounds at night; and their desertions meant not only the loss of valuable baggage and stores, but a serious addition to the labours and responsibilities of the troops, who dared not lose sight of their transport, lest man and beast should vanish in the trackless desert.

On arriving at Dadar, it proved only too true that the Baluchi chiefs, still uncertain whether they would, or would not, throw in their lot with the British Government, had failed to keep their promise to provide camels of hardier breed; and, notwithstanding the despairing protests of their owners, the remnant of the twenty thousand Sind camels, together with many thousands brought from the Punjab, were ordered to proceed to Pishin. The step, inevitable under the circumstances, had serious consequences apart from the discredit which it brought upon British honour.¹ All the arrangements for keeping up a constant stream of supplies between India and the Forces in Southern Afghanistan, had been based upon the expectation that the plain-camels, after making over their loads to animals better adapted than they to tread rough mountain-paths, and endure the

¹ "But of all the evils which beset the fair progress of the Expedition, there is nothing to my mind, so disgraceful as the breach of good faith committed with the camel-men. . . A native will stand by the *Sirkar* (Government) because he believes its word, but here, at the outset, was a distinct breach of faith." (Major Le Messurier, *Kandahar in 1879*, p. 23.)

intense cold of an Alpine winter, would return to Sukkur, where vast quantities of military and commissariat stores were daily accumulating, to re-load, and were to continue plying between the Indus and the foot of the Bolan, so long as the war should last. Now, however, the transport which was to have played a similar part between Multan and Rohri, had to cross the river and go on, in its turn, to Pishin; and the Indian Government found itself driven to make a great effort to replace it with inferior animals, purchased at enhanced prices. The measure must have been a bitter pill to Lord Lytton, whose pleasing dream of war waged at no expense worth mentioning, was fast melting away on every side; but, having once launched troops into regions where food of every description was non-existent, no cost could be allowed to stand in the way of providing for their necessities; and it shows what pressure must have been put upon the Punjab peasant to compel him to part with his remaining stock of camels, that the Kandahar Field Force escaped starvation, for the leakage of stores by the way, was simply enormous. It was not merely that the loads of thousands of the transport-animals whose corpses strewed the road from Sukkur to Pishin, had to be left lying in the desert or on the mountain-side—but that the Baluchis, not content with these windfalls, were very active in plundering the convoys whose scanty escorts could neither protect them on the march, nor effectually guard their camping-grounds. After a time, two causes brought about a marked improvement in a state of things which was threatening to reduce Stewart's and Biddulph's Divisions to a state of impotence: Sandeman, at last, succeeded in inducing the Baluchis to keep their promise to supply hill-transport, and the Bombay troops to whom the duty of guarding the communications of the Kandahar Field Force had been assigned, began to appear on the scene. Of course, Baluchi aid had to be dearly bought; the rates asked—eight rupees for the conveyance of a camel-load (three hundred and twenty pounds) from Dadar to Quetta—staggered the British

negotiator ; but the wily old Brahui¹ chief, who had been the first to consent to treat, knew the state of things prevailing along the whole line of advance, too well, to abate one tittle of his demands ; and the prices agreed upon with him, had to be conceded to all. The arrangements once concluded, thousands of hill-camels poured into Dadar, and the Sind and Punjab camels were relegated to their proper sphere of work.

The Bombay Division, details of which are given in the accompanying table, established its headquarters at Jacobabad about the middle of December, and from that point the troops belonging to Brigadier-General Phayre's Brigade, spread gradually along the entire line of communications :—

BOMBAY DIVISION.

Major-General J. M. Primrose	Commanding.
Lieutenant E. O. F. Hamilton	Aide-de-Camp.
Colonel E. A. Green .	Assistant Adjutant-General.
Major Lloyd	Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General.
Captain A. B. Stopford	Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Shewell	Principal Commissariat Officer.

ARTILLERY.

B-B Royal Horse Artillery	Major W. H. Caine, Commanding.
H-1 Royal Artillery	Major H. F. Pritchard, Commanding.

¹ The Brahui is not a true Baluch, but the two races intermarry, and the differences between them are fast disappearing. Thornton, in his *Life of Sir R. Sandeman*, writes (page 110) :—“ In character, both Brahui and Baluch are frank and open in their manner, and their hospitality is proverbial ; they are brave and enduring, predatory, but not pilferers ; vindictive, but not treacherous. With all the virtues of their neighbours, the Afghans, they are more reliable and less truculent ; and on two points, which have an important bearing on their management, they differ widely : the Baluch is amenable to the control of his chief ; the Afghan is a republican and obeys the Jirga, or council of the dominant faction of his tribe. The Afghan is fanatical and priest-ridden ; the Baluch is singularly free from religious bigotry.”

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

CAVALRY.

14th Hussars.

1st Sind Horse.

INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General R. Phayre

Commanding.

Major C. J. Burnett

Brigade Major.

83rd Foot.

1st Bombay Grenadiers.

19th Bombay Infantry.

Two Companies Bombay Sappers.

Their presence soon insured the safety of the convoys, and their labour, in due time, facilitated their movements, for the 1st Bombay Grenadiers and the 19th Bombay Infantry so widened and repaired the road up the Bolan, modifying gradients, ramping ravines, bridging the river at many points and clearing away shingle and boulders along an aligned route extending for nearly seventy miles—a work which it took them six months of incessant toil to complete—that, just at the very time when the mortality among the camels had thinned their ranks beyond all hope of replenishment, it became possible to replace them by bullock-carts.

At Dadar, confusion still reigned supreme. There had been no leisure in which to arrange for proper commissariat and conservancy establishments; no opportunity of procuring and stacking fuel and forage for the use of the regiments that emerged from the hot plain one day, to disappear the next into the cold hills; and the few fields of *jowari*, now ripe along the river-banks, had to be reaped, without sickles, by the men themselves, and the crop carried on their pack-animals, without ropes to secure, or saletas (coarse canvas bags) to contain it. Again and again, it looked as if the troops could never be got to the front; yet, the stream of men and beasts never actually stopped, and, by the latter half of December, after much suffering and the loss of a large part of its transport, the 1st Division of the Kandahar Field Force had arrived at Quetta.

General Stewart, who, with his Staff, had hurried forward in advance of the troops, had reached that town on the 8th of December. It must have been a relief to his mind, harassed by a load of military cares, to find a man of Sandeman's experience, tact, and resolution, waiting there to discuss the political situation, and soon to have proof in the conclusion of the transport arrangement already chronicled, of his great influence over the Baluchis. Unfortunately, the General's relations with his Second-in-Command were less satisfactory. On his way up the Bolan, Stewart had been much shocked by the foul and insanitary state of the camping-grounds, and the number of dead camels lying unburied in the pass. New to such scenes, and not suspecting that, if there were any fault in the matter, his own troops would shortly deserve far greater condemnation, he hastily concluded that the Quetta Reinforcements had neglected their duty, and wrote his displeasure in strong terms. Biddulph, a proud and sensitive man, bitterly resented the undeserved rebuke, and the absence of all recognition of the great services which his tired and sickly troops had rendered to Stewart's Division by smoothing the way for their advance. His vexation was natural ; yet, to some extent, he had himself to blame. Had he gone to Quetta to meet his Chief, a few words of explanation would have shown Stewart his mistake ; but he could not bring himself to take this step, and there was no meeting between the two Generals till the senior rode into the junior's camp, by which time their mutual feelings had been so much embittered as to injure, permanently, their relations to each other, and to impair the cordiality which, under other circumstances, would have existed between their respective Staffs, and between the rank and file of their respective Forces.

If the state of the Bolan had alarmed General Stewart, the condition of Quetta was not such as to lessen his disquietude. Outside that town, lay the corpses of the six or seven hundred camels which Biddulph, having neither labour at his command to bury, nor fuel to burn them, had

caused to be dragged to leeward of the station.¹ The sight was a sickening one, though, owing to the unusual dryness of the season, the bodies, instead of decaying, shrivelled up in the sun and wind, and did little to poison either the air or the water; but the filth which abounded on every side, was a real and most serious danger. In vain the medical officers offered suggestions, and the military authorities issued stringent orders for its disinfection or removal; the evil which grew rapidly as more and more troops passed through the valley, was beyond all cure; and Quetta had to continue a hot-bed of disease throughout the entire campaign.²

On the 14th of December, General Stewart and his Staff left Quetta, Deputy Surgeon-General Alexander Smith remaining behind to subject the Kandahar Field Force to the same rigorous inspection which the Quetta Reinforcements had already undergone at his hands. The result so far as the European regiments were concerned, proved satisfactory. The keen air of the Bolan had so braced and invigorated the men, that but few had the mortification of hearing themselves pronounced unfit to go further; but among the Native troops, to whom cold is a poison—not a tonic, there was much sickness; and many

¹ “ Experience showed that when fuel was available (which was very seldom) the easiest mode of disposing of dead animals was to disembowel them, fill their interiors with dry straw, grass, thorns, or any other inflammable materials available, which, when fired, gradually consumed the whole body.” (Deputy Surgeon General A. Smith.)

² If stringent orders could have ensured the health and well-being of the Force, its condition should have been perfect, for plenty of them were issued. Major Le Messurier, writing from Dadar, gives a caustic account of one batch of them. “ These orders,” he writes, “ which, by the way, were handed to us on several pieces of paper and disconnected, desired, or, rather, laid down that all followers were to be clothed:—admitted; but where the clothing? That all camels were to be protected by a jhool (covering):—good again; but where the jhools? That so many days’ provisions were to be carried through the Pass:—excellent; but where the rations and forage? That all camps on being abandoned were to be thoroughly cleaned:—but where was the conservancy staff?” (*Kandahar in 1879*, p. 23.)

of them, and still larger numbers of the camp-followers, had to be detained in Quetta for medical treatment.

At Abdulla Khan-Ka-Killa, Stewart found himself confronted with the same difficulties which he had had to face at Quetta. The hospitals were full; deaths had been numerous among troops and followers; many of the Cavalry-horses had died or broken down; much of the original transport had perished, and little had been done to renew it;¹ and the one fresh element in the situation—the attitude of the Pathans in the Native regiments—was far from re-assuring. The men could not be called disaffected, for they were loyal to their officers and quite ready to fight against the Amir; but they were restless and uneasy with the consciousness that scenes like to those in which they were bearing a part, were being enacted in the Khyber, where many of them had their homes. The news of Maude's expedition into the Bazar Valley, so increased their alarm that many Afridis came boldly forward to ask for leave of absence in order to place their families in safety, promising to rejoin as soon as this duty had been accomplished. On the refusal of their request, these men deserted in a body, leaving however, their rifles, ammunition, and accoutrements behind them, as a proof that they were acting in good faith, and had no intention of turning traitors to their salt.

After visiting Chaman to select a site for a redoubt, which was to cover the western end of the Khojak Pass and to contain a large commissariat depôt, General Stewart addressed himself to the task of re-organizing the whole of the troops now under his command, into two bodies, which were thenceforward to be known as the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Kandahar Field Force; the former, to continue

¹ General Stewart to the Adjutant-General of the Army in India:—

“Camp, Killa Abdulla, 22nd December, 1878.

“We are halted here because we have no money and our transport is in pieces—due no doubt to scarcity of forage and cold. Many of the poor brutes were unfit for the hard work of knocking about Pishin, and have died of exhaustion.” (*Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, page 232.)

under his own immediate command, the latter, under Biddulph's ; no change being made in the Divisional Staff of the respective Generals.

TABLE SHOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KANDAHAR
FIELD FORCE.

1ST DIVISION.

Royal Engineers.

Colonel R. H. Sankey	Commanding.
Major A. Le Messurier	Brigade Major.
Lieutenant C. F. Call	Assistant Field Engineer.
Lieutenant E. S. E. Childers	Assistant Field Engineer.
Lieutenant G. R. R. Savage	Superintendent of Field Telegraphs.
Three Companies of Sappers and Miners.	
Engineer Field Park.	

*Artillery.*¹

Brigadier-General C. G. Arbuthnot, C.B.	Commanding.
Captain A. D. Anderson	Brigade Major.
Major C. Cowie	Commissary of Ordnance.
Captain R. A. Lanning	Adjutant.
Colonel A. C. Johnson	Commanding Royal Horse and Field Artillery.
Colonel A. H. Dawson	Commanding Heavy Artillery.
5-11 Royal Artillery (Heavy)	Major C. Collingwood, Commanding.
6-11 Royal Artillery (Heavy)	Major J. A. Tillard, Commanding.
11-11 Royal Artillery (Mountain)	Major N. H. Harris, Commanding.
Ordnance Field Park.	

Cavalry Brigade.

Brigadier-General W. Fane, C.B.	Commanding.
Captain H. H. F. Gifford.	Brigade Major.
15th Hussars	Lieutenant-Colonel J. E. Swindley, Commanding.
8th Bengal Cavalry	Colonel B. W. Ryall, Commanding.
19th Bengal Lancers	Colonel P. S. Yorke.
A.B. Royal Horse Artillery	Colonel D. MacFarlan.

¹ *Siege Train en route from India.*

Colonel E. J. Bruce	Commanding.
Major W. H. Noble	Staff Officer.
13-8 Royal Artillery (Siege)	Major E. S. Burnett, Commanding.
16-8 Royal Artillery (Siege)	Major J. H. Blackley, Commanding.
8-11 Royal Artillery (Siege)	Major H. H. Murray, Commanding.

1st Infantry Brigade.

Brigadier-General R. Barter	Commanding.
Captain C. M. Stockley	Brigade Major.
2nd Battalion 60th Rifles	Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Collins, Com- manding.
15th Sikhs	Major G. R. Hennessy, Commanding.
25th Punjab Infantry	Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Hoggan, Commanding.
I-1 Royal Artillery	Major H. B. Lewes, Commanding.

2nd Infantry Brigade.

Brigadier-General R. J. Hughes	Commanding.
Captain A. G. Handcock	Brigade-Major.
59th Foot	Major J. Lawson, Commanding.
1st Gurkhas	Colonel R. S. Hill, Commanding.
3rd Gurkhas	Colonel A. Paterson, Commanding.
12th Bengal Infantry	Colonel R. H. Price, Commanding.
D-2 Royal Artillery	Major E. Staveley, Commanding.

2ND DIVISION.

Royal Engineers.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Hichens	Commanding.
Captain W. S. S. Bisset	Field Engineer.
Captain W. G. Nicholson	Field Engineer.
5th Company Bengal Sappers and Miners.	
Engineer Field Park.	

Artillery.

Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Le Messurier	Commanding.
Lieutenant F. H. G. Cruickshank	Adjutant.
Major F. V. Eyre	Commissary of Ordnance.
E-4 Royal Artillery	Major T. C. Martelli.
No. 2 Jacobabad Mountain Battery	Captain R. Wace.
No. 3 Peshawar Mountain Battery	Captain J. Charles.
Ordnance Field Park.	

Cavalry Brigade.

Brigade-General C. H. Palliser, C.B.	Commanding.
Captain H. R. Abadie	Brigade-Major.
1st Punjab Cavalry	Major G. S. Maclean, Commanding.
2nd Punjab Cavalry	Colonel T. G. Kennedy, Commanding.
3rd Sind Horse	Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. P. Malcolm- son, Commanding.

1st Infantry Brigade.

Brigadier-General R. Lacy . . .	Commanding.
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Captain M. H. Nicolson
70th Foot
19th Punjab Infantry

Brigade Major.
Colonel H. de R. Pigott, Commanding.
Colonel E. B. Clay, Commanding.

2nd Infantry Brigade.

Brigadier-General T. Nuttall
Captain W. W. Haywood
26th Punjab Infantry

Commanding.
Brigade-Major.
Lieutenant-Colonel M. G. Smith
Commanding.

32nd Pioneers

Lieutenant-Colonel H. Fellows, Com-
manding.

29th Baluchis

Lieutenant-Colonel G. Nicholetts,
Commanding.

Quetta.

Two Guns Jacobabad Mountain Battery } Major F. T. Humphrey,
30th Bombay Infantry (Jacob's Rifles) } Commanding.

Moveable Column in Pishin.

Two Guns Peshawar Mountain Battery } Major F. J. Keen, Commanding
1st Punjab Infantry }

Chaman Fort.

Two Guns Jacobabad Mountain Battery } Lieutenant-Colonel A. Tulloch,
One Troop 3rd Sind Horse . } Commanding.
Two Companies 26th Punjab Infantry }

Hand in hand with this measure, went the working out of a simple but effective plan of campaign, its twofold object being *speed* in its earlier stages, attained by a separation of the invading forces, and *strength*, in its final stage, by their re-union at Takht-i-Pul, thirty-two miles short of Kandahar, and still outside the zone in which organized resistance might be expected, if the Amir's father-in-law, Sirdar Afzul Khan, carried out the peremptory instructions which he was known to have received from Kabul, to oppose with his cavalry the British advance.

The First Division was to cross the Khwaja Amran mountains by the Gwaja Pass—its commanding Engineer, Colonel R. Sankey, had confirmed Colonel Kennedy's report as to the practicability of

that Pass for Heavy Artillery;—the Second, by the Khojak.¹ The working parties required to complete the work of widening the road through the Gwaja and reducing its gradients, were to be furnished by the Second Division, as the First was only just beginning to concentrate at Gulistan Karez; and Major A. Le Messurier, with a party of sappers, was to be sent forward to develop and regulate the water supply which, contained in deep wells varying in depth from a hundred and fifty to three hundred feet, and yielding about eight hundred gallons at a time, would have to be drawn and stored in puddled tanks, the process being repeated as fast as the wells refilled.

¹ Stewart's original intention was to send the Heavy Guns along the foot of the mountains to Chaman—from the exit of the Gwaja Pass to Chaman was about twenty-eight miles—thus avoiding the long and waterless march between Gwaja and Konchai; but a reconnaissance made by Major C. S. Maclean with his regiment, the 1st Punjab Cavalry, showed that it was not practicable for wheeled carriage, and no time could be spared to improve it.

FROM QUETTA TO KANDAHAR.

GWAJA ROUTE			KHOJAK ROUTE		
Heights in Feet	Distance in Miles	Posts	Posts	Distance in Miles	Heights in Feet
5624		Quetta to—	Quetta to— ,		5624
—	14	Gazarband.	Kushlak	13	5282
—	16	Khwardah	Syud Yaru	11	5046
4997	10	Gulistan	Haikalzai	10	4977
6211	11	Gundawanni .	Arambi Karez	14	5076
6996	2	Gwaja Kotal	Killa Abdulla	5	5138
6240	2	Spintaza	Khojak Post	9	6929
4571	7	Gwaja	Khojak Kotal	1	7380
4013	21	Konchai	Chaman	4	5660
3727	14	Shahpasand	Gatai	17	4050
3613	16	Takht-i-pul	Melmandu	19	—
—	7	Abdul Rahman	Abdul Rahman	11	—
3308	15	Khusab	Mand-i-Hissar	17	—
3426	10	Kandahar City	Kandahar City	11	3426
	145			142	

Table compiled by Major A. Le Messurier from Captains Bevan's and Roger's Surveys.

On the 26th of December, General Stewart transferred his Headquarters to Gulistan Karez, and the same day the survivors of the regimental and commissariat camels—in a single march thirty-five had died, eight strayed, and twenty-one been incapacitated¹—were sent back to Abdulla Killa to load up and take forward the supplies with which it had been decided to provision the different camping-grounds—an excellent arrangement that had been rendered possible by Sandeman's successful handling of the Achakzais, a nomadic tribe which in 1839, had given Keane's army endless trouble, but now, for the moment, was showing itself friendly.² On the 30th of December, Sankey reported that the Pass was ready for the advance of the troops and baggage, and the last day of the year saw the First Division concentrated at Gulistan Karez, with its advanced guard on the western slopes of the Khwaja Amran Mountains, and the Second Division, at Chaman, re-inforced by A.B. Royal Horse Artillery (three guns), I. 1 Royal Artillery, II. 11 Royal Artillery, and the 15th Hussars, transferred on account of the scarcity of water in the Gwaja Pass.

Water was not the only necessary of life of which there was a deficiency; only ten days' supply of food remained to the whole Force, and the mind of its Commander-in-Chief was heavy with anxious thought as he looked forward to the long march that still lay before

¹ The mortality amongst the transport animals had been now increased by the prevalence of a poisonous bush in appearance like a bastard indigo, with a small hard grain, which the camels eat with avidity. The Anglo-Indian Press about this time, teemed with accounts of their sufferings over the whole area of operations. The *Pioneer*, after giving the case of an officer who started from Mithankote with five hundred and twenty camels and lost them all before he got to Quetta, and quoting from a correspondent at Jellalabad the statement that the camels in the Khyber were dying at the rate of two hundred a day—ended a leading article with the words: "Losses of this kind are not only wasteful but shameful."

² According to Major H. B. Lumsden, the tents of the Achakzais, each one containing a family, number 14,000.

it, and to the chance that bad weather might cause delay, and leave him no choice but to put his troops on half rations.¹

To complete the history of the military movement connected with the advance of the Kandahar Field Force, it remains only to state that Sibi was occupied by a detachment of Bombay troops, and the Bhawalpur Contingent which had temporarily garrisoned Multan, was relieved, early in December, by a Brigade from Madras commanded by Brigadier-General A. C. MacMaster, consisting of the following Staff and Troops :—

STAFF.

Captain S. W. Bell, Brigade Major.

CAVALRY.

1st Madras Cavalry.

INFANTRY.

67th Foot. Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Knowles,
Commanding.

30th Madras Infantry.

36th Madras Infantry.

Two Companies Madras Sappers.

OBSERVATION

The importance of the work performed by troops employed on lines of communication is so great and so often overlooked, that it is well to emphasize it by a brief summary of the duties discharged by the Bombay Division. On it devolved :—

1. Every arrangement connected with the prompt, efficient and safe transmission of troops, transport and supplies of every kind to the Advanced Force.

¹ " Camp, Gulistan Karez.

"December 31st, 1878.

" I am very down in my luck to day, owing to the breakdown of the Commissariat. We are now in possession of only ten days' supplies, and we may have to go on half rations if we are snowed up, or anything of that sort. (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, pp. 232-233.) .

2. The construction and garrisoning of the fortified posts along the whole line of communications.
3. The provision of troops for the various moveable columns.
4. Road and bridge making.
5. Furnishing escorts for convoys, survey parties, officers, etc.
6. Escorting sick and wounded to the base hospitals.
7. Patrolling and outpost duty.
8. Telegraph arrangements.
9. Signalling.
10. Reconnoitring.
11. Minor expeditions against recalcitrant tribes.
12. Re-inforcing the Main Army at any time, and at a moment's notice.

CHAPTER XIV

Public Opinion in England

DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT

THE indifference which prevailed in the United Kingdom during the weeks of grace accorded by Lord Beaconsfield's Government to Shere Ali, contrasts strongly with the excitement pervading all classes of society before the late South African war; but the reason for the difference is not far to seek. In 1899, military preparations were carried on under the eyes of the people of these islands, whose hearts were daily thrilled, or wrung, by the sight of their sons, husbands, brothers, friends, starting forth to meet unknown dangers. In 1878, there were no martial scenes in the streets to arouse popular passion, no public partings to touch the springs of deeper feeling, and to the great mass of Englishmen the prospect of a conflict with Afghanistan brought no fear of personal loss. India has never filled a large place in the mind of the British public, and with trade stagnant, manufactures crippled, agriculture—despite a good wheat-harvest—depressed by unseasonable weather and disastrous floods, home troubles would have left little time for weighing Lord Lytton's conduct to Shere Ali against Shere Ali's attitude towards the British Government, even had men been in possession of the facts essential to the forming of an independent judgment on either point. And no one had any knowledge of those facts; even the Indian experts who fought against the coming war in the columns of the daily press, even Lord Lawrence and Lord Northbrook, had only their own former experience to go on in arguing that Shere Ali was no enemy of the British Empire, and

that if he had come to look like one, it was because Lord Lytton had forced him to assume a character which he had no desire to wear. It was a year and a half since British relations with Afghanistan had been last discussed in Parliament, and dismissed by Lord Salisbury with the assurance that Great Britain was still on good terms with that country and its ruler, and since then, beyond the bare fact that a Russian Mission had visited Kabul, and a British Mission been refused a passage through the Khyber, not a crumb of information to account for the imminence of hostilities with a government so recently friendly, had been vouchsafed to the British people or its representatives; not even the withdrawal of the Vakil from Kabul, having been allowed to transpire.

This lack of data from which to reason, coupled with the prevailing belief that war, if it came, would be short, bloodless, and cheap, deprived those who sought to avert it, of the advantage which the absence of popular excitement might otherwise have given them. It is ill standing for principles, when the case to which they have to be applied, is shrouded in obscurity; yet, there were men who did not shrink from the task. Dean Plumtre, preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 17th of November, from the text, "Shall we smite with the sword?" reminded his hearers that they who sowed the wind of aggressive ambition, must look to reap the whirlwind of disastrous failure; and Dr. Fraser, the Bishop of Manchester, in a pastoral letter, bade Englishmen ask themselves whether the rectification of a frontier, or the desire to avenge an insult to an envoy—if insult had been offered, of which there was no proof—was a sufficient reason, in the sight of God, for plunging into the unspeakable horrors and incalculable consequences of war. There were other ministers of the Church of England who appealed earnestly to their congregations to use their influence to induce the Government to delay hostilities until the Amir's reply to the ultimatum had been received and made public; but, as a body, the clergy of the National

Church remained passive and mute, leaving it to the pastors of the dissenting churches to take anything like united action in vindication of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, those of the Midland Counties lodging a strong protest against the war, whilst, all over the country, individuals like Paxton Hood and Baldwin Brown, boldly denounced it from their pulpits.¹

On the 21st November, when the war had already begun, the Government broke its long silence by the publication, in the *Times* and other leading journals, of the very latest document relating to Afghan affairs—a secret Despatch, but three days old, addressed by Lord Cranbrook, Secretary of State for India, to Lord Lytton. This document, which professed to be a true summary of the events that had led to the rupture with the Amir, was merely the echo of Lord Salisbury's Despatches to Lord Northbrook, of his letter of instructions to Lord Lytton, and of that Viceroy's letter of instructions to Sir Lewis Pelly, and it was marked by the same misstatement or concealment of facts at variance with the impression it desired to convey, the same skill in drawing false conclusions from those it could not omit or

¹ In a speech delivered by Sir William Harcourt at Oxford, on January the 17th, 1879, he commented severely on the attitude taken up by the Bishops regarding the war:—

“The Viceroy” (he said) “declared at the outset that we had no quarrel with the people of Afghanistan, but only with Shere Ali. Shere Ali is gone, and we are now waging hostilities against a people with whom we had no quarrel whose homes we have invaded and whose territory we have annexed; and when they resist—not, perhaps, an unnatural thing—we find it necessary to cut their throats and exterminate their villages. To my conscience, this sort of thing, though it may be very scientific, is not altogether comfortable or pleasant; but I suppose I am wrong, for I find the Bishops approve and vote for it (laughter). One of them, I think, has said it is the best way of propagating the Gospel (laughter). I don't mean all the Bishops, for I am glad to think there was one Bishop, who, at this Christmas time, voted for “peace on earth and goodwill to men”; and I am proud to remember that prelate was the Bishop of Oxford” (cheers). (The *Times* report.)

Unfortunately, the Bishop of Manchester was too ill to record his vote against the war.

distort, which distinguished those documents. It emphasized the Treaty of 1855, where all the obligations were imposed on the Amir, and ignored the Treaty of 1857 by which the British Government bound itself to send none but a Native Envoy to Kabul, although the subsequent attempt to escape from that pledge, lay at the root of the misunderstanding that had now culminated in war. It repeated the assertion that the Simla Conference owed its origin to Shere Ali's anxiety to obtain from Lord Northbrook a distinct promise of assistance against Russia, though Nur Mahomed had had no difficulty in showing at Peshawar that it was Lord Northbrook, not the Amir, who had desired to draw closer to Afghanistan, and taken steps to bring the two Governments into direct communication. It dwelt on Lord Lytton's eagerness to assure Shere Ali of the British Government's friendly feeling towards him, and omitted all mention of the threats in which that eagerness manifested itself. It re-asserted the accusation of ambiguous conduct on the part of the Amir prior to the Peshawar Conference, and branded his subsequent attitude as openly inimical, and it had not a word to say about the numerous unfriendly acts which had robbed him of his faith in the value of the British alliance. It reproached him with having received the Russian Mission with hospitality, and made no mention of the displeasure with which he had viewed its approach, or of his attempts to delay its arrival in his capital. In a word, from the first paragraph to the last, it represented the British Government as a benefactor, seeking to confer favours on a valued ally, and Shere Ali as a treacherous ingrate, plotting to rid himself of his obligations towards a generous friend, though its author had before him official proof that, for years, British benefits had only taken the form of pious wishes for his prosperity.

It may seem strange that Lord Cranbrook should have ventured to publish such a travesty of British relations with the ruler of Afghanistan, when the means of testing its value would soon be within the reach of all who cared to compare it with the documents which it

distorted. It must be remembered, however, that Lord Cranbrook could reckon on an enormous disproportion in his favour between the readers of a Parliamentary Blue Book, and the readers of a document published in the public Press; and that the latter had on its side, the immense advantage of being the first in the field. Eight days later, when the first batch of Afghan papers was issued, the tale of Shere Ali's duplicity and ingratitude had already sunk deep into the public mind; and he himself had to pass away and the objects for which his ruin had been compassed, to fade out of men's recollection, before it could give place to a truer picture of his character and conduct.

The Afghan papers appeared on the 29th of November, and on the 5th of December, Parliament met to receive from Ministers an announcement of the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and Afghanistan, and to record its judgment on the policy which had brought about so unexpected a state of things. On the opening day of the Session, Lord Grey moved an amendment to the Address, censuring the Government for entering upon hostilities, without affording Parliament the opportunity of expressing an opinion on their expediency. On the 9th, Lord Halifax met Lord Cranbrook's resolution asking the Peers to consent to the debiting of the Indian revenues with the expense of the Expedition against Afghanistan, by an amendment which declared that the House of Lords, whilst ready to consent to provide means to carry on the war to an honourable conclusion, regretted that the conduct of the Government had involved the country in an unnecessary conflict. Lord Grey's amendment was negatived without a division; that of Lord Halifax, after a two days' debate, in which every man of special experience in Indian affairs on both sides had taken part—by a majority of one hundred and thirty-six—the figures being two hundred and one, against sixty-five. The first sitting of the House of Commons was marked by a sharp discussion, in the course of which the Government was vigorously attacked by Mr. Fawcett,

Lord Hartington, Mr. Gladstone,¹ and Sir C. Dilke, and equally vigorously defended by Mr. Stanhope, the Under Secretary for India ; but no direct vote of censure was proposed till four days later, when, on the Report stage of the Address, Mr. Whitbread moved a Resolution disapproving of the conduct of her Majesty's Government in bringing about war with Afghanistan. After a discussion lasting four days, this Resolution was defeated by three hundred and twenty-eight votes to two hundred and twenty-seven, and an amendment, moved by Mr. Fawcett to Mr. Stanhope's proposal to saddle the revenues of India with the cost of the war, shared the same fate ; though Government met its supporters so far as to promise that, in case the war should assume larger dimensions and last longer than was then anticipated, the question of transferring some portion of its expense to the British Exchequer, should be favourably considered. The original Resolution was then agreed to, and the Government being now free to prosecute the war to any end, and at any cost which the course of events might make desirable or necessary, Parliament adjourned.

The first impression made on the mind of the student of history who goes back to these debates, is one of astonishment at the large part played in the discussions of both Houses by questions of fact. The conflicting principles underlying the old and the new Afghan policies, were indeed more or less clearly in the mind of every speaker, and some, notably Lord Lawrence and Lord Beaconsfield, defined and defended them with precision and force ; but more time and more

¹ Mr. Gladstone strongly condemned the Government's policy in Afghanistan and its treatment of her ruler, and the House on both sides cheered long and warmly the noble peroration which concluded his speech :—" Those members of this House "—he said in deep and solemn tones—" those members of this House who oppose your course will believe that they have performed a solemn duty incumbent on men who believe that truth and justice are the only sure foundations of international relations, and that there is no possession so precious, either for peoples or men, as a just and honourable name."

passion were spent on wrangling over whether the Government had, or had not, deceived Parliament with regard to Afghan affairs; whether attempts had, or had not, been made to coerce Shere Ali into receiving British Officers; whether that Prince had been ill-disposed towards the British alliance since the days of the Duke of Argyll and Lord Mayo, or only since those of Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton; whether he had welcomed a Russian Mission, or received it under the stress of circumstances beyond his control. It would seem as if, when both parties had access to the same sources of information, there ought to have been agreement as to the facts to be found in them; but the speeches show that the speakers on the Opposition side based their attack on the enclosures contained in the Despatches, and the speakers on the Government side, on the Despatches themselves; between enclosures and Despatches, however, as has been previously pointed out, there exists a divergence amounting, at times, to contradiction. It was natural that Ministerialists should have stuck to the brief so carefully prepared for them by Lord Lytton and two successive Secretaries of State for India, and no one will feel surprise that Lord Salisbury and Lord Cranbrook should, in a general way, have repeated their former statements and arguments with unshaken faith in their truth and validity. Yet, there was one point on which change might have been looked for: in the Despatch which led to the resignation of Lord Northbrook, Lord Salisbury had declined to believe that the Amir's disinclination to allow the establishment of a British Agency in his capital, was more than a passing sentiment, and in his Letter of Instructions to Lord Lytton he had spoken of the "apparent reluctance" of Shere Ali to receive British Officers; now, with the record of Nur Mahomed's long struggle against the "essential preliminary" in his hands; after a rupture with Afghanistan which had for its immediate cause and excuse the attempt to send a British Mission to Kabul—he was still found asserting that it was "pure imagination" to say that the Amir had any real aversion to a British Resident; a

truly amazing example of the power of opinion to blind men to the most patent truth—truth that, in this instance, went deeper than the mere personal feeling of a single ruler since, in opposing the intrusion of British Agents into his country, Shere Ali was the embodiment of that jealous dread of the foreigner which had possessed his people long before he came to the throne, and was to lose none of its force under his successors.

But if the first thing to strike the reader of these debates, is the want of agreement as to the facts upon which they turn, what remains with him when he has finished studying them, is a strong impression of the lack of insight and foresight displayed by all the speakers on the Ministerial side. Not a man among them seems to have been able to catch so much as a glimpse of the Afghan view of the policy which had brought about the war; and inability to understand the feelings and aims of one party to the strife, rendered them incapable of looking beyond the temporary successes of the moment achieved over the Armies of the Amir, to the inevitable failure in store for Great Britain, when her forces should find themselves confronted by a nation in arms. And if they were blind to the issue of their policy, they were ludicrously wrong in their assumption of its importance. Prophecies of danger to India and the Empire which the presence of a British Agent at Herat alone could dissipate; solemn assurances that it was no longer possible to maintain satisfactory relations with Afghanistan unless a British Resident were permanently established in Kabul—read in the light of subsequent events, would provoke a smile, did not the recollection of the price paid for opening men's eyes to their futility, check any inclination to mirth. Twenty-five years have passed since, trusting to those prophecies and assurances, the two Houses of Parliament gave to Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues the moral support which they claimed for their Afghan policy, and the material means to enable them to enforce it; and yet though, from that day to this, there has never been a British Agent in Herat, and,

only for the shortest interval, a British Resident in Kabul—India's security has not been imperilled, and, in the eyes of her inhabitants, the British Empire has suffered no loss of prestige.

There were fair grounds for disagreement between speakers on the Ministerialist and speakers on the Opposition side, as to whether Ministers had, or had not, exceeded their powers in going to war without having first obtained the sanction of Parliament, for the "Act of 1858," transferring the Government of India from the Company to the Crown, on which both relied, contradicts itself on the point¹; but there could be no question as to the illegality of the treatment which the Indian Council had suffered at the hands of Lord Cranbrook. That Council, created by the above named Act, consists of fifteen men whose long and intimate acquaintance with India fits them, above all others, to assist inexperienced Secretaries of State in the task of ruling the greatest dependency for which any modern State has ever been responsible. Its functions, except in the province of finance, are purely advisory, and even in that province, though by Article 41 "no grant or appropriation of any part of the revenues of India can be made without the concurrence of a majority of votes at a meeting of the Council," its control over its Chief is really illusory, since, by simply transferring

¹ Article 55 of that Act by which the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown directs that "except for preventing or repelling actual invasion of Her Majesty's Indian possessions, or under other sudden and urgent necessity, the revenues of India shall not, without the consent of both Houses of Parliament, be applicable to defray the expenses of any military operation carried on beyond the external frontiers of such possessions by Her Majesty's Forces charged upon such revenues"; whilst Article 54 declares that "when any order is sent to India directing the actual commencement of hostilities by Her Majesty's Forces in India, the fact of such order having been sent shall be communicated to both Houses of Parliament within three months of the sending of such order if Parliament is sitting, unless such order shall have been in the meantime revoked or suspended; and if Parliament be not sitting at the end of such three months, then within one month of the next meeting of Parliament."

business to the Secret Department of his office, the Secretary of State for India can escape from it until the time for enforcing it has gone by. It was by the exercise of this power of transference, that Lord Salisbury and Lord Cranbrook had been able, without overstepping the letter of the Act of 1858, to keep their Council for three years in ignorance of the disquieting change which was passing over the relations of the Indian Government to that of Afghanistan; but when, early in October, 1878, Lord Lytton added ninety-six men to every Native Cavalry, and two hundred men to every Native Infantry regiment north of the Narbudda, thereby increasing the military expenditure of India by two hundred and seventy thousand pounds,¹ and Lord Cranbrook kept to himself the telegram asking for his sanction to the measure—the Secretary of State was guilty of an illegal act, for the exceptional case had arisen in which he could only take a decision in conjunction with his Council, and in accordance with the views of a majority of its members. The result of the voting, when, on the 4th of December, the Council was at last consulted, affords good ground for believing that, but for this illegality, there might have been no war; for its consent to the augmentation of the Indian Army was given by a majority of one vote only; and the Minutes in which two of the members who voted for it—Sir Erskine Perry and Sir William Muir—recorded their reasons for doing so, show conclusively that had hostilities been in prospect, instead of in progress, their votes would have been given against it.² Neither of them called

¹ This method of augmenting the Native Army had the merit of simplicity, but it had two serious defects: it increased the disproportion between the Native troops and the British officers, a disproportion already dangerously large, and it discontented the rank and file of every affected regiment by diminishing each man's chances of promotion.

² Sir Barrow H. Ellis and Sir R. Montgomery, though approving of the Government's Afghan policy, protested against placing on India any part of the extraordinary charges connected with a war which they believed to be due entirely to European complications.

attention to Lord Cranbrook's unconstitutional action ; but Sir Erskine Perry gave strong expression to the feelings of mortification with which all the members of the Council regarded the position assigned to them by law, and to his own personal desire that Parliament should be made clearly to understand that the Secretary of State had been under no obligation to consult them in regard to his Afghan policy. The desire was a very natural one, for, in the absence of an official proclamation of their impotence, it was impossible for the general public to believe that the men who knew most about India, were debarred from expressing any opinion on matters in which that country's gravest interests were involved ; but, however natural, it does not seem to have been gratified, and the anomaly, which hurt the dignity and shocked the common sense of the Indian Council in 1878, remains untouched up to the present hour.

CHAPTER XV

The Last Days of Shere Ali

REGENCY OF YAKUB KHAN

WHILST the friends of peace in England were pleading Shere Ali's cause before the tribunal of public opinion in their own country, that prince sat silent in the capital of his threatened kingdom. The ultimatum must have been in his hands by the 4th or 5th of November, but he made no attempt to answer it. Another decision had to be come to before he could determine the nature of the reply to be given to its demands. He himself was a broken man; broken in health, broken in heart, by the death of Abdullah Jan; it behoved him to choose a successor quickly if the sceptre of Afghanistan was not to pass away from his family, and on whom could his choice fall save on the son who had sinned against him, and against whom he himself had sinned? It was, perhaps, bitterer to him to yield as a father than to yield as a Prince¹; and the thought that, by bowing to British pressure, he might escape the necessity of accepting Yakub Khan as his heir, must often have crossed his mind, since, to oppose a British invasion, he must have behind him a united people and a united Royal House; but the pecuniary assistance which a British Envoy would be empowered to grant to a submissive Amir, might enable him to dispense with unity

¹ It is curious that the one proof of British ill-will named in the answer to the ultimatum, should have been Lord Northbrook's intervention in favour of "my undutiful son, that ill-starred wretch Yakub Khan," epithets which show that the Amir's feelings towards the rebellious prince had undergone no change.—H.B.H.

in either.¹ In the end, national feeling triumphed over personal prejudice ; Yakub Khan was not, indeed, immediately set free, but his release was involved in the tone and tenour of the letter which, on the 19th of November, after the period of grace accorded to him had virtually expired,² he at last brought himself to write to Lord Lytton ; for its key-note was resentment for wrong done to him and his country, not contrition for the offences with which he himself was charged. In it he offered no apology for the rebuff administered to Sir Neville Chamberlain and his companions ; on the contrary, he defended the refusal to allow them to enter the Khyber, on the ground of the fear felt by the officials of his Government that the coming of the British Mission would affect injuriously the independence of Afghanistan, and her friendship with Great Britain ; he declared that he cherished no feelings of hostility and opposition towards the British Government, that he sincerely desired to be on good terms with it, but its officials must refrain from inflicting injury upon well disposed neighbours. Let them do their part towards maintaining good relations between the two Governments, and then, if they should desire to send a purely friendly and temporary Mission to Kabul, with a small escort, not exceeding twenty or thirty men, similar to that which attended the Russian Mission, he would undertake not to oppose its progress.³

There was nothing of a conciliatory nature in this letter, yet it seems to have undergone some softening modifications. "Make peace with the English if they offer it," Kaufmann had written on the 4th of November ; and on the 20th, Shere Ali replied that the advice had

¹ Yakub Khan's mother was a Mohmand Princess, and Shere Ali had alienated the Ghilzais by imprisoning his son in violation of a promise given to certain of their chiefs.—H.B.H.

² The Amir's letter could, in no case, have reached the nearest British authorities in time to hinder the invasion of his dominions ; as it happened, however, it was not delivered at Sir S. Browne's headquarters till the 30th of November, the messenger to whom originally it had been entrusted, having returned with it to Kabul on learning, at Basawal, that Ali Masjid was already in British hands.

³ See Appendix I.

reached him whilst he was engaged in answering a letter "from the Officers of the British Government, containing very severe, harsh and hostile expressions," and that though he knew "from the conduct and manners" of that Government that it was vain to attempt to disarm its enmity, he had "made overtures for peace according to the advice given him by command of the Emperor; that was to say," he had "sent a friendly reply to their letter, containing civil and polite expressions." If the "civil and polite expressions" contained in that reply, were inserted in it in deference to Russian counsels, then, in its original form, it must have been a declaration of war, since, after their insertion, it remained an acceptance of the hostilities with which the ultimatum had threatened him.

Shere Ali may have flattered himself that his newly created army would prove a match for British troops, but the fate of Ali Masjid must quickly have undeceived him; and, though the news of Roberts's discomfiture, on the 28th of November, revived his hopes, the final issue of the fighting on the Peiwar Kotal extinguished them for ever.¹ For the moment, he met the crisis with energy and decision. He ordered his people of all ranks to send away their wives and children and to prepare to meet the invaders; he reminded the Russian Government of the dishonour it would incur should ruin overtake Afghanistan; and he requested Kaufmann to assist him by despatching all his available troops to Afghan Turkestan. Yet, on the 10th of December, only two days after the letter to Kaufmann had been written, Shere Ali held a durbar in which he announced his intention of travelling to St. Petersburg, there to lay his case against the English before a Congress to be summoned by the Czar.

¹ The spirited letters of thanks and encouragement addressed to the Afghan officers and troops in the Kuram after the news of the repulse of Roberts's first attack on the Peiwar Kotal, were written, not by Shere Ali, but by his wife, the bereaved mother of Abdullah Jan. These letters were found in the Afghan camp on the Peiwar Kotal, and are now in the possession of Major-General Barry-Drew, C.B.

Such a radical change of plans, taking place apparently in the short space of two days, may seem unaccountably sudden; it is probable, however, that it had been long in the background of the Amir's thoughts. The breach in his diplomatic relations with India had not shut him out from all knowledge of what was passing in that country, and in the world beyond. Both from British and Russian sources, he had heard of the Berlin Congress, and, in Stolietoff and Rosgonoff he had at his elbow men who would make the most of the part played at it by Russia, and teach him to see in its decisions a proof of her moral victory over Great Britain. Out of such lessons, there must have dawned upon him the thought of appealing, under Russian protection, to a similar assemblage of Powers; and the confusion into which his kingdom seemed falling under the shock of a threefold invasion, the loosening of the ties of discipline among his troops,¹ the knowledge that, if he delayed too long, the passes of the Hindu Kush would be closed against him, the desire not to part from Rosgonoff, who had received imperative orders to return at once to Tashkent,² above all, the repugnance with which he faced the prospect of remaining in Kabul to share his authority with Yakub Khan—turned thought into resolve.

When once the Amir's journey had been sanctioned by his principal chiefs and officials, the release of Yakub Khan could no longer be delayed. He was sent for to the durbar which had just taken so momentous a decision, and, having solemnly pledged himself to obey all instructions that he might receive from his father, was formally invested with the civil and military powers pertaining to Afghan sovereignty. The change which a single hour made in his position was enormous, but it must not be imagined that he exchanged a dungeon for a throne. His captivity had never been rigorous,³ except,

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 7 (1879), p. 7.

² The Amir had refused to allow Rosgonoff to depart, and the latter may have encouraged the former's plan of proceeding in person to St. Petersburg, with a view to securing his own return to Russia.

³ Letter of *Times* special correspondent, January 3rd, 1879.

in the sense, that he was not allowed to go beyond his own garden, and that opportunities of intriguing with his former adherents were denied him. His prison was his own house, and news from the outer world must sometimes have penetrated within its walls. The din of war can certainly not have been excluded from it; and the captive prince may have known enough of the troubles in which the kingdom was involved, to guess that he himself might be called upon to assist in facing them.

The meeting between father and son must have been painful and embarrassing to both, and Shere Ali's departure may have been hastened by his desire to escape from the necessity of publicly honouring his now acknowledged heir. All the preparations for the great journey that lay before him, were completed in three days' time, and, on the 13th of December, he left Kabul, his last act of sovereignty being to write a letter to the officers of the British Government informing them of the step he was taking, and challenging them to establish their case and explain their desires before a Congress to be held at St. Petersburg.¹ He was accompanied by his family, by the Mustaufi and other great Officers of State, and by Colonel Rosgonoff and the remaining members of the Russian Mission, and he took with him his treasure, amounting, according to rumour, to seventy lakhs of rupees.² On the 22nd of December, from some unnamed halting-place, he wrote to General Kaufmann announcing his approach and issued the following Firman :—

“Let the high in rank, etc., Sirdar Muhammad Omer Khan, the Governor of Herat, Tolmshir Sahib and Hasan Ali Khan, the Sipah Sala-i-Aazim, be honoured by this Royal Firman and know—

“That, having previously announced the result of the fights of our victorious troops to-day, also that by the Grace of God a series of victories have been won by the lion-devouring warriors, we have

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 7 (1879), p. 9.

² More likely seven.

deemed it necessary to announce the details of the same to you, so that you may be made fully aware of the facts.

“The state of affairs and of hostilities on the Khyber frontier line are as follows :—At the outset there were only five regiments stationed at Ali Masjid as a permanent garrison when the British troops advanced to attack them. The said five regiments gave battle to fourteen of the infidel white regiments, and for about eight hours the roaring of the cannon and musketry, together with the clashing of the swords, were incessant ; till, in accordance with the words of the holy verse, ‘ There is no victory except that which comes from God,’ the goodness and strength of the Almighty aided the lion-catching warriors, and they totally defeated the English army, when a considerable number being killed and wounded on both sides, a stop was put to further fighting and each side retired to his own camp.

“Six days after, two other engagements took place at Peiwar, where the victorious troops, again in their zeal to push back the infidel army, brought on a day like that of the Day of Judgment, and rushing on like a torrent compelled the infidels to fall back.

“Since then to the present moment the English troops have not dared to show fight, nor to make any advance. In fact, on account of the severity of the winter and especially by the action of Ooloosat people and the Afridi tribes, who are anxious for the infliction of loss on their (the English) lives and property, it is quite certain that they will not make any forward advance.

“As perfect harmony exists in all the affairs of this mighty Government, most of the Nobles and Chiefs of this country have made certain representations to us in person with the view of putting a stop to this mischief which may affect the peace of this Government. The opinion of our ministers and military officers being also in conformity with our royal views, we have decided that to put a stop to the present trouble there is no alternative but to have recourse to friendly negotiations as opposed to hostility and warfare ; for instance, although our enemy

should give up his hostile attitude and the idea of interference in Afghanistan, yet having taken up arms against us he ought to be bound down by diplomatic action.

“It now being winter and his advance difficult, and, as in the spring this evil will be sure to break out afresh, there is no better opportunity than the present, when the enemy has not the power of moving in consequence of the severity of the winter, that our royal self should proceed to the capital of Russia, and open an official correspondence with the British Government. We have accordingly, in conformity with the approval of our ministers and a number of our well-wishers, decided on proceeding to St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Emperor, and have appointed our elder and beloved son, Sardar Muhammad Yakub Khan, to act in our absence, leaving the whole of our Sardars under his immediate orders. We also, under an auspicious fortune, and putting our trust in Almighty God, left Kabul, on the 13th December, accompanied by our illustrious brother (*sic*) Sardar Sher Ali Khan, Shah Muhammad Khan, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mirza Habibullah, the Mustaufi-ul-Momalek, Kazi Abdul Kadar Khan, a few servants, and one ‘Namadek Kadek Uptur,’ the Russian envoys who also took part in the council we held respecting this journey, together with the High Princes, Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Sardar Muhammad Taki Khan.

“We received letters from the Governor-General, General Stolietoff, at the station named Sir Cheshmeh; Stolietoff, who was with the Emperor at Livadia, having written to us as follows:—

“The Emperor considers you as a brother, and you also, who are on the other side of the water,¹ must display the same sense of friendship and brotherhood. The English Government is anxious to come to terms with you through the intervention of the Sultan, and wishes you to take his advice and counsel; but the Emperor’s desire is that you should not admit the English into your country, and, like last year,

¹ i.e. Oxus,

you are to treat them with deceit and deception until the present cold season passes away, then the Almighty's will will be made manifest to you, that is to say, the (Russian) Government having repeated the Bismillah, the Bismillah will come to your assistance. In short, you are to rest assured that affairs will end well. If God permits, we will convene a Government meeting at St. Petersburg, that is to say, a congress which means an assembly of powers. We will then open an official discussion with the English Government, and either by force of words and diplomatic action we will entirely cut off all English communication and interference with Afghanistan for ever, or else events will end in a mighty and important war. By the help of God, by spring not a symptom or vestige of trouble and dissatisfaction will remain in Afghanistan.

“It therefore behoves our well-wishing servants to conduct the affairs entrusted to them in a praiseworthy and resolute manner better than before, and having placed their hopes in God, rest confident that the welfare and affairs of this glorious Government will continue on a firm footing as before, and the mischief and disaffection which seem to have arisen in the country will disappear.

“Let it be known to the high in rank, Tolmshir Bahadur and Hafizulla Khan, Secretary to the Sipah Salar-i-Aazim, that, thanks to God, the trouble we have been taking for a series of years in instructing and improving the officers of our victorious regiments has not been lost, and in fighting the English troops they have displayed the same bravery as the force of the civilized nations. Not one of the victorious troops went to Heaven until he had himself slain three of the enemy. In short, they fought in such a way, and made such a stand, that both high and low praised them. We are fully confident that our victorious troops wherever they may fight will defeat the enemy.

“The Herat Army is also noted for its bravery and discipline, a result of your devoted services. You will convey our royal satisfaction to all the troops and inhabitants of Herat, high and low, and tell them

that our hope is that God and His Prophet may be as satisfied with them as we are.”¹

The interest of this Proclamation lies not so much in its distortion of the facts of the war—for the device of keeping up the spirits of an army, or a nation, by concealing defeat or exaggerating successes, is not confined to Eastern potentates—but in the use made in it of Stolietoff's letter of the 8th of October to Wazir Shah Muhammad Khan, the vague promises in which it translated into the proposal of a Congress, and an invitation to the Amir to visit St. Petersburg.² It may be that the Amir read into the letter what he desired to find there; it may be that he deliberately falsified its tenour; in either case the paraphrase of it given in the Firman, shows how keenly he felt the need of strengthening the defence of his conduct in abandoning his country, by adducing evidence to prove that he had reason to believe that he could best serve his people by leaving them.

The 1st of January, witnessed Shere Ali's arrival at Mazar-i-Sharef, the chief town of his province of Turkestan. Only three hundred and eighty-one miles of the five thousand seven hundred which separate Kabul from St. Petersburg, lay behind him, and already his strength was failing fast. A pause for rest and medical treatment had become imperative, and during the first weeks of that pause he received, in rapid succession, three letters from Kaufmann, which destroyed the

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 7, pp. 8, 9.

² See vol. i. pp. 252, 253. The second half of Stolietoff's letter, which is the part epitomized in the Firman, runs thus:—“Now, my kind friend, I inform you that the enemy of your famous religion wants to make peace with you through the Kaiser (Sultan) of Turkey. Therefore you should look to your brothers who live on the other side the river. If God stirs them up and gives the sword of fight into their hands, then go on in the name of God (*Bismullah*); otherwise you should be as a serpent; make peace openly and in secret prepare for war; and when God reveals His order to you, declare yourself. It will be well when the envoy of your enemy wants to enter the country, if you send an able emissary, possessing the tongue of a serpent and full of deceit, to the enemy's country, so that he may, with sweet words, perplex the enemy's mind and induce him to give up the intention of fighting with you.”

hopes that had so far supported him.¹ The first of the three, dated the 2nd of January, 1879, written after Kaufmann had heard that the Amir had come out of Kabul, but whilst he was still in the dark as to the motive which had prompted that step, did, indeed, contain the good news that the British Ministers had promised the Russian Ambassador in London not to injure the independence of Afghanistan ; but it also conveyed the information that the Emperor had decided against the possibility of assisting him with troops. The second, dated the 7th of January, urgently entreated him not to leave his kingdom, but to preserve its independence by coming to terms with the English, either in person or through Yakub Khan, and ended with the warning that his arrival in Russian territory would make things worse. The third, written on the 11th of January, curtly informed him that the writer had been directed by the Emperor to invite him to Tashkent, but that he had received no instructions with regard to his journey to St. Petersburg.

Shere Ali must have felt that the advice to preserve the independence of his kingdom by making terms with the English, was a mere mockery of his troubles. If he had not been convinced that the British Government's terms, whatever form they might assume, would be such as he could not accept, he would not have allowed himself to be goaded into war, and the promise given to the Russian Ambassador failed to reassure him. Independence was an elastic term that might mean much or little, and he could not trust the Russian Government to look too closely into the interpretation that the British Government might see fit to give to it. Kaufmann's second letter made it too clear that the Amir would be an unwelcome guest, for the permission to visit Tashkent, contained in the third, to afford him any gratification. Yet his disappointment found no expression in the one letter—his last—which served as an answer to the three communications.² In his

¹ *Central Asia*. No. 1 (1881), pp. 24, 25.

² *Ibid.* p. 25.

correspondence with Foreign Governments he had always maintained a dignified reserve, more or less tinged with irony, and he preserved that attitude to the last. There was irony in his brief acknowledgment of "the royal favours of the Emperor," and of Kaufmann's "sweet expressions," and in his assurance of his own "desire for a joyous interview with the latter"; and no one can deny dignity to the brief reference to his own illness, "sent by the decree of God," to the request to Kaufmann to consider as true whatever the Ministers whom he was despatching to wait upon him, might state regarding the affairs of his kingdom, or to his praise of the "noble qualities and good manners" of General Rosgonoff and his companions. Sick, helpless, and deserted, he was yet a prince whose word was to be accepted, and whose praise honoured him on whom it was bestowed.

Shere Ali might write that his intention to continue his journey was unchanged, but he knew that his travels, hardly begun, had already ended. There was nothing to be gained by going on, and it was idle to think of going back. A sovereign who, in the crisis of his country's fate, had misjudged his duty, could never again sit on the throne of Afghanistan. The news that continued to reach him from Kabul, must have added to his self-reproach. Everywhere the English advance had been checked by natural difficulties. One part of Stewart's army, which had begun to push forward towards Herat, had come to a standstill on the Helmand; another portion had occupied Khelat-i-Ghilzai, only to fall back upon Kandahar. Browne's forces were still stationary at Jellalabad, unable to move for lack of carriage. Roberts's troops, compelled to withdraw from Khost and weather-bound on the Peiwar Kotal, were daily being thinned by disease; there was no sign of that rapid advance on Kabul, of that general occupation of Afghanistan, the expectation of which had seemed to justify him in placing the Hindu Kush between himself and his enemies. What might not have been achieved against them if he had remained at Kabul, and, sinking his differences with his son, who had even less love of British

domination than himself, had worked with him for their common cause ?

It is easy to believe that thoughts such as these must have crowded upon the Amir's failing mind and reconciled him to death ; and there is nothing improbable in the story told by one of his companions at Mazir-i-Sharif to an officer of the British Survey Department,¹ of how he made no effort to recover, but refused food, medicine and consolation, and died lamenting his folly in having left his friends to seek aid from his enemies. He passed away on the 21st of February, 1879, in his fifty-sixth year, after a life of exceptional activity, marked by varied vicissitudes of fortune. In his childhood, he had witnessed the first British invasion of Afghanistan, and had shared his father's Indian exile. In his early manhood, he had contributed to the successes which crowned Dost Mahomed's steady determination to reconstitute and consolidate his former kingdom, and on the death of his brother, Gholam Hyder Khan, he was rewarded for his ability and valour by being appointed heir to the throne ; a costly reward, which involved him in years of sanguinary struggle with his two elder half-brothers, who had been passed over in his favour. Driven from his capital and, again and again, defeated in his attempts to return thither, he showed himself resourceful in raising fresh armies, and brave and skilful in leading them ; and though, in his nephew, Abdur Rahman, he encountered a man as bold and capable as himself, that prince, handicapped by the tyranny of his uncle Afzul and the vices of his father, Azim Khan, had to fly the field when popular feeling in Kabul veered round to the side of the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan.

The subsequent events of Shere Ali's life, so far as they brought him into contact with the British and Russian Governments, have been told in the foregoing pages. Of his internal government comparatively little is known, but that it did not entirely disappoint the hopes with which he had inspired Lord

¹ Mr. G. B. Scott.

Mayo, is proved by the testimony borne to its fruits by Lord Northbrook, in 1876. He may not always have shown himself perfectly just and merciful; but, at least, he consolidated his kingdom, commanded the loyalty and devotion of the officers who helped in its administration, and taught the most lawless of his subjects to appreciate the advantages of a firm rule.¹ If his firmness effected fewer improvements in the condition of his people than Abdur Rahman afterwards carried through, it must be remembered that he had a much shorter reign, and, that by entering into an alliance with a civilized State, he deprived himself of the liberty to clear the ground for reforms by cutting off the heads of all who might be suspected of wishing to oppose them.

A man of strong affections and violent passions, Shere Ali's private life was darkened by sorrows, many of which he brought upon himself. When the battle of Kajbaz seemed to be going against him, he overwhelmed his idolized son, Prince Mahomed Ali, with such bitter reproaches that the high-spirited youth rushed madly into the thickest of the fight, and singling out his uncle, Mahomed Amir, engaged him in single combat, and perished by his sword; the victor in this unnatural combat being at once slain by the victim's enraged followers. The double tragedy so affected its unhappy author's mind that for many months he was practically insane, fits of deepest gloom alternating with outbursts of frenzied grief. His son, Yakub Khan, who had been his right hand during the last years of his struggle for the throne, turned against him as soon as he had regained it; and when he stooped to treachery to punish the traitor, he became his own worst enemy, since, by shocking Lord Northbrook's moral sense, he drew upon himself remonstrances, coupled with threats, that shook his confidence in the British Government, and led him to adopt towards it an aloofness of attitude in which a later Viceroy was to find the best defence of the

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1878), pp. 147-149.

policy that brought about the war. He had nothing to reproach himself with in the death of the darling of his later days, Abdullah Jan, but his sorrow for the boy's death was intensified by the knowledge that its untoward political consequences were of his own creating. The place in history to be finally awarded to Shere Ali will be determined, however, not by the achievements or failures of his internal administration, not by the loves or hatreds of his private life, but solely by his foreign policy, and more especially by his refusal to yield one jot of his own dignity and his country's independence to the demands of the British ultimatum. That refusal may stamp him as a madman, or a fool, in the eyes of those who look merely to the sequel of events as they affected him and his dynasty; but viewed in the broader light of subsequent history as it affected Afghanistan, his unbending attitude bears testimony to his foresight and patriotism. The choice offered him, as he understood it, was not between war and peace, but between war then, and war at some not distant date. He knew that if he apologized for the conduct of his officers, who had done their duty in upholding his authority and dignity, he would forfeit their respect; he felt sure that if he consented to receive a British Envoy in his capital, he would soon be called upon to permit British officers to reside in his frontier towns, and that when their presence had inflamed to the highest point his subjects' hatred of foreigners, and that passion had found its natural expression in the murder of the intruders, he would either have to bear the responsibility for their deed, or to become the instrument of British revenge; and whether he elected to side with, or against, his people, the result would still be the same—for them, war; for himself, the certain loss of reputation, the probable loss of life. And underlying these considerations, was his profound conviction that the new policy of the British Government aimed at destroying the independence and integrity of his kingdom, and that he himself was the object of that Government's special ill-will, or, at least, of the ill-will of the man through whom

alone he was able to approach it ; and thus his personal interests and the interests of his people alike led him to the conclusion that it was better to have war before suffering humiliation, than after. That he did the intentions and aims of the British Government, so far as they were represented by Lord Lytton, no injustice, must be admitted by all who have read the letter in which the Viceroy, writing to the Secretary of State for India, in January, 1879, declared that the three main points for which the war had been undertaken were (a) the punishment of Shere Ali ; (b) the permanent improvement of India's present frontier ; (c) the establishment of paramount (British) political influence over all the Afghan territories and tribes between our present frontier and the Oxus.¹ Shere Ali's mistake lay, not in mistrusting one of his neighbours, but in placing too much trust in the other. He had undoubtedly a strong moral claim on the Russian Emperor ; but, as an experienced statesman, he ought to have known that no prince will ever allow his regrets and sympathies to override the interests of his country. He should have remembered, too, that armed intervention on his behalf would have meant, in the end, the same danger from the North-West which was then threatening him from the South-East, and that the only assistance Russia could safely give, and Afghanistan safely receive—money and arms—was more likely to be accorded to him, secretly, in his own land than, openly, on Russian soil. Had he been as clear-sighted in judging one side of the situation as he was in judging the other ; had he remained with his people ; had he held on to his capital to the last possible moment ; and had he then retired to Ghazni, or beyond the Hindu Kush—the national resistance would have centred round him, and he, not Abdur Rahman, would have reaped the fruits of the difficulties which, a year later, were to gather so thickly round the British forces, that how to retire from Afghanistan, not how to stay there, became the problem for which the British Government had to seek a solution.

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 312.

CHAPTER XVI

January, 1879

THE new year brought with it no improvement in the situation by which the Government of India had been confronted in the old. The winter rains had failed in the Punjab, the North-West Provinces and Oudh ; the death-rate throughout the three Presidencies was abnormally high, the poverty of the people widespread and acute. Money, judiciously expended, might have done much to lessen misery and restore health ; wise remissions of land revenue would have saved thousands of peasants from the clutches of the village usurer ; but no money could be spared for commonplace, every-day objects of utility whilst the war continued to shake credit, depreciate securities and swallow up the cash balances in the Civil Treasuries ; and instead of a generous lightening of the burdens of the people, old taxes were relentlessly collected, and every rupee produced by fresh taxation, nominally imposed to form a fund for the protection of the country against famine, was quickly diverted to military purposes.¹

¹ "India seems to have fallen on evil days. It has often been observed that in the wake of an iniquitous and foolish war follow a train of internal calamities which, though not always to be traced to a blundering foreign policy, are still none the less disastrous and aggravate the calamities which have been wantonly invited. The threatened dearth in the North-West Provinces, now officially recognized, the deficiency of crops now feared in the Punjab, are circumstances sufficient to cause uneasiness, and deserve anxious attention on the part of our rulers. But are the local authorities really aware of the agricultural and other difficulties at our doors ? Have they received any official intimation of the calamities that threaten the eastern and south-eastern parts of our own Presidency ? The Kharif (autumn) crop in these parts is said not to have yielded more than a two annas proportion, (one-eighth), and even this miserably small yield has been damaged by *tob*, little beast-like

But the injury inflicted upon the civil population by the war, was, for the moment, less embarrassing to the Government than the military perplexities to which it was daily giving birth. Though the peasant and the trader should suffer from lack of beasts of draught and burden, yet agriculture and trade would be carried on after a fashion; but a dearth of transport animals might, at any moment, bring a moving army to a standstill, or threaten the existence of a stationary force; and whilst, from each of the lines of communication came the cry for more mules, more camels, the difficulty of responding to it steadily increased. Already, on the 1st of the year, when the campaign had lasted barely six weeks and before snow had fallen, Colonel J. V. Hunt, Sir S. Browne's Principal Commissariat Officer, had complained that his camels were going to ruin in the Khyber, and that, unless he could get them back to the plains for a fortnight's grazing, he should want a fresh lot for work in the spring, and that the carcasses of the thousands that would have died, must inevitably breed a pestilence. Similar complaints came from the Kuram, and the state of things on the Kandahar route was even more disheartening. Supplies of every description were rotting at Bukkur, on the left bank of the Indus, for want of a bridge,¹ and at Sukkur, on the right bank, for lack of camels. At Dadar, at Jacobabad, at Quetta, there was the same dearth of transport facilities, and desert and pass were strewn with dead camels and aban-

insects. As to *rabi* (spring crops) three-fourths of the fields lie covered with rank weeds and grass.

In the beginning the *rabi* crop promised well, especially where ryots (peasants) could afford to prepare the land. But since the middle of December, rats, in millions, have poured into the fields and destroyed the crops. The people have been suffering during the last two years; their resources are exhausted; migration has recommenced as the only means of escape from starvation and death—for death overtakes many victims of privation." (*Bombay Review*, February 1st, 1879.)

¹ The railway had been completed between Kurachi and Multan, but the Indus was not bridged till after the war.

done stores. The advantages to be reaped from General Andrew Clarke's scheme of a railway, connecting the Indus with the Bolan, had, by this time, become too apparent for Lord Lytton to continue to oppose it, and Colonel G. Medley, Consulting Railway Engineer to the Government of India, was hurriedly despatched to examine the ground and prepare plans and estimates. But the hot weather had begun before he could complete his survey and present his report, and the work had to be postponed until the following cold season. Meantime, the Governor of Bombay, Sir Richard Temple, was struggling, in person, with the supply chaos at Sukkur,¹ and Colonel Hogg, Deputy Quarter-Master General of the Bombay Army, with the reorganization of the Transport Service. The Commissioner of Sind, having provided the military authorities with six thousand camels over and above the thirteen thousand originally demanded from him, had desisted from efforts which were ruining his district ;² now, under the double pressure brought to bear upon him, he succeeded in getting together an additional six hundred, and sent up two hundred and fifty carts to clear out some of the stores that had accumulated at Jacobabad. But no zeal on the part of the military officers, no assistance rendered by civil officials could keep the supply of transport equal to the demand, and, given a sufficient duration of

¹ "Sir Richard Temple has had to send all the way to Bombay for carts ; he has had camel-drivers engaged in northern Gujerat at extravagant pay, and his emissaries are now scouring Rajputana in search of more camels." (*Bombay Review*, January 25th, 1879.)

² "One hears the Commissioner loudly abused on all sides for having so suddenly stopped collecting transport animals, but one must bear in mind that he looks at the case from a purely civil point of view, and naturally does not wish to denude the whole of his district of its beasts of burden, representing, as they do in many instances, the sole means of subsistence of the inhabitants. The military estimate, framed in solemn conclave at Sukkur, was under 13,000 camels, and when the Commissioner had handed over 19,000, he fancied he had done his duty, and allowed a very liberal margin for all sorts of casualties." (*Correspondence Times of India*.)

hostilities, the coming of a day when the invading forces must lose their mobility could clearly be foreseen.

The prospect as regarded the continued efficiency of the troops was little brighter. Despite, or perhaps in consequence of, the mildness of the season, there was much sickness in all the columns, more especially among the men employed on the lines of communication whose lot was cast in the most unhealthy districts. On all three lines of advance, there were regiments so sickly as to be unfit for active service; and though the courage and resolution of officers and men enabled some of these to hold out to the end of the campaign, there were others, no less brave and zealous, who had to submit to the humiliation of being ordered back to India. In Maude's Division, this was the fate of Her Majesty's 81st Regiment; in Browne's, of the 14th Sikhs; in Stewart's, of the 12th Khelat-i-Ghilzai;¹ and the carriage of all supply convoys, on their return march, had to be utilized for the conveyance of invalids, pronounced medically unequal to further duty in the field. Recruiting for the Native Army had already begun to fall off; the drafts sent from India to make good gaps caused by disease in both British and Native corps, were not in proportion to the casualties incurred; and though many of the Independent Princes were eager to take part in the war, considerations of distance and expense had made it impossible for the Indian Government to accept more than the services of a Contingent furnished by six Punjab Chiefs²—the Rajahs of Patialla, Nabha, Jhind, Kappathala, Nahun and Farid Kot. The four thousand four hundred and sixty-six troops composing this Force, after undergoing a course of instruction in the use of the Enfield rifle, were sent to guard the communications of the Kuram Force and to strengthen the garrison of Bunnu, a British frontier station whose safety had been endangered by tribal discontent, due to the war.

¹ This regiment had greatly distinguished itself in the First Afghan War.

² The Maharajahs of Hyderabad and Baroda were among the Native Rulers whose offers of troops were declined.

TABLE SHOWING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PUNJAB CHIEFS' CONTINGENT AS REVIEWED BY LORD LYTTON AT LAHORE IN DECEMBER, 1878.

13 Guns	10 Elephants
868 Cavalry	1,145 Horses
2,685 Infantry	825 Camels
1,913 Followers	240 Mules and Bullocks

Principal Officers.

Bunshree Gunda Singh	}	Patiala Contingent
Syud Jurdan Ali		
Lalla Bhugman Doss		
Sirdar Juggat Singh	}	Jhind Contingent
Sirdar Ruttan Sing		
Dewan Beshun Sing	}	Nabha Contingent
Bunshree Budroodun Khan		
Lalla Nuthoo Lall		
Dewan Ram Jas	}	Kaphathala Contingent
Sirdar Nubbi Bux		
Colonel Mahomed Ali		
Sirdar Golun Singh	}	Farid Kot Contingent
Sirdar Albail Singh		
Sirdar Buh Singh		
Colonel Whiting		Nahun Contingent

British Officers attached to Contingent.

- Brigadier-General J. Watson, V.C., C.B., Commandant and Chief Political Officer.
 Major W. C. Anderson, 3rd Punjab Cavalry, Assistant Adjutant-General.
 Captain V. Rivaz, 4th Punjab Infantry Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General.
 Captain J. Pearson, R.A., Brigade-Major.
 Captain F. C. Massey, Political Officer.
 Captain J. D. Turnbull, 15th Bengal Cavalry, A.D.C.
 Surgeon-Major J. R. Drew, in Medical Charge.
 Captain F. Burton, 1st Bengal Cavalry, and Captain A. K. Abbott, 42nd Bengal Infantry.

Native Aides-de-Camp to the General.

- Sirdar Mahomed Enzat Ali Khan.
 Sirdar Gholab Singh.

That discontent extended the whole length of India's North-West frontier. In Buner and Swat *mullahs* were preaching a *jehad* against the enemies of their religion, and only the influence of some of the chiefs kept the people's excitement within bounds. Mohmands and Afridis were vying with each other in obstructing the movements of Maude's and Browne's forces. The Orakzais, long friendly, were preparing to raid upon Roberts's communications, and the Zymukhts, a tribe that had given no trouble since 1856, were busy attacking that General's convoys and driving off his camels from their grazing-grounds. Last, but not least, four thousand Mahsud Waziris, consisting largely of Powindars—men of the carrier class—many of whose camels had been seized for Government purposes, had entered British territory on New Year's day, burnt Tank, and taken up a strong position between that town and the Zam Pass; and, though General G. J. Godby employed five thousand Infantry and two hundred Cavalry against them, it was not till the 20th of January, and after several skirmishes, in which the British loss was two men killed, and Captain T. Shepperd and nine men wounded, that the invaders were finally driven back into their hills.

A further source of increasing regimental weakness was the growth in the normal disproportion between the Native troops and their European officers. Not a single Native corps had taken the field with its full complement of British Officers, and many of these had already been removed by death, wounds, or sickness, or had been absorbed by one or other of the Army Staffs. At the attack on the Peiwar Kotal, the 29th Punjab Infantry had gone into action with only five European Officers, the Gurkhas, with but four; and according to a report furnished to Government by General Maude, four came to be the number both in the 10th Bengal Lancers and the 24th Punjab Infantry—a state of things aggravated by the fact that each of these regiments was broken up into small, widely separated detachments, so that many of the men were entirely removed from what ought always to be the ruling

influence of the sepoy's professional life.¹ Maude's report was not written till almost the end of the first phase of the war, but he and the other Commanders had all along striven to impress the Indian Government with the evils resulting from the paucity of European Officers; and though Lord Lytton could not be brought to face the expense of a permanent addition to their number, he did, in January, throw open the Indian Staff Corps to Officers of British regiments other than those serving in India. Little advantage, however, was taken of the concession, and the failure of what was, at best, but a temporary expedient, can hardly be regretted, for, if successful, it would have furnished the Native regiments in the field with leaders ignorant of the country in which they had been called upon to serve, and of the language, character and habits of the men whom they were expected to command.

Under the sobering influence of growing difficulties and waning resources, the thoughts of the Home and the Indian Governments had begun to turn towards peace, only to discover that it was easier to begin a war than to end one. "We cannot"—wrote Lord Lytton to Lord Cranbrook—"we cannot close the Afghan war satisfactorily, or finally, without an Afghan Treaty; we cannot get an Afghan Treaty without an Afghan Government willing to sign and fairly able to maintain it. It is only, therefore, in the early establishment of such a Government that we can find a satisfactory solution of our present difficulties. Its early establishment mainly depends on our policy; and we must, I think, be prepared to do whatever may be necessary on our part to promote and maintain the existence of such a Government at Kabul."²

¹ "Under the foregoing circumstances, I am at a loss to understand how either of these two fine regiments can be considered to have been in a state of efficiency for active service in the field as regards the number of British Officers, on whom devolves the all-important duty of commanding and leading their men in the day of battle." (*Report of Sir F. Maude*, May, 1879.)

² *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 312.

By the expression, "whatever may be necessary on our part," Lord Lytton evidently meant promises of support, and gifts of money and arms. To the gifts the Beaconsfield Ministry were not likely to take exception; however large, they would be cheap compared to the expense of an indefinite prolongation of the war; but where was the Amir on whom to bestow them? No sooner had the news of Shere Ali's virtual abdication reached India than Cavagnari had been instructed to make cautious advances to Yakub Khan, but Yakub Khan had shown no inclination to allow himself to be approached. His coldness might be due to the pledge exacted from him by his father, and might disappear if circumstances should release him from his oath; but he was known to be incensed at the invasion of his country, and Lord Lytton doubted his ability to maintain himself in power, and thought it probable that he would soon follow his father into exile. Actuated by these misgivings, the Viceroy looked about for some member of the Barakzai House whom he could have under his hand, ready, at an opportune moment, to be put forward as a successor to Shere Ali; though, meantime, he left the door for negotiations with Yakub Khan open, and, to avoid complicating an already tangled situation, ordered Cavagnari to abstain from intriguing either with parties in the Afghan capital or with any of the Afghan tribes. The Viceroy's choice of a possible British nominee fell upon Shere Ali's half-brother, Wali Mahomed Khan, who had let it be known that, if he could escape from Kabul and reach the protection of a British Force, he would be found willing to play the part filled by Shah Sujah in the first Afghan war.

There had been a difference of opinion between the Viceroy and the Home Government as to the lines on which Afghanistan should ultimately be re-settled; the former desiring to split her up into several weak states, the latter preferring to retain her as a strong and united kingdom. The views of the higher authority had prevailed on paper; but when Lord Lytton, in recommending his protégé,

honestly warned Lord Cranbrook that Wali Mahomed, though probably strong enough to establish himself in Kabul, was hardly the man to extend his rule to Kandahar and Herat, Ministers, having no one else to propose, gave a provisional consent to the Viceroy's request to be allowed to make use of the uncle against the nephew, should circumstances seem to render such a course advisable.¹

It must have added to Lord Lytton's vexations, if not to his anxieties, to know that whilst he was casting about to find some safe ground from which to take the initial step in the direction of peace, the Government Press, both at home and in India, was treating the war as a thing concluded and done with, and counting up the gains, financial and political, which must accrue to India from a rectified frontier.² It was hard for a man oppressed by the knowledge of India's growing expenditure, and harassed by the difficulty of temporarily keeping open the Khyber, to be told that, as a consequence of the permanent occupation of that and other passes, he would be able to reduce the Indian Army and cut down Indian

¹ It is curious that Lord Lytton, whose policy of weakening Afghanistan was based on the conviction that, if strong, she would gravitate towards an "alliance with the ambitious, energetic and not over-scrupulous Government of such a military empire as Russia," rather than towards an alliance "with a Power so essentially pacific, so sensitively scrupulous as our own," (*Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 311) should have failed to perceive that the disintegration he aimed at was incompatible with one of the three main objects of the war; yet it is an absolute certainty that a break-up of Afghanistan would have resulted then, would result now, in the annexation of Herat and Afghan Turkestan by Russia, after which annexation there could be no more dreams of extending British influence to the Oxus. Even Lord Lytton could see that, when Russia was once in actual possession, it was vain to think of ousting her influence by ours. (Vide the allusion to Merv on page 254 of *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*.)

² See *Times* and other Journals for January and February, 1879.

"The war arose from a conviction that, so long as our frontier was fixed on the eastern side of great passes into Afghanistan, our military security was dependent upon the degree in which we could rely upon the friendliness of the Amir of Kabul. This alliance, at a critical moment, broke down, and it consequently became necessary that we should rectify our frontier in such a

taxation.¹ The pleasant stories sent home by special correspondents at Jellalabad of regimental sports, of hunting parties, of scientific and historic explorations, stories which seemed to readers in India and England conclusive testimony to the completeness of British success, had a different meaning for the man who read them in the light of Browne's Despatches and Cavagnari's Reports. The obstacles in the way of making a fresh advance was the ever recurring theme of the former; the difficulties attendant upon keeping a hold on the short and narrow stretch of country already occupied, of the latter. How to accumulate stores and transport whilst working under conditions which perpetually exhausted both, was the problem that pressed, day and night, on the Military Officer; how to induce the tribes to facilitate this accumulation, the task at which the Political Officer incessantly toiled.

The negotiations with certain Afridi tribes, begun to smooth Sir Neville Chamberlain's passage through the Khyber, had widened out into a scheme which embraced all the subdivisions of that powerful clan, as well as other tribes occupying territory within striking distance of the Pass. Its arrangements, similar in their general character to those devised for a like purpose forty years before, had a twofold aim—to attract the individual tribesmen of warlike proclivities to the British side by the offer of well paid² military service,

manner as to make its security independent of anything so capricious as the will of an Asiatic Prince. This has now been done." (*Times* article, February 21st, 1897.)

¹ "Those passes have now been seized by us and we shall not relinquish them. We have thus secured what was described beforehand as a 'scientific frontier,' and military men are agreed that a moderate force in the strongholds thus occupied will suffice to insure us against all external danger from Central Asia.

More money cannot be raised, and the expenditure therefore must by some means be reduced. The means for that reduction are opportunely afforded by the security which our recent acquisition of a satisfactory frontier has given to our military position." (*Ibid.*)

² The monthly cost of this force was 2,740 rupees.

under their own Officers, and to disarm the hostility of the tribes, as a whole, by the payment of a monthly subsidy of seven thousand six hundred and sixteen rupees, in return for which each tribe possessed of land bordering on the Khyber, was to furnish a certain number of chowkidars (watchmen) to protect its section of the Pass ; the largest number demanded from any one tribe being sixty, the smallest, twelve. No difficulty was experienced in raising and maintaining the three hundred and twenty Jezailchis—matchlock men—and their fifteen Officers ; and Cavagnari was able to report, when handing over political charge of the Khyber to Mr. Donald Macnabb, that they had given satisfaction to the Military Commanders, and considerably relieved the troops in the matter of convoy duty ; but the subsidy negotiations proved exceedingly troublesome. It was no easy matter to decide the proportion in which the whole sum allowed should be divided among the different tribes ; it was harder to discover to which party in each tribe that proportion should be paid, for, in every case, the party inclined to look favourably on British overtures of friendship, proved to be the weaker, therefore of less value as an ally, than the party which held aloof. In the end, however, a division based upon some rough appraisement of the claims and merits of each recipient, was arrived at, but the plan, so far as the return to be made for the money was concerned, proved worse than a failure. The chowkidars were utterly untrustworthy, a danger instead of an assistance to the British Forces, as their licensed presence in the passes enabled them to keep a watch upon the movements of convoys and troops, and to signal the approach of the one, and the withdrawal of the other to their friends lurking in the hills above ; and the chiefs and headmen soon learned that they could make double profits by sending one half of a tribe to make submission and finger the Government rupees, while the other half harried

¹ Cavagnari's *Report on Matters relating to Arrangements with the Khyber Tribes*, dated Safed Sang, April 28, 1879.

the road and, by night, even ventured to attack the British outlying pickets.¹ The wiser policy would have been to give the subsidy freely, as an acknowledgment of the Afridi and Shinwari claim to levy tolls on a road the use of which was being monopolized by the British Forces, withholding or redistributing it as a punishment for breaches of faith, and to forbid armed Natives, under the severest penalties, within the British outposts. These measures would have done as much as those adopted to influence the tribes through the hope of gain, and more to check their power to harm and harass; thus diminishing the temptation to indulge in punitive expeditions to which Cavagnari, by reason of his exceptional position, was peculiarly exposed. One such expedition—the first invasion of the Bazaar Valley—has already been chronicled; the story of three others has now to be told.

¹ *Report of Captain Tucker to Major Cavagnari, dated Lundi Kotal, April 9th, 1879.*

CHAPTER XVII

Punitive Expeditions

MOHMAND, SHINWARI AND BAZAR EXPEDITIONS

ON the first day of the year 1879, Sir S. Browne held a Durbar at Jellalabad, at which Cavagnari explained to a few, by no means very representative Afghan Chiefs, the reasons which had led the British Government to go to war with Shere Ali, and its intentions towards the tribes with whom, in the course of certain military operations, it must come into temporary contact. Those reasons embraced all the impugments of the Amir's character and conduct which figure in Lord Lytton's Despatches, with the addition of the entirely new charge of having put to death, mutilated, imprisoned, or fined all persons whom he suspected of supplying the British authorities with information as to the state of Afghan affairs. There exists no official or private confirmation of this charge which has, therefore, no more claim to credence than hundreds of other rumours, most of them palpably false, which were put into circulation by the enemies of Shere Ali after the withdrawal of the Native Envoy from Kabul; but to appreciate its value, if true, it must be understood that, in the East, so-called news-agents are simply spies, who earn large rewards by a trade which men in all countries carry on with the fear of death before their eyes. To Cavagnari's auditors, however, it mattered

little whether this or any other accusation brought against the Amir was true or false, since none of them would strike them as reflecting on his character ; even the distinction drawn by the Viceroy's proclamation between the Sovereign and the people of Afghanistan had little interest for them, for they knew that, whatever the action of the tribes, as tribes, the conduct of the British Forces towards them would be determined, in part, by the latter's need of their neutrality, in part, by the acts of individual tribesmen whose predatory instincts, stimulated by opportunity, might at any moment embroil them with these would-be well-wishers and friends. Nevertheless, by the mouth of Abdul Khalik, Khan of Besud, the assembled Chiefs accepted Cavagnari's enumeration of their Sovereign's misdeeds, denounced the oppression which they themselves had suffered at his hands, and expressed their thankfulness for the prospect of the even-handed justice and kindness which the arrival of the British in their districts was to ensure to them.

The relations between the Mohmands, the tribe to which Abdul Khalik belonged, and the British troops, had been peaceful ever since Mahomed Shah, the Khan of Lalpura, had paid his respects to Sir S. Browne at Dakka ; for though Moghal Khan of Goshta, the Chief second to him in authority, had held aloof from the British authorities, he had not shown himself openly hostile. That those relations should remain peaceful was of vital importance to a Force whose communications, separated from Mohmand territory only by the Kabul River, lay for forty-two miles open to attack ; yet, eleven days after the Durbar, they were disturbed by a punitive Expedition, the first of many which were to prove a source of anxiety to the Commander, and of worry and fatigue to the troops. The occasion for the expedition was an attack made by some hillmen on a lowland village ; the raiders and the raided alike were Mohmands. The incident was an entirely domestic one, calling for no foreign interference ; but Cavagnari saw in it an opportunity for putting pressure on Moghal Khan, who was

suspected of having instigated the outrage,¹ and at his request a small force, under the command of Brigadier-General Jenkins, consisting of two guns, Hazara Mountain Battery, fifty men of the Guide Cavalry and three hundred of the Guide Infantry, crossed the river, surprised the village of Shergarh, where the raiders were supposed to be hidden, and failing to capture the offenders, carried off as prisoners the headmen who had given them shelter, and had possibly connived at their offence, and sent them prisoners to Peshawar.

On the 24th of January, a punitive Expedition, consisting of three hundred and fifty men, drawn from the 17th Foot, the Rifles, 4th Gurkhas, Guide Cavalry and Sappers, and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel A. H. Utterson, entered Shinwari territory to avenge the death of the regimental Bheestie of the 17th. The column surrounded and burned the villages of Nikoti and Raja Miani, killed five men who tried to escape, and returned to camp with seventy prisoners and two hundred head of cattle, and some sheep and mules. The latter seem to have been retained; the former, except two who were believed to be implicated in the murder, were soon released.

Between these two incursions into tribal territory, an expedition of a far more serious character had been planned and begun. The invasion of the Bazar Valley, in the month of December, had exasperated instead of cowing the Afridis, who had seized the opportunity afforded them by the absence of some of the best troops of the 2nd Division, to cut telegraph wires, attack small detachments and ill-guarded convoys, fire into standing camps, and temporarily close the pass. Their depredations were checked by the return of the punitive Force, and after a while they were coaxed or threatened into tranquillity, with the exception of the Zakka Khel who continued to give trouble whenever they saw the chance.

¹ Moghal Khan was also suspected of being concerned in the death of two camel-men belonging to the Jellalabad Force, who were murdered about this time, but there was no proof of his complicity—none, even, that the murderers were Mohmands: they may just as well have been Shinwaris.

Early in January, an important step had been taken in the direction of efficiency and economy by the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles M. Macgregor, an Officer of great energy and experience, to the charge of the communications between Jumrud and Jellalabad. So far, Browne's and Maude's independence of each other had extended to their supply and transport; now, in all that regarded these departments, Macgregor became a connecting link between them, and in that character was able to smooth away difficulties, diminish friction, and arrange for a more equitable distribution of work between the 1st and 2nd Divisions.¹ The new Officer in command of communications quickly discovered the insecure state of the Khyber, and at once wrote direct to Cavagnari recommending a second invasion of the Bazar Valley, and the occupation both of it and the adjoining Bara Valley till the complete submission of the Zakka Khel had been obtained. The suggestion fell in so entirely with Cavagnari's own aims, that he hastened to draw up a memorandum setting forth the reasons for the proposed expedition, and calling upon General Maude to arrange for its despatch. That Commander's task had not grown lighter since his return from Bazar. Every day, men were breaking down from exposure and over-work, and the duties which had to be performed by those who kept off the sick-list, became, proportionally, heavier. Reinforcements were urgently needed to bring the 2nd Division up to full working strength, and when, instead of additional troops, he received an invitation to divert a large part of his already over-taxed Force from work which could not for a moment be lessened or put aside, to an undertaking of unknown magnitude and duration, his astonishment and displeasure were very great. Whatever his feelings, however, he kept them to himself, and, in obedience to the instructions he had received to act in conformity with the wishes

¹ Macgregor had seen a great deal of active service, and in the famine of 1874 he had filled the important post of Director of Transport. He had an efficient assistant in Major J. D. Dyson-Laurie.

of the political authorities, he lost no time in considering how he could best fulfil the Political Officer's clearly implied desire. On the 15th of January he telegraphed to Colonel C. C. Johnson, Quartermaster-General in India, recapitulating the substance of Cavagnari's memorandum, and stating that, with the Commander-in-Chief's sanction, he intended to carry out the suggestions it contained with two columns from his own Division, the one starting from Jumrud, the other from Ali Masjid, in conjunction with a Force from Basawal, under Brigadier-General Tytler; each column to visit the villages that lay within reach of its line of march, so that the concentration of the troops would not take place till the fifth day. Once concentrated, he thought that three days would suffice to complete the work which had to be done in the Bazar Valley, but that as regarded the operations in Bara, he was not yet in a position to form any plan, and could only say that he thought the Force he intended to employ would be equal to any demands that might be made upon it.

Though General Maude had wisely refrained from hazarding an opinion as to the length of time that would be required to execute the second part of his programme, it was clear to him, and ought to have been equally clear to the authorities at Headquarters, that it would take longer to penetrate into and subdue Bara, an utterly unknown country, further removed from the invading Army's base, than to overrun Bazar for the second time; yet the Government's sanction to the scheme was clogged by the extraordinary proviso that the time devoted to the whole expedition was not to exceed ten days, accompanied by the contradictory comment that the Commander-in-Chief thought three days too short a time to do the work needed in Bazar. General Maude felt strongly that the imposition of a time-limit on a Military Commander was absolutely unprecedented, and that, in this particular case, it must result in placing him in a position of great perplexity, since it virtually vetoed a part of the plan which had professedly been sanctioned in its entirety; but being unwilling to "foreshadow

difficulties," he accepted the decision of the Government, and did his best to make the short campaign as successful and complete as possible.

The Jumrud column, consisting of twelve hundred and thirty-five men of all ranks, commanded by the Lieutenant-General in person, started on the 24th of January, and followed the road by the Khyber stream which runs, at first, through Kuka Khel territory. Here no opposition was met with, the tribe being classed as "friendly," and having been warned by Captain Tucker that armed men were not to show themselves. This column spent the first night in the bed of the river—below the Shudanna tower, and the second, at Barakas, where it was joined by the baggage-camels of the Ali Masjid Force. The baggage-party had been fired on, about a mile from camp, and, after dusk, shots were fired into the camp itself.

The Ali Masjid column, under Brigadier-General Appleyard, advanced by the Alachai road to Karamna, where it effected a junction with the 6th Native Infantry, under Colonel G. H. Thompson, which had marched the same morning from Lundi Kotal. The Force, now numbering twelve hundred and five officers and men, blew up the towers of Karamna, and on the following day those of Burj, at which village it was met by a detachment from the Jumrud column, and then entered the Bazar Valley and joined General Maude. Tytler's column, twelve hundred and eighty-three strong, which had to cross the Sisobi Pass, did not arrive till the afternoon of the 27th. Whilst waiting for it to appear, General Maude sent out three hundred men, under Colonel Ruddell, to scour China, and a detachment of Cavalry, under Lieutenant-Colonel R. G. Low, 13th Bengal Lancers, to the west of that hill to cut off fugitives; also three hundred men, under Major E. B. Burnaby, to clear the hills to the south-east of the valley, from which the rear-guard had been harassed the previous day. On China, a few Zakka Khel were found and killed; but Burnaby's party did not come into contact with the enemy. When the concentration

of his troops had been accomplished, Maude moved the united Force to a strong position in the centre of the valley, out of range of the hills—a necessary precaution, as the Zakka Khel had already shown unmistakably that they had no intention of submitting tamely to this second invasion of their territory ; baggage had been attacked, rear-guards harassed and camps kept on the alert at night by constant firing. Perhaps the clearest proof of their determination to offer a stubborn resistance to the advance of the expedition, was to be read in the fact that, in the Bazar Valley, all the villages were found in flames, fired by the hands of their own inhabitants. Foreseeing such a catastrophe, and anxious to avert it, Captain Tucker had instructed Malik Khwas, the Zakka Khel Chief of evil repute whom the tribe had been ordered to accept as its head, to assure his clansmen that their dwellings would be spared. Possibly Malik Khwas never gave the message ; possibly he gave it and was not believed ; whatever the truth of the matter, the Political Assistant's humane intentions were frustrated.

On the 28th of January, General Maude reconnoitred in person the Bukhar Pass, through which runs the road to Bara. Tytler was in command of the covering party, fortunately a strong one—a thousand men of all arms—as the enemy held every hill-top on the line of advance, from which they had successively to be driven, and they followed up the troops as they retired, to within two miles of the camp. The next morning, when Colonel G. H. Thompson led a detachment to Hulwai, to blow up the towers of that village, the tribesmen showed in much greater numbers, and Lieutenant-Colonel Low, who was sent out with a squadron of his regiment to look for a site with water suitable for a camp near the Bara Pass, found the hills beyond the point to which General Maude had penetrated the previous day, occupied by strong parties. All this showed that the numbers of the enemy were daily increasing, and pointed to the probability that neighbouring tribes were coming to the help of the Zakka Khel, though Major Cavagnari

had positively asserted that nothing of the kind would occur. Bearing in mind that five days of his allotted time had already expired, and fearing that the invasion of Bara would be the signal for a general rising of the Afridis, the extreme inopportuneness of which, at this particular juncture, he could well appreciate—General Maude, though doing full justice to the energy of Captain Tucker, judged that, before proceeding further, he ought to have the opinion of an older and more experienced Political Officer; and he therefore sent a telegram to Major Cavagnari asking him to come at once to the Bazar Valley. But Cavagnari was busy at Jellalabad with work which he deemed more important, and declined to comply with the summons; ridiculing in his telegraphic answer the idea of an Afridi war, and referring the General back to Captain Tucker for advice on all political matters. Maude, however, whose views on the gravity of the situation were shared by Brigadier-General Tytler and Colonel Macgregor, both men well versed in frontier affairs, was no longer inclined to allow the movements of his Force to be decided for him by an officer of Captain Tucker's standing, and he therefore resolved to lay the question of the invasion of Bara before the Indian Government. If he had felt any doubts about taking this step, they must have been dispelled by the receipt of a circular letter from the Quartermaster-General in India, dated the 26th of January, and addressed to him—General Maude—by name, in which he was reminded of the terms of the Viceroy's proclamation of the 21st of November, 1878, requested to bear in mind that "the British Government had declared war, not against the people of Afghanistan and the adjoining tribes, but against the Amir and his troops," and desired to use his best endeavours to avoid unnecessary collisions with the tribes and other inhabitants of the country, and to render its occupation as little burdensome to them as possible, "for the British Government was anxious to remain on friendly terms with the people of Afghanistan."

Such a letter, reaching a Commander in the midst of a punitive Expedition against one of these very adjoining tribes—an Expedition sanctioned only seven days earlier by the Government which now, by implication, condemned it—must necessarily compel him to ask for definite instructions; and this General Maude accordingly did in the following outspoken telegram:—

“ 1. 30th January, 1879, from General Maude to Quartermaster-General and Viceroy.

“ Your letter 327H, 26th inst., was received last evening, directing me to use my utmost endeavours to avoid provoking unnecessary collisions with the Tribes.

“ 2. In my telegram to you, dated 15th inst., I proposed, at Major Cavagnari's suggestion, to visit Bazar, Bara and other villages.

“ 3. I proposed on the 8th day, should my information be sufficient to proceed to Bara, an unknown place. The number of days required to embrace the execution of my plans could not be named on account of want of information, which could only be obtained after my arrival here, but it evidently embraced from sixteen to twenty days. In reply I was informed that the Government sanctioned my being out for ten days only.

“ 4. I conclude Government fixed ten days to cut short the extent of my programme, and as your 327H throws all the responsibility of collisions with the Tribes on me, and as every time my troops proceed from camp one mile in any direction, they come into collision with the Tribes, and at night my pickets round the camp are attacked by them, I require specific instructions as to my future proceedings, whether I am to force my way to Bara against such opposition as I may meet.

“ 5. The report of my reconnoissance on the 28th, will have informed you of the opposition I am likely to meet. Yesterday, further

reconnaissances showed the enemy to be on the alert in every direction.

“6. I am ready and willing to carry out any orders I may be entrusted with, but I decline, at the suggestion of a Political Officer, making a raid into a country which I am instructed to avoid provoking unnecessary collision with, unless I receive distinct orders to that effect from competent authority. I wait here for orders.”

The answer to this telegram was not received till the 2nd of February, and meantime circumstances had occurred which obliged Maude to settle the matter for himself. On the 30th, Captain Tucker, who hitherto had maintained that only the Zakka Khel were assembled to dispute the British advance, informed the General that members of other tribes were present with them, some from a considerable distance, thus confirming the opinion of the Military Officers that the resistance of the inhabitants of a single valley might grow into a great Afridi war. It subsequently transpired that detachments from the Kuki Khel, Aka Khel, Kambar Khel, Malik Din Khel, and Sipah Afridis, as well as from the Sangu Khel Shinwaris and the Orakzais, were assembled in the Bara Passes. This information was brought in by Jemadar Yussin Khan, who, with Subadars Said Mahomet, Sultan Jan and Kazi Afzal, had been sent out by Captain Tucker to try to establish friendly relations with the headmen of Bazar, an attempt in which they met with unexpected success. As a first result of their representations there was no firing into the camps on the night of the 30th, and on the 31st, the Jirga of the Zakka Khel of Bazar came into camp, followed, on the 1st of February, by the Jirga of the Zakka Khel of Bara. Whilst the Political Officer was busy negotiating with these representative bodies, the camels, which had been sent back to Ali Masjid for fresh supplies, returned, bringing only half the quantity expected, and General Maude saw himself compelled to place his British troops on half rations; and—a still more serious matter so far as the question of a further advance was concerned—Sir S. Browne

alarmed by a rumour that the Mohmands and Bajauris were to make a simultaneous attack on Jellalabad and Dakka, on the 7th of February, telegraphed an urgent request for the return of Tytler's troops. Now, as the Letter of Instructions which directed Maude "to act in conformity with the views of the political authorities," also ordered him "to strengthen troops in advance, if required"—i.e. Sir S. Browne's Division—this telegram imposed upon him the necessity of coming to an immediate and definite decision on the very point which he had referred to Government; for to let Tytler's Brigade go, was to abandon the Expedition, which could certainly not be carried further without its co-operation in the face of the formidable opposition that was developing. When it came to be a question between the safety of the 1st Division and the desire of Major Cavagnari to see Bara invaded, Maude was not likely to hesitate. He telegraphed to Browne that Tytler's Brigade should return to Dakka in time, and he informed Captain Tucker that no further advance was possible. That Officer seems, for the time being, to have been quite in accord with the General as to the wisdom of bringing the Expedition to a speedy end; anxious even to take the credit of the withdrawal to himself, since he wrote as follows in a letter to Maude, dated Camp Bazar, 2nd of February:—

"I myself think that a more lengthened occupation of the valley will arouse much irritation, and suggest that the Army which has now been here a full week, should march to-morrow, the Afridis undertaking to supply escorts whose business it will be to see that no attack is made on the retiring columns. I am led to recommend this—firstly, on *account of the risk of a collision with other Pathan Tribes*, which I believe Government is anxious to avoid; and secondly, on account of the threatened attack on Dakka and Jellalabad, and necessity of weakening the Force by sending back General Tytler's Brigade which Sir S. Browne has recalled.

“ I have, therefore, felt myself bound to make a somewhat hasty settlement, but I trust it may, nevertheless, be lasting.”

This hasty settlement was based on the restitution of some camels stolen by the Zakka Khel in recent raids in the Khyber, and an undertaking on their part to send two representatives to Jellalabad to lay before Major Cavagnari their claim to a portion of the subsidy promised by the Indian Government to all tribes possessing land in the Passes ; and even these tokens of submission were qualified by the declaration of the headmen that “ they were unable long to restrain the mixed inhabitants of the country from acts of hostility.” This warning probably referred to the state of things then existing in the Bazar Valley, but it contained a truth of wider application. Among all the independent Tribes the power of the Chiefs is small, the licence claimed, or exercised by individuals, very large. As a clan, the Zakka Khel had at no time opposed the British occupation of the Khyber, but bold and stirring spirits among them had been busy cutting telegraph wires, plundering convoys, and murdering camp-followers ; and this they were likely to do on every favourable opportunity, whatever arrangements their headmen might come to with the British Political Officers.

On the 2nd of February, when terms had been settled and the return of the three columns fixed for the morrow, General Maude received from the Quartermaster-General the following answer to his telegram asking for explicit orders :—

“ The instructions of Government regarding avoiding collision with people of Afghanistan are accepted as general and applicable more particularly to tribes which have hitherto been directly under Afghan rule. Your Expedition was undertaken entirely on the advice of the local and political authorities with a view of more efficiently controlling the Khyber and its Tribes. Mr. Macnabb, invested with

full political authority, has been directed to join you at once, and, on consultation with him, you are left entirely free to act on your own judgment in carrying out the intention for which the Expedition was planned.”

No better man than Donald Macnabb could have been selected to assist General Maude with his counsel and influence, and it was reasonable that the latter, after consultation with his new adviser, should be accorded complete freedom “to act on his own judgment in carrying out the intention for which the Expedition was planned”; but the adviser and the permission came too late: the time-limit and the recall of Tytler’s Brigade, between them, had killed the Expedition; and though the former was now virtually cancelled, it would have been a breach of faith to persist in entering Bara after an agreement had been come to with its inhabitants. So, early on the 3rd of February, the Force broke up, each column returning to its starting-place. On the 4th, General Maude met Mr. Macnabb at Ali Masjid, and had the satisfaction of hearing from his own lips that he considered the solution arrived at satisfactory under the circumstances; whilst on the 5th, the telegraph brought him the assurance of the full approval of the Commander-in-Chief.¹

There were no engagements to which names can be given, in the Second Bazar Expedition, any more than in the First; but there was constant skirmishing, in which five men were killed, and one Officer, Lieutenant H. R. L. Holmes, and seventeen men were wounded.²

¹ The same day Maude received a letter from Macnabb, in which he wrote that he was sure the Government would be very glad that the Bazar Expedition terminated without a serious collision with the Afridis, for he had got a telegram, on returning home the previous night, saying that they particularly wanted to avoid anything of the kind, if consistent with military exigencies.

² “It is highly interesting to note the result of this short Expedition, without tents, on the Khyber Hills. The 17th were a singularly fit regiment, and for

The loss in life to the Zakka Khel was far larger, and much suffering must have been inflicted on the women and children of the Bazar Valley by their hasty flight to the hills in mid-winter.

In his report to Government of the 13th of February, General Maude, whilst admitting that "the operations in Bazar did not afford the troops opportunities for the display of much gallantry," claimed that "both Officers and men showed themselves possessed of high military qualities," and that "all ranks gave proof of the greatest anxiety to meet the enemy on all occasions"; and he spoke warmly of the "gallant and devoted spirit of those of the men who ran the gauntlet of the enemy carrying letters. It was in rescuing one of these, that Lieutenant R. C. Hart, Royal Engineers, won the Victoria Cross whilst serving with a Company of the 24th Native Infantry, under Captain E. Stedman, engaged in covering the rear of the convoy of supplies that arrived in camp on the 31st of January. The convoy had cleared the hills and entered on the plain, when, half a mile in its rear, post-runners, escorted by troopers of the 13th Bengal Cavalry, came cantering down the defile, and were fired on by the Afridis who had been lying in wait for the convoy, but had not dared to attack it. The sound of shots attracted the attention of the covering party, and, looking back, they saw one of the troopers lying wounded on the ground, and some twenty Afridis rushing down the hill towards him. Lieutenant Hart instantly ran to the assistance of the defenceless man, followed by Captain Stedman and six men. He so completely outstripped them that when he reached the trooper, whom the Afridis had already surrounded and were slashing with their knives, he was alone. At his approach the murderers ran off to a little distance and opened fire; but Hart had already dragged several days after their return did excellently well; but when the excitement passed off, the wear and tear and the exposure to the biting cold began to tell, and 31 cases of pneumonia resulted, with 11 deaths."—"Recollections of the Afghan Campaign of 1878, 1879, and 1880," by Surgeon-Major J. H. Evatt, *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, 1890, vol. xix. No. 82.

the wounded man behind a rock, where the two remained till Captain Stedman and his party came up and drove off the enemy. The trooper died whilst being carried into camp.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. The first Expedition recorded in this chapter was uncalled for and unwise. By interfering in the domestic quarrels of the Mohmands, Cavagnari turned the whole tribe into enemies, and compelled Sir S. Browne to waste the strength of his troops in exhausting and futile operations.¹

OBSERVATION II. There was good ground for the Expedition against the Shinwaris, but no excuse for burning down two of their villages, and turning their women and children adrift in midwinter. The proper punishments to be inflicted on a community which, by refusing to surrender a criminal, associates itself with his crime, are (a) fines; (b) confiscation of arms; (c) the blowing up of towers. These fall directly on the men of the tribes, and only indirectly affect its women and children. The two former penalties have the advantage of being revocable, for the hope of obtaining their full or partial remission may sometimes lead the tribal authorities to the act of submission originally demanded of them.

OBSERVATION III. The Second Bazar Expedition, like the First, was admirably planned, with one exception, for which General Maude cannot be held responsible—namely, the unsupported advance of Tytler's force from the distant bases of Dakka and Basawal, through a wild hill-country, where, had the enemy possessed a spark of military ability, it might easily have been overwhelmed. This movement was arranged by Cavagnari with Sir S. Browne, but its real authors were the Viceroy and his Government, who kept the 2nd Division so

¹ The relations between Cavagnari and Sir S. Browne are somewhat obscure. Nominally, the latter had been invested with full political powers; practically, they would seem to have been exercised entirely by the former, who corresponded direct with the Government of India.

weak that its Commander had not sufficient troops to carry out single-handed the behests of the Political Officer to whom they had subordinated him. The Reconnaissance of the 28th of January was also an excellent military movement. The covering party, whilst not so numerous as unduly to weaken the camp, was large enough to enable General Maude to force his way, against strong opposition, to a point from which he could get a view of the passes into Bara, and to feel the strength of the enemy, knowledge without which he would have been unable to form a true estimate of the opposition that he must expect if the advance into Bara were persisted in.

OBSERVATION IV. The two Bazar Expeditions were merely episodes in the Khyber campaign, but episodes which deserved to be told in detail ; partly, because, as military operations, they were conducted on right principles, with a due regard to the fact that Bazar was an enemy's country, praise which must be denied to much of the strategy and the tactics displayed in both phases of the war ; partly, for the sake of several points which they suggest for consideration. The first of these is the vexed question of the relations between Military Commanders and Political Officers, a question which they go far to settle, since they are an object-lesson in the disadvantages and dangers of divided authority. Here was General Maude, a man of mature years, of great experience and ability, burdened with responsibility for the safety of the communications of the whole Khyber Force—compelled to take his orders from men, his inferiors in age, standing and experience. Bound by the Letter of Instructions, which he had received immediately after assuming the command of the 2nd Division, he carried out with singular loyalty the schemes of the Political Officers ; but how inopportune, how foolish such raids into outlying valleys must have appeared to him, may be gathered from the fact that during the whole time occupied by the second Expedition he had to leave many of the guards and pickets in the Khyber standing, reliefs not being available. Maude knew the hard work his troops had

to perform, and the hardships to which they were subjected, for he had to take daily anxious thought for their health and efficiency. Major Cavagnari was ignorant of these matters, and indifferent to them. Altogether absorbed in his own schemes, he seems never to have asked himself—"Is the 2nd Division strong enough in numbers, strong enough in health, to be able to spare a thousand, or two thousand, men for a week, or a fortnight, or a month, or whatever the length of time necessary to occupy the Bazar and Bara Valleys *until all opposition is at an end?*" And what were the objects which he deemed sufficiently important to justify him in weakening the communications of an Army, and doubling the work of overtaxed troops? The Expeditions were intended to bring about the submission of the Zakka Khel, to avenge "*outrages committed by them during a period of over half a century,*" and to strengthen the Political Officer's arrangements with the Khyber Afridis. It is not too much to say that no man who had to bear both the political and the military responsibility for his actions, would have engaged in either Expedition on any such grounds. Feeling the heavy pressure of the present, he would have had no room in his mind for the petty offences of the past, and he would have trusted to severe and summary measures in the Khyber to keep the Zakka Khel and all the robber tribes in order. What was really wanted to check their raids—and beyond this there was no need for their submission to go—was not punitive expeditions to Bazar or Bara, or any other valley whose inhabitants had a natural hereditary tendency to possess themselves of other people's camels; but sufficient regiments in the Pass to make camel-raiding an altogether dangerous amusement. Yet General Maude, from whom so much was expected, asked in vain for a regiment to replace the 81st Foot which he had had to send back to India "*saturated with malaria.*" Political Officers are useful and necessary to furnish the General to whose force they are attached, with information and advice, supposing them to know the country in which war is being waged, better than he does, and to act as

intermediaries between him and its inhabitants ; but when it comes to military measures, great or small, only he who will be held accountable for their failure, should they fail, can justly be invested with the power to initiate, control, and end them. There may be safety in many counsellors, but there is nothing but weakness and blundering to be got out of many heads. In the field, a Commander should be an autocrat ; if a bad one, the remedy is not to give him a civilian, or, what is worse, a comparatively junior Military Officer as his master, but to recall him, and put a better man in his place.

The second point raised by the Bazar Expeditions is the wisdom of taking the Khyber tribes into some form of alliance with the Indian Government. Major Cavagnari seems to have been fairly satisfied with the arrangements made with them, but they amounted to very little, and the good got out of them could have been obtained in a much simpler and cheaper way. Had there been a really efficient British Force between Dakka and Peshawar, there would have been no need for this elaborate system of holding the passes through their own tribes, a system which kept them constantly on the skirts of the army, and gave them the opportunities of thieving, under pretext of protecting. An extra British or Native regiment would have been worth far more to the safety of Browne's communications than three hundred and thirty-five Jezailchies, and a handful of treacherous Chowkidars.

The third point which the Bazar Expeditions suggest for consideration, is the question why the Government which subordinated a General Commanding in the field to a Political Officer, and trusted so blindly to that Officer's judgment and knowledge that it took no trouble to form any opinion as to the justice and good sense of his schemes, but actually desired General Maude to attack Chura—a friendly village¹—or any other locality at his bidding—why this Government did not

¹ See Chapter V.

choose the best man so fill so invidious a position. It is impossible that the Viceroy and his Council should not have known that Mr. Donald Macnabb was, of all men living in India at that time, the one most conversant with Border affairs, and possessed of most influence with the Border Tribes. He was a civilian of long experience, of ripe judgment—too well known in India to require to advertise himself by showy undertakings; too well known to the Afridis to need to fear that, in him, moderation and patience could be mistaken for weakness and timidity. If General Maude was to have a superior, that superior should have been the Civilian Commissioner of Peshawar, not the Military Deputy Commissioner, with his soldier's instincts still strong within him, and no military responsibility to hold them in check; a man whom Lord Lytton's favour had suddenly raised into notice, and who was, not unnaturally, eager to achieve such personal distinction as should justify his elevation. Then why was Macnabb left at Peshawar, and Cavagnari appointed Political Officer in the Khyber? The answer is not far to seek. Macnabb was known to disagree with the Afghan policy of the Viceroy, whilst Cavagnari was its enthusiastic supporter. So the comparatively untried man went to the front, and the tried man was kept in the background, till the former having brought the Government face to face with danger, the latter was asked to conjure it away. Fortunately, Macnabb's services were not required in Bazar, and it was only in April, when Cavagnari was sent to Gandamak to negotiate a treaty with Yakub Khan, that the management of affairs in the Khyber fell into the hands of the man who ought to have been entrusted with them from the beginning.

Lastly, it is worth noting that these Bazar Expeditions, though avowedly punitive in their nature, and directed against a tribe that really had been guilty of offences against us, were not stained by any acts of wanton cruelty. The reports both of General Maude and of Captain Tucker bear witness to the fact that, where the destruction of villages is spoken of, nothing more was meant than the blowing up

of the towers which are their defence. The only houses burned were those to which the inhabitants themselves set fire ; and, though large stores of boosa and grain were destroyed, or seized for the use of the troops, there was none of that injuring of fruit-trees and blowing up of wells which inflict permanent injury on a district. Judged both from the political and the military standpoint, there should have been no Bazar Expeditions ; but since they were undertaken, it is a satisfaction to be able to say of them, that they were conducted in a manner which reflects no discredit on the humanity of the authorities concerned.

CHAPTER XVIII

Alarms and Excursions

THE reports of the 28th of January, which had obliged Sir S. Browne to ask for the return of Tytler's Force, were of a very disquieting nature. Mohmands and Bajauris were said to have fraternized; the Mir Akhor, assisted by local mullas, was preaching a Jihad amongst the Shinwaris and Ghilzais; ¹ whilst the Lagmani had already given proof of their ill-will by firing on British reconnoitring parties. On the 2nd of February came news that twenty thousand armed Mohmands and other tribesmen had been actually seen in the mountainous country near the Kunar River, and that the friends of the headmen captured at Shergarh were inciting them to attack Jellalabad. At first, Browne contented himself with sending out reconnoitring parties in all directions, and with strengthening his own position which was far from strong—for a cluster of villages commanded his commissariat lines, and

¹ "The Ghilzais may, roughly speaking, be said to inhabit the country bounded by Khelat-i-Ghilzai and Poli on the south, the Gulkoh range on the west, the Suliman on the east and the Kabul River on the north. In many places they overflow these boundaries, as to the east, they come down into the tributaries of the Gomal, and, on the north, they in many places cross the Kabul River and extend to the east, along its course, at least as far as Jellalabad. This country is about 300 miles long and 100 miles broad in its southern portion, and 35 miles in the northern." (SIR CHARLES MACGREGOR.)

Broadfoot estimated the number of the Ghilzais at 100,000 families, and Masson put down their fighting strength at 35,000 to 50,000 men. On the approach of danger the men hastily gather together their flocks, take up strong positions on the hills behind stone walls, and fight well, their women-folk bringing them ammunition, food and water, and not infrequently fighting by their side.

gardens which might afford good shelter to an enemy, lay between his camp and the town ; but the time had come for assuming the offensive when, on the 6th, Captain W. North, who commanded the Sappers at Gidi Kach, on the right bank of the Kabul River, ten miles from Jellalabad, telegraphed that, on the opposite bank, five thousand footmen and fifty horsemen had passed within eye-shot of that post. The British Commander's plans were quickly made, and, very early next day, he sent out Macpherson, with four guns, Hazara Mountain Battery, and twelve hundred men, consisting of one troop 10th Hussars, one squadron 11th Bengal Lancers, one wing 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade, one wing 4th Gurkhas, one wing 20th Punjab Infantry, and two companies 1st Sikh Infantry, to attack the raiders. At the same time, he despatched Colonel Charles Gough to watch the fords at Ali Boghan, with two guns F. C. Royal Horse Artillery, a squadron of the 10th Hussars, and one of the 11th Bengal Lancers, and ordered Tytler, with three guns 11-9 Royal Artillery, a squadron of the Guide Cavalry, and a wing of the 1-17th Foot to move up the river from Basawal to Chardeh, opposite Goshta, through which place the enemy were known to have passed, with a view to intercepting them, should they try to retrace their steps.

Macpherson crossed the Kabul River by the new trestle bridge, and sent forward his Cavalry, supported by the 20th Punjab Infantry, to seize some high ground on the further side of the Kunar river, with the object of surprising the Mohmands and cutting off their retreat from Shergarh and the neighbouring villages ; their advance, however, was checked by numerous irrigation-channels and retarded by the boggy nature of the ground,¹ and when, at last, the river was reached, its channel proved to be so wide, its current so swift, that the Commanding officer wisely decided not to attempt to cross it in the dark. In the interval, the Infantry, unencumbered by baggage and doolies which,

¹ Many of the mounted men slipped into the bog and were with difficulty drawn out again.

under a strong escort, had been left to follow, came up, and at dawn the whole Force was thrown across the stream—not without many accidents, though none of them, fortunately, of a fatal character ;¹ but the enemy had got wind of its approach, and had disappeared, leaving only a few men to cover their retreat. The 10th Hussars, with their Martini-Henry carbines, got a few shots at this rear-guard, whose position was betrayed by the glittering of its weapons, and Major E. J. de Lautour's mountain-guns dislodged another small party from a higher peak beyond ; but the main body had secured too good a start to be overtaken, and so the Cavalry, after a pursuit of some miles, turned back, and joined by the guns and the 1st Sikhs, returned the same day to Jellalabad. The rest of the Infantry bivouacked in a raging north wind, and the next morning Macpherson himself superintended its re-passage of the Kunar River, which was again effected without loss of life, though several men were carried off their feet, and many rendered nearly insensible by the intense cold of waters which flow direct from the great glaciers of the Hindu Kush.

As the tribesmen retired by a different route from that by which they had advanced, neither Tytler's nor Gough's co-operation was required ; but the former's column came in for its share of difficulties, for, after marching down to Chardeh in the dark, and crossing three channels of the Kabul River, it was brought to a standstill by a fourth, which was too deep for the Infantry and guns. Major Battye, with the Cavalry, however, managed to get over, and reconnoitred to the foot of the hills, three miles away. No enemy was met with, but it was discovered that, the previous day, the invaders had attacked a group of villages called Maya, lying to the west of Goshta, one of which they had burned after killing and wounding a score of its defenders, a son of the Chief being among the dead.

The danger that had threatened Sir S. Browne's Forces had been for

¹ Three camp-followers and some mules that were carried away and reported drowned, were subsequently recovered and resuscitated.

a short time very grave, for later information left no doubt that the Mohmand raid was part of a scheme for an attack upon Jellalabad, planned by the Mir Akhor, in which the Mohmands and Bajauries, the Ghilzais, Shinwaris and Kujianis were to have taken part. The death of its author, who was accidentally killed before it could be put into execution, led to its abandonment, and Macpherson's Expedition broke up, for the time, the confederacy of the tribes, and relieved the pressure on Jellalabad and its communications. Other troubles, however, soon cropped up. Azmatulla, the chief of the northern section of the Ghilzais, was reported to be busy in the populous and fertile Lagman Valley, arranging for a fresh rising, and on the 22nd of February, Jenkins, with a small column, penetrated into and reconnoitred it for a distance of thirty miles. Crowds of armed men were seen, but they kept beyond the range of the British rifles, and though a number of headmen were seized and carried off as hostages for the good behaviour of their respective clans, Azmatulla and the Lagman Chief made good their escape. The intelligence that the eldest son of the Akhand of Swat, with a following of five thousand men, had entered Lalpura territory, and was trying to induce Mahomed Shah Khan to make common cause with him and the Afridis against the British, was not re-assuring; nor yet, the news that Yakub Khan was working hard to re-constitute the Afghan Army, and that the seven thousand Cavalry and twelve thousand Infantry, with sixty guns, already concentrated in and about Kabul and Ghazni, were in high spirits and eager to avenge the defeats of Ali Masjid and the Peiwar.

Each of these reports, emanating, as they all did, from Native sources, was accepted with large deductions; but, even after due allowance had been made for intentional, or natural exaggeration, the cumulative effect of so many was to add heavily to the burden of care borne by the British Commander, and to the labours and fatigues of his troops; yet, as if the dangers inevitably attendant on an occupation of tribal territory were not sufficiently numerous, the passion of the

Survey Department for adding to its knowledge of the topography of the country, gratuitously provoked others. Mr. G. B. Scott and his assistants when sketching near Michni Fort, on the 26th of February, were fiercely attacked by a number of hillmen, probably Mohmands. Scott, though a civilian, at once took command of the escort, consisting of twenty men of the 24th Punjab Infantry, and by his coolness and skill brought off his party, not, however, without loss, four of the escort being killed and two wounded.¹ Three weeks later, a similar incident occurred in Shinwari territory. A survey party, in charge of Captain E. P. Leach, escorted by a troop of the Guide Cavalry, under Lieutenant W. R. P. Hamilton, and a Company of the 45th Sikhs, commanded by Lieutenant F. M. Barclay, started on the 16th of March from Barikab, a British post midway between Basawal and Jellalabad, and encamped for the night near the village of Chilgazai. The next morning, leaving half his infantry and a few sabres to guard his camp, Leach pushed on to a hill lying about four miles to the south. On the further side of this hill, there is a group of villages called Maidanak, the inhabitants of which were thrown into a state of the wildest excitement at sight of the survey party and its escort. Swarming out

¹ "The Pathans have an inveterate hatred of the surveyor. They have an idea that Government sends a surveyor first, then an army. This is not the only time that Mr. Scott has been placed in the same predicament. In August 1868, when surveying the Khogam Valley, he was attacked by a large body of Cis-Indus Swatis. He was accompanied by a small escort of the 2nd Punjab Infantry (5th Gurkhas ?), who behaved in the most gallant manner, and though harassed for many miles by several hundreds of hillmen, he succeeded in beating them off and reached camp at Oghi without loss, though not without casualties. The men of the escort received substantial rewards; the Non-commissioned Officer in charge was decorated with the Order of Merit, and Mr. Scott received the warm acknowledgements of the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence. It was rumoured that he was recommended for the Victoria Cross, but there were difficulties in the way which proved insuperable." (*Times* Correspondent, 8th of March, 1879.) The Sepoys on this occasion refused to leave Scott when he urged them to secure their own safety by abandoning him. The retreat to Oghi lasted several days. —H.B.H.

of their houses like angry bees, they made a rush for some rising ground that commanded the eminence occupied by the intruders. In vain the Malik of Chilgazai was despatched to calm and reassure them, —they continued firing volley after volley. Barclay soon fell, dangerously wounded, and Leach, assuming command, ordered the handful of Infantry to fall back on the Cavalry which had been left with Hamilton at the foot of the hill. Instantly the villagers began gathering from all directions round the retreating troops, and one compact body of fifty men were advancing boldly to the attack, when Leach shouted to the Sikhs to fix bayonets, and, charging at their head, drove back the assailants. The hesitation which followed on this spirited counter-attack, lasted long enough to enable the survey party to rejoin the Cavalry; and, when once the escort was re-united, the villagers lost courage and ceased to pursue. Barclay succumbed to his wounds, and the gallant conduct of Leach who, in the charge, had received a severe cut from an Afghan knife, was brought by Sir S. Browne to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, and rewarded by the bestowal of the Victoria Cross.¹

Sir S. Browne, whose earnest desire it was to avoid an open rupture with the Shinwaris—a powerful, well armed clan, a portion of whose scattered territory commanded the left flank of his communications—was glad that the attack on Leach's party had been so clearly unpremeditated, and due to surprise and alarm as to call for no heavy punishment. Some notice he was obliged to take of it, but he instructed Tytler, to whom he committed the task of obtaining reparation, to avoid bloodshed, and to use no unnecessary severity. With four guns and twelve hundred men, Tytler marched quickly to Maidanak, blew up the towers, levied small fines on the villagers, and, thanks to the

¹ In recommending Captain Leach for this honour, Sir S. Browne wrote :—
“ In this encounter Captain Leach killed three or four of the enemy himself, and he received a severe wound from an Afghan knife in the left arm. Captain Leach's determination and gallantry in this affair, in attacking and driving back from the last position, saved the whole party from annihilation.”

excellence of his dispositions and to the tact shown by Captain E. R. Conolly, the Assistant Political Officer attached to his force, returned to his Headquarters at Basawal without having fired a shot, though, from all the hills around, crowds of armed tribesmen had watched his proceedings. It was mortifying to find that, during his short absence, a convoy had been waylaid and plundered near Deh Sarak by the inhabitants of another group of Shinwari villages, and to have to enter at once on a second punitive Expedition.

Misled by his experience at Maidanak, Tytler, on this second occasion, took with him only seven hundred men and two guns. The start was made at 1 a.m. ; at daybreak, Mausam, the principal village of the offending group, came into sight. At the first glimpse he caught of its strong defences and commanding position, high up on a slope of the Safed Koh, with a great drainage line protecting it on either side, Tytler understood his mistake ; and his anxiety deepened when he saw the villagers hurrying to man the walls, and streaming through the gate to take up a position outside. From the high ground on which he had halted, he could see a troop of the 11th Bengal Lancers working up one of the nullahs, and in imminent danger of being cut off and overwhelmed. Hastily recalling them, he waited for the rest of his Force to come up, and then ordered the Infantry, under cover of the fire of the guns, to make a direct assault on the village, and sent Captain D. H. Thompson, with the Cavalry, to surprise the villagers collected on a plateau beyond it. Thompson carried out his instructions with promptitude and skill. Taking advantage of the accidents of the ground to conceal his movements, he crossed the nullah, circled round to his right, recrossed higher up and charged down upon the enemy, who, busily engaged in firing on the Infantry, had taken no heed of his approach.¹ Yet, though caught at unawares, the Shinwaris fired off their matchlocks, killing two men and wounding seven, before they broke and fled. The pursuit was short ; horses had no chance against

¹ Captain Thompson was highly commended for this gallant charge.

the nimble Afghans on a steep hillside, and the charge had effected its purpose. At sight of their friends' discomfiture, the men within the village, who had hitherto offered the most desperate resistance, abandoned their defences and fled ; all but a single man, who, for some time, continued to hold one of the towers and to keep the victors at bay. When he had been shot down, Mausam was in Tytler's hands, and he at once blew up its towers, as well as those of Darwaza, a neighbouring village whose people had fired on his rear-guard, and promptly began his retreat. The moment the troops were seen to be retiring, the men of Mausam rallied and became, in their turn, the assailants. By this time, the news of the British invasion had spread far and wide, and large reinforcements came hurrying up, many of the newcomers being inhabitants of Maidanak, eager to avenge the punishment to which a few days previously they had had to submit. All in all, Tytler reckoned that on that day he had had to deal with three thousand tribesmen ; and, though many of them were only armed with matchlocks and swords, their courage and determination and their skill in taking shelter made them formidable foes. So great was the peril, that only a General possessing the entire confidence of his men could have brought them safely through it. That confidence Tytler had won for himself ; and, secure in the certainty that he had nothing to fear from panic, he écheloned the Cavalry on his flanks, and coolly retired his Infantry by alternate lines, halting the whole Force, from time to time, to bring the guns into action against the enemy, pressing in upon his flanks and rear with such boldness that, at one point, they came within eighty yards of the troops. This running fight was maintained for nearly ten miles until, on high ground under the walls of Pesh Bolak, Tytler's men found safety, and the enemy drew off into the adjacent hills. In this expedition the British loss was only two killed and twelve wounded, but the Shinwaris buried one hundred and sixty men the following day, and they must have had at least three hundred wounded. Tytler had only been twenty-four hours away from his

Headquarters, and yet, in that brief interval, men of the same tribe had made a serious raid on his communications, in which two men of the 17th Foot were killed, and forty-four camels carried off.

OBSERVATION

Tytler's column was badly constituted, as well as dangerously weak. In addition to the guns, it consisted of detachments drawn from no less than six regiments:—

11th Bengal Lancers	1 squadron.
13th Bengal Lancers	1 troop.
1/5 Foot	2 companies.
1/17th Foot . .	2 companies.
27th Punjab Infantry	$\frac{1}{2}$ a company.
2nd Gurkhas . .	$\frac{1}{2}$ a company.

The system of mixing up men of a variety of regiments is vicious in principle, as, so constituted, a Force lacks cohesion owing to the multiplication of Commanding Officers, and the fact that the different units have not been accustomed to work together. This faulty organization was of frequent occurrence during the war, on all three lines of advance. Sometimes it was unavoidable when, as in the case under review, the troops destined for an Expedition were scattered on the line of communication, though a better disposition of them on that line, with a view to such a contingency, might have been made. In the Peninsular War, the rule was that a company, or a troop, was to be regarded as the smallest unit for detached duty, and, if any increase was necessary, such increase was not to be less than the prescribed unit. In Afghanistan, the Indian Government was making war with inadequate armies, for neither Browne nor Maude was strong enough to form the moveable columns which should have been stationed at Jamrud, Lundi Kotal and Basawal, ready to move at a moment's notice, and they were driven to the dangerous expedient of weakening the posts guarding their communications, and getting up scratch Forces whenever an emergency arose.

CHAPTER XIX

The Invasion of Khost

ATTACK ON BRITISH CAMP AT MATUN

IF the condition of affairs in the Khyber at the beginning of the year 1879, was unsatisfactory, that in the Kuram was distinctly worse. Browne had in Peshawar, distant only a few miles from the Afghan frontier, a real base ; Roberts's true base was at Rawal Pindi, 171 miles from Thal, and Thal was again 82 miles from the British outpost at Ali Khel. No river broke the communications of the former ; those of the latter were cut by the Kuram and the Indus, the flooding of either of which streams would bring his Force face to face with starvation, since there were no local supplies to count upon, and no reserve of food had been accumulated in the valley.¹ The weather, though exceptionally dry, was very severe, and the health of the troops had suffered so grievously from exposure and fatigue that, although a large convoy of sick and wounded had left for India on the 2nd of December, a week later there were no fewer than five hundred and

¹ " My Commissary-General reported to me that only a few days' provisions for the troops remained in hand, and that it was impossible to lay in any reserve unless more transport could be provided. About this reserve, I was very anxious, for the roads might become temporarily impassable from the rising of the rivers, after the heavy rain to be expected about Christmas. Contractors were despatched to all parts of the country to procure camels, and I suggested to Government that pack-bullocks should be bought at Mirzapur and railed up country, which suggestion being acted upon, the danger of the troops having to go hungry was warded off." (*Forty-One Years in India*, p. 155.)

twenty-four officers and men in hospital. Great difficulty had been experienced in getting together the camels required for the above-named convoy, and a large proportion of the regimental transport and of the animals incessantly engaged in provisioning the scattered units of the Army, was non-effective.¹ The new road by which the double crossing of the Kuram River would be avoided, was still unfinished; and the old road, from end to end, was infested by Mangals and Zymukhts, who hung on the flanks and rear of the troops in movement, and murdered stragglers and carried off camels from under the very walls of Thal; even the friendly Turis were suspected of plundering whenever they had the chance.² Thus every circumstance connected with the Kuram Field Force, pointed to the need of consolidating the position it had won before calling upon it to extend the sphere of its operations; but the restless activity of its Commander could so ill brook delay that, within three weeks of his return to the Kuram from reconnoitring the Shutargardan, he had concentrated two thousand and eighty-two men, with eight guns, and transport amounting to fifteen hundred and thirty-nine camels and five hundred

¹ In six months the Kuram Field Force lost 8,828 out of 10,861 hired camels, besides a large number belonging to the Government." (*Commissariat Return of Camel Carriage, Kuram Field Force.*) "The position of the camp at Kuram was not suited to keeping camels in a healthy condition. The distance of the nearest range of hills where brushwood, which would do for their food, was found, was about seven miles, and the camels had thus to walk fourteen miles, there and back, to their feeding ground daily; the cold, added to their change of diet, was trying to their constitutions, and the damage which was done in a few weeks at the commencement of the campaign from these causes, which were evident, and from other causes, which may not have been so clear, materially affected the movements of the Force later on." (*With the Kuram Field Force, by Major Colquhoun, p. 150.*)

² "Our line of communications was constantly harassed by raiders, convoys were continually threatened, outposts fired into and telegraph wires cut. The smallness of my force made it difficult for me to deal with these troubles, so I applied to the Commander-in-Chief for the wing of the 72nd Highlanders left at Kohat and the 5th Punjab Cavalry at Thal to be ordered to join me at Kuram." (*Forty-One Years in India, p. 154.*)

and sixty-five mules,¹ at Hazir Pir, and had completed the changes in the distribution of the troops to be left behind in the Kuram, rendered necessary by the withdrawal of a large part of its garrison.

TABLE SHOWING CONSTITUTION OF THE KHOST EXPEDITIONARY
FORCE

No. 1 Mountain Battery.
No. 2 Mountain Battery.
1 Squadron 10th Hussars.
3 Troops 5th Bengal Cavalry.
200 men of the 72nd Highlanders.
21st Punjab Infantry.
28th Punjab Infantry.

TABLE SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF THE TROOPS IN THE KURAM,
JANUARY, 1879

THAL

3 Guns F.A. Royal Horse Artillery.
1 Troop 5th Punjab Cavalry.
1 Company 8th Foot.
Wing 29th Punjab Infantry.

HAZIR PIR

3 Guns F.A. Royal Horse Artillery.
3 Troops 12th Bengal Cavalry.
1 Company 8th Foot.
Wing 29th Punjab Infantry.

DARWAZA PASS

23rd Pioneers road-making between Kuram Forts and Hazir
Pir.

FORT KURAM

1 Troop 12th Bengal Cavalry.
1 Company 72nd Highlanders.
5th Gurkhas.

¹ "Total Regimental Carriage, which included sick and non-effective attached to the Kuram Field Force on January 1, 1879: 1257 camels, and 1169 mules." (Assistant Adjutant-General's Return.) Of these, 539 camels and 556 mules were absorbed by the Khost Expedition.

PEIWAR KOTAL AND VICINITY

3 Guns C-3 Royal Artillery.
 1 Squadron 12th Bengal Cavalry.
 Wing 8th Foot.
 3 Companies 72nd Highlanders.
 1 Company Sappers and Miners.

Total strength : 5,694 Officers and Men, and 6 guns.

No maps of Khost, or of the district lying between it and the Kuram, were in existence,¹ but from Native sources it had been ascertained that the distance between the starting-point and the goal of the expedition was only thirty-five miles, divided into four stages :—

Hazir Pir to Jaji Maidan	11	miles.
Jaji Maidan to Balk	10	„
Balk to Khubi	6	„
Khubi to Matun	8	„

and Captain F. S. Carr, who had reconnoitred the road for fifteen miles, reported that it ran through fairly open country, and was practicable for Cavalry. No organized resistance was expected on the way, and Mahomed Akram Khan, the Afghan Governor of Khost, had signified his readiness to hand over the administration and the revenue records of the valley to General Roberts as soon as the latter could take charge of them, in return for an assurance that he himself should be free either to return at once to Kabul, or to take up his residence in India till the war should have come to an end.

Preceded by a squadron of the 10th Hussars with flanking parties furnished by the 5th Punjab Cavalry, the troops designed to add Khost to the British Empire, left Hazir Pir, at 9 a.m. on the 2nd of January, 1879, and pitched their camp early in the afternoon in the rice-fields that surround the cluster of villages known as Jaji Maidan—the plain of the Jajis—whose inhabitants brought in plentiful supplies of milk, fowls, etc.

¹ “The Khost country had till this time been represented on the map by a blank space. The streams which ran into the Kuram River at Hazir Pir were just marked at their embouchures as the roads by which the Amir’s Sirdars went to collect the revenue.” (Major Colquhoun, p. 181.)

The second day's march proved more trying: first, a network of small irrigation-canals so hampered and hindered the movements of the transport that it was noon before the rear-guard got clear of the camping ground; next, followed a long, steep, slippery descent, strewn with boulders and cut by water-courses, where the ice lay five to six inches thick; and, beyond this, the valley was shut in to the south, by a belt of rugged hills, four miles in depth, the path through which was so rough and broken that the 23rd Pioneers, who had been temporarily withdrawn from road-making in the Darwaza Pass, to smooth and widen the track leading into Khost, had hard work to render it practicable for camels.

Hearing on the northern side of this belt that Mangals had been seen in the neighbourhood, and feeling sure that it would be impossible to get the whole of his Force through the passes before dark, Roberts parked his supply-convoy near the village of Dhani, and leaving the rear-guard to protect it through the night, moved cautiously forward with the main body. No opposition was met with, and the troops, having threaded their way through the hills, passed down a wide drainage channel to Balk, a group of villages like those at Jaji Maidan, situated in a perfectly flat, cultivated plain. Here, there was a day's halt to give time for the supply-convoy to come up, and to rest the camels, which were already in miserable plight.¹ During this halt, a Non-commissioned Officer of the 28th Punjab Infantry was murdered within fifty yards of the camp sentries. The murderer escaped, but, fortunately for the villagers, there was strong reason to identify him with a man who, sometime before, had been flogged at

¹ "On the next day, the 4th, we were obliged to halt, owing to the done-up condition of the baggage-animals, and to allow the convoy and troops left behind the evening before to come up. When these arrived, which was about noon, the camels looked totally unfit to go another step, and a good many died the same night." (Surgeon R. Gillham-Thomsett's *Kohat, Kuram and Khost*, p. 161.) The same writer mentions having seen "lovely, fair children in Balk."

Hazir Pir, and who, quite recently, had been heard to threaten to avenge the deaths of four Natives, hanged under revolting circumstances for killing some camp-followers in the Darwaza Pass.¹

On the 5th, the march was resumed, troops and baggage moving on a broad front, through open country, to the Kam Khost River, which, owing to the absence of the winter rains, they had little difficulty in crossing. At Khubi, on the southern bank, where the Force halted for the night, General Roberts and Colonel Waterfield, his political adviser, had an interview with the Governor of Khost, who came to renew in person the promises already made by him in writing. Next morning the Force marched for Matun in three columns, and, at the outset, in open order, the Infantry stretching right across a flat boggy plain² three miles in width; then, as the valley contracted, drawing closer together, till, on arriving at the foot of a low range of hills, pierced by a track scarce wide enough to admit of the passage of laden beasts in single file, a complete change of formation became necessary. Beyond these hills, the road descended into the rich and peaceful Khost Valley, with its terraced rice-fields, irrigated by numerous channels drawn from the streams that flow down into it from the surrounding mountains,³ and dotted with pretty, clean,

¹ "Four of the prisoners were hanged, and the fifth, who was proved to be a milder offender, was doomed to be an eye-witness of the scene, and then stripped and horse-whipped. It was, indeed, a horrible sight; there stood the gallows—an unfinished one surely, but looking, perhaps, more grim in its simplicity than would be a better made one. In front and beneath the gallows were dug graves for the reception of the culprits; in fact, they were actually being made under their very eyes." The unfinished structure gave way, and only two of the men were hanged. "The other two actually got up and staggered about, and, amidst struggling and groaning, were brained by the Provost-Sergeant." (Ibid. p. 129.)

² "I saw two or three horses with their riders sink suddenly down for three or four feet deep and have the greatest difficulty in getting up again." (Ibid. p. 163.)

³ "On arriving at the summit of the last hill, a beautiful view of the Khost Valley lay beneath us, which contrasted well with the surrounding mountains.

whitewashed villages; a smiling scene, pleasant to look upon, but with fever lurking in the fertile, water-logged ground.¹

Whilst the troops halted to allow the baggage to come up, the General, accompanied by his Political Officer, Colonel Waterfield and his Staff, galloped on to Matun, where the Governor formally surrendered to him the dilapidated, unsanitary fort—a square enclosure with circular bastions at the corners, connected by curtain-walls a hundred feet long.

With the fulfilment of his own engagements, Mahomed Akram's power to serve the new Government of Khost was exhausted, and he had to warn the British General that the inhabitants of the valley, though peaceable enough when left to themselves, might be forced into resistance by their warlike neighbours, whom he knew to be gathering in the hills, attracted by the smallness of the British Force, which they believed to have "been delivered into their hands."² Roberts's personal observations confirmed the ex-Governor's warnings, so far as the uncertain temper of the people of Khost was concerned—he had noticed that many Maliks refrained from waiting on him till sent for, and that some of those who had come out to meet him had asked leave to return to their villages;³ and though, as yet, no armed hillmen had been sighted, he knew by this time enough of their ways to be aware that there might be thousands of them close at hand, for,

The valley indeed looked very snug and peaceful. As we descended into the valley signs of agriculture became very apparent. . . . Rice is grown plentifully in the Khost district, and the inhabitants lay out the ground in tiers, one below the other, so that it can be well supplied with water by a stream running along the border of each tier. The little white cottages, garnished as they were with cherry trees, looked uncommonly pretty in the distance." (Ibid. pp. 158-59.)

¹ "I discovered that there was water very near the surface of the ground upon which we had formed our camp. This, doubtless, was the cause to a great extent of the malarious diseases which prevailed among the troops during our stay in the Khost Valley." (Ibid. p. 171.)

² Major Colquhoun, p. 189; *Forty-One Years in India*, vol. ii., p. 159.

³ Despatch dated Matun, Khost Valley, Jan. 10, 1879.

in the mountains that surround Khost, dwell some of the most formidable of the Independent Tribes—Mangals, with whom he had already made acquaintance in the Sappari Pass, who could put some eight thousand fighting men into the field; Darwesh Khels, a section of the powerful Waziri tribe; and Judrans, a smaller people, but so uncouth and savage that Elphinstone had described them as more like bears than men.

In view of the grave uncertainties that overhung the fast approaching night, where to place the British camp was an anxious question. The fort had, for the moment, to be left in the hands of the ex-Governor and his two hundred native levies, whose loyalty was not so assured as to allow of taking up a position under its walls, and, in its neighbourhood, there was no good site. The imperative need of a large supply of water determined the one finally selected, which was defective from the fact that the southern side of the camp would rest on the edge of a deep, wide nullah, where the enemy might collect unobserved. Whilst the work of pitching and fortifying the camp was being pressed forward, Akram Khan sent in word that the Mangals were assembling in large numbers; that some of the Khost people had joined them; and that an attack on the British position might be looked for after dark. On receipt of this message the British General sent for the headmen of all the adjacent villages, and curtly informed them that they and their fellow-villagers would incur severe punishment if any hillmen were found next day within their boundaries. The terrified Maliks hurried away to see what they could do to avert the evils hanging over their homes, and returned before midnight bringing word that the Mangals had promised to leave the valley, and offering themselves as hostages for the good faith of their own people.¹ Their presence was some guarantee for the safety of the camp, and every precaution had been taken for its protection—rifle-pits dug, sentries doubled, strong pickets placed on either flank, each with two guns;

¹ Despatch, January 10, 1879.

nevertheless, the Infantry lay down with their arms beside them, and the Cavalry stood all night at their saddled horses' heads.¹

Next morning Roberts sent out some of the Maliks to ascertain the position of affairs, and the news that they brought back was very disquieting :—the Mangals who, the previous evening, had pledged themselves to leave the valley, had, indeed, started for their homes, but, on meeting crowds of their kinsfolk streaming down from the hills, had turned back, and all Khost, with the exception of the villages nearest to the British position, was now swarming with armed men. At the time, it seemed strange that the camp should have remained unmolested during the night, but it was discovered later that, trusting in their numerical superiority, and believing that by daylight they could more easily compass the total destruction of the British Force, the tribesmen had deliberately put off attacking till morning ;² when Roberts, who was not the man to wait inactive whilst dangers thickened round him, forestalled them by himself assuming the offensive.

The General's first step was to despatch a troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry under Major J. C. Stewart, accompanied by Captain F. S. Carr, to test by a reconnoissance the truth of the Malik's report. Three miles from camp, the party came upon fifteen hundred to two thousand tribesmen, and as in the face of so formidable a body there was nothing to be done but to retire, Stewart having sent off a messenger to ask for assistance fell back slowly, till the appearance of Hugh Gough, at the head of two hundred and fifty troopers, turned the tables on the Mangals, who, quickly dispersing, made a rush for the hills. The Cavalry, admirably handled, gallantly followed them up,³ and seizing

¹ Telegram to *Standard*, dated January 7th, 1879.

² Despatch of January 10, 1879.

³ "A troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry made a brilliant charge up a hill in the centre of the enemy's position, and rapidly dismounting, commenced to harass them in their retreat. This charge, which was personally led by Major B. Williams, struck me as one of the most gallant episodes in Cavalry warfare I had ever seen." (Brigadier-General H. Gough's Report, dated 9th January, 1879.)

commanding positions with dismounted men, tenaciously held their ground, till the arrival of Colonel J. Hudson, with the 28th Punjab Infantry, and of Major Swinley's mountain-guns, compelled the tribesmen to retreat to still more inaccessible heights. Acting in accordance with instructions received from General Roberts, Gough at once withdrew the whole Force, covering its slow, steady retirement by the fire of the mountain-guns, and holding his Cavalry in readiness to charge should the enemy venture down into open ground.

Whilst one body of Mangals was drawing away a large part of the British Force, other bodies had stolen so secretly into the hitherto unoccupied villages that no one in camp suspected their proximity; even the hurried return of some camel drivers, who had been set upon, robbed of their camels, and one of their number killed, only half a mile from the British position, awakened so little suspicion of the true state of things that, about 1 p.m., Roberts rode out with his Staff to see how Gough had fared, leaving Colonel Barry Drew in charge with orders to stand on the defensive till he, the General, should return. Hardly had Roberts and his party disappeared from view, than large numbers of armed men¹ were seen to issue from the villages lying north-west of the British position, and to gather in dense masses in front of the nearest of them. The troops remaining in camp after the departure of the 28th Punjab Infantry and practically of the whole of the Cavalry, were too few in number to admit of any being held in reserve, but each side of the camp was adequately protected—the eastern, by a wing of the 21st Punjab Infantry and two guns, No. 1 Mountain Battery, under Major F. H. Collis, the southern, by the remaining guns of the Mountain Battery and the other wing of the 21st, under Captain J. G. T. Carruthers, the northern and western sides, by the 72nd Highlanders, under Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. J. Clarke—and the enemy, though bold and wary, never had a chance of deliver-

¹ Four thousand, according to Sir Hugh Gough. See article entitled "Old Memories," in *Pall Mall Magazine* for June, 1898, p. 207.

ing the intended assault. On the east, Captain Morgan's guns were quickly at work dropping shells into their midst, and as they streamed away southward, Captain Kennedy, with a handful of troopers, dashed out to cut them off, but was pulled up by the nullah that lay between him and them, and had to recognize that he was too weak to attempt to recapture the stolen camels, which could be seen moving away in a northerly direction. Meantime, a general fusillade had broken out from the Afghan Cavalry Lines beside the fort. Protected by the fire of the guns, a detachment of Highlanders and of Punjab Infantry, commanded by Captain N. J. Spens, soon drove the Mangals from their cover, but only for them to find fresh shelter in villages just out of range. The fort, so far as could be seen, was not occupied by the enemy, but from its roof the Governor's levies watched the fight, ready, should the attack on the British camp succeed, to come to the aid of the tribesmen, with whom they were suspected of having communicated during the preceding night by means of vivid flames, which, from time to time, had been seen to burst forth on the ramparts.

At 2.30 p.m., the General, having returned to find his camp intact, but the Mangals still in possession of the ground on three sides of it, gave orders to carry all the villages lying to the east and south of the British position, and to plunder and burn them as a punishment to their inhabitants for having admitted the hillmen within their walls; but to spare those to westward, which had not been occupied by the enemy, and where, early in the day, camp-followers had been warned of danger.¹ Barry Drew, at the head of the 72nd Highlanders, and a wing of the 21st Punjab Infantry, drove out the defenders of the eastern villages and followed them up to the foot of the hills, three miles away, whilst two guns and the other wing of the 21st cleared the southern villages, from the back of one of which a large body of tribesmen was seen to issue. Roberts instantly ordered Captain

¹ Despatch of January 10th, 1879.

J. C. Stewart, who, with thirty men of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, had accompanied him back to camp, to charge, and, in answer to a question put to him by that Officer, directed him not to burden himself with prisoners. The sowars, dashing forward, overtook the enemy in a nullah, and drove them, with a loss of some sixty killed and wounded, up its broad, stony bed, till, in a village on its further bank, the fugitives found temporary shelter, and, opening fire on their pursuers, obliged them to withdraw out of range. The respite, however, was short; reinforcements of Infantry were already coming up, at sight of which the hillmen made a rush for another village beyond a second ravine. An attempt to intercept them proved partially successful. Eighty or ninety, cut off from their comrades, ran back to the refuge they had just deserted, and, after considerable hesitation, were induced to lay down their arms and give themselves up. The Military Officers on the spot, would have let them go, but Colonel Waterfield, discovering that they were Waziris, decided to have them taken into camp, where Roberts placed them in charge of the 21st Punjab Infantry, to be kept in captivity till ransomed by their tribe.¹ In addition to these prisoners, the enemy had, at least, eighty men killed and wounded in the course of the day, while the British casualties were only three killed and four wounded—an extraordinary disproportion;² but when Major Colquhoun, in his narrative of the Khost Expedition, declares that “not a man turned on the small handful of troops who were carrying fire and sword into their villages,” he misses the true explanation of the tribesmen’s apparent cowardice. It was just because the villages were *not* their own, that Mangals and Waziris—the latter, perhaps, the bravest of all the Pathan tribes—abandoned them to their fate, and recognizing that their attack upon the British

¹ Parliamentary Paper of 17th June, 1879, proceedings of Major-General Roberts in Khost on 7th and 8th of January, 1879.

² “Our casualties were very small indeed, which was no doubt due to the inferior weapons of the enemy, and to the longer range of ours.” (*Kohat, Kuram and Khost*, p. 190, by Surgeon R. Gillam Thomsett.)

camp had failed, hurried back to the hills to devise fresh schemes for driving its occupants from the valley. The people into whose homes fire and sword were carried, were really men of unwarlike disposition and habits, accustomed to look to the Afghan troops quartered in their midst, for protection against the very tribesmen who, having coerced them into a contest with their new rulers, now left them to bear the consequences of their weakness. There were no Afghan troops to defend them now; so they could but watch from afar, whilst eleven of the pretty villages that had charmed the eyes of the British soldier as he marched down into Khost only the day before, were burned to the ground, and all their treasured possessions, all their means of subsistence, "bullocks, sheep, goats, fowls, ponies, gunpowder, old-fashioned matlocks and swords of every Asiatic description,"¹ were carried off by camp-followers, to whom General Roberts had given leave to take whatever they could snatch before the torch was applied to the houses, and, in some instances, by soldiers to whom, apparently, such permission had not been accorded.²

Before dark the troops had been withdrawn to camp, the outposts strengthened, and a strong in-lying picket posted in readiness to proceed to their aid at a moment's notice. There was, however, so little chance that the enemy would renew the attack that night, and the brilliant moonlight and the glare from the burning villages made it so impossible for them to approach unnoticed, that all who were not on duty, could lie down to sleep with easy minds.³

¹ Special Correspondent of the *Standard*, dated Matun, January 11th, 1879.

² "When the first village had been occupied and set alight, the camp-followers, who had been on the watch for plunder, swooped down upon them and carried off whatever was portable, though there was nothing left in them to speak of." (*With the Kuram Field Force*, p. 199, by Major Colquhoun.)

³ "The night that set in on that day of fighting and devastation was one of wonderful beauty. The moon shone in a blue sky, freckled with rippling snow-clouds. On the broad plain around the camp, villages were burning luridly. Sometimes a roof fell in, when sprays of fire shot high into the air. Altogether, the scene was one as suggestive of the horrors of war as remarkable for its terrible beauty." (Letter in *Standard* from "One who was Present.")

OBSERVATION

Certain questions addressed by Mr. Anderson, M.P., to the Under-Secretary of State for India, on the 17th of February, gave General Roberts the opportunity of stating the grounds which he held to justify the order given to Stewart to refuse quarter to the enemy on the afternoon of the 8th of January, and the looting and burning of the villages in the neighbourhood of Matun.¹ Those grounds may be summed up in the words—"military necessity"; the position of the troops under his command in Khost, so he alleged, having been such that he could not afford to take prisoners, and was obliged to inflict "speedy and severe punishment" on "the tribes who had dared to organize an attack on his camp," and to plunder and destroy "villages which had harboured the enemy, and from which hostile shots had been fired."² This defence must be rejected as invalid, for the barbarities it sought to excuse cannot be shown to have lessened the hostility of the tribes, and they certainly destroyed any chance there may have existed, of retaining some kind of shadowy hold upon the valley till circumstances should permit of its effective occupation. General Roberts's reputation, however, would gain nothing by its acceptance, for it implied either that he did not know before entering on the Expedition that "the strength of his column was insignificant in comparison of the numbers that might be arrayed against it," and that "it would be separated by many miles of difficult country from its nearest supports"³—in which case he had neglected the first duty of a Commander in failing to acquaint himself with the conditions under which his projected operations would have to be conducted—or, else, that knowing what lay before him, he deliberately chose to run risks so great that, in his opinion, they must absolve him from the necessity of observing the honourable traditions of the Army to which he belonged. Those traditions dated from the days when the East India Company was

¹ Parliamentary Paper of 17th June, 1879, regarding proceeding in Khost.

² Ibid. ³ Ibid.

gradually extending its authority over a vast country, inhabited by an enormous population, differing from their new rulers in colour, customs, laws, and religion. The soldier-statesmen who wrought what, viewed as a whole, seems little less than a miracle, never forgot "the enormous disparity between their forces and those that might be arrayed against them," and always sought to disarm the hostility of the peoples with whose Governments they came in collision, by making the burden of war fall as lightly as possible on all non-combatants. In the campaigns against Sultan Tippoo Sahib, at the end of the eighteenth century, the troops of the East India Company not only abstained from inflicting injury on the unhappy peasantry of Mysore, but protected them, by force when necessary, against the lawlessness and cruelty of the contingent furnished by the Company's ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad. "A reputation for justice and humanity preceding an Army, is of more consequence than an advanced guard of 10,000 men,"¹ wrote John Malcolm in commenting on this episode in Indian history; and Malcolm's friend, Arthur Wellesley, to whom much of the credit of winning this reputation for the Company's Forces was due, carried faith in the same great truth back with him to Europe, and acted on it when, after a five years' struggle to free Spain from French domination, he followed Soult's retreating forces into France. The General Orders of England's greatest Commander teem with instructions as to the conduct of his troops now that they, in their turn, were operating in an enemy's country; instructions based as much on enlightened concern for the safety and well-being of his Army, as on a generous recognition of the rights of a vanquished people.

The higher code of military ethics which the East had given to the West in the person of Wellington, the West gave back to the East in his example and influence. A certain William Nott, who, as an unknown officer, had made "a perfect study of the Wellington

¹ Kaye's *Life of Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.*, vol. i. p. 23.

Despatches,"¹ came, in due course, to hold first a subordinate, and later an independent command in the first Afghan war, and, in both positions, never deviated from "the humane principles of conduct which had invariably animated the mighty Duke."² Standing by them steadily, undeterred by misrepresentation and censure, for four long years, he reaped at last his just reward in the tardily bestowed confidence of the Indian Government, in the grateful affection of the people of Kandahar, and in the consciousness that he returned to India with a reputation alike free from the stain of cruelty and the shadow of failure.³

Following closely in Nott's steps, John Jacob, whose life presented the world with the rare spectacle of a man of great military genius entirely free from the lust of personal distinction, insisted on applying the rules of civilized warfare to the savage and troublesome tribes of Sind, and their no less savage and troublesome neighbours. Punishment, with Jacob, never degenerated into revenge, and he scorned the cowardly method of striking at the guilty through the innocent. Even when pursuing a marauding band across the frontier, he suffered no looting of villages, no destruction of houses, or trees, or crops; every unarmed or unresisting man was certain of his protection, and he, too, reaped his reward in the rapid pacification of a Province, and the devoted attachment of its inhabitants.

Trained under Wellington in the Peninsula, Charles Napier, as Commander-in-Chief in India, held no less staunchly than Nott to the wise and humane principles of his great Chief. The burning of some villages, during a punitive Expedition in the winter of 1849-50,

¹ *Memoirs of Sir William Nott, G.C.B.*, by J. H. Stocqueler, vol. i. p. 63.

² *Ibid.* p. 267.

³ "I put down rebellion, and quelled all resistance to the British power; in spite of the fears and weakness of my superiors. By mild persuasive measures I induced the whole population to return to the cultivation of their lands, and to live in peace. I left them as friends and on friendly terms. On my leaving Kandahar my soldiers and the citizens were seen embracing." (Letter of Sir W. Nott to the Adjutant-General, dated April 4th, 1843.)

drew from him the following official Memorandum, addressed to Sir Colin Campbell :—

“ It is with surprise and regret I have seen in Lieutenant-Colonel Bradshaw’s report of his march into the Euṣofzie country that villages have been destroyed by the troops.

“ I desire to know why a proceeding at variance with humanity and contrary to the usages of civilized warfare, came to be adopted. I disapprove of such cruelties, so unmilitary and so injurious to the discipline and honour of the Army. Should the troops be again called upon to act, you will be pleased to issue orders that war is to be made on men ; not upon defenceless *women and children*, by destroying their habitations and leaving them to perish without shelter from the inclemency of the winter. I have heard of no outrages committed by the wild mountaineers that could call for conduct so unmilitary and so impolitic.”¹

The officer to whom Napier forwarded this Memorandum, was to remain faithful to its teachings under the strongest possible temptation to repudiate them. The outrages committed by the mutineers of 1857, on British women and children, might easily have been made the excuse for terrible acts of retaliation ; but Lord Clyde never allowed indignation to betray him into injustice, or to blind him to the truth that only by giving the people no cause for siding with the revolted soldiery, could he hope for a peace which should leave British authority still supreme in India. Knowing human nature too well to believe that fear is the strongest lever by which it can be moved, making generous allowance for the instinct of race, the promptings of family affection and the pressure of circumstance, he avoided the mistake of trying to shorten the life-and-death struggle in which he was engaged, by striking terror into

¹ *Defects Civil and Military of the Indian Government*, by General Sir William Napier, K.C.B., pp. 114-5. Initials in the Memorandum. It transpired that these villages were destroyed by the Political Officer.—H.B.H.

the souls of the villagers who, willingly or unwillingly, were daily harbouring and befriending the mutineers. No defenceless towns or villages were burned or plundered by his orders, no fields laid waste, no cattle slaughtered, no bullock-carts confiscated, no women and children driven from their homes; and, as a consequence of this resolute limiting of the evils of the war to its original authors and their active abettors, when hostilities ceased, the whole country resumed its normal aspect; and bitterness against their alien rulers, on the score of the severity with which they had put down a military revolt, soon died out of the hearts of the Indian peasantry. The foregoing examples might be multiplied indefinitely, but enough have been adduced to prove that in the rules and practice of the Anglo-Indian Army, prior to 1879, Christian ethics, as applied to war, had touched their high-water mark, and in lowering the standard of humanity upheld by a long line of illustrious soldiers, General Roberts put back the clock of progress for the whole world.

CHAPTER XX

The Retirement from Khost

RESCUE OF MATUN GARRISON

RECONNOITRING parties that were out very early the day after the attack on the British camp, scouring the valley for seven or eight miles around Matun, discovered no traces of the enemy; yet, rumours of so disquieting a nature were afloat, that General Roberts felt it necessary to order the construction of shelter trenches in advance of his position, to give time for the troops to fall in in the event of a night-attack. None was made, but there were several scares, one of which ended in a strange tragedy.¹

Soon after dark a false alarm turned out the troops, who began firing on all sides. In an instant the captive Waziris were on their feet, struggling to free themselves from the ropes that bound them together, and to wrest their rifles from the sentries. The Native Officer in command of the guard, fearing that his men would be overpowered, shouted to the prisoners, in Pushtu, to keep quiet, or he would shoot them down. The warning was unheeded, and the order to fire or to use the bayonet had to be given. Nine men were killed and thirteen wounded, four of them mortally, and in the darkness it was difficult

¹ "We had no end of scares about night-attacks, which is a favourite mode of fighting with these people. For myself I have a horror of night-attacks, all confusion and bother, and often firing into friends as well as foes. They are very trying even to the best and most disciplined troops. On one occasion, in the middle of dinner, a sudden alarm took place. The troops turned out in a moment, and there were volleys as if 30,000 Mangals were on us. There was really no attack and the firing soon ceased." ("Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough, *Pall Mall Magazine*, June 1898, pages 208, 209.)

to separate the uninjured from the injured, the living from the dead. As soon as possible, however, the wounded were placed in a roughly-improvised shelter, where Surgeon W. E. Griffiths, of the 21st Punjab Infantry, and Surgeon H. Cotton, of the 72nd Highlanders, did all in their power to save life and mitigate suffering. In the confusion attendant on this unfortunate occurrence, a friendly Chief, returning home with his followers after paying a visit to the General, was fired upon and wounded. It is probable that the shots which had alarmed the camp and led to both these regrettable incidents, had been fired for the purpose of creating a state of panic favourable to the escape of the prisoners, but the good discipline of the troops frustrated the plan, and the only men to suffer by it were those whom it was intended to help, for a Court of Inquiry held to investigate the unfortunate affair, exonerated the Native Officer from blame : he had warned the Waziris before firing on them, and he only did his duty in using force to prevent their escape.¹

On the 9th, foraging parties brought in large quantities of grain and firewood from the ruined and deserted villages round Matun. On the same day, a Non-commissioned Officer and eight men of the 5th Punjab Cavalry rejoined the main body, after a very chequered experience. They had been left, with a view to protecting the road to Hazir Pir, at a village named Yakubi, whose headmen had undertaken to protect them. So long as there was no temptation to break it, this promise was kept ; but during the attack on the British position, the little party was overpowered and disarmed, plundered and stripped. A few hours later, when the light of the blazing villages proclaimed the victory of the British, the villagers repented of their hasty act, released the captives, and restored to them their arms and personal possessions. The Non-commissioned Officer in command immediately seized two Maliks, who had been forward in inciting their people to violence, and, on withdrawing from the village, carried them off to camp, where

¹ Roberts's despatch, 10th January, 1879.

they were tried by a Military Court, and sentenced to seven years' transportation, whilst a third Malik, who had done his best to protect the outpost, was rewarded.

During the evening of the 7th, Roberts had caused the Maliks, who the previous night had placed themselves in his hands, to be brought before him, and, in full view of their burning villages, had reproached them with having brought their misfortunes on themselves, and expressed the hope that they would now see the futility of attempting to withstand disciplined troops, however small their numbers. His account of the transaction, put forward in an Official Despatch written three days later, followed the same lines. The villages had been destroyed "as a punishment to the inhabitants for having given shelter to his assailants." It had been "severe, but the lesson was certainly needed," and he expected that "its results" would be "satisfactory." "There was evidence that the combination against him (me) was widespread, and if a severe example had not been made of those who fought against him (me) on the 7th of January, the ill-feeling would have extended. Now, the headmen of the neighbouring villages had come in, and the remainder were reported to be anxious to submit." So satisfied was the British General that the punishment inflicted was a certain guarantee of future good order and peace in the valley, that he could end his Despatch with the assurance that it would now be safe to leave "an adequate Force"—defined as half a Mountain Battery, two troops of Native Cavalry, and a regiment of Native Infantry—in Khost, provided that the troops in the Kuram were maintained in sufficient strength to keep open its long line of communications.¹

In accordance with the views expressed in this Despatch, the Native levies were now disbanded, the Ex-Governor and his attendants placed in tents, and, when the fort had been thoroughly cleansed and stocked with food and ammunition, all the sick and such of the Waziri prison-

¹ Ibid.

ers as had not been ransomed, were moved thither, Major Collis appointed Commandant, with Mr. Archibald Christie, C.S., as Political Officer, and the 21st Punjab Infantry and a troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, for a garrison. These arrangements completed, Roberts struck his camp, at 8 a.m., on the 13th of January, and entered on the subsidiary work of the Expedition—the exploring and surveying of the Khost Valley. In three days' time, he visited the whole of the western side of the valley, without encountering any opposition, though, in consequence of rumours that the Mangals intended making a night-attack, measures of precaution had to be taken on the evening of the 14th. On the return of the Force to Matun, the camp was established on a fresh site, nearer the fort, and on the southern, instead of on the northern, side of the watercourse on which its water supply depended.

As soon as it had become evident that the whole of the Expeditionary Force would be detained in Khost for a longer period than had been planned for, orders for a second fifteen days' supply had been sent to Hazir Pir ; and, on the 18th of January, the expected convoy, escorted by the 23rd Pioneers, a party of the 5th Gurkhas, and a draft of recruits from the 72nd Highlanders, arrived in camp. The Gurkhas returned the following morning, taking with them all the camels still with the Force ; but the greater number of those whose loads had been consumed, had already left on the 16th, in charge of a party of armed Turis, sent from the Kuram to bring them back. The same day, Captain Woodthorpe, accompanied by Captain Wynne, the Superintendent of Army Signalling, and escorted by the 28th Punjab Infantry, began a survey of the southern side of the valley. In order to connect his operations with the great Trigonometrical Survey of India, Woodthorpe obtained leave from a Waziri Chief, Kiput by name, to ascend the Lazam Peak, six thousand four hundred feet high—from the summit of which Wynne, having succeeded in opening heliographic communication with Bunu, received from Colonel Godby, commanding the Punjab Frontier Force, who chanced to be there, the news of the

Mahsud Waziris' raid into British territory and the burning of Tank. The bearing of this raid upon his own position was not lost upon General Roberts. With one subdivision of the Waziris he had already come into collision, and he knew that in Dawar, the valley lying south of Khost, where the bulk of the population was of Waziri stock, a certain Mulla Adkar was busy preaching a *Jehad*. Other news of an alarming nature had been in his possession for some time. The Mangals and Jajis had taken advantage of the weakening of the Forces in the Kuram to threaten the Peiwar Kotal, an extensive position inadequately held by three guns and about a thousand men; and though the courage and coolness of Captain Rennick,¹ the officer in command of the isolated, advanced post of Ali Khel, had averted the danger by giving Brigadier-General Thelwall time to bring up reinforcements, there could be no certainty that it might not recur, and with more serious results, for, with the hundred and fifty men of the 72nd Highlanders and the two hundred Gurkhas already called up, Thelwall had exhausted the troops on whom he could draw in an emergency; and the strength of every post, from Thal to the Peiwar Kotal, was steadily diminishing under the wasting inroads of disease.

The same process of attrition was going on in the Khost Force, where, to the fever and dysentery bred by the water-logged ground, the setting in of severe weather had now added pneumonia of a very acute type,² while the causes that were predisposing the men to sick-

¹ Rennick, threatened by a very large force, first persuaded the villagers of Ali Khel to side with him, and then sent out their headmen to warn the enemy that he should certainly oppose their advance. This resolute attitude on the part of a single Englishman, backed by only a handful of Native troops, so amazed and disconcerted the Mangals that they allowed two days to slip by unused, and when, avoiding Ali Khel, they swarmed into the Harriab Valley and advanced in dense masses towards the Kotal, they found the garrison so fully prepared to receive them, that they dared not venture an attack, and dispersed as rapidly as they had assembled.—H.B.H.

² (a) Extracts from Surgeon R. Gillam-Thomsett's Journals, 15th January (p. 206):—"The men now began to suffer a good deal from fever, neuralgia,

ness of all sorts were telling in still greater degree on the transport-animals in both valleys. All these untoward circumstances were weighing on General Roberts's mind whilst engaged in carrying out the subsidiary objects of the Expedition ; yet, he continued to cling to his scheme for the permanent occupation of Khost till the 23rd of January, when reports reached him of a second great gathering of Tribesmen in the mountains bordering on that valley. The immediate danger was promptly met. A messenger was despatched to recall the 23rd Pioneers, who had been sent on in advance of the troops to improve the eastern road into the Kuram, by which they were to return to Hazir Pir ;¹ the camp was entrenched, so far as defective tools would permit, and further protected by a rampart of camel-saddles, piled one upon another and picketed down to the ground by ropes, whilst, during the night, star-shells were fired off at intervals ; but the safety thus secured was so evidently of a temporary nature, that there could be no further question of leaving a fourth part of the troops to continue a work which was taxing to the utmost the strength of the whole Force. A reconnaissance, made by Hugh Gough, revealed no large body of the enemy within six miles of the British position ; but the attitude of the people on the lower hillslopes was unfriendly, and nowhere was there any sign of that willing-

and chest complaints." 21st January (p. 210) :—" A great many of the men were knocked down with lung complaints, which proved fatal in many cases, especially among Natives." January 27th (p. 212) :—" In common with many others, the malarious influence of the Khost Valley had now begun to tell on me.

. . . I really thought I was quite breaking up." January 30th (p. 215) :—" One soldier of the 10th Hussars died during the journey from lung complaint. Indeed, pneumonia was dreadfully prevalent just at that time, and I believe the 21st Punjab Infantry and the 5th Punjab Cavalry suffered very much from it, the former regiment losing ten, the latter six men during the last three or four days we were in Khost."

(b) " I believe more men died in Khost during our short period of occupation than General Roberts had lost since we crossed the Kuram." (Special Correspondent of *Standard*, January 31.)

¹ The Pioneers had reached Hazir Pir before the messenger could overtake them.

ness to submit to British authority which the General and the Political Officer had expected to follow upon the punishment meted out to the villages lying around Matun.

Unwilling, however, to admit the failure of his costly enterprise, Roberts fell back upon a plan by which he hoped to be able to retain Khost for the British Empire, whilst putting an end to its occupation by British troops. A certain Sultan Jan, an Indian Civil Servant and, at the same time, a scion of the Saduzai Royal House, a man of distinguished manners and appearance, had arrived in camp on the 22nd, summoned thither with a view to the eventuality which had now arisen. If any man could hold Khost without the aid of British troops, resting his authority simply on his personal influence, supported by a small body of Native levies—all Turis, for the people of the valley declined to enlist in it—which Captain Conolly had been organizing, that man was Sultan Jan, and him, therefore, Roberts now appointed Governor of the valley, to hold it until it could be brought more directly under British rule. The appointment once made, no time was lost in giving effect to the change of military policy which it denoted, and, on the 25th, all the headmen of Khost appeared, by order, at Matun to be instructed in the new arrangements which recent occurrences had rendered necessary. Roberts's speech on this occasion was an echo of that which, two months earlier, he had addressed to the people of Kuram. It contained the same explanation of the causes of the war; the same assurance that the British Government's quarrel was with the Amir, and not with his subjects;¹ the same promises of religious toleration and non-interference in local customs

¹ "Maliks of Khost, you all know the reason of our coming here. It had nothing to do with the people of Afghanistan; with them the British Government has been, and *still is, at peace*. Our quarrel is with the Amir, Shere Ali alone and, with him, only because he was ill-advised enough to break off friendly relations which, for many years, had subsisted between him and the British and to throw himself into the hands of the Russians." (Letter of Special Correspondent of *Standard*, dated January 31st, 1879.)

and affairs ;¹ the same picture of the blessings of peace and good government ; the same praise of British honesty and humanity ;² and if it differed from the earlier oration in that it announced the approaching evacuation of the valley, instead of its continued occupation by British troops, the difference was concealed under the threat of returning, at short notice, should the authority of the new ruler of Khost, Shazada Sultan Jan, be disputed, or attacked.

The encomium passed by the General on British honesty and humanity must have sounded strange in the ears of men who had seen their own or their neighbours' houses looted and destroyed, and had suffered the loss of all their cattle and winter stores of grain ;³ but the time and place were not favourable to the expression of dissent, and the submissive attitude of the audience confirmed Roberts's confidence in the stability of the Government he had so hastily set up. On leaving the durbar tent, to which only natives of Khost had been admitted, he addressed a few words to a group of hillmen gathered outside, who had come in, by invitation, to pay a visit to their late antagonists. The interview closed with the gift of a few rupees and of twenty sheep, on which the guests were feasted to the accompaniment of the band of the 21st Punjab Infantry.

The next morning, the order for the return of the Expeditionary Force to Kuram was issued, and the necessary preparations were pushed forward with cheerful alacrity, for, the excitement of novelty having worn off, the troops were eager to get back to somewhat

¹ " You have been assured that the British Government have no wish to molest you or interfere in any way with your liberties, either social or religious." (Ibid.)

² " Discipline has been well maintained among my troops, not a complaint having been made, and all supplies have been regularly paid for. In short, you have been treated with the greatest forbearance and kindness." (Ibid.)

³ " I think the whole Valley of Khost and the surrounding tribes will remember our visit for some time to come, and the rough handling they have received will go far to ensure our safe return to Hazir Pir." (*The Times* Correspondent, 14th February, 1879.)

healthier and less trying conditions.¹ A very different spirit, however, animated the Turi levies. With ever increasing anxiety and depression, they watched the activity prevailing in camp, and when the Fort, with its stores of ammunition and grain, had been formally handed over to Sultan Jan, and there could no longer be any doubt that all the British troops were about to withdraw from the valley, they flatly refused to be left behind, and only by much persuasion, and the promise of increased pay were they at last induced to remain.

On the morning of the 28th of January, the Force began its return march to Hazir Pir by the new route prepared for them by the Pioneers, and after crossing a rugged range of mountains, on the further side of which the country proved to be much cut up by ravines and water-courses, encamped at Sabbri, a village twelve miles from Matun. Here, the next day was spent for the double object of reconnoitring the district and resting the camels, some of which, whilst grazing, were driven off by hillmen and only recovered after a sharp chase. That halt saved the lives of Sultan Jan and his Turi levies. The Mangals had lost no time in showing the kind of attention that the British nominee might expect to receive from them. They had gathered at once round Fort Matun in such numbers as left its little garrison no hope of defending it successfully,² and had the retiring troops been two marches off, instead of only one, the messenger despatched to ask for assistance, would have arrived too late for a relieving force to regain the Fort before the threatened attack on it had been delivered. As it was, starting very early next

¹ "Nobody in the Khost Expedition regretted in the least that he was leaving the Khost Valley, and would never, in all probability, see it again." (Special Correspondent of *Standard*, January 31st, 1879.)

² "The Shahzada's message spoke of 10,000 Mangals, or Jadrans, as assembled round Matun, and a few hours later, Captain Wynne, who had established a signalling-post on a peak from which he could see the whole valley, signalled to Barry Drew that it was black with Mangals." (Special Correspondent of *Standard*, January 31st, and *Times* Correspondent, March 7th, 1879.)

day, Roberts, with No. 2 Mountain Battery, one Squadron 10th Hussars, one Squadron 5th Punjab Cavalry, a small detachment 72nd Highlanders, and the 28th Punjab Infantry, penetrated once again into the Khost Valley, which by this time was swarming with tribesmen, and reached Matun by 9.30 a.m. to the intense joy of the terrified Turis. Whilst the Cavalry watched the enemy, six thousand of whom occupied a strong position only two miles away, the Infantry loaded their camels with as much grain as they could carry, flung the remainder into a neighbouring pond, destroyed the ammunition and set fire to the Fort. The retirement was carried out with great skill and coolness. Behind a screen of Cavalry skirmishers, thrown forward as if to attack the enemy, the mountain-guns and the Infantry gained so great a start that the Mangals' chance of falling upon them with any prospect of success, was lost, and they made no attempt to meddle with the Cavalry when the time had come for these also to withdraw. At 5 p.m. relievers and relieved arrived safely at Sabbri, where Barry Drew and his men, whilst on the alert to respond to a call for assistance, should any such call reach them from Roberts's column, had been busy all day, first, striking half the tents so as to bring the camp into smaller compass, and then, surrounding it with a rampart, three feet six inches high, built up of men's kits, Officers' baggage, camel-saddles, flour-bags, tents, etc.

The next day, escorted by the 5th Punjab Cavalry, General Roberts and his Staff rode into Hazir Pir, followed, on the 31st, by the main body under Barry Drew. Its starting-point regained, the Expeditionary Force was broken up and the troops composing it distributed along the line of communications, which the Viceroy, on the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, had strengthened during their absence by the addition of the 14th Bengal Cavalry, the 92nd Highlanders, the 11th Native Infantry, and the troops contributed by the Rajahs of Fared Kot, Nabha, Pattiala, and Nahun, under the command of Brigadier-General John Watson, V.C., C.B.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. There are notable discrepancies between the despatch of the 10th of January, 1879, and the Memorandum of the 1st of April, of the same year. In the former, General Roberts gave a straightforward and fairly full account of the circumstances connected with the attack on his camp ; in the latter, he omitted all reference to the efforts made by the Maliks of the Matun villages to induce the Mangals to retire from the valley, and suppressed the fact that, in proof of their good faith, these same men had voluntarily constituted themselves his prisoners. On the other hand, the murder of "unarmed camp-followers in villages within half a mile" of the British camp, mentioned in the justificatory documents, finds no place in the purely historical narrative, and Major Colquhoun's detailed diary of the operations in Khost, makes no mention of any camp-follower who lost his life before the Matun villages were destroyed, except the driver killed by the Mangals when they captured and carried off some camels, an offence which Roberts also sought to saddle upon the people of Khost.¹ One point, however, on which both accounts agree is the putting forward of the threat to exact summary and severe retribution from all who should give admittance to "persons having hostile intentions towards us," made on the 6th of January, as an excuse for the destruction wrought on the 7th. But that threat was, in itself, a violation of justice and policy ; firstly, because there were no means of ascertaining whether admittance to the Matun villages would be given, or forced ; secondly, because only an effective occupation can, morally and legally, deprive a people of the right to defend its territory against invasion, and the arrival of a British Force at Matun did not constitute an effective occupation of Khost ; thirdly, because a punishment inflicted on the inhabitants of the valley could have no deterrent effect on the inhabitants of the hills, whose homes were in no danger of

¹ Parliamentary Paper of 17th June, 1879, "Proceedings in Khost."

suffering a like fate ; fourthly, because the fear of being called to account for the acts of the Mangals, was certain to drive the villagers into co-operation with the former ; fifthly, because the execution of the threat could not fail to alienate completely the people of the valley, whom it was Roberts's interest to reconcile. Memories of burned houses are not to be blotted out, either by moral lectures, or promises of future benefits ; and in Khost, as later on in Kabul, Roberts did his country the disservice of associating the British name with acts of " implacable vengeance,"¹ which, but for his own reckless generalship, he would never have been tempted to commit.

OBSERVATION II. Responsibility for the costly and unsuccessful Expedition into Khost must be borne entirely by General Roberts. His instructions did, indeed, order him to take possession of that valley, but, as regarded the time and manner of the occupation, they left him the latitude without which no discreet and independent-minded Officer would care to accept a command in the field ; yet, he rushed into it at the earliest possible moment, taking with him an inadequate Force and leaving behind him a dangerously weakened and sickly garrison to keep open his communications, and its own. His preparations made no provision for the state of things that any intelligent Frontier Officer could have told him would confront him at Matun ; and, as the whole business was planned and conducted on a scale commensurate to a punitive Expedition, into a punitive Expedition it soon degenerated, with the ordinary ending of all such expeditions—a rapid retreat from an untenable position. That it ended merely in failure, and not in disaster, was due to two causes, on neither of which was it possible to count beforehand, viz., the dryness of the season, and the lack, on the enemy's side, of any leader endowed with average

¹ "In the eyes of the Afghans, General Roberts is the personification of the implacable vengeance of a conqueror"—words used by an Afghan Khan in a letter to a Persian Minister. (See, Letter to Sir Henry Rawlinson, in a volume entitled *Tracts : Central Asia*.)

military ability. Had the winter rains set in after the arrival of the troops at Matun, flooding the rice-fields in which they were encamped, and filling the wide river-beds in their rear, they would have been unable to move in any direction, the supply-convoy could not have come up from Hazir Pir, and man and beast would have had reason to be thankful if nothing worse happened to them than the being put, temporarily, on half rations; ¹ and had the Mangals understood their business as well as the Afridis in the Tirah Campaign of 1897-98 understood theirs; had they kept to the ordinary tactics of hill-peoples, and contented themselves with nightly firing into camp, and with daily cutting the Force's communications with Hazir Pir, the troops would have had no chance of lightening the pressure of peril for as much as a day; and the retreat that had in the end to be accepted, would have come earlier, and been carried out under worse conditions.

¹ "Rain hung about for the first few days, and had it come down we would have been in an awful hat, for we had only seventeen days' provisions with us.

We were therefore praying that no rain might fall to complicate matters." (*Kohat, Kuram and Khost*, p. 172, by Surgeon R. Gillham-Thomsett.)

CHAPTER XXI

The Occupation of Kandahar

ACTION AT THE GHLO KOTAL PASS

ON the 1st of January, 1879, the day after the 1st Division of the Kandahar Field Force had concentrated at Gulistan Karez, on the hither side of the Khwaja Amran Mountains, and the 2nd Division at Chaman, on the further side of the same range, the advance guards of both forces started for the Takht-i-Pul Valley, where the converging tracks to be followed by the left and the right columns, respectively, merge into one; the Brigades composing the main body of each, following at intervals of a day's march.

The advanced guard of Stewart's column, under Brigadier-General Palliser, was composed of the—

15th Hussars, one squadron;
1st Punjab Cavalry, two squadrons;
A.B. Royal Horse Artillery, two guns;
25th Punjab Infantry;
32nd Pioneers;
Wing of 2nd Beluchi Regiment;
4th and 9th Companies of Sappers and Miners;
Strength about 1,800 men.

Biddulph's advanced guard, commanded by Colonel T. G. Kennedy, consisted of the—

15th Hussars, one troop;
2nd Punjab Cavalry, two squadrons;
3rd Sind Horse, one troop;
A.B. Royal Horse Artillery, two guns;
Strength about 350 men.

Nominally, Palliser was in command of both bodies, for Stewart, knowing that the distance between them—only twenty-five miles at the outset—would steadily diminish, supposed that they would all along be able to co-operate, their cavalry joining hands to screen the march of the entire force ; but the intricate nature of the ground separating them, rendered joint action impossible ; each had to act independently of the other, and all correspondence between the Divisional Commanders was carried on by relays of horsemen, posted at convenient distances, in rear of their respective forces. The distance by either route was much the same—about fifty miles, divided into three marches ; the country to be traversed a rough, stony plain, broken by rocky hillocks and cut up by nullahs ; but Stewart's line of advance had no exposed flank, his left being covered by the drifting sands of the Registan Desert ; whilst Biddulph's right had to be carefully patrolled, and great care taken to maintain touch between the advanced guard and the two Brigades—Nuttall's and Lacy's—echeloned in its rear, in order to guard against surprise from the extensive Kadani valley, which it was impossible to reconnoitre satisfactorily.

It would be hard to exaggerate the barrenness and loneliness of the region into which the troops had now descended, for two days the only sign of life was a group of Kabitkas,¹ the temporary dwellings of a party of nomads, which Palliser's men caught sight of ; and though, on the third morning, after the Mel Manda Valley had been entered, a few scattered habitations were discerned and strips of cultivation here and there, these were confined to the banks of artificial watercourses, and far away the greater part of the land was clothed with thick brushwood, smelling of sage. The foliage of this

¹ These Kabitkas are formed of branches bent in a curve and stuck in the ground, and then the framework is covered with a thick, coarse camel-hair cloth, most neatly pinned together with large thorns, and fixed to the ground by short ropes and pegs. In these domed tents, men, women, children and animals all live together, and they suit the climate, being warm to a degree." *Kandahar in 1879*, by Major A. Le Messurier.

shrub—though not actually poisonous—proved fatal to many a starving camel, whose weakened stomach was unable to digest the unaccustomed food which hunger compelled it to devour; for the difficulty of feeding the transport animals still weighed heavily on the Kandahar Field Force, as did also the allied difficulty of keeping up their numbers to a point compatible with the efficiency of the Army. Even as late as the 1st of January, the Commissariat Officer attached to Lacy's Brigade, had reported that very necessary stores would have to be left behind for lack of carriage; and when, the next day, an Afghan brought in three hundred donkeys, they had to be hired at the exorbitant rate which their owner's knowledge of the Army's needs emboldened him to ask. Fortunately, they were particularly fine animals, almost as big as mules.¹

About the middle of the morning of the 4th of January, when the two advanced guards were within three or four miles of each other, parties of the enemy's horse were discovered, pushed well forward in front of a low rugged chain of hills to protect the passes which lead from the Mel Manda, into the Tukht-i-Pul Valley. Major G. Luck who, with a squadron of the 15th Hussars, was scouting well ahead of Palliser's force, pressed back the Afghans opposed to him into the Karkoma Pass, and, driving them before him, descended at their heels into the last named valley. Here the fugitives came upon their supports, and, turning back, rushed upon their pursuers, shouting and waving their swords. Though greatly outnumbered, Luck boldly galloped forward to meet the charge, and when the opponents were only a few hundred paces apart, the Afghans hesitated, paused, broke, and, scattering right and left, sought shelter in ground too rough and rocky to make it safe for a mere handful of men to follow them up.

¹ Some people may ask why they were not pressed into the service, and fair wages allotted to their owner. The answer to this is that the Afghan would have taken the first opportunity to desert with his beasts, and no further transport animals would have been brought into camp.—H. B. H.

Hardly had the squadron come to a halt, before a detachment of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, led by Major C. S. Maclean, rode up, bringing the order to fall back upon the guns which, by this time, were in the Pass, and if possible to lure the enemy under their fire. This withdrawal was part of a general scheme suggested by Kennedy, who, finding himself confronted by a considerable body of Afghan Cavalry and learning from his scouts that the Ghlo Kotal Pass was strongly held, had determined, before advancing, to dislodge the former and clear the latter, and had sent off a note to Palliser asking for his co-operation in reconnoitring the Tukht-i-Pul Valley. Palliser took the necessary steps for carrying out the proposed joint movement, by recalling and, at the same time, strengthening Luck, by directing the 32nd Pioneers to hold the Karkoma Pass, and the 25th Punjab Infantry to move rapidly in support of the Artillery, which was to stick to the Kafila track. Meantime, Kennedy had reinforced his scouts, and whilst they were gradually enveloping the enemy's flanks, he himself, with the remainder of his cavalry, threatened them with a frontal attack. Skilfully hidden by this screen of horsemen, the guns were brought to the front, and, coming into action, compelled the Afghans to fall back. At the first sound of Artillery fire, Palliser, with his Brigade-Major, Captain H. R. Abadie, hurried forward to meet Luck's party, placed himself at its head, turned sharply to the right, and, as quickly as the rugged nature of the ground would allow, pushed on towards the northern mouth of the Ghlo Kotal Pass. Just then, a dust storm sprang up, so thickening the air that Palliser was for an instant deceived into believing that a body of Afghan horsemen who were just then issuing, in good order, from the pass, were Kennedy's men; whilst the Afghans, unaware that the British had already penetrated into the valley, mistook Palliser's troops for a party of their own cavalry. The deception was a short one on either side. Maclean and Luck, at the head of Palliser's column, saw more clearly than their chief, and, quickly deploying, dashed into the enemy's

exposed flank. Though taken by surprise and their ranks broken by the impetus of the British charge, the Afghans gathered in groups and fought on bravely, till Kennedy's Cavalry, pressing them in rear, obliged them to seek safety in flight, and they galloped away, unpursued, in the direction of Kandahar.¹ Whilst this fighting was in progress on the eastern side of the valley, the guns which Palliser had left on the western Kafil road, and, as he thought, under the protection of his Infantry, had, by some mistake, been pushed forward four or five miles, escorted only by a small party of Cavalry. Near the village of Saif-u-Din they came suddenly in sight of the main body of the enemy, twelve hundred strong, posted on a hill about a mile away. At the same moment, they were themselves discerned, and the Afghans, seeing them so weakly guarded, poured down towards the stream on the banks of which they had halted. Marshall, the officer commanding, at once began to retire slowly on his distant supports, and sent back an urgent message asking for assistance, which Colonel H. Moore who had assumed command in Palliser's absence, was not slow in rendering. Hurrying forward cavalry and infantry, he covered the retirement of the guns with mounted skirmishers, whom he directed to fall back slowly as soon as they had come into touch with the enemy; and, in this way, he not only brought the Artillery into safety, but, by its fire, inflicted some loss upon its would-be captors.

¹ "The curious mistakes during the day are worth noting, for they were made by one and all. In the first place, the Afghans themselves, on issuing from the Ghlo Kotal, saw the 15th Hussars and Punjab Cavalry, and at first set them down for their own cavalry coming in from Kandahar; then the 15th Hussars took Kennedy's men for the enemy, and instances could be given in which individuals nearly suffered, for their want of knowledge of the men in whose vicinity they remained. One man of the 15th Hussars was out as a scout, and actually, for a time, did left flanker to a party of the enemy; and in the evening, General Palliser, Sankey and myself at first thought we had run on the main body of the enemy when we were close to our own men."—*Kandahar in 1879*, by Major Le Messurier, pp. 57, 58.

The brief danger was over before Palliser rejoined his men, but with evening closing in, the British forces in the valley widely scattered, and the main body of the enemy still unshaken and near at hand, it would have been imprudent to carry the reconnaissance any further; so the troops bivouacked as they stood, with strong outposts thrown out on every side. The night proved a wild one. At first it rained heavily, then a sharp wind arose, and, in its wake, a second dust storm, making the darkness doubly dark; and when morning broke, Palliser and Kennedy found themselves in undisputed possession of the valley, for, under cover of that darkness, the Afghans had retreated on Kandahar.

In his report on this very creditable little affair—the only engagement on the whole long march from the Indus to Kandahar—General Palliser brought to special notice Colonel Kennedy whose admirable dispositions had contributed so much to its success, Majors Maclean and Luck, Captain Abadie, and his own Aide-de-camp, Lieutenant the Hon. R. Rupert. Three men of the 1st Punjab Cavalry enjoyed a similar distinction: Sowar Mahomed Takhi, who in the face of the enemy had picked up a dismounted comrade, and Ram Rukha and Akhmat Khan, who, together, had boldly charged into the ranks of a considerable body of Afghans to rescue J. Lower, a private of the 15th Hussars. All these men were subsequently decorated with the Order of Merit; had they been British soldiers, or negroes belonging to a West Indian regiment, they would have got the Victoria Cross.

The British casualties in the action were small:—in the 15th Hussars, one officer, Major Luck, contusion of shoulder;¹ one non-commissioned officer and five troopers wounded, two severely; in the 1st Punjab Cavalry a native officer, Jemadar Huknewary Khan

¹ Luck would have lost his arm but for the fortunate coincidence that the night before the action he received a pair of steel epaulettes from his wife in India, which his bearer at once sewed on his uniform.

and three sowars wounded, one severely; whilst the enemy's losses amounted to about a hundred men killed and wounded.

On the 6th of January, at Abdur Rahman, in the Tukht-i-Pul Valley, the two divisions of the Kandahar Field Force concentrated for the first time, and all the regiments and corps that had been temporarily transferred from the one to the other, returned to their respective commands. On the 7th, the combined forces marched to Kushab, a village about eight miles short of Kandahar. The two Cavalry Brigades, under General Palliser, carefully covered the movement, and at night encamped well in advance of the main body of the army, for news received at Abdur Rahman had pointed to a stout resistance on the part of the enemy, and to the need of regular siege operations for the reduction of Kandahar. On the line of march, however, a deputation from that city waited upon the British Commander-in-Chief to inform him that the Governor, Sirdar Mir Afzul, had fled, with two hundred horsemen, to Herat, that the troops retiring from Tukht-i-Pul had been refused admittance within its walls, that the rest of the Afghan garrison had dispersed to their homes, and that the citizens were prepared to submit to British authority.

Stewart immediately decided to make, on the morrow, a ceremonial entry into Kandahar. The whole army, except the two Batteries, Heavy Artillery, C-4, and 1-1 Royal Artillery,¹ escorted

¹ By this time it had become a difficult matter to move the Artillery at all. On the 1st January, General Stewart wrote, as follows, to the Adjutant General: "The Artillery have simply collapsed, owing to complete failure of the bullocks. They have died in large numbers, and from sore feet and from other causes are hardly able to drag themselves, much less loaded waggons, along even an easy road. At present most of the troops in this force are simply working parties for the Artillery, and if I had not arranged for this, not one of them would have reached Quetta. This is a very serious matter, especially as we cannot get bullocks in this country." Again, on January the 4th, he wrote: "If I had known they were in such a plight I should have left, the waggons at Quetta, for as matters stand I am always in dread of being obliged to abandon them."—*Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, pp. 235, 236.

by 59th Foot¹ and the troops needed to guard the baggage, was to share in the triumphal march, passing in one long stream from the Shikarpur Gate on the southern, to the Kabul Gate on the eastern side of the town.² The start next day was made early, but, owing to the cutting of numerous watercourses,³ the road for miles was little better than a swamp,⁴ and the difficulties of getting the infantry, guns and baggage along so great that it was four p.m. before the head of the British column, after threading its way through the narrow lanes of an extra-mural suburb, passed through the Shikarpur Gate into the broad street which runs northward in a straight line

¹ 59th Foot came up the next day with C-4 and 1-1 Royal Artillery, and the two Heavy Batteries, 5-11 and 6-11.—*T. C. Hamilton's Diary*.

² ORDER OF MARCH THROUGH THE CITY OF KANDAHAR:—

15th Hussars.
 A-B Royal Horse Artillery.
 1st Punjab Cavalry.
 2nd Punjab Cavalry.
 E-4 Royal Artillery.
 D-2 Royal Artillery.
 Peshawar Mountain Battery.
 Jacobabad Mountain Battery.
 2-60th Rifles.
 70th Foot.
 25th Punjab Infantry.
 32nd Pioneers.
 29th Baluchies.
 No. 9 Company Sappers and Miners.
 8th Bengal Cavalry } Detachments.
 19th Bengal Cavalry }

Generals Stewart, Biddulph, Fane, Palliser, Nuttall, and Barter took part in the Procession.—*Diary of the March of the 15th King's Hussars to Kandahar*, by T. C. Hamilton.

³ These watercourses had probably been cut to impede the advance of the Force before the intention of defending the city had been given up.—H. B. H.

⁴ "An officer galloping from rear, assured the General that his Infantry were miles behind toiling through the slough, his Guns were entangled, his Baggage in a desperate case. The sappers told off had doubtless done their best, but the water was too much for them. After weary hours the Infantry appeared, crowning the slope, and with them A.B. Battery of Horse Artillery."—*Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 237.

to the citadel, and which, in the centre of the city, is crossed, at right angles, by a similar thoroughfare connecting the Eastern, or Kabul Gate, with the Western, or Herat Gate. At the point of intersection, both streets are arched over by the Charsu, a circular dome, fifty feet in diameter; and under this vast roof and along the half mile of road between it and the Shikarpur Gate, are the principal bazaars. These, as a rule, swarm with men of many nationalities, all wearing Afghan dress, but in endless variety of hue and shade, and through this bright crowd carts filled with country produce, and camels laden with merchandise, come and go, whilst here and there a woman, clothed from head to foot in the "burkha," a formless robe, or domino, glides silently by. For the traveller, weary and hungry after weeks of toilsome journeyings, no pleasanter sight, even in winter, can be imagined than the food shops of Kandahar, with their piles of juicy pomegranates and almonds and raisins, of dried figs and apricots, to say nothing of cooked vegetables and fish and cresses, fresh from the watercourses which give life and fertility to the valley in which the southern capital is situated. But on that January evening, all these tempting delicacies were hidden from the eyes of the British soldier and his Native comrade. Every shop was closed; buyers and sellers stood, sullen and scowling, in dense ranks on either side the road; and every roof was crowded with women gazing down, half in wonder, half in fear, on the white-faced infidels, rumours of whose approach had so long agitated the city, and who were now actually in its midst.

Arrived at the Charsu, the column ought to have turned to the right, but its guide went steadily forward into the Topkana, or Place d'Armes; a square closed, on the further side, by the citadel's southern wall. At sight of this unexpected obstacle, the leading troops came to a standstill; and, whilst Sir Donald Stewart and his staff rode forward to ascertain the cause of the halt, the regiments behind continued to advance, and soon there was a dangerous block

just outside the square, where the roadway narrowed down to half its original width, and in the still narrower stretch of street just outside the Charsu. The growing darkness added to the difficulty of the situation ; but coolness and discipline soon set matters straight. The Commander-in-Chief and his staff forced their way back through the press ; the men faced about where they stood ; the Artillery, with a good deal of trouble, turned their horses' heads in the right direction, and then the column once more got into motion, and after retracing its steps to the covered crossways, swung round to the left and, a few minutes later, began issuing from the Kabul Gate and marching north-eastward towards the old graveyard of the city, in the vicinity of which tents and baggage were expected to be awaiting its arrival.¹ This expectation was fulfilled for half the Force only. The original order with regard to the impedimenta of the Army, had been that they should all follow the road which, much cut up by watercourses, run through the villages on the south and eastern side of the city ; but an officer on Biddulph's Staff who, after careful inquiry, had convinced himself that the Mand-i-Hissar road, which branches off from the southern road three miles from the Shikarpur Gate, though rough and winding, yet, as lying outside the region of irrigation, was safer and easier than the route selected, went to General Stewart, and, with some difficulty, obtained his permission to use it for the stores and baggage of the 2nd Division. This officer's information proved correct, and Biddulph's tents were being pitched and food got ready for issuing when his troops reached their camping ground ; but Stewart's transport, entangled in narrow streets, and perpetually

¹ "Retracing our steps we again reached the *Charsu*, and turned down the road leading to the Kabul Gate, from whence we emerged at about five o'clock in the evening. The troops, however, continued to pass through the streets until long after dark. The guns had some difficulty in getting through the narrow turnings of the Shikarpur Gate, there was consequently delay, and it was nearly nine o'clock before the bayonets of the last regiment filed through the streets."—Correspondent of the *Bombay Gazette*.

stopped by canals, many of them with broken bridges, moved so slowly that it was hours late in arriving, and in the First Division of the Kandahar Field Force, man and beast celebrated the end of their long march by going supperless to bed.¹

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. In their advance from the Khwaja Amran range to Kandahar, both Stewart's and Biddulph's advanced guards were too weak in Artillery ; a complete battery should have been attached to each, and Kennedy should also have been given a regiment of Infantry and a company of Sappers and Miners, because (1) opposition was expected and its strength uncertain ; (2) the country, especially as regarded the eastern column, offered the Afghans many opportunities for concealment and attack ; (3) the advanced guards were not marching in light order, but had their baggage to protect ; (4) the supports of each were a day's march in the rear.

OBSERVATION II. It is a matter of regret that Sir Donald Stewart should have allowed himself to run so great a risk as was involved in his triumphant entry into Kandahar, for the sake of a mere spectacular effect ; for no practical end was served by rushing into the town in ignorance of the temper of its notoriously treacherous population, and with no certain information as to the whereabouts

¹ In a letter, dated 4th March, 1879, General Stewart writes :—

“That account of our march to Candahar is quite true. We were seven or eight hours doing eight miles, and a weary time we had of it. I don't admit, however, than any part of the delay was due to avoidable causes, because the stoppage was caused by watercourses, which had to be bridged over for the guns. The mistake was bringing the guns at all. But, before I ordered them to go, I had ascertained from our news-writer, a man who had only left Candahar a week before, that the road was a splendid one, fit for guns of any size, etc., etc. A native's idea of a good road is a place along which a pony or mule can scramble, and the country round the city was so intersected by watercourses that we had to *work* our way in. It was very aggravating, but having once got into the labyrinth of lanes and watercourses, there was no way of getting out of a fix except by going on.”—*Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 253.

of the large body of troops which had so recently been within its walls. And not only was the march through Kandahar a grave error in itself, it was marked by faults of still greater gravity. No precautions were taken to diminish its dangers; not a gate was seized, nor any strong force of Artillery and Infantry told off to hold the Charsu and the Citadel; nor, yet, were patrols sent out to make sure that every part of the town was clear of the Afghan soldiery. Had there been a capable leader within its walls that winter afternoon, its inhabitants, all of whom were armed, might have annihilated their invaders when closely jammed together in the cul-de-sac, into which ignorance of its topography had betrayed them. That the Kandahar Field Force escaped unscathed, is no excuse for the temerity which exposed them to the chance of destruction; and the success of the demonstration was one of many incidents in the war which tended to confirm British officers in their inveterate habit of neglecting precautions and courting unnecessary danger.

CHAPTER XXII

Expedition to Khelat-i-Ghilzai

EARLY on the morning of the 9th January, the gateways of Kandahar were occupied by strong European detachments, and the wing of a Native regiment was encamped in the square outside the citadel—measures excellent in themselves, but quite inadequate to the protection of the soldiers and camp followers who, later in the day, poured into the city ; for bazaars and streets were swarming with disbanded soldiers, armed with the jezail or the terrible Afghan knife ; and amongst those seething crowds were many Ghazis (religious fanatics), men ever ready to give their lives for the chance of slaying an unbeliever. That first afternoon, Major St. John, riding in the principal bazaar, had his bridle seized and a gun fired point-blank into his face, by a man who sprang suddenly out of the throng. The startled horse swerved aside, the bullet whistled harmlessly by, and, with the assistance of his companion, Nawab Gholam Hussain Khan, late British Resident at the Court of Shere Ali, St. John succeeded in securing his assailant, who was subsequently tried by a military commission, found guilty, and hanged on the scene of his attempted crime. In a different part of the town, Lieutenant Willis, a young Artillery officer, was stabbed to the heart ; and the assassin cut down three soldiers and wounded Captain H. De la M. Hervey, 1st Punjab Cavalry, who bravely tried to seize him, before he was killed by a non-commissioned officer of the same regiment.¹ Strong detachments of troops were hurried into the city,

¹ Referring to these outrages in a letter dated 12th January, 1879, General Stewart writes : “ There are a lot of Ghazis about the place, but I have told the troops they must look out for themselves, as I am not going to let them bully us or frighten us into *not* going about the town, or wherever we like.”—*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 242.

where the merchants were hastily closing their shops, to collect and bring out their comrades scattered about its streets; and, when this had been accomplished, the gate guards strengthened and the bazaars diligently patrolled—the dangerous wave of excitement sweeping over the population died away; but from that time forward no officer or soldier was permitted to enter Kandahar singly and unarmed; and its citizens were warned, by proclamation, that every man among them was liable to be searched, and that whoever should be found with weapons concealed on his person, would be handed over to the Provost Marshal for condign punishment.

With an almost immediate further advance in prospect, Stewart's most pressing business was to provide for the safety of the city and its garrison during his absence. To render an alien rule as little irksome as possible to its inhabitants, he appointed Nawab Gholam Hussain Khan, a man of the same religion if not of the same race, to the Civil Governorship, with Major St. John, his own Principal Political officer, as his adviser.¹ The command of the garrison, consisting of—

ARTILLERY

Colonel C. Collingwood Commanding—

E-4 Royal Artillery,

5-11 } Heavy Batteries,
6-11 }

CAVALRY

Major C. S. Maclean Commanding—

5 troops 1st Punjab Cavalry,

INFANTRY

Wing 59th Foot

6 Companies 26th Bengal Infantry,

4 " 12th " "

Strength—14 guns, 1,735 effective European and Native Troops.

¹ In a letter dated 9th January, 1879, Stewart writes: "I am in a difficulty to know what to do with the country now we have got it. I have to arrange for the government of the city and the collection of taxes. This is no easy matter, as most of the officials have disappeared."—Ibid. p. 240.

he conferred on Nuttall, one of Biddulph's Brigadiers; and he directed that the sick, of whom there were four hundred and sixty-six, in charge of the Senior Medical Officer, Surgeon J. B. C. Reade, should be accommodated in the Citadel—one hundred and fifty beds for the Europeans in certain of its buildings, two to three hundred for Native soldiers and camp-followers, in tents pitched in its central square, which the Garrison Engineer, Captain W. S. S. Bissett, was directed to put, as quickly as possible, into a defensible and sanitary condition. ¹

Meanwhile the subordinate General Officers and their respective Staffs were employed in arranging for the occupation of further points of the Amir's territory. The immediate goal of the First Division was Khelat-i-Ghilzai, and that of the Second, Girishk, a fort of considerable size, situated on the right bank of the River Helmand; but it was rumoured in camp that if the weather continued favourable—so far it had been unprecedentedly fine—the former might go on to Ghazni; and every one regarded Girishk as only a halting place on the way to Herat. Stewart certainly arrived in Kandahar with both these distant objects in view, but a very few days in the “vile barren country” ² lying around that city, sufficed to limit his ambition to the attainment of either the one or the other. Any hopes that he may have cherished of replenishing his supplies and renewing his transport at the end of the first stage of his great undertaking, had been quickly dissipated: Kandahar might offer a few luxuries to those who were able to pay for them, but it could not entirely support its own small garrison, still less furnish the stores of food that would be needed by two large forces on a journey of several hundred miles; and if, to use his own words, “having to draw all European supplies for three hundred miles

¹ Deputy-Surgeon-General A. Smith, Principal Medical Officer.

² The expression appears in a letter of Stewart's dated 8th January, 1879.—*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 240.

and more, through a country which produces little or nothing is a serious undertaking, and anything that throws it out of gear plays the mischief with us''¹—to what straits would not his men have been reduced by a doubling, in two directions, of the distance which separated them from their depôts? Already the margin that lay between them and starvation, was of the narrowest; only seven days' supplies remained in camp on the 13th January, and, four days earlier, Stewart had written to the Adjutant-General that if he was not to go on to Herat, he should like, on account of the scarcity, to send some of the Force back to India.²

¹ *Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 243.

² *Ibid.* p. 241. In his admirable little book, *Kandahar in 1879*, Major Le Messurier gives an interesting calculation to show the daily consumption of food by a force of 14,000 men—the total strength of the Forces at Kandahar and on the line of communications being 14,025.

FOR EUROPEANS

5,300	Loaves	or	25	Camel loads of flour.
265	Sheep	„	25	„ „ of meat.
	Rice		4	„ „
	Sugar		3	„ „
	Tea		1	„ „
	Salt		1	„ „
	Vegetables		16	„ „
100	gallons		3	„ „
	Rum		3	„ „
	Wood		50	„ „
			—	
			128	„ „

NATIVE TROOPS AND FOLLOWERS

Flour	183	Camel loads.
Dhal	22	„ „
Ghee	11	„ „
Salt	4	„ „
Wood	275	„ „
	—	
	495	„ „

The First Division of the Kandahar Field Force,¹ consisting of the following troops :—

ARTILLERY

A-B Royal Horse Artillery.
 D-2 „ Artillery.
 G-4 „ „
 11-11 „ „ (4 guns).

CAVALRY

15th Hussars.
 8th Bengal Cavalry.
 19th Bengal Lancers.

INFANTRY

1st Brigade

2nd 60th Rifles.
 15th Sikhs.
 25th Bengal Infantry.

2nd Brigade

59th Foot.
 3rd Gurkhas.
 12th Bengal Infantry (4 Companies).

Strength—4,182 officers and men, 5,119 camp followers, 22 guns, 1,564 horses, 78 gun bullocks, 4,439 transport animals, of which 3,930 were camels.

set out on the 15th January for Khelat-i-Ghilzai, in the following order—

Each horse 8 lbs. grain, 8 lbs. bhoosa ; other animals, ponies, mules, and bullocks, half that rate ; each elephant 1 camel load.

For horses, ponies, } mules, and bullocks }	{ 500 maunds grain 500 „ bhoosa	165 Camel loads. 200 „ „
Camels	{ 650 „ bhoosa 650 „ grain }	450 „ „
Elephants		15 „ „
	Total	830 „ „

Grand Total for one day's consumption, 1,453 Camel loads.

¹ No change was made in the Divisional and Brigade Staff, but in Major St. John's stead Lieutenant-Colonel Browne, R.E., accompanied the Force as Political Officer.

ADVANCED GUARD

Cavalry Brigade and Battery Royal Artillery, under Brigadier-General W. Fane, one day's march in advance of Main Body.

MAIN BODY

General Stewart's Head Quarters, 2nd Brigade, under Brigadier-General Hughes, and three Batteries Royal Artillery under Brigadier-General Arbuthnot.

REAR GUARD

1st Brigade under Brigadier-General Barter, one day's march in rear of Main Body.

The distance to be traversed was 84 miles, divided into eight stages—

1	Mohmand	12 miles
2	Robat	8 "
3	Khel-i-Akhum	12 "
4	Shahr-i-Safa	12 "
5	Tirandaz	10 "
6	Jaldak	14 "
7	Pul-i-Sang	9 "
8	Khelat-i-Ghilzai	7 "

and the road, which, after the third day's march, ran for the most part in the valley of the Turnak,¹ presented only one difficulty—numerous irrigation channels—which was met, on the suggestion of Captain A. Gaselee of the Quarter-Master-General's Staff, by sending ahead camels carrying gang boards, and laying them down for the use of the Transport and Artillery over each watercourse in turn. But all the way the ground rose steadily ; with each march the cold at night grew greater, the east wind, which, day after day, swept down the valley from dawn till noon, more and more cutting ; and though no opposition was encountered, the possibility of it had to be so constantly guarded against that, short as were most of the stages, the men were

¹ This tributary of the Argandab, at the time of Stewart's advance only 16 feet wide and 2 deep, during the rains is a considerable stream. "Its water is good, and the country in its vicinity is extensively cultivated, yielding for Afghanistan fair crops of wheat, the young shoots of which were just beginning to show themselves above ground."—*Surgeon-Major H. S. Muir's Diary.*

kept under arms from before daylight until after dark.¹ Cold and fatigue would have been easily borne if those who endured them had been well clad and well fed ; but nearly all the camp-followers and many of the Native soldiers were still without warm clothing ; and, by the substitution of meat for part of the usual allowance of flour and ghee, soldier and camp-follower alike were put practically on half rations for the whole period of their absence from Kandahar.² This confession of the paucity of the supplies accompanying the Force, was made at the end of the first day's march³ ; by the end of the second, scarcity of forage, coupled with cold, had begun to tell on the camels ; by the end of the sixth, the losses among them had been so heavy that the Commissariat Department could no longer supply the necessary carriage,⁴ and General Stewart saw himself compelled to decide that the Rear-Brigade and the Divisional Hospital should go no further than Jaldak—a decision which dislocated the new medical organization, left the greater part of the European troops ill-furnished with medical necessaries and comforts,⁵ and, as the number of sick

¹ Ibid.

² This statement of Major Le Messurier's is confirmed by Deputy-Surgeon General A. Smith. "The reduction of rations," wrote the latter, "fell most heavily on the Native soldiers and followers, whose diet is mostly of a farinaceous description. It was not until their return to Kandahar that the whole of the Native troops were again able to have their full rations issued to them."

³ "Articles of provision are not to be trifled with or left to chance, and there is nothing more clear than that the subsistence of the troops must be certain upon the proposed service, or the service must be relinquished."—Duke of Wellington's Despatch, dated February 18th, 1801.

⁴ January 19th. "We are getting into cold regions again, and our camels are dying in large numbers every day."—*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 245.

⁵ "As there was no other arrangement to meet this unlooked-for contingency, the European portion of the advanced Brigade had to go forward trusting to the medical aid which could be afforded to the sick through the means at the disposal of Batteries and Corps as provided under the arrangements prescribed in Appendix A of the Précis."—Deputy-Surgeon-General A. Smith.

It is probable that the regimental hospital system, though less economical, is the one best suited for campaigning in a country like Afghanistan, where troops are constantly on the move, and forces are so often split up into small divisions.

—H. B. H.

outran the accommodation that could be provided for them in Khelat-i-Ghilzai, subjected the worst cases among them to the suffering attendant on removal.

On the 22nd, General Stewart, with the Divisional troops and the 2nd Brigade, arrived at Khelat-i-Ghilzai, which had been occupied by the advanced guard two days before. Native reports asserted that the garrison of six to seven hundred men, had originally intended to defend the place, but that, disheartened by the splitting of their largest gun, they relinquished their purpose and withdrew in the direction of Ghazni, carrying off with them as much food and forage as they required for their own use, and distributing the balance of their stores amongst the inhabitants of the surrounding districts. Had they stood firm, however, it is probable that the place would have been taken, without great difficulty, by a *coup de main*,¹ for, though strongly situated on the summit of an isolated eminence, well supplied with water by two copious springs,² and possessed of strongly defensible works—ramparts scarped out of the face of the hill, a substantial encircling parapet, and on its western front a natural cavalier³ in the shape of a rough pyramid of conglomerate, shooting up to a height of nearly a hundred feet—its northern gateway had no flanking defences, and large masses of conglomerate scattered in its vicinity would have given good shelter to a covering party.⁴

The First Division remained eleven days in Khelat-i-Ghilzai, and

¹ This was the conclusion come to by Colonel Sankey and Major Le Messurier after a careful inspection of the fort and its surroundings.

² There are two copious springs of water, giving an abundant supply, rising in the fort below the northern face of the cavalier; its quality is said, however, not to be good, but the existence of these springs in an isolated hill formed of conglomerate and sandstone is curious, to say the least.—*Kandahar in 1879*, by Major Le Messurier.

³ A work situated behind another, over which it has a command of fire. From this point there is an extensive view of the bare, treeless plain, and also of distant hills, with some small villages, half hidden in orchards lying at their foot.—H. B. H.

⁴ Major H. B. S. Lumsden.

during the whole of that time, apart from some valuable surveying work, its entire energies were devoted to keeping itself alive. To make its supplies go further, the men's rations were reduced in respect of several small articles of diet; but the resultant economies were effected at the expense of the health of the troops, more especially the Native troops, amongst whom there were already many cases of dysentery and pulmonary complaints. Dried fruits, eggs and fowls found their way into the fort; but the men, being in arrears of pay, had little spare cash, and the high prices offered by the Commissariat authorities failed to induce the people to bring in the grain and bousa, deprived of which they and their live stock, with one bad harvest behind them and another in prospect, would be in danger of starvation.¹ What could not be obtained by consent, had to be taken by force; and a duel of wits between the two interested parties ensued, the villagers growing more and more cunning in hiding their stores, and the British foraging parties more and more skilful in scenting them out and rifling their caches.² On the whole, the despoilers had the better of the despoiled; but in the daily search for forage and food, camels and men were worn out, and the only gain resulting from their sufferings and exertions was a slight prolongation of the term during which Khelat-i-Ghilzai remained in British hands.³

¹ "There is forage in the country, but it is only natural that the villagers should wish to keep it until their spring harvest is gathered."—*Kandahar in 1879*, p. 102, by Major Le Messurier.

² "Hereabout the people have no love for the Amir, and decline to do anything for him. But they don't care about us, and would prefer our room to our company; my plan is to keep on good terms with them, but I insist on getting what the troops want. They always say they have nothing, and yesterday, when a foraging party went into a house to search for grain, they were shown into a room where a woman was found moaning and groaning, and the people said she had been delivered of a baby that morning. On asking to look at the child, a thumping thing of five or six months old was shown, and the woman was requested to get up. Under her bedding was found the entrance to a granary, in which 150 maunds of wheat were hidden."—*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 249.

³ On the arrival of the Cavalry Brigade at Khelat-i-Ghilzai, its Commander,

Not all the Force shared in this prolongation. Partly in order to lessen the Commissariat difficulty, partly with a view to examining into the resources of new districts, Stewart, very soon after his arrival at Khelat, sent two small columns back to Kandahar—the one *viâ* the Argandab, the other *viâ* the Arghesan Valley ; the former, commanded by Colonel B. W. Ryall, consisting of 2 guns of 11-11 Brigade Royal Artillery, 1 squadron 19th Bengal Lancers, 25th Punjab Infantry ; the latter, under Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Hoggan, 2 guns of 11-11 Brigade Royal Artillery, 1 squadron of the 15th Hussars and one of the 8th Bengal Cavalry. To these last-named troops a wing of the 3rd Gurkhas, sent up from Mundi Hissar, was added *en route*,¹ when Colonel A. Paterson, as senior officer, assumed command.

With the exception of an attack on this second column, delivered with great courage and determination by a small party of horse and footmen, who were driven back with loss into the hills, neither Force was molested on its march, but both were delayed for some days by snowstorms ; and the result of the investigation into the resources of the two valleys was disappointing—there was fish in the rivers, and plenty of mallard, teal and other wild ducks along their course ; also, in sheltered places, an abundance of fruit trees, already white with blossom ; but the quantity of grain and forage in the possession of the people barely sufficed for their own wants, and the attempt to extort from them so much as a few days' supplies deepened their natural dislike to the invaders of their country.²

Brigadier-General W. Fane, deeply impressed by its miserable condition—Stewart himself states that the Cavalry and Artillery horses were half starved—recommended that it should be sent back to Kandahar before things grew worse. Had his suggestion been acted upon, the Infantry and Artillery must have starved, since it was only the ceaseless activity of the Cavalry which secured to them their daily bread.

¹ The march of the Gurkhas was much impeded by a heavy snowstorm.

² "The people here say they can't fight us, but they don't hesitate to give out that they will worry us in every way they can."—General Stewart, 26th January, 1879, p. 247

General Stewart had held on to Khelat-i-Ghilzai in the hope of obtaining the Indian Government's sanction to an advance on Ghuzni, and when that hope had been disappointed, he was not sorry to receive an order to return with his Division to Kandahar. So great, however, had been the deterioration in his transport service, that by no possibility could sufficient camels be mustered to admit of his whole Force getting under weigh together, and he had to arrange to leave Brigadier-General Hughes with the Head Quarters and wing 19th Bengal Lancers, Head Quarters and wing 12th Bengal Infantry, 9th Company Sappers and Miners, and the Engineer Field Park, at Khelat-i-Ghilzai until such time as more could be procured, when the fort was to be handed over to a Ghilzai chief, who had undertaken to hold it for the British Government against the Amir.

In the teeth of a bitter wind laden with sharp dust, Head Quarters and the bulk of the Division marched on the 2nd of February to Jaldak, where the Divisional Hospital was waiting to join them. The next day proved calm and mild, but the transport animals were so exhausted, that the day's march had to stop short of Firandaz, the next halting place ; and hardly had the Force encamped when the long delayed rain, alternating with violent snowstorms, descended in torrents, turning the ground into a half frozen quagmire, sunk in which the starving camels died as they lay.¹ The state of the horses was hardly less wretched. Fuel ran short ; the men shivered in their wet clothes ; and had the storm continued for a week, the whole Force might have perished of cold and hunger, or been destroyed by the Ghilzais, who would have been as willing to complete the work of destruction begun

¹ "Unluckily, last night we were caught in a storm of rain and snow ; the former has, however, prevailed ; the camp is simply a sea of mud, and the poor camels can't move to feed themselves. The horses, too, are in a miserable plight, and it is difficult to see how they are to be fed if this weather continues.

If we had had this weather at the proper season, the troops would have been unable to do anything."—*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 250.

by the elements, as their fathers had shown themselves thirty-seven years before in the Khurd Kabul Pass.¹ Luckily, it only lasted two days, and on the 6th, the march could be resumed ; but the loss of camels had been so enormous that only a portion of the troops could move at one time, and those who got off first had to halt two miles south of Tirandaz, that their transport might be sent back to bring up the baggage left behind. The same state of things repeated itself day by day, progress growing slower as more and more camels gave out ; and it was not till the last day of February that the 1st Division was once again concentrated at Kandahar. Its Commander had arrived there on the 11th, to find that during his absence his orders with regard to providing accommodation for the sick² had been effectually carried out ; also that only one serious incident had occurred, and that, outside the city, not within its walls. One morning, late in January, a band of Pathans, eluding the sentries, rushed into the camp of the Royal Artillery and 59th Foot, cutting and slashing right and left. Some of the soldiers lost their heads, and, instead of using their bayonets, seized their rifles and began firing with such recklessness that more of their comrades were injured by their bullets than by the knives of the Ghazis. Of these latter, five or six were killed on the spot, but not a single man taken alive ; and, as in the confusion, no one saw in what direction the survivors made good their escape, the affair could never be thoroughly investigated ; but from the fact that none of the dead were identified as belonging to the town, it was surmised that the

¹ "The Commissariat are out of wood, camels are dying off, and move we must before long, if we want to get out of our trip with any chance of success."—*Kandahar in 1879* (February 4), p. 103, by Major Le Messurier.

² Native string beds had been provided, with thick felt mats in lieu of mattresses, and each patient was provided with a rough table. The whole citadel had been put into excellent sanitary condition ; the dry earth system introduced ; all refuse removed daily and buried in trenches outside the city walls. In the opinion of the Principal Medical Officer, Dy. Surgeon-General A. Smith, the whole arrangements, considering the means at his disposal, reflected the highest credit on Brigade-Surgeon J. B. C. Reade's zeal and energy.

whole party had entered it, in twos and threes, the evening before delivering their desperate attack.^{1 2}

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. Where a captured or occupied city is without any civil authority, or machinery for the control of its turbulent elements, the more drastic the measures adopted to prevent disturbance and crime, the better both for the victors and the vanquished. General Stewart's first act on entering Kandahar, should have been to issue two proclamations : the one, to its inhabitants, commanding them to bring in and give up their weapons of every description ; the other, to the people of the surrounding country, forbidding them to come armed within the British outposts ; and until time had been allowed for these proclamations to have their full effect, no camp-follower or soldier, not on duty, should have been permitted to pass through the city gates, at each of which a search party should have been stationed, with orders to arrest every man found in possession of arms, whether worn openly or concealed about his person. A fair interval should have been granted to the townspeople and the villagers in which to learn and obey the order affecting them ; but, after a specified date,

¹ In this affray one Artilleryman lost his life, and three were wounded, of whom one mortally ; one man of the 59th and one of the 70th Foot wounded ; also a Native officer of the 1st Punjab Cavalry and three followers. After this occurrence the troops were strictly enjoined to make use of their side arms, not of their rifles. " Our only excitement is trying to avoid these rascally Ghazis. A gang of them ran amuck in camp a few days ago, and the soldiers, losing their presence of mind, began to fire recklessly, and killed more men with their bullets than the Ghazis did with their knives. It is very disgusting having to guard against these brutes, and I am surrounded by sentries as if I were the Emperor of Germany. The mischief of the whole matter is that all the sentries in the world won't save one from a man who has no regard for his own life."—*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 250.

² The following extracts from a Diary of the march of the 15th Hussars in 1878-9, kept by " A Soldier in the Ranks " (T. C. Hamilton), give a vivid picture of the hardships undergone by the men and the suffering endured by the animals who took part in the Khelat-i-Ghilzai Expedition :—January 15. " Halt at

any violation of either proclamation should have rendered the offender liable to capital punishment. In a country like Afghanistan, however, where every man habitually carries arms for his own defence, the area within which such a proclamation should apply, ought always to be small, and so distinctly marked out that there can be no question as to its limits; and in no case should the death penalty attached to its violation be inflicted, except on a sentence pronounced by a regularly constituted military court, confirmed by the General Commanding, for its object is not the terrorizing of a people, but the prevention of crime, and the detection and punishment of the criminal. Had the measures recommended above been adopted, Lieutenant Willis would not have lost his life; there would have been no rushing of the camp of the Royal Artillery and 59th Foot, and many outrages of later date would never have occurred.

Robat. Forage runs short; horses on half rations." January 16. "Numerous fatigues, these last two days getting in forage." January 18. "Fatigues for foraging. Commissariat is getting scanty. Got one pound of bread." January 19. "Got extra feeds for our horses to-day." January 20. "Very cold to-day; out foraging till 6 p.m. Not much grain to be got, and not enough wood to cook all our rations. The element fire is, indeed, scarce up here. Roti (bread) getting short; want of grain one of the reasons we left Kandahar." January 22. "Fearfully cold last night and this morning. No wood. Am weaker to-night." January 23. "General Stewart inspects our horses, which are mostly in very poor condition supplies are very short now." 24th. "Awfully cold last night; the thermometer down to 5° or 6°. Stock of vegetables run out. Foraging parties out every day." 25th. "Out foraging till 6 p.m. Our tea and sugar is further cut." 26th. "Troops go off reconnoitring to the Arghasan Valley, probably on account of scarcity of supplies. Got extra half-pound of mutton yesterday in lieu of groceries cut. Rain at night. 27th. "Out foraging. Patrolling still kept up every night." 28th. "Very cold. Great scarcity of wood." 29th. "Find extra sentries and picket duty is heavy." February 1. "Out foraging Send a great many sentries and pickets now; am getting only two or three nights in bed." February 5th. "Convoy comes in with highlows, socks, gloves, guernseys and waterproof sheets." 6th. "Very great difficulty in getting the camels to move in the mornings, as they are often frozen to the ground and unable to rise." 8th. "Baggage often late, as the camels succumb in numbers to cold and hunger."

OBSERVATION II. Although the occupation of Khelat-i-Ghilzai formed part of the Indian Government's programme of operations in Southern Afghanistan, the time of that operation was left as much to the discretion of General Stewart as the time of the annexation of Khost to the discretion of General Roberts ; and the responsibility for a risky and futile expedition rests even more exclusively with the man who planned and conducted it in the former case than in the latter, since the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief were aware of Roberts's intention to invade Khost at the beginning of the year 1879, and forbore to interfere ; but they had no knowledge of Stewart's intention to march on Khelat-i-Ghilzai within a week of arriving at Kandahar, till too late for their attempt to stop him to prove successful. That Stewart knew the expedition to Khelat-i-Ghilzai to be risky and futile can be shown from his own correspondence.

On the 15th January, he wrote to his wife : " It has been rather a risky trip, this, as we have only two or three days' supplies in hand, and are living from hand to mouth on what we can pick up." And again, three days later, " A fall of snow would cut us off entirely from our base and source of supply." He might, with equal truth, have added, " And from the opportunities of picking up enough to keep us going from day to day," on which he had come to depend. The day after his entry into Kandahar he had written : " I am ordered to take Khelat-i-Ghilzai and Girishk, which I can easily do in eight or ten days, but what is to be done after that is a puzzle to me. I cannot get to Ghazni till spring, and by that time the Government of Afghanistan will have tumbled to pieces " ; and in the letter of the 18th already quoted from, he admitted that he did not know what he was to do after he got to Khelat-i-Ghilzai, unless it were to return to Kandahar. Of the two reasons assigned by General Stewart for doing what, on his own showing, he had better have left undone, the one—that " it is better to keep moving about and occupying the country than squatting in a place like Kandahar, where the troops will suffer

from sickness and ennui"—though sometimes valid, had no application to the circumstances of the case ; and the other—that he wanted “ to show the Russians that we can go where we like, even in winter time ”¹—savours more of the spirit of the English schoolboy than of the judgment of a British Commander. Who can doubt that what Stewart's troops needed, after a long and terribly arduous march, was rest, and that they were far more likely to suffer from ennui in the wilderness into which he flung them, than in a large town, with bazaars full of objects of interest, and streets teeming with strange and vivid life ; and what could his advance to Khelat-i-Ghilzai teach the Russians save the old, old lesson, that, in a country like Afghanistan, the armies of a civilized state may, indeed, go where they like ; but how long they can remain at the points reached, and in what condition withdraw from them, depend, not on the will of their Commander or on their own courage and discipline, but upon their ability to procure food, and upon the greater or less severity of the season. How many of Stewart's camp-followers and men succumbed on the march to and from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, how many of the sick sent back to India shortly after the return of the Expedition to Kandahar, had belonged to it—cannot be ascertained ; but the corpses of nineteen hundred and twenty-four camels² strewn along its route, reveal something of the price paid by General Stewart to vindicate his liberty of movement in the eyes of men who, noting his losses with cynical satisfaction, were in no danger of being deceived into mistaking failure for success. The extraordinary errors into which British Commanders allowed themselves to fall, both in the First and Second Afghan Wars, were largely due to ignorance of, or incapacity for assimilating the teachings of military

¹ *Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, pp. 243, 244.

² “ Out of curiosity I asked Brigadier Hughes to count the skeletons of camels lying on the road from Khelat-i-Gilzai to Kandahar, and the list was 1,924. This was what we lost out of a division transport of about 3,500. Many more disappeared, but there is no doubt about these, as the carcasses were counted by officers.” (*Ibid.* p. 255.)

history. If General Stewart had had present to his mind the example set him by the Duke of Wellington, when, arriving victorious on the northern frontier of Spain, he disappointed the expectations of those who believed he would at once invade France; had he reflected on the reasons assigned by that great soldier for his determination to consider the question of such an invasion only in reference to the convenience of his (my) "own operations,"—he would have spared his troops the trouble of marching to Khelat-i-Ghilzai, only to march back again. "An army which has made such marches and fought such battles as that under my command has," so wrote the Duke to Earl Bathurst from Lusaca on the 8th August, 1813, "is necessarily much deteriorated. Independently of the loss of numbers by death, wounds and sickness, many men and officers are out of the ranks for various causes. The equipment of the army, their ammunition, the soldiers' shoes require renewal. The magazines for the new operations require to be collected and formed, and many arrangements to be made without which the Army could not exist a day, but which are not generally understood by those who have not had the direction of such concerns in their hands." Leaving out the allusions to battles fought and to the numbers of killed and wounded, this passage describes exactly the state of things in Stewart's army when it entered Kandahar. Men and transport were exhausted with long marches, the ranks of both thinned by death, sickness and various other causes; equipment of all kinds required renewal, magazines re-stocking, and there were endless arrangements calling for attention—when the man who had "the direction of such concerns in his hands," for no object that he could himself define, decided to press on into a country resembling France in that "everybody was a soldier and the whole population armed,"¹ but differing from it, in being poor and barren instead of rich and fertile.

¹ "Then observe that this new operation is the invasion of France, in which country everybody is a soldier, where the whole population is armed."—Despatch dated 8th August, 1813.

To General Stewart's honour, however, it must be recorded that, though he did not profit by other men's experience, he learned wisdom from his own. Kandahar once regained, he embarked on no more adventures, but set himself steadily to the work of reorganizing and re-equipping his Force ; and when the day came for him to be consulted with regard to the terms of peace,¹ he opposed the retention of a province which, as he had come to recognize, could never maintain either a British or a Russian army of occupation of even twenty thousand men.²

¹ See Memorandum on the Strategical and Political value of Kandahar as a Position, given on pp. 263-5 of *Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart's Life*.

² "I am quite sure that, with all India at our back, we could not keep up a force of 20,000 men in one place, and I don't think Russia could do much better than ourselves in that respect." (Ibid. p. 248.)

CHAPTER XXIII

Expedition to the Helmand

THE constitution of the 2nd Division of the Kandahar Field Force, after contributing its quota to the garrison of the city, was as follows :—

ARTILLERY

I Battery, 1st Brigade Royal Artillery, 6 guns.
11th Battery, 11th Brigade „ 2 mountain guns.
Peshawar Mountain Battery, 4 guns.

CAVALRY

2nd Punjab Cavalry.
3rd Sind Horse.

INFANTRY

70th Foot.
Wing 19th Punjab Infantry.
29th Bombay Infantry (Baluchis).
32nd Pioneers.
5th and 10th Companies Sappers and Miners.
Engineer Field Park.
2 Pontoon Boats.

STRENGTH OF FORCE

3,035 Troops of all ranks.
2,087 Camp-followers.
991 Horses.
278 Bullocks.
364 Ponies and Mules.
2,251 Camels.

The Division had lost Brigadier-General Nuttall, Captain Bissett, R.E., and Lieutenant Colonel Lane, placed in charge of the important depôt of Kandahar ; but Brigadier-General Palliser and his Brigade-Major, Captain Abadie, had been re-transferred to it, and Captain W. Luckhardt had succeeded Lane as Principal Commissariat Officer,

Lieutenant J. E. Dickie, R.E., being attached as signalling officer, and Captain R. Beavon in charge of Survey party.

Girishk, the objective of the expedition, lies on the right bank of the Helmand, and the distance from Kandahar to Abbazai, the village facing it on the left bank, is seventy-six and a half miles by the southern, and seventy-four and a half, by the northern road, divided, in each case, into eight stages, four of which coincide.

(1) 8	miles	Kokeran .	8	miles (1)
(2) 4	„	Sinjiri .	4	„ (2)
(3) 12 $\frac{3}{4}$	„	Haus-i-Madat Khan .	12 $\frac{3}{4}$	„ (3)
(4) 8 $\frac{3}{4}$	„	Ata Karez	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	„ (4)
(5) 10	„	Killa Sayad. Kushk-i-Nakhud	9	„ (5)
(6) 11	„	Band-i-Tomur. Khak-i-Chopan	18	„ (6)
(7) 12	„	Bala Khana. Heckehal .	7	„ (7)
(8) 10	„	Abbazai .	7	„ (8)

Immediately after his arrival at Kandahar, General Biddulph had personally reconnoitred the first of these stages, and had subsequently sent out working parties to widen the road where it runs through the suburbs of the city, and to strengthen the bridges over the numerous water-courses by which it is intersected. On the 14th of January, Palliser, with the cavalry, proceeded to Kokeran, on the left bank of the Argendab, to collect supplies, and, that duty accomplished, gave place on the 16th, to Headquarters and the main body, and, crossing the river, occupied Sinjiri, where, on the 17th, he was reinforced by the 32nd Pioneers, who had pushed on to join him after helping the Sappers and Miners to ramp the banks of the Argendab¹ for the passage of the guns. On the 18th, the main body encamped at Sinjiri, and the advanced guard, a march ahead, at Haus-i-Madat Khan. There was nothing in the nature of the country—a hard, flat, stony plain—to have prevented a rapid advance; but Biddulph, solicitous for the well-being of his sickly

¹ The Argendab is not a difficult river to cross, its fords, except during floods, being only two feet deep, with good gravelly bottoms, and its current not exceeding four miles an hour.

transport, aware that the immediate object of his expedition was to relieve the pressure on the scanty food stores of Kandahar—he had started out with supplies for only one and a half days—and anxious, alike from motives of policy and humanity, to avoid driving the people along his route to despair by cruelly enforced exactions, moved slowly, drawing grain and forage from as wide an area as possible, and enforcing his requisitions according to a scheme thought out by his political officer, Colonel Moore, through the Maliks of the principal villages within reach.¹

Advancing thus in leisurely fashion, he arrived at Ata Karez on the 23rd, where, to protect his right flank, and to reconnoitre the northern route to Abbazai, he detached a small column, under Colonel Tanner, to Kushk-i-Nakhud, with orders to regulate its subsequent movements by those of the main body, which was to follow the southern road, because, running for two more marches at no great distance from the Argendab, it seemed to hold out a better prospect of supplies. The reality proved so disappointing, that at Killa Sayad, the very next halting place, Biddulph ordered General Lacy, with the undermentioned troops—

I-1 Royal Artillery, 4 guns.
 11-11 Royal Artillery, 2 guns.
 70th Foot.
 Wing 19th Punjab Infantry.
 Wing 29th Baluchis—

to retrace his steps to Ata Karez, whilst he transferred his own Headquarters, the Peshawar Battery, the 10th Company of Sappers and the Pontoon Train, to Palliser's column at Bala Khana. Lacy executed a delicate duty with energy and discretion; but his troops soon swept the district lying round Ata Karez bare of food and fodder, and, notwithstanding the exertions of his Purchasing Agents, Major C. Sartorius and Captain J. E. Waller, who visited many dis-

¹ See General Biddulph's Lecture, vol. 24, No. cvii. of the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*.

tant villages in search of supplies, he had to fall back on Haus-i-Madat Khan, where he put himself into communication with Kandahar, by establishing a heliographic station on an isolated hill near his camp.

Even after the sacrifice of so large a part of its strength, it looked as if the second Division would fail to reach the Helmand; and only by extending the operations of Colonel Moore's Purchasing Agents to the right bank of the Argendab, could Biddulph obtain sufficient food to carry his men through the last stage of their arduous journey. On the 29th, he reconnoitred the Helmand, and determined the ultimate disposition of his troops; and the next day his Force, preceded by an advanced guard under Colonel Kennedy, consisting of—

2nd Punjab Cavalry.

32nd Pioneers.

5th and 10th Company of Sappers and Miners—

moved slowly forward through an apparently illimitable desert, stretching away westward to where, on the far horizon, a range of hills, bare and stony as the plain from which they spring, could be descried. Suddenly, at the men's very feet, lay a deep valley, two to three miles broad, its fertile surface diversified with hamlets and orchards; Girishk, half hidden in jungle, on the further side; and, flowing under the cliffs on which they stood, the swift, clear stream of the Helmand, winding among yellow sands, and giving the finishing touch to the beauty which, in countless centuries of ceaseless change it had itself called into being, and then hidden from sight—for to step back only a few paces, was to lose all hint of it and its surroundings.

That night, the troops, including Tanner's flanking party, slept on the left bank of the river; but by ten o'clock the next morning, the Sappers, under the direction of Lieutenant L. F. Browne, R.E., had established a flying ferry across its channel. Mir Afzul, in his flight from Kandahar, had destroyed all the boats on the river except one, which the people of Abbazai saved by sinking it out of sight.

This and the pontoon raft,¹ brought up by the 5th Company of Sappers, sufficed for the conveyance of the Infantry, camp-followers and baggage belonging to the Force with which Palliser was to occupy positions on the further shore, the Cavalry and unladen camels crossing by the ford, in small groups, each accompanied by two or three guides, thanks to whose intimate knowledge of the stream, not a life was lost, though the water in places was four feet in depth, the current rapid, and the diagonal passage narrow and difficult to keep.²

When all the dispositions previously determined on by the General had been carried out, only the Divisional Headquarters, the Peshawar Mountain Battery, the Field Park and two hundred Baluchis remained on the southern side of the Helmand, encamped on the summit of the cliffs above Abbazai—the valley itself reeked with malaria. Two companies of Sappers were employed in ferry operations on the right, and two companies of Pioneers on the left bank of the channel, whilst the bulk of Palliser's troops occupied a position on high ground above Girishk, which fort was garrisoned by small detachments of Pioneers and Baluchis, under Colonel Tanner, and gave shelter to the Commissariat depôt and, in the first instance, to

¹ A raft consists of two pontoon boats.

² During the time the Force remained on the Helmand only one man was drowned, and he lost his life in attempting, in defiance of orders, to cross the river without a guide. A dog belonging to the author frequently crossed the river at night to visit the only other canine member of the expedition, visits which were never returned. The following are the Helmand's principal fords:—

(a) Koji Bazak Ford, about three miles above Abbazai, bottom stony, passage difficult.

(b) Abbazai Ford. Very fair bottom; water about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep in dry weather.

(c) A Ford about 700 yards below *b* and similar in character. Above Abbazai the river divides into two branches, which reunite three-quarters of a mile lower down, thus forming a long island between 300 and 400 feet wide, covered with brushwood and small jungle. Fords *b* and *c* cross the two channels on either side this island.

(d) Ford Malger, 5 miles below Abbazai and of the same nature as *b* and *c*, minus the island.

(e and f) The two Fords at Killa-i-Bist, both very easy to cross. (H.B.H.)

the hospital ; but as every case of pneumonia—and there were many, especially among the Pioneers—treated within its walls, ended fatally, the sick were very soon removed into tents, pitched in a wide hollow, where, sheltered from the keen winds, they rapidly recovered.¹

Hardly, however, had the arrangements for a prolonged sojourn on the Helmand been completed, than all illusions as to the value of its valley, as a source of supply, were roughly dispelled. Both up and down stream, the stocks of grain and bhousa, within anything like easy reach of Girishk, were quickly exhausted, and the foraging parties and Purchasing Agents had to go ever further and further afield. When one of these latter had been murdered by the Alizais of the Zernandawar, a district twenty-five miles from the British camp, and it had become impossible for the transport camels and the horses of their escort to go and return in a single day,—Palliser reported that some other system of collecting supplies would have to be devised, and Biddulph was driven to the dangerous expedient of scattering his cavalry over the country, leaving each detachment to forage for itself. How dangerous that expedient was, no one knew better than the General, whose thoughts were continually occupied with the problem of how to keep on good terms with tribes whom he saw himself compelled to strip of the very necessaries of life, and who was well aware that the discontent provoked by his exactions—pay as he might for the stores taken—was growing daily deeper and more widespread. That he adopted it, is the best proof of the straits to which he had been reduced within ten days of his arrival at Girishk.² He continued, nevertheless, to believe that his

¹ Girishk, as a fort, is quite useless, as, being commanded by the opposite bank, it would be untenable under the fire of modern artillery. Forty years before Biddulph occupied it, Major J. Woodburn, one of Nott's most trusted officers, had recommended that it should be blown up. (H.B.H.)

² The troops were generally short of tea, sugar and vegetables. Scurvy was showing itself, and there was no lime-juice in camp. The grain procured locally was not unfrequently poisonous. At first, treachery was suspected, but a searching inquiry showed that datura plant had been garnered with the

men were the advanced guard of a larger body that would march triumphantly on Herat, and, in that belief, began preparations for the building of a bridge over the river and for the improvement of the ferry service ; constructed a good military road between the ferry and the Helmand's northern bank—a work which called for the bridging of three wide water-courses—and sent out towards Herat, one reconnoitring party in the direction of Washir, sixty-two miles from Abbazai, and another, for three marches, towards Farrah, both of which brought back reports showing that, by either route, an invading army would have to carry all its supplies, and was likely to fare badly in the matter of water. He also took advantage of the scattering of the cavalry to extend his knowledge of the country through which he had advanced. An excellent traverse of the road between Kandahar and Abbazai had already been made by Captain Beavon ; now, the whole of the Argendab-Helmand Doab¹ was thoroughly surveyed ; and Biddulph himself, escorted by the Peshawar Battery and the Baluchi Infantry, visited Killa-i-Bist and the point, some miles below that ancient city, where the two rivers meet. From this interesting excursion he was recalled by news that the Alizais and other tribes were about to deliver simultaneous attacks on the British camps at Abbazai and Girishk.² A forced march of forty miles

corn, and this, though eaten with impunity by the people of the country, was hurtful to the troops, seventy of whom, from this cause, were under treatment at one time. The symptoms were extreme giddiness, followed in some cases by unconsciousness. No deaths occurred. (H.B.H.)

¹ *Doab*. Strip of country lying between two rivers.

² "The Headquarters Camp commanded the passages (of the Helmand), nevertheless our situation was critical, divided as we were by such an obstacle as lay between the two camps. Zemindawar, the country of the Alizais, a war-like tribe, was only 25 miles distant. There were signs of excitement in that quarter and a blow was threatened on both banks at the same time. Had an attack been made, we should have been found weak in numbers, as the troops were much occupied in distant expeditions ; reconnoitring and bringing in supplies." See General Biddulph's Lecture, vol. 24, No. cvii. of the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*.

brought him to the latter place in time to frustrate plans which, in the dispersed state of his troops, might have proved successful; and a few days later—the 15th of February—he received the unexpected order to withdraw his Force to Kandahar, preparatory to returning to India by the Thal Chotali route.

In view of the heat that would soon be setting in below the passes, delay was to be deprecated; but it was impossible to move without supplies, and Biddulph had to wait till the 22nd of February for a convoy from Killa-i-Bist, where he had established a Purchasing Agency, and another from Kandahar, to ensure the safe arrival of which large bodies of cavalry were sent out. On the 19th, whilst strong reconnoitring parties watched the Zemandawar frontier to give timely notice of any symptoms of hostile unrest on the part of its inhabitants, Biddulph shifted his Headquarters back to the cliffs above Abbaszai, and, in the course of the three following days, withdrew all the troops, sick and baggage from the right to the left bank of the Helmand.

The retirement to Ata Karez, which began on the 23rd, *viâ* Kūshk-i-Nakhud, was covered by a rear-guard under Colonel H. P. Malcolmson's command, consisting of two squadrons 3rd Sind Horse and one company 29th Baluchis—strength seven officers and four hundred and six men, of whom two hundred and eighty-five were Cavalry. Malcolmson's orders were to watch the up-stream fords for a day and a night, and so to time his subsequent movements as to be always one march in rear of the main body, which, by the recall of Lacy to Kandahar, had lost the support it had hitherto enjoyed from the presence of a British column at Haus-i-Madat Khan.

Ata Karez was reached, without incident, on the 26th; but, after dark, two men of the 3rd Sind Horse galloped into camp bringing a message from Malcolmson, asking urgently for reinforcements both of Cavalry and Infantry, as he was surrounded by a large body of Tribesmen, and, though he had beaten off their attack, there was

every likelihood of its being renewed during the night. The messengers were evidently very anxious, and there could be no doubt that the rear-guard was in danger of being overwhelmed before help could reach it, though Biddulph lost not a moment in despatching Lieutenant-Colonel G. Nicholetts with a squadron of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry and a wing of the 29th Baluchis—strength, two hundred and ninety-one officers and men—to its assistance. When, after a rapid march, this little relief party arrived in the neighbourhood of Kushk-i-Nakhud, there were no lights to indicate the presence of friend or foe, and the stillness of the desert—that stillness which only they who have lived in that land of rocks and stones, can realize—was unbroken by the slightest movement of man or horse. For a moment Nicholetts thought of sounding a bugle call to give Malcolmson notice that friends were at hand; but the reflection that the signal would be equally understood by the enemy, and must destroy any chance, there might be, of taking them by surprise in the morning, made him abandon the idea. So, in drizzling rain, he and his men lay hidden till dawn, silent and watchful, their minds full of doubt and anxiety; for what disaster might not the darkness conceal from them, and what would be their own fate if those they came to succour, had already been annihilated? Daybreak dissipated their fears. An early patrol sent out by Nicholetts fell in with one of Malcolmson's; and soon the two forces were merged into one, and the former officer had heard from the latter, the story of his narrow escape from destruction.

Malcolmson had marched into Kushk-i-Nakhud at noon the previous day, without the slightest suspicion that fifteen hundred Alizais and other Tribesmen, who, on the 25th, had crossed the Helmand by a ford far up-stream and, after a rapid march of thirty miles along the foot of the hills to the north of the Kandahar road, had spent the night in a ravine not far from Kushk-i-Nakhud—were, at that very time gathering on the reverse slope of some high ground, a mile and a half to the left front of the British position. Just as the officer

in command of the Sind Horse was holding an inspection of the men's saddles, which, together with the bridles, were laid out on the ground—vedettes galloped in to report that they had seen a large body of men streaming over the adjacent ridge. The troopers coolly put their accoutrements together, saddled their horses and mounted. With equal steadiness, the Infantry fell in, and, in obedience to Malcolmson's order, Colonel Tanner brought their right shoulders forward so that their rifles might bear on the enemy's left. The Baluchis reserved their fire till the assailants were within five hundred yards of their ranks, and then poured into them such a storm of bullets that, to avoid it, they edged off to their own right, with the evident intention of occupying some huts and enclosed gardens. In doing this, they brought themselves on to ground favourable to Cavalry, and Malcolmson instantly wheeled his squadrons to the left, formed line and charged into the enemy's centre. A determined attack met with an equally determined resistance;—the Cavalry rode through the heavy masses opposed to them, sabring right and left; the Tribesmen forced their way through the Cavalry, hamstringing the horses as they pressed forward. At last the Zemandawaris' stubborn valour gave way before the desperate courage of the Indian horsemen, and, dividing into two columns, they retreated, still fighting, towards the hills. Major W. Reynolds was sent in pursuit of the enemy's right wing; Tanner, with the bulk of the Infantry, followed up the left, driving them, with heavy loss, into broken ground; whilst Malcolmson, with a troop of horse and a small detachment of Baluchis, tried to cut off a third body that was making for a village not far from camp. A deep, wide water-course intervened, and a false alarm that the right of his position was threatened, reaching him as he pulled up on its edge, he recalled his troops, and set all hands to work to strike the tents and get the camp equipage, ammunition, treasure and stores into the fort before dark. This done, he placed his men in an enclosure, protected on three sides by a wall two and a half feet high, and all

through the night sent out patrols, none of which chanced to approach the hollow where Nicholetts's party lay concealed.

In this sharp affair, the Infantry had no casualties, but the Cavalry had their second in command, Major William Reynolds, and four men killed, and Colonel Malcolmson and twenty-three men wounded, besides losing twenty-eight horses. Reynolds had been wounded early in the action, but continued to lead his men, and fell in the pursuit. In his despatch, Malcolmson, whose own wound fortunately was slight, brought the following officers' names to notice :—

Lieutenant-Colonel O. V. Tanner.
Captain J. P. Maitland.
Lieutenant H. C. Hogg.
Lieutenant F. D. N. Smith.
Lieutenant B. L. P. Reilly.
Surgeon C. E. E. Boroughs.

Praise of Boroughs' gallantry failed to save him from being reminded by the Deputy-Surgeon-General that a medical officer's place was with the wounded, not in the fighting line ; an undeserved rebuke, since, in this case, every man was needed to repulse the enemy, who, led by chiefs of distinction, displayed both military skill, and the utmost coolness and contempt of death. The total number of their killed probably exceeded two hundred—one hundred and sixty-three bodies were counted in the open, amongst them that of Abu Bukker, the Alizai chief who had murdered the Purchasing Agent's party a week or two before. One of the three men taken prisoners, stated that a hundred and twenty wounded had escaped, or been carried off by their friends ; but the explanation of the fact that only these three fell alive into Malcolmson's hands was an ugly one : whilst the troops were in pursuit, the camp-followers broke loose ; and, as they certainly mutilated the bodies of their dead foes in barbarous fashion, there is strong reason to suspect that they murdered all whom they found still living ; but as there were no outside witnesses of their brutal deeds, the crime could not be brought home to them.

General Biddulph and his Staff rode into Kushk-i-Nakhud shortly after the meeting of Malcolmson and Nicholetts, and after inspecting the field of battle and visiting the wounded, returned, with the troops, to Ata Karez. The next morning, just when all was ready for a start, camels laden, Infantry fallen in, Cavalry thrown forward to examine the ground to the front and flanks—an officer galloped up to announce that the Tribesmen were rapidly advancing in numerous columns, with banners displayed and flags flying. Apparently, the Zemandawaris defeated by Malcolmson, had been reinforced, and were about to try their fortune a second time. Camels and baggage were hastily parked, with strong guards told off to protect them; the reserve ammunition was placed at points convenient for the troops, who were drawn up in line of contiguous columns ready to deploy, and then—another messenger arrived, breathless, to explain that the dust-enveloped masses of the enemy had resolved themselves into flocks of mountain sheep, whose long tails, wagging in the air, had been changed into waving banners by the mirage, so common in Afghanistan. The news was received with shouts of laughter, mingled with some grumbling over lost time and wasted energy, and tempered by a general feeling of disappointment that, after all, the bulk of the troops were to see no fighting; then the quickly made preparations were as quickly undone, and the interrupted march resumed.

Two days later, March 1st, Biddulph's Division re-entered Kandahar in a storm of sleet and rain. It had been absent exactly six weeks; and though it had had the same Commissariat difficulties to struggle with that had troubled Stewart's Force, in coping with which the Cavalry horses were well-nigh worn out, yet, thanks to a milder climate and an abundance of fuel all along the course of the Helmand, it had suffered comparatively little in health, and there were no heavy losses among its transport animals to deplore.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. Biddulph's expedition to Girishk was as barren of results as Stewart's to Khelat-i-Ghilzai; it failed even of the immediate advantage expected of it, for the troops had to be mainly supported by provision convoys sent out from Kandahar; and, though the camels improved in condition, the cavalry horses were worn out in the incessant search for food. Its chief effect was to rouse the inhabitants of the Zemandawar into active hostility, and to bring trouble on the peaceable inhabitants of the Doab,¹ whose villages were threatened and, in some cases, plundered by the Tribesmen in revenge for their defeat at Kushk-i-Nakhud, lack of carriage for a time rendering it impossible to afford them the protection to which they had a claim at the hands of their new rulers. All that was really gained would have been attained, without these drawbacks, by sending the spare camels to Ata Karez with a strong Cavalry and Infantry guard.

OBSERVATION II. The disposition of Biddulph's troops on the Helmand was faulty in the extreme. In an enemy's country to divide so small a force—fifteen hundred men with only four guns, its nearest supports fifty miles away—would have been unwise under any circumstances; but to place the bulk of the troops on the further side of a deep and rapid river, flowing through a valley so intersected by water-courses as to be impassable by night, and to leave Headquarters, the mountain guns, and the Engineer Park on the hither side, protected only by a few hundred men with a desert at their back—was

¹ "The defeat of the Alizais on the 26th ultimo has had less effect than was expected. Bands of Alizais and other vagabonds, religious and predatory, collecting to the number of two thousand in the neighbourhood of Kandahar, at a distance of thirty miles, are looting weak and threatening strong villages, in the name of the Amir and Islam. The respectable inhabitants, including the Barakzais, are inclined to assist in putting the vagabonds down, but nearly all the means of carriage have been absorbed by the returning force, and none are left for columns strong enough to restore order at any distance."—Telegram from the Kandahar correspondent of the *Times*, dated 6th March, 1879.

to expose the latter to serious risks. Yet, to have kept the whole force together on the left bank of the stream, would have added enormously to the labour and danger incurred in the collection of supplies, as the resources from which they were drawn, lay on the right bank, and the unsupported foraging parties would have been constantly liable to attack and capture. It should never be forgotten that a commander's first duty is to his troops, and that only exceptional circumstances—circumstances in which some much higher interest than that of their safety is involved—can justify him in exposing them to the possibility of having to choose between starvation and annihilation at the hands of the enemy. In the case under consideration, there were neither political nor military reasons calling for the maintenance of a position on the Helmand. There was no enemy to keep at bay, no friendly force to rescue or support, no rich province to hold for the sake of its teeming supplies. Biddulph, therefore, when brought face to face with two equally unwise courses, should have informed the Indian Government that he had been given a task to which his troops and his material resources were alike inadequate, and have asked either to be placed in a position to perform it satisfactorily, or to be permitted to return to Kandahar.

OBSERVATION III. In the retirement from the Helmand, wise caution was shown in watching the fords till the troops were clear of the river, but only Cavalry, unencumbered with baggage, should have been used for that purpose, with orders to rejoin the main body the same evening; for the safety of a small force depends on keeping its units together, and on making up for its deficiency in numbers by enhanced vigilance, surprise being guarded against by night and day patrolling; by surrounding camps with strong outlying pickets, protected by *sangars*; by holding a certain proportion of the troops ever ready to fall in; and by so timing marches that baggage and rear-guard shall reach the camping ground before dark. Malcolmson's detachment was not a rear-guard in the ordinary acceptance of that term, for it had

no connection with the main body ; and, for the same reason, the detachment which marched to Abbazai by the northern road was not a flanking party. Both were dangerously weak, and the reconnoitring performed by Tanner's men could have been done equally well from the Helmand. On the important point of keeping a force together, Sir William Nott gave excellent advice to Colonel Wymer in the letter already quoted from. "The Major-General," so he wrote, "has taken every precaution in his power to fit out your detachment in the most efficient manner, and provided you keep it together and, unless absolutely necessary in your military judgment, never allow of it being divided and frittered away into parties, it must be successful." ¹

OBSERVATION IV. In the action of the 26th February, the troops were skilfully handled and well led ; but, before the fight, military precautions seem to have been neglected. Had Malcolmson on his arrival at Kushk-i-Nakhud despatched strong Cavalry patrols to search the ground beyond the screen of hills, and posted an observation party on its crest, he would have received timely warning of the enemy's presence. Until this step had been taken, a saddle parade was out of place, and one half the troops should have been held ready to mount at a moment's notice.

¹ *Major-General Sir William Nott, G.C.B.*, by J. H. Stoqueler, vol. I. p. 337.

CHAPTER XXIV

Visit of the Commander-in-Chief to Jellalabad

IN the midst of the Mohmand troubles, Sir S. Browne received the welcome news that the Commander-in-Chief and the Headquarters Staff had left Calcutta, and were on their way up country to visit the Peshawar Valley and the Kuram Field Forces. It was a relief to the harassed General to have the prospect of submitting his arrangements to a higher judgment, and of obtaining from the best authority some information as to the work which he might still be called upon to perform.

On the 24th of February, Sir Frederick Haines arrived at Jumrud, where he visited the hospitals, inspected the fortifications, and reviewed the troops, on whose soldierly appearance he was able to compliment General Maude.¹ That night he slept at Ali Masjid,

¹ "On this occasion the 5th Fusiliers (1st Battalion) turned out so strong that, as the ground available for parade purposes was limited in space, the Regiment formed up in half battalions. This regiment had passed the hot weather of 1878 in the hills, and was largely composed of seasoned soldiers, who maintained their efficiency and health during the campaign, while other regiments, such as those that had been stationed at Peshawar, were so impregnated with fever that hard duty and variations of climate soon told on their shattered constitutions. No regiment should, if possible, be kept at a notoriously unhealthy station for a longer period than a year. The prospect of a change for the better would have a good effect on the men's spirits, and any expense the Government would incur in carrying out these reliefs would be amply compensated for by the increased efficiency of the regiments concerned, to say nothing of the saving of life and health."—*General Maude's Diary*, 24th February, 1879.

and the next day rode through the Khyber, the hills on either side of the pass being crowned with troops to ensure him and his party against the possibility of attack. On the 28th he was at Jellalabad, where he remained till the 3rd of March. During this time he inspected the garrison, selected a site on the hills, about a mile from the town, for the cantonments which had become necessary since the Government had made up its mind to a permanent occupation of that post, issued orders for the erection of huts for the accommodation of the men during the coming hot season, and sanctioned the construction of a fortified enclosure to protect the great sheds containing supplies and military stores. But whilst busy with these immediate details, the Commander-in-Chief was on the alert to take in and weigh every feature of the general situation, a knowledge of which might enable him to advise the Government as to its future military policy, and afterwards he held a long consultation with Sir S. Browne and General Maude at Peshawar, when many important matters were discussed.

The distribution of troops between Jumrud and Jellalabad had not satisfied Sir Frederick ; it seemed to him that there was too much overlapping of Browne's and Maude's commands, and that Jellalabad, at the extreme end of the line of advance, and the point from which a further forward movement would have to be made, was far too weak. To obviate these defects it was now agreed that the 2nd Division should take over charge of the whole line of communications, with its Headquarters at Lundi Kotal, where a fort and huts were to be erected ; and that, strengthened by the addition of a wing of the 9th Lancers, the 10th Bengal Lancers, the 12th Foot¹ and the 39th Bengal Infantry, it should be distributed for the time being, at its Commander's discretion, between Jumrud, Ali Masjid,

¹ "The 12th Foot, a very nice Battalion, commanded by Colonel Walker, joined my Division. A good many young soldiers in it."—*General Maude's Diary*, 18th April, 1879.

Lundi Kotal, Dakka, Basawal¹ and Barikab, with the addition, later on, of Jellalabad.² The 1st Division, reinforced by the Heavy Battery and the 51st Foot, whilst temporarily continuing to have its Headquarters at Jellalabad, was to occupy Gandamak, at which place, in view of the likelihood that it might have to serve as a secondary base of operations, a strong position was to be secured, extensive enough to contain a field hospital and a depôt for Commissariat stores, but not so extensive as to require to be defended by a large force.

When these and other matters had been settled, the Commander-in-Chief left Peshawar for the Kuram, and Sir S. Browne returned to Jellalabad charged with the responsibility of preparing a comprehensive scheme for that advance on Kabul which the political aims of the Indian Government might at any moment demand. The desire to have his name associated with the capture of the Afghan capital must have been a powerful inducement to Browne to place the undertaking in the most favourable light; but the uprightness of his character, and his exhaustive knowledge of all the conditions of the problem given him to solve, prevailed over personal ambition, and the document which was to have shown how Kabul could be reached, amounted, when complete, to a demonstration of the fact that, under then existing circumstances, it could not be reached at all.

So far as troops were concerned, Browne considered that if he took with him his whole Division and established no posts to keep open his communications,³ he would be strong enough to overcome

¹ A Commissariat depôt was to be formed at this place, and shelter provided for troops and Commissariat establishment.

² The new arrangement gave Maude—

4 Batteries Royal Artillery,

1 Regiment of British Cavalry,

2 Regiments of British Infantry,

6 Regiments of Bengal Infantry.

³ Browne justified this departure from ordinary military caution on the ground that he would not be able to spare the men to hold the posts, and that

any resistance he might encounter, either in going or returning, and, marching by the Khurd Kabul route—the same that Pollock had taken in 1842—he would reach Kabul on the eighth day; but he could not assume a like adequacy with regard to transport. The weather would be warm, therefore tents could be dispensed with, and little baggage need be taken; but in the matter of food there could be no stinting and no trusting to the resources of the country. An ill-fed army, his experience taught him, was an inefficient one; and though he did not anticipate delays, he felt bound to provide against them to the extent of carrying fifteen days' supplies for his eight days' march. Calculating on this basis, he found that for eight thousand men and two thousand one hundred horses he should need—

	Camels	Elephants	Mules	Ponies	Bullocks
For Guns		39	150		
Baggage Stores and Ammunition.	1,700		1,900	700	320
15 Days' Supplies.	4,355				
Total	6,055	39	2,050	700	320

and if, to save the time and stores and labour that would be consumed in converting Gandamak into an auxiliary base, the expedition started from Jellalabad—an alternative preferred by him—fourteen hundred and fifty-two additional camels would be required. But as two mules are always reckoned equal to one camel, the necessary carrying capacity expressed in camel-loads would amount to ten thousand six hundred and sixty-seven,¹ while the carriage actually at his disposal amounted only to three thousand five hundred and sixty loads—two thousand eight hundred camels, fifteen hundred

the posts themselves would be in danger of being cut off, and unable to communicate with either the front or the rear. If the point should be decided against him, he suggested that fortified enclosures should be established at Jugdallak, Kala Sang and Tezin.

¹ Sir George Pollock, for 8,000 men, took with him 10,736 camel-loads.

and twenty mules. Colonel G. S. Macbean whom he had consulted, had promised to provide him with a fresh draft of eleven hundred and thirty-two camels and twelve hundred and fifty-eight mules, and to transfer two thousand camels and one thousand mules from the line of communications;¹ yet, even then, the total carrying capacity of the transport provided would be equivalent but to seven thousand five hundred and forty-three camel-loads, three thousand one hundred and twenty-four loads less than his minimum requirements.² Under these circumstances, all that he felt justified in recommending in the matter of an advance on Kabul, was the immediate transference of his Division to the cooler and healthier climate³ of Gandamak.⁴

Preparations for this next step, which had long been in progress, were now pressed forward with redoubled activity. In addition to military movements, to be dealt with in a later chapter, they included fresh efforts to accumulate supplies, to increase the stock of transport animals, and to allay the suspicions and soften the hostility of the Afridis; for though the arrangements to secure the line of communications through the Khyber were by this time excellent, they were not so perfect but that a combination of the Pass

¹ This transference would have deprived the Second Division of mobility.

² Sir S. Browne noted that his estimate made no allowance for deaths among the transport animals, or for their drivers deserting with them, though he believed that the losses from both causes would have been heavy. He mentioned, too, that he had no hope of obtaining any further camels from the Kabul traders.

³ There had been a sudden increase of sun heat, and the European troops had begun to suffer from fever, pneumonia and dysentery, in consequence of the difference in temperature between the days and the nights: Maximum, 86° minimum, 46°.

⁴ Sir S. Browne sent in his draft-scheme early in April, and it was quickly apparent that his blunt statement of the difficulties standing in the way of an advance on Kabul had not shaken Lord Lytton's desire to bring the war to an end by the capture of that city, for, on the 13th, General Maude received, from the Adjutant-General, an official intimation that, in such an advance, he would command the First Division, Major-General R. O. Bright, the Second, and Sir S. Browne, the whole Force, with Colonel C. M. Macgregor as chief of the staff.

Tribes might jeopardize them, and, with them, the very existence of the troops in advance. And the Afridis were uneasy; they had not forgiven the invasion of Bazar, and the attempt to penetrate into Bara, and they could not see why, now Shere 'Ali was dead, the Indian Government should continue to keep an army in Afghanistan and to build forts and barracks in their territory. It was no easy matter to explain conduct so distinctly at variance with the promises made to them at the beginning of the war; but the Viceroy did the best he could to appease their discontent by appointing Mr. Donald Macnabb as Political Officer of Maude's Division, in succession to Cavagnari, when the latter moved on to Gandamak.

During his visit to Jellalabad, Sir Frederick Haines was shown many places of interest connected with the memorable siege of that town, by the only officer in Sir Samuel Browne's Force, who had been a member of its "illustrious garrison"—Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Bailey, Rifle Brigade.

This officer was able to point out the bastion held by what was then his regiment, the 13th Foot, from which Dr. Brydon, the sole survivor of the British Army massacred in the Khurd Kabul and Jagdalak Passes was first descried; the garrison graveyard, now covered by a mosque; the tracings of the fortifications which it had taken the garrison three months to construct, and an earthquake an hour or two to destroy; and, lastly, the spot, where his own gallant commanding officer, Colonel Dennie, fell in the engagement, in which Mahomed Akbar was driven across the Kabul river with the loss of all his tents and baggage.—H. B. H.

CHAPTER XXV

The Occupation of Gandamak

10TH HUSSARS DISASTER—ACTION AT FUTTEHABAD—
THE KAM DAKKA AFFAIR

ON the last day of March, information reached Sir S. Browne that Azmutulla Khan, with a large following, had again descended into the Laghman Valley, where he was working to bring about a fresh combination of the Tribes against the British occupation of their country, and that the Khugianis, a powerful clan, occupying the fertile lands that lie to the south of Futtehabad, a large village seventeen miles west of Jellalabad, were assembling in great numbers in the neighbourhood of Khaja, their principal border fortress. To prevent the threatened mischief assuming larger proportions, Browne instantly organized three lightly equipped columns—no tents were taken, and the ammunition mules carried only half loads—one of which, under Major E. Wood, was to march to Chaharbagh in the Laghman Valley and capture, or drive out, Azmutulla; another, under Brigadier-General Macpherson, was to cross the Siah Koh (Black Mountain) by the Jowari Chann Pass into the valley on its further side, to cut what was expected to be that chief's line of retreat; and the third, under Brigadier-General Charles Gough, was to march on Futtehabad, and disperse the Khugianis.

Macpherson's Column, consisting of :—

The Hazara Mountain Battery,
A wing 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade,
Do. 4th Gurkhas,
Do. 20th Punjab Infantry,
A Company of Sappers and Miners,
Approximate strength—1,000 men and 4 guns.

was the first to move. It left camp at 9 p.m. and, marching quickly, followed the course of the Kabul River up-stream for nine miles, and then, turning sharply northward, made its way through lands cut up by muddy irrigation channels, which so delayed it that the moon had set before it reached the Surkhab.¹ Here, the usual ford was found to be impassable, and another had to be sought. When this had been discovered, about half a mile lower down, at a point where the river divides into two branches—the whole force crossed in pitch darkness, and, pressing on, arrived about 4 a.m., at the foot of the Siah Koh. Here, there was a pause of fifty minutes, to allow of the troops closing up, and then the passage of that range began. The track presented many difficulties, its steep ascents and descents being strewn with huge boulders, or running over layers of sheet rock, so slippery that it seemed impossible for horse or mule to keep its footing; but at last the crest—five thousand three hundred feet above sea level—was reached, and Macpherson, hearing that Azmatulla was still in Laghman, and hoping to catch him near Bairam Khan Fort, where he would probably try to cross the Kabul River, hurried down the further side of the pass with a detachment of the Rifle Brigade, only to find that his expected prisoner had made good his escape, and that his followers had dispersed to their villages.

As pursuit was out of the question, and the troops—the same who five months previously had scaled the rocky heights of Rotas—though now inured to steep hillsides and stony ways, were exhausted by the long march, Macpherson determined to spend the night on the further side of the mountains, and the men's eyes turned anxiously to the path by which they had descended, watching for the rear-guard and the loaded mules. But nothing was seen of them that day, nor till 2 p.m. on the morrow, when they rejoined the main body on its homeward march. It turned out that they had missed their way

¹ A tributary of the Kabul River, and, like that stream, very dangerous at the season of the melting of the snows.

and wandered down to Futtehabad, where they had blundered into Gough's column, and been promptly sent back, by paths so steep and narrow, that the 20th Punjab Infantry had been obliged, again and again, to unload and reload their mules.

At midnight, orders reached Macpherson to detach De Lautour's Mountain Battery, with an escort of two hundred Infantry, to reinforce Gough, and to return himself, with the rest of the troops, to Jellalabad. A few hours later, the column was again in motion, and though the Duranda Pass, by which its commander had elected to return, proved little less difficult than the Jowari Chann, by nightfall it was once more in quarters.

Major Wood's Column, consisting of a squadron of the 10th Hussars and one of the 11th Bengal Lancers, had left camp half an hour after Macpherson's.¹ To reach the Laghman Valley the Kabul River had to be crossed, and as, owing to its swollen state, the trestle bridge had been removed, the troops were obliged to make use of the ford just below the spot where that bridge had stood. The bed of the river at this point is about three-quarters of a mile broad ; but, in mid-stream, a stony island divides it into two channels. Between the right bank and this island, the ford—a wide strip of gravel strewn with boulders—is drawn in a straight line from shore to shore ; but between the island and the left bank, it runs first down the stream at an angle of 45°, then up-stream at the like angle, and above and below it, are rapids, broken by sandbanks and rocks. The V-shaped half of this ford is at all times dangerous, yet Jenkins and Gough seem to have been the only two senior officers who recognized the danger, and, unfortunately, a report of the former, in which he deprecated the use of it at night, was forgotten, or overlooked, by the Quartermaster-General's Department, in the hurry and stress of preparing three forces, at short notice, for the field. The moon was sinking and the dark shadows of

¹ The infantry supports which were to have followed the next day, were countermanded when news came that the Ghilzais had fled from Laghman.

the hills were falling across the valley when the column rode down to the river, and crossed over to the island without mishap, the single guide attached to it, leading the way, followed first by the squadron of the 11th Bengal Lancers in half sections, i.e. four abreast ; next, by two mules led by their drivers ; and, lastly, by the squadron of the 10th Hussars, also in half sections, Captain R. C. D'E. Spottiswoode at their head. By this time the darkness had deepened, so that no man could do more than dimly discern his neighbour, and the roar and rush of the river drowned every voice save its own ; yet, once again, the guide and the Bengal Lancers, composed of men accustomed from youth up to the treacherous rivers of the Punjab, reached the opposite bank in safety. Nevertheless, in the long column there had been a slight yielding to the pressure of the stream, so that at the apex of the V its tail had been dangerously near the edge of the ford ; so near, that the mules and muleteers, following close behind, stepped off into deep water and were at once swept over the rapids.¹ Almost at the same moment, Spottiswoode's horse—a powerful English charger—lost his footing, recovered it, lost it again, and finally, after being carried down some distance, swam to land with his rider, on the further shore. As with the leader, so with the rank and file. Too closely locked up for one section to take warning by the fate of that in front of it, the whole squadron missed the ford at the same point, and in a moment men and horses, closely packed, were fighting for life, rolling over and over in the swift, strong flood. Many of the men were drowned, or kicked to death by the struggling chargers, a few carried on to sandbanks and so saved. The last to enter the water, Sub-Lieutenant C. M. Grenfell, escaped through the wise instincts of his horse, who swung round the moment he felt himself in deep water, and regained the shore which he had just left. The Bengal Lancers on the left

¹ The official reports say nothing as to the fate of the mules and drivers, but, according to private sources of information, they all succeeded in getting back to land.

bank of the river knew nothing of this sudden tragedy; but two men of the 10th who had lingered on the island when their comrades entered the river, saw, as it seemed to them, the whole squadron in mid-channel suddenly face to the right, gallop down stream and vanish from sight.¹ The first intimation of what had occurred, was carried into camp by riderless, dripping horses, who about 11 p.m. rushed through the lines of the Horse Artillery to those of the 10th Hussars. That a great disaster had befallen that regiment was evident, and the officers in camp belonging to it, hurried down to the ford, followed by doctors and ambulances, and, as quickly as possible by Major G. E. L. S. Sandford with the elephants of the Heavy Battery, equipped with ropes, and carrying large bundles of firewood. Soon a huge bonfire was blazing on the island, and, by its light, Lieutenant the Hon. J. P. Napier and a few of his men were discovered on a sandbank below the rapids, and dragged, bruised and exhausted, to shore. Not till morning could there be any search for the dead, and then only the bodies of Lieutenant Harford and eighteen men were recovered; ² all the rest had been swept away and were never seen again, though, later on, a report was current that they had been cast up by the flood, stripped by the Natives and flung back into the river.

The loss sustained by the 10th Hussars on that fatal night was one officer, three non-commissioned officers and forty-two rank and file—total casualties forty-seven; nearly two-thirds of the squadron

¹ *Memoirs of the Tenth Royal Hussars*, p. 402.

² "As daylight came and the banks lower down were searched, the bodies were found jammed amongst the boulders and under the rocky banks. The men were in full marching order, khaki, with putties and warm underclothing. They had their swords on and carried their carbines slung over their shoulders and their pouches were full. A man so accoutred simply had no chance against the swollen river."—Surgeon-Major George T. H. Evatt's *Personal Recollections*.

"Many amongst them were excellent swimmers but the water was bitterly cold from the melting snows, and the poor fellows were quickly benumbed."—*Memoirs of the Tenth Royal Hussars*, p. 401.

which had left camp seventy-five strong.¹ Only thirteen horses were drowned ; the rest, when freed from their riders, having swum to land, on one bank or the other.

In the hurry and horror of this unexpected catastrophe, Sir S. Browne did not forget the important movement that was in progress, and quickly despatched another troop of the 11th Bengal Lancers to take the place of the lost Hussars. Furnished with guides and lighted by the fire on the island, the Lancers crossed over safely, and, thus reinforced, Wood pushed on to his destination, where he arrived too late to capture Azmutulla, who, warned of his approach, had quitted the valley, and was by that time well on his way to Kabul.

Saddened by the knowledge of the misfortune which had overtaken Wood's force, Gough's Column left camp at 1 a.m. of the 1st of April. The night was intensely dark, and difficulty was experienced in forming up the men, so hard was it to distinguish the stony track from the stony plain through which it ran ; but, once started, its progress was fairly rapid, and daybreak found it within a mile of Futtehabad. It was soon discovered that the inhabitants, who were reputed friendly, had deserted the village, and there was reason to fear that many of them had gone to swell the ranks of the Khugianis. A site for a camp

¹ "Several instances of gallantry, worth recording, took place during this terrible calamity, and none more so than the conduct of Lieutenant Charles Greenwood, who, although much exhausted by his efforts, had extricated himself from the quicksands and found himself on an island. Hearing cries for help, he again entered the water and found a man thirty yards out, unable to move in the deep gravel and almost drowning. Lieutenant Greenwood failed in getting the man out alone, when Lieutenant Grenfell, hearing the shouts, came to his assistance, and together they brought the man in safety to the shore. Lieutenant Greenwood received the Humane Society's medal for his conduct on the occasion.

"Private Crowley, who had swum with his horse a considerable distance and remained with it until it succumbed, had great difficulty himself in reaching the shore, and on doing so went to the assistance of Lieutenant the Hon. J. Napier, whom he helped to rescue."—*Memoirs of the Tenth Royal Hussars*, p. 404.

was selected, and the Cavalry found shelter under some trees whilst waiting for the rest of the Column to come up. The Infantry and guns came in at 10 a.m.; the baggage animals not till nightfall. Gough made use of the day's halt to acquire all the information he could as to the strength and whereabouts of the enemy, sending out numerous patrols and interviewing a good many local chiefs, amongst whom the Khans of Gandamak and Khuja were conspicuous by their absence. Early next day, he despatched Major H. F. Blair, R.E., and Major the Hon. A. Stewart, commanding the Horse Artillery, with an escort of thirty men of the 10th Hussars, to reconnoitre the road as far as Nimla Bagh, at the foot of the ascent to Gandamak, and report on its condition; whilst Captain J. Davidson, Quartermaster-General's Staff, and Lieutenant R. Purdy, R.H.A., with thirty men of the Guide Cavalry, were sent south towards Khuja, the principal village of the Khugianis, to try to ascertain the temper of that tribe. Its unfriendliness was shown by their firing on the reconnoitring party; and Davidson reported on his return that they were in large numbers, with outposts thrown forward to within five miles of the British Camp, evidently prepared to give battle. Finding that he was in presence of an enemy, Gough at once seized a hill from which the Khugianis' movements could be observed, the picket on which reported, about 1 p.m., that masses of men were advancing from the direction of Khuja, and forming up on the edge of a plateau, four miles south of the Gandamak road. As Blair and his escort had not returned, Gough ordered Major Wigram Battye, with three troops Guide Cavalry, to go in search of them, as far as the point where that road crossed the slopes leading up to the plateau on its northern side, and here he was quickly joined by the missing party.

Leaving Lieutenant-Colonel C. M'Pherson, with three hundred Infantry and a squadron of Cavalry to guard the camp, Gough, with

4 guns I.C. R.H.A. : Major the Hon. A. Stewart,

3 troops 10th Hussars : Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Ralph Kerr,

240 men 17th Foot : Major F. S. S. Brind,
 220 „ 27th Punjab Infantry : Lieutenant-Colonel C. J. Hughes,
 240 „ 45th Sikhs : Major C. L. Woodruffe—

followed Batty, and on reaching him found that the Khugianis, numbering about five thousand men, held a very strong position that stretched for a mile along the edge of the plateau, its flanks protected by steep bluffs, its front, by strong stone breastworks and by the lie of the ground, which fell, at first abruptly and then more gently, to the Gandamak road. A frontal attack on such a position was out of the question, and Gough was too good an officer to dream of weakening his little force by detaching troops to turn it; the only course open to him, therefore, was to draw the Khugianis from their stronghold, and this he did with singular skill and success. Having carefully explained his plan to his principal officers, he ordered the Cavalry and Artillery to advance together to within a mile of the enemy. Here the former were to halt, while the latter, with a strong escort, were to gallop forward several hundred yards, fire a few rounds, limber up and retire. Gough felt confident that, when they saw the guns begin to fall back, the brave but undisciplined Tribesmen would rush out from their defences to seize them, and that, by repeating the manœuvre, he would, in time, draw them so far down the hill that it would be impossible for them, when attacked, to return to the position they had left. For the attack he made ample provision by sending the Infantry up a nullah, through which, if his calculations proved correct, they would get unsuspected on the enemy's right flank.

Everything worked out exactly as the General had hoped. When the guns fell back for the first time, the Khugianis began streaming from their breastworks; and when, after again firing a few rounds, they fell back the second time, accompanied by the Cavalry, the whole of the enemy's force abandoned their defences and rushed down into the plain, collecting on their own left to attack what they

supposed to be the only troops opposed to them. At that moment the Infantry emerged from the nullah on their right; the 17th Foot and the 27th Punjab Infantry deploying into line, whilst the 45th Sikhs were held in reserve.

Making over the command of the Cavalry and Artillery to Lord Ralph Kerr, with strict injunctions to guard against the Khugianis cutting in on his right, and orders to charge them when a favourable opportunity should present itself—Gough now hurried away to a point from which he could direct the movements of the Infantry. The latter were already at close quarters with the enemy, whose courage had not been shaken by their unlooked-for appearance on the scene of action. One group of Khugianis, led by a man carrying a large flag which had been very conspicuous throughout the fight, rushed boldly forward, and was met with like boldness by a handful of the 17th, led by Lieutenant Wiseman. A fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued, in which the gallant young officer and the equally gallant standard-bearer fell. The courage of the tribesmen, however, could not prevail over the admirable tactics of the British Commander, and, completely out-flanked on that side of the field, they had to give way. Seeing that the decisive moment had arrived, Gough despatched his A.D.C., Lieutenant the Hon. G. L. Bellew, to bid the Cavalry charge. But the order had been anticipated. Lord Ralph Kerr had recognized the opportunity for which he had been directed to watch, and forming up his men—barely two hundred, all told—the 10th Hussars on the right, the Guides on the left—had dashed straight into the crowd of Khugianis hovering on his right flank, and shattered it into fragments.

Many groups of men still clung obstinately to their rocky slopes, and, for a time, fought on bravely; but they could not reunite sufficiently to offer any effectual resistance to cavalry, and when they fled back to their original position, the mounted men were at their heels, and they were driven headlong over and beyond the breast-works, behind which, an hour before, they had enjoyed perfect security.

On the ridge, Lord Ralph Kerr halted to rally his scattered men, and here Gough—riding ahead of the Infantry, who were pushing up the slope towards the other end of the plateau—joined him, and together they looked down over a plain, seamed with ravines and sowed with rock, over which the Khugianis were flying for their lives, towards the forts that could be seen dotting the fertile country on either side of this region of stone. The order to pursue was quickly given, and whilst the galloping Cavalry cut down scores of fugitives, the guns which had been placed in position on the ridge, opened fire, and mowed down every little body of men that still retained its formation, and was within their range. It was a terrible slaughter, but the Khugianis were brave men and they did not die tamely. Flying, they fought on, till, under the walls of Khuja, they reached safety, and the victorious British Cavalry drew rein, and, turning, rode back over the blood-stained waste to the ridge where the Infantry awaited them.

In this, the most successful engagement of the war, the Afghans cannot have lost less than three hundred killed, and three times that number wounded. The British loss, as the table on the following page shows, was also heavy in comparison with the number of troops engaged.

In Major Wigram Battye, the Indian Army lost one of the best and bravest of its officers.¹ When he fell, the command of the Guides Cavalry was taken by Lieutenant W. R. P. Hamilton, whose gallant conduct on this occasion won for him the Victoria Cross.

The action was over by 5 p.m., and the same evening Gough's Column returned to camp by a valley lying to the east of the plateau on which it had been fought. Only a low range of hills separated the two, yet how great the contrast! On one side the blood-stained battlefield, where dead and dying lay strewn among the rocks; on the other, the homes of these very men—pretty villages, surrounded

¹ "In Major Wigram Battye the Government have lost an officer of whom any army would have been proud—a noble, chivalrous character and beloved by all who knew him."—Covering despatch by Sir S. Browne.

by gardens, half hidden in fruit trees just bursting into bloom ; beyond the gardens, long fields of corn waving green in the evening

RETURN OF THE KILLED, WOUNDED AND MISSING IN THE ACTION
OF FUTTEHABAD, 2ND APRIL, 1879

Corps	Killed.						Wounded.						Total, Officers and Men	
	British Officers	Native Officers	Sergeants, Duffadars	Drummers	Rank and File	Horses	British Officers	Native Officers	Sergeants, Duffadars, etc.	Drummers	Rank and File	Horses ^c		
I.C.R.H. Artillery ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 ^a	—	—	1	
10th Hussars	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	6	—	—	7	
Cavalry of Corps of Guides	1	1	1	—	1	5	—	4	5	19 ^b	20	—	32	
1st Battalion 17th Foot	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	6	
27th Bengal Native Infantry	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
45th Sikhs	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
TOTAL	2	1	1	—	2	6	—	4	7	—	29	20		
GRAND TOTAL ..	6						—	40						46

a. Mortally wounded.

b. One Sowar since died of his wounds.

c. Horses missing, 31.

NAMES OF OFFICERS KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Killed.

Major Wigram Battye, Bengal Staff Corps, Officiating Commandant Cavalry of Corps of Guides.

Lieutenant Nicholas C. Wiseman, 1st Battalion 17th Foot.

Resaldar Mahmood Khan, Cavalry of Corps of Guides.

Wounded.

Resaldar Dhuni Chand, Resaldar Kala Sing, Jemadar Jewand Sing, Jemadar Bishen Das, Cavalry of the Corps of Guides—all slightly.

sunshine, and, on every hand, the ripple and glitter of the streams from which this favoured valley borrows its beauty and its wealth.

Unwilling to inflict any further suffering on a brave people, Sir S. Browne waited for a day before resuming operations against the Khugianis, and sent two chiefs who had previously come in, to tell their head-man, Hyder Khan, of Gandamak, that their forts would be spared if they would undertake to give no further trouble. This message remaining unanswered, Gough, reinforced by the remainder of Tytler's Brigade¹ and by the troops detached by Macpherson, started out again on the 4th of April to destroy the fortifications of Khuja. The Cavalry and Horse Artillery ascended the slopes; the Infantry and Mountain Guns moved by the lateral valley, and the two bodies, meeting on the plateau, continued their united march to Sarna, the site of a post held by the British troops in 1840-2. Hearing

¹ The supersession of Tytler by Gough was much criticized at the time, and has never been explained or justified. The *Bombay Review* of the 5th of April 1879, has the following passage: "From what we know of General Tytler as an experienced and eminently judicious Commandant of his own (Gurkha) Regiment, to say nothing of the unmistakably superior service he has rendered during the present campaign, we would emphatically endorse the following remarks by the *Indian Daily News*, which, indeed, only repeats what is being said on all sides: 'A strong sense of injustice pervades the Peshawar Field Force, and great sympathy is felt for General Tytler, V.C. The records of the time testify that General Tytler has not been wanting in anything that has been required of him, and this supersession by a junior officer is felt to be one of those acts which is not only a personal wrong, but a course that tends to discourage men who have capacity and will to serve their country.'"

There is no evidence to show whether Browne or the Military Authorities at Headquarters must bear the responsibility for what must be stigmatized as an act of injustice, for the fact that Gough acquitted himself admirably of the duty confided to him, did not make it less unjust that a man should have been passed over, who had so recently given proof of his ability to discharge it with equal success. Tytler's retreat from Mausam was masterly, and if he made a mistake in taking too small a force to attack that village, it must be remembered that he had the safety of an important part of the communications of the 1st Division to provide for, and that when he had gone out with a larger column, he had returned to find that a convoy had been plundered in his absence.—H.B.H.

at this point, that the Khugiani chiefs were holding a Council of War, Gough despatched another messenger charged to assure them that, if they would surrender, all hostile action on his part should cease. Again there was no answer; so at 2 p.m. the march was resumed and the towers of Khuja, which village was found deserted, were blown up. Then, at last, Hyder Khan sent in to say that if the British General would promise to destroy no more forts, he and his chiefs would come in. The promise was given without demur, and the troops returned to Futtehabad, where, on the 6th, the Khugiani leaders made their submission to Gough, by whom they were courteously received and kindly treated; and, from that day to the close of the campaign, the tribe not only kept the peace but, by furnishing working parties, rendered valuable assistance to the army of occupation.

The action at Futtehabad and the agreement with the Khugianis || having cleared the way for the long intended advance, Sir S. Browne, accompanied by a small column, left Jellalabad for Gandamak, on the 12th of April. The two valleys are thirty-five miles apart, and the distance is divided into three marches. The first day the General established his Headquarters at Rosabad; the second, at Nimla,¹ on the eastern side of the Gandamak heights, where he was joined by Gough and Tytler. On the 14th, the British troops entered the high-lying, well-watered valley of Gandamak, shady with mulberry trees, and cool with the breezes that blow down from the snow-capped peaks of the Safed Koh. It afforded ample accommodation for a large force; but, as a military position, Sir S. Browne preferred the Safaid Sang, a ridge three miles nearer to Jellalabad, where there was an abundant supply of good water, and where his camp could not be overlooked. These advantages had, however, counterbalancing

¹ At Nimla is the beautiful garden laid out by the Emperor Barbar. The garden, which is a square, with sides over 1,000 feet in length, contains avenues of gigantic plane trees and many summer houses, and is famed for its narcissi. Here, in the year 1809, Shah Shuja was defeated and expelled from his kingdom by Futteh Khan, the elder brother of Dost Mahomed.—H.B.H.

defects; the ridge was stony and treeless, very hot by day, very cold at night, and it suffered from clouds of dust, which sudden winds swept up from below; in the end, therefore, though the original camp was maintained, a large part of the First Division was removed to Gandamak, and the whole position was known by that name.¹

It will be remembered that, by Sir F. Haines's arrangements, Jellalabad was to be transferred to the Second Division; but when the time came for carrying this out, Maude's hands were too full to allow of his extending his responsibilities beyond Barikab, eight miles short of that town, and, accordingly, when Appleyard's Brigade moved on to Gandamak, a small force consisting of—

2 guns E-3 Royal Artillery,
One wing 11th Bengal Lancers,
1st Sikhs,
One wing Guide Infantry,
One Company Sappers and Miners—

was left behind as a garrison for Fort Sale,² and its connexion with Safaid Sang was assured by the establishment of two strongly fortified posts—Fort Rosabad and Fort Battye—the one, twelve; the other, twenty-one miles from Jellalabad.

Though Gough's victory at Futtehabad had killed all resistance to the west of Jellalabad, to the east of that town, a fresh movement among the Tribesmen coincided with the British advance to Gandamak. First, came rumours that the Mohmands, under a certain

¹ Four miles from Gandamak is the hill where the last survivors of the British army, retreating from Kabul in 1842, were massacred. Pollock's men, advancing to avenge their fate, covered their bodies with stones. These, in course of time, became displaced, and when Browne moved to Gandamak, the bones of those brave men still whitened the hill-side, and received tardy burial at the hands of the 17th Foot, a regiment which had formed part of "the illustrious garrison" of Jellalabad.—H.B.H.

² This important post was afterwards strengthened with two troops of Cavalry, a company of 51st Foot and two of Sappers and Miners; and when the wing of the Guide Infantry was called up to Safaid Sang, it was replaced by four Companies furnished by the 45th Sikhs and the 27th Punjab Infantry.—H.B.H.

Mulla Khalil, were gathering in the hills beyond Lalpura, on the left bank of the Kabul River; then, the officer commanding at Dakka, Major O. Barnes, received a message from the Khan of that district asking for help against the insurgents, who were within three miles of his village, and had already exchanged shots with his outposts. The request put Barnes in an awkward position. He felt the hardship of leaving a chief who had entered into engagements with the British invaders, to the vengeance of his countrymen; but more strongly still did he feel his responsibility for the safety of his own post, with its large hospital and Commissariat depôt, and he knew that to detach any portion of its small garrison of eight hundred men and six guns to the further side of the river, would dangerously weaken its defences. Fortunately, the insurgents themselves relieved him from his dilemma by abandoning the threatened attack on Lalpura, and crossing over, in the night, to the northern bank of the river. Hearing, the next morning, that the enemy was at no great distance from Dakka, Barnes sallied out with two guns, C-3 Royal Artillery, a squadron 10th Bengal Lancers and three Companies of the Mhairwarra Battalion, to ascertain their character and number, and pushed forward, unopposed save for a few shots fired from the opposite bank of the stream, as far as the Kam Dakka Pass. Here he halted his guns and Cavalry, and himself advanced cautiously with his Infantry, and a few mounted scouts to the village of the same name, whose inhabitants he found much alarmed by the news of the Mohmand gathering, and urgent in their entreaties that he and his troops would remain and defend them. Their prayer was refused at the time; but on his return to Dakka, Barnes, after consulting the Political Officer, sent back a detachment of the Mhairwarra Battalion, consisting of a hundred and thirty men of all ranks, under Captain O'Moore Creagh, well provided with entrenching tools, ammunition and rations, to give the protection asked for. It was no easy matter getting the laden mules over the hills in the dark, and it was eleven at night before Creagh, who had

left Dakka Fort at five in the afternoon, arrived at the village, and prepared to occupy and entrench it. To his surprise, the inhabitants refused to admit him ; they were, so they declared, quite able to defend themselves, and the presence of a British detachment, without guns, could add nothing to their safety, and would certainly compromise them with the Mohmands. To force an entry was out of the question ; so the troops bivouacked outside the walls, with strong pickets thrown out to guard against surprise.

At 4 o'clock next morning, Creagh again summoned the elders of the village and ordered them to open their gates. But the men stood firm ; neither a Mohmand nor a Sepoy would they suffer within their walls. At this time, very few of the enemy were in sight, and Creagh felt so little fear of an attack that the messenger whom he sent to Dakka to inform Barnes of the strange position in which he found himself, was instructed to add that all was well. An hour later, he despatched a second messenger with very different tidings : the Mohmands had crossed the river in large numbers ; the inhabitants of Kam Dakka were showing themselves less and less friendly, and, his right flank being endangered, he had withdrawn to a fresh position covering the Pass, where he was momentarily expecting to be attacked. At half-past five, his right was again in danger, and once more he began slowly falling back. At 8 o'clock, he was joined by thirty-six men and a Native officer, who, leaving Dakka late the previous evening, had been benighted among the hills. Small as was this detachment, it was very welcome to Creagh, especially as it brought with it a fresh supply of ammunition ; but it was discouraging to hear that the Native officer doubted whether the second messenger would get through to Dakka, and was of opinion that no reinforcements could be counted on that day. Retreat, in the face of so numerous and determined an enemy, was impossible ; so Creagh looked about for a position in which his small force might defend itself until help should arrive, and found it in a graveyard lying in the plain between Kam

Dakka and the Pass, midway between the river and the Dakka road. No wall surrounded it, but there were plenty of stones, and out of these, whilst some of the troops held the enemy in check and others watered the baggage animals and laid in a store of water for the use of the men, the remainder built up a good, solid breastwork. Just as they finished their task, the Mohmands, descending from the hills, drove in the skirmishers, and taking advantage of the high corn and other cover, closed round the graveyard to within a distance of from sixty to a hundred yards, cutting off the garrison alike from road and river. Again and again, did the enemy assault the entrenchments, and, again and again, were they driven back at the point of the bayonet. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the attack on the front facing the Pass relaxed a little, but the other three sides were assailed with even greater fury than before; and though the troops fought with unabated spirit, ammunition was running short, and every man knew that help must come soon, or it would come too late. Luckily, Creagh's second messenger did succeed in reaching Dakka, and Barnes instantly telegraphed the bad news he brought, to Headquarters at Lundi Kotal. General Maude, who up to that moment had been unaware of the despatch of Creagh's Force to Kam Dakka, now took prompt steps to provide for its safety. In a very brief space of time, two Forces—the one starting from Dakka Fort, under Captain D. M. Strong, the other from Haftchar, a fort lying half way between Dakka and Lundi Kotal, under Major J. R. Dyce—were hurrying over the hills to the rescue of their beleaguered comrades, whilst Colonel F. B. Norman, who with a small column of Artillery and Infantry was reconnoitring between Lundi Kotal and the Kabul River, warned by a heliographic message of the emergency which had arisen at Kam Dakka, was hastening across country to Creagh's assistance, and two companies 2nd Gurkhas from Basawal, and three companies 12th Foot, and two mountain guns 11-9 Royal Artillery from Lundi Kotal, under Lieutenant-Colonel C. J. C. Sillery, were on the march to strengthen the weakened garrison of Dakka.

Strong's party, consisting of a troop of the

10th Bengal Lancers,
One Company 5th Fusiliers,
One of the Mhairwarra Battalions;

and accompanied by Captain Trotter, the Political Officer, was the first to arrive on the scene of action. Soon after 3 p.m., descending the Kam Dakka Pass, it reached a point from which all the details of the unequal contest in the valley below, could distinctly be discerned. On its left lay the Kabul River, winding through yellowing cornfields; the mountain slopes and the plain at its feet crowded with blue-togared Mohmands, and gay with red and white banners. But the point that drew all eyes was the graveyard, with its improvised defences, behind which glimpses could be caught of the gallant Mhairwarras, some with bandaged limbs and heads, firing slowly into the surging throng which threatened every moment to overwhelm them. Recognizing the imminence of their peril, Strong, with the Fusiliers, scattered the nearest Mohmands, posted his Company of the Mhairwarras on a ridge to maintain communication with his rear and to protect his flanks; and then, despatching Lieutenant C. E. Pollock to bring up at once the troop of the 10th Bengal Lancers, he and Tucker, at much risk, succeeded in getting into Creagh's enclosure. When the Cavalry came up, Strong dashed out again, and succeeded in joining it unhurt. Putting himself at the head of the Lancers, he charged through the fields, driving the astonished Mohmands headlong down the steep bank into the river, which was soon full of struggling men and floating flags and turbans. Simultaneously, the garrison of the graveyard, its ammunition at last exhausted, rushed from its entrenchments, and attacking with the bayonet, completed the enemy's discomfiture. Bewildered and terror-stricken, the Tribesmen fled to high ground, and the combined British Force at once withdrew, with all its killed and wounded, to the shelter of the Pass. This retirement was the signal for the return of the Mohmands; but hardly

had they swarmed down into the valley, and occupied the abandoned entrenchments, than the relief Force from Haftchar came hurrying up, and with its mountain guns soon drove them out, and forced them, for the second time, to seek safety among the hills.

Strong had been instructed to hold the Pass till morning, but the Mohmands were still in great strength, and not only Creagh's men, but the corps which had come to his aid, were much exhausted; there were wounded requiring treatment, and neither rations for the men, nor forage nor water for the horses and mules; so Major Dyce, the senior officer of the united Force, very judiciously decided on an immediate withdrawal, and, thanks to his careful dispositions, Dakka was reached, with few casualties, at 8 p.m., though the column, hampered by baggage and doolies, moved slowly, and the Mohmands followed it up and harassed it by continuous and heavy firing. When, the following morning, Colonel Sillery, with a strong column, re-crossed the Pass, he met with no resistance, nor did Norman who joined him at Kam Dakka after a long march through the Shilman Valley. The Mohmands had melted away as quickly as they had come together; and thenceforward, till the end of the campaign, they gave no further trouble as a tribe, though individuals still continued to steal, rob and murder whenever they had the chance. Their losses on the 22nd of April had been heavy—about two hundred killed and wounded—whilst the British casualties were only six killed and eighteen wounded, an inconsiderable number when it is remembered that the slightest hesitation or error of judgment on the part of Creagh or Strong must have entailed the destruction of the whole detachment. General Maude showed his appreciation of the former officer's skill, coolness and determination, by obtaining for him the Victoria Cross; and he commended Captain Strong's name to the favourable consideration and notice of the Commander-in-Chief, an honour shared by Hospital-Assistant Syud Nur Khan and Bheestie Nadari, both belonging to Creagh's Company of the Mhairwarras.

It was suspected that some of the Kam Dakka people took part in the attack on the graveyard; but the offence could not be proved against them, and as, after the dispersal of the Mohmand gathering, they made haste to return to their original friendly attitude, it was deemed unwise to punish them for a change of front which was, to some extent, justified by the weakness of the column sent to their assistance. A body of armed tribesmen belonging to Lalpura, who had accompanied Captain Trotter, were also believed to have gone over to the enemy. Certainly they took no part in the action on the British side, and their unfriendliness, even if it went no further than abstention from aid, was a fresh proof of the folly of expecting Mohmands to fight against Mohmands, Afridis against Afridis, at the bidding of a foreign authority, and in any interest but their own.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. The operations against Azmutulla emphasize what has already been written about night marches, and wide turning movements, in a mountainous country. In Wood's Column, the lives of forty-seven British soldiers were thrown away in the attempt to surprise an enemy, whose spies swarmed in Jellalabad, and watched every yard of the Kabul River; and Macpherson's Column ran immense risks, and underwent exhausting fatigues, in striving to cut off the retreat of a fugitive who was practically certain to get away before the point at which, alone, there was a chance of intercepting him, could be reached. Gough's enterprise succeeded, not because he started out in the middle of the night—for the fact that he found Futtehabad deserted proved that the enemy had been warned of his approach—but because, after duly informing himself as to the strength and dispositions of the Khugianis, he adopted the only tactics by which the superiority due to position could be transferred from them to him. No such military success was possible in the Laghman Valley, but a single strong force, leaving Jellalabad by daylight, could

have accomplished all that Wood's and Macpherson's combined movements were able to effect—namely, the evacuation of that valley by the Ghilzais—without the loss of a single life. In the whole of the first phase of the war, only one night march, Roberts's on the 1st of December, can claim to have attained its object; and that, though it succeeded, so far as the surprise of the Spingawai Kotal was concerned, failed as a turning movement, in co-operation with General Cobbe's frontal attack.

OBSERVATION II. The proceedings of the Court of Inquiry held to take evidence as to the cause of the accident to the 10th Hussars, have never been made public, but Sir S. Browne attributed the disaster to a sudden rise in the Kabul River, similar to that which, in 1839, swept away the leading troop of the 16th Lancers, when effecting the passage of the Jhelam, on their return to India. The surmise was probably correct; but that spates are of frequent occurrence in Afghan rivers, is an additional reason for the exercise of foresight and care in crossing them, and, on the occasion under review, the most ordinary precautions were neglected, the best known rules violated. The river was known to be in flood, yet (1) the eccentric course of the ford had not been staked out; (2) only one guide was attached to the column; (3) baggage animals were allowed to interpose between the two Cavalry corps; (4) the troops were ordered to cross in half-sections; (5) no Staff Officer was present to superintend the operation; (6) the officer commanding the column, instead of remaining on the island till all his men had landed on the further bank, crossed with the first half of his Force, and left to subordinates the duty of watching over the safety of the second half; (7) the passage, risky by day, was made at night.¹

¹ On the occasion of the accident to the 16th Lancers, the regiment entered the ford six abreast, and missed it in trying to pass some camels. After the accident, Sir J. Keane ordered the rest of the Cavalry to cross the Jhelam singly, with a horse's length between each animal, and every troop led by a guide.

OBSERVATION III. Though the incident at Kam Dakka reflects nothing but credit on all concerned, it nevertheless brought out strongly the need for well organized moveable columns, unconnected with the defence of the communications, and free, therefore, to march to the assistance of any threatened post. Had Barnes, on the 22nd of April, been in command of such a column, anxiety for the safety of Dakka would not have obliged him to refuse the prayer of the people of Kam Dakka, and the adequate protection which he would have been able to afford them, would have commanded their fidelity and kept the Mohmands to their own side of the Kabul River.

CHAPTER XXVI

Visit of the Commander-in-Chief to the Kuram

ADVANCE TO ALIKHEL

FOR some weeks after the close of the Khost Expedition, the Kuram Field Force, except for road-making, in which it was greatly helped by local labour, enjoyed a period of rest ; the severity of the weather which protected its outposts from attack, condemning it to not unwelcome inactivity. There was, however, no respite from toil and anxiety for the troops on the line of communication within British territory, where there was no snow to act as a check on the hostility of the tribes. Around Thal, cattle were still frequently carried off from their grazing grounds, and no man dared venture beyond the walls of that fort without a strong escort, which a garrison, so weak that it was not always able to relieve its outposts, could ill afford to furnish. Between Thal and Kohat, the Zymukhts, tempted by the stream of supplies flowing within sight of their hills, were continually raiding, and, early in March, a section of the Orakzais made a night attack on an unfinished resting place for convoys, a walled, but gateless, enclosure, killed four Commissariat servants and a police constable, wounded several drivers and carried off twenty-nine mules, without losing a single man, the small guard, in a better protected enclosure hard by, not daring to oppose or pursue them.

The strain on the Commissariat and Transport Departments also knew no relaxation, for not only had the troops, from Kohat to the Peiwar, to be fed, but supplies had to be accumulated as far forward as possible with a view to a fresh advance in the spring, a season of the

year when local food stores are at their lowest. The toil which this necessity imposed upon the transport animals, steadily thinned their ranks, and as each of the two thousand carts plying between Kohat and Thal, had to carry fodder and grain for its bullocks, the labour expended was out of all proportion to the result obtained.¹ On this section of the road, some relief was given by contracts with the local Tribesmen for the conveyance of goods; but beyond Thal, no such arrangements were entered into; and though the civil authorities scoured the Bunnu district to replace losses among the camels, the animals obtained were of inferior quality and died off so quickly that when the order to prepare to march on Kabul was received, General Roberts found that he had only four thousand fit for service instead of the six thousand that would be needed, if his Force was to take the field in an efficient condition.

Early in March, three guns, F.A. Royal Artillery, passed over the new road from Thal to Kuram, accompanied from Chapri, their first halting place, by the 23rd Pioneers.² A week later, the 5th Punjab Infantry and a squadron of the 9th Lancers marched by the same road, which came thenceforward into general use. For its better protection, General Watson, who was now in command of Roberts's line of communications from Kohat to Thal, was requested to send the Nabha Contingent to Badish Khel, and orders were issued to prepare sites near Chapri, Shinnak and Badish Khel for the camp of the Commander-in-Chief, who was expected in the valley at the close of his visit to the Khyber.

¹ These bullocks had been purchased in Bengal on the suggestion made by General Roberts in December.

² STAGES ON THAL-KURAM ROAD.

	<i>Miles.</i>
1. Thal to Chapri	7
2. Chapri to Alizai	12
3. Alizai to Shinnak	6
4. Shinnak to Badish Khel	9
5. Badish Khel to Wali Mahomed's Fort	7
6. Wali Mahomed's Fort to Kuram	<u>10</u>
	51 miles.

On the 22nd, Sir Frederick Haines, accompanied by General Roberts, arrived at Kuram, where he reviewed the troops assembled to meet him, and inspected the forts and hospitals. On the 23rd, he rode up to Peiwar, and after a day's delay, due to heavy rain, to the Kotal. Everywhere he was able to compliment the men on the excellence of their conduct, as attested by the fact that not a single complaint had been preferred against them; and on the Kotal, he had words of special praise for the 8th "King's," whose gallant deeds he could fully appreciate, now that he had seen with his own eyes what manner of ground it was over which they had climbed, in the teeth of the Afghan guns.¹ Sir Frederick Haines began his return journey on the 27th, leaving with Roberts who took leave of him at Shinnak—the second stage from the Kuram forts on the new road—the order to hold the undernamed troops in readiness to co-operate with Browne's Division in an advance on Kabul, as soon as the Shutargardan should be free from snow:—

ROYAL ARTILLERY.

F-A. Royal Horse Artillery.
G-3 Royal Artillery.
No. 2 Mountain Battery.

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

Squadron of 9th Lancers.
12th Bengal Cavalry.
14th Bengal Lancers.

1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE.

72nd Highlanders.
5th Gurkhas.
28th Punjab Infantry.
23rd Pioneers.
7th Company Sappers and Miners.

¹ "Men of the 'King's' Regiment, now that I have seen the ground that you have come over and taken, I think that you have done wonders, and that you have performed deeds that any man should be proud of." Words of the Commander-in-Chief as conveyed to the "King's" Regiment in Regimental Orders, 25th March, by Colonel Barry Drew.

2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE.

92nd Highlanders.
5th Punjab Infantry.
21st Punjab Infantry.

ARTILLERY.

380 men of all ranks and 18 guns.

CAVALRY.

820 Sabres.

INFANTRY.

3,500 of all ranks.

Total 4,700

Cobbe, who had recovered from the wound received in the attack on the Peiwar Kotal, was again in command of the 1st Brigade, but Brigadier-General Thelwall having been invalided back to India, the command of the 2nd Brigade was vacant, and remained so till the middle of April, when it was given to the Commandant of the Bhopal Battalion, Brigadier-General Forbes.¹ The only change in the Staff was the substitution of Captain E. Straton, 22nd Regiment, as Superintendent of Army Signalling, for Captain Wynne, whose health had broken down in the Khost campaign. The Regiments and Corps selected to take part in the advance on Kabul were to assemble at Alikhel, and a Reserve, consisting of:—

ARTILLERY

Half Battery C-4 Royal Artillery,
No. 1 Mountain Battery,

CAVALRY

5th Punjab Cavalry,

INFANTRY

2nd Battalion 8th "King's,"
67th Foot,

¹ This appointment, except as regarded seniority, did injustice to Colonel Barry Drew. The man who had led the 1st Brigade when, weakened in numbers, it performed the deeds eulogized by Sir F. Haines, and who had commanded it in the Khost Campaign, had the best claim to the command of the 2nd.—H.B.H.

11th Bengal Infantry,
29th Punjab Infantry,

was to be formed in the Kuram and afterwards transferred to the Harriab Valley. The command of this Reserve was conferred on Colonel Osborne Wilkinson only three days before the conclusion of peace. General John Watson's functions as Inspector-General of Communications were extended to the Kuram; and in the course of April, Colonel Mark Heathcote was appointed to his Staff as Assistant Quarter-Master-General, and Major G. Wolseley, then on his way back from Kandahar, as Assistant Adjutant-General.

The 28th Punjab Infantry, the 23rd Pioneers, and the 72nd Highlanders were the first regiments to be ordered to Alikhel, and each, as it marched up, improved the road for the troops that were to follow after. The advance above was supported by a corresponding advance below; the 92nd Highlanders, the Headquarter wing of the 14th Bengal Lancers and the 11th Punjab Infantry—regiments that had been placed on Roberts's line of communications during his absence in Khost—moved up to Kuram, also two companies of the 8th "King's" from Kohat, and the 67th Regiment from Multan, accompanied by half C-4 Royal Artillery, bringing with it thirty-seven elephants to carry the 9-pounder guns over the mountains. The Nabha Contingent already held posts on the new road; now, half the Pattiala Contingent accompanied General Watson to the Forts, and went to work to improve their dilapidated defences, whilst the Artillery of the Force was further strengthened by raising the number of guns in each of the Mountain Batteries from four to six, and calling upon the 2nd Punjab Infantry, as it passed through Kuram on its way back to India, to furnish additional drivers.¹ Two Gatling guns

¹ "The 2nd Punjab Infantry, who had suffered much from exposure in the beginning of the campaign, were now ordered to be withdrawn from the Kuram Force, and their place was to be taken by the 11th Native Infantry."—*With the Kuram Field Force*, p. 288, by Major Colquhoun.

that were brought up by elephants on the 9th of April, turned out to be defective; and, though, after much tinkering, they were passed as fit for service and allowed to proceed to Alikhel, the practice made with them was never satisfactory.

All through the month of April, there was no pause in the upward and onward movement of troops; but the successive steps in advance were necessarily slow where regiments had to march by detachments, because the greater part of their transport was required to bring up supplies, where ordnance stores and ammunition had to be transferred from one kind of transport to another, at a great cost of time and labour—loads calculated for camels being quite unsuited to mules or men—and where weather varied from day to day, snowfalls following hard on sandstorms, and torrential rains on both.

As it was clear that similar causes of delay would have to be reckoned with in an advance from Alikhel to Kabul, when speed might be of vital importance, General Roberts made up his mind to increase the mobility of his Force by diminishing its impedimenta. In accordance with this resolve, he ordered the daily ration of the Native troops and camp-followers to be reduced from two pounds of flour or rice to one and a half, and, in his plan for the coming campaign, cut down the Commissariat reserve of food stuffs to fifteen days, curtailed camp equipage both for officers and men, abolished it altogether for camp-followers, and reduced the supply of ammunition, per man, to a hundred rounds for Infantry and fifty for Cavalry.

If General Roberts imposed sacrifices on his troops and demanded of them unflagging industry and zeal, he certainly did not spare himself. But though perpetually on the move, now at Kuram, now at Alikhel, again at Peiwar, Thal, and even at Kohat, seeing, with his own eyes, what was being done from one end of his long line of communication to the other, noting defects, ordering improvements, fertile in expedients to meet the difficulties which were constantly cropping up—he could not succeed in concentrating his troops and

guns till the 28th of April, eleven days after the date on which he had telegraphed to Colonel Macgregor his readiness to begin the combined movement on Kabul at a day's notice. Even then, the greater number of his horses, mules and camels were still in the Kuram, recruiting their strength after the fatigue and semi-starvation of the winter, as well as six elephants, which had been sent back to Peiwar for medical treatment, in consequence of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease.¹ He himself arrived at Alikhel on the 29th, and established his Headquarters near the First Brigade. The Second, and all the Artillery guns occupied a plateau six hundred yards away, a deep nullah separating the two camps. Breastworks of loose stones surrounded each, picket towers protected them at night against snipers, and a redoubt and other fortifications commanded their approaches. Strongly protected against attack, they had one internal weakness—water had, at first, to be procured from the Hazardarakht, a stream flowing in a deep ravine half a mile off; and when, by the construction of a channel two miles long, water was brought in from a spring, there was always a chance that the supply thus obtained might be cut off. Beyond the camps, a road fit for wheeled carriage had been constructed, and a telegraph line laid to within eight miles of the Shutargardan.

Whilst the military authorities, on both sides the Safed Koh, were occupying positions from which to attack Kabul, events were in progress which were to obviate the necessity for a further British advance. Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan, the candidate for the throne of Afghanistan whose pretensions Lord Lytton was inclined to favour, had arrived in the Kuram late in January, and Roberts, on his return from Khost, had despatched him to Jellalabad, with Captain Conolly, Assistant Political Officer, as his companion, and a squadron of the 10th Hussars as his escort. But the Viceroy's wish to impose a

¹ This outbreak was attributed to feeding the elephants on rice straw. One died of the seven attacked.

sovereign with British proclivities on the people of Afghanistan, had already given place to the more sober desire of coming to an agreement with the prince in possession, and it was with Yakub Khan that, after many delays, negotiations were at last opened. During their progress, no movements directly hostile to the Government at Kabul could be undertaken; so the troops collected at Alikhel, filled up the weeks of waiting with extensive survey operations. On the 1st of May, Generals Roberts and Watson rode up the Hazardarakht defile as far as Drekulla. On the 6th, Colonel J. Gordon, Major Parry, Captains Rennick and Carr, Lieutenant Spratt and Dr. Duke, set out from Alikhel to explore some of the side gulleys leading to the Shutargardan plateau, on reaching which they split into two parties, one returning by the Thabai Pass, the other by the Gogizal road. The former, which runs into the Hazardarakht defile at Jaji Thanna, was found to be impracticable for laden camels and mules, and the latter, which debouches at Drekulla, was, in part, only thirty to forty yards wide and flanked by lofty precipices. On the 10th and 12th, the hills lying to the south of the Harriab valley were surveyed by Captain Clarke. On the 17th, Captain Woodthorpe succeeded in tracing the Hazardarakht stream to its junction with the Kuram river.

The wild inhabitants of these solitary regions saw, with intense dislike and suspicion, strangers scaling their mountains and penetrating into their most secluded ravines. Their acts of hostility might be few—a little firing into the camps at night, an attempt, nearly successful, to cut off Captain G. W. Martin's survey party, the murder of one or two camp-followers—but, at bottom, every man among them was the enemy of the invaders, and from the Shutargardan to the Peiwar Kotal, as from the Peiwar Kotal to Thal, and from Thal to Kohat, the price of safety, for reconnoitring parties and convoys alike, was perpetual vigilance.¹ Still, there was no objection to

¹ The reconnoissance to the Shutargardan plateau nearly provoked a fresh

profit by the needs of the Force ; poultry and vegetables, the latter specially welcome, were freely brought into camp, and the Jajis of the Harriab Valley showed themselves as ready as their kinsfolk in the Kuram, to make money by working on the roads ; though, at one moment, the reduction of their wages, from four annas a day to three, nearly provoked a strike among the Alikhel labourers.¹ The Hassan and Ahmed Khels, more distant sections of the tribe, held aloof throughout April ; but the former attended a Durbar held by the General on the 3rd of May for the purpose of announcing to all concerned that the Kuram and the Harriab Valley were now definitely severed from Afghanistan and united to the British Empire ;² and the latter, alarmed by Roberts's threat that, if they did not come to visit him, he would go to visit them, came in on the 21st, in time for their leaders to accompany the General when, reconnoitring to the south-west of Alikhel, he reached a point from which he could look down upon their villages.

As the belief gained ground that the negotiations in progress at Gandamak would be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, life in the camps became a little easier—sports and parades occasionally taking the place of work on roads and fortifications. The news that

Ghilzai rising, and drew from the chief of the tribe, Padshah Khan, who hurried back to his own territory from Yakub Khan's camp at Bhut Khak on hearing of it, a strongly worded protest.—H.B.H.

¹ Thelwall had paid his labourers four annas a day ; Roberts reduced their wages to three, and threatened to make them work for nothing, if they would not work for what he declared to be the recognized rate of wages.—H.B.H.

² General Roberts must have been conscious of a certain unreality in the threats and promises which he addressed to his audience at this Durbar. The conviction of the worthlessness to India of this barren and nearly inaccessible region, later expressed by him, may already have been growing in his mind ; and he knew that Colonel Colley, who had visited the Kuram in April and ridden with him to the mouth of the Hazardarakht defile, had come for the purpose of fitting himself to advise the Viceroy on the vexed question of which route to Kabul—that by the Shutargardan or that by the Khyber—should be retained in British hands, at the close of the war.—H.B.H.

Yakub Khan had accepted the British terms was telegraphed to General Roberts at Alikhel on the 20th, and after a grand review held on the 24th, in honour of the Queen's birthday,¹ the orders for the return of the troops to the Kuram Valley were published. The following day the backward movement began with the march of the 12th and 14th Bengal Cavalry from Byan Khel to Ibrahimzai; and, on the 26th, Headquarters moved to Shaluzan, a village in the upper part of the Kuram Valley, which had been selected as the site for a permanent British cantonment. Here a feast had been prepared by the Punjab Chiefs to celebrate the first occasion on which their troops had been employed in the service of the Empire; ² and here, in the midst of festivities, the news of the signature of the treaty of peace was received by the Commander of the Kuram Field Force, and communicated by him to his hosts and fellow-guests.

OBSERVATION

A single general action, half a dozen skirmishes, would have exhausted the hundred rounds per man for Infantry, the fifty rounds for Cavalry to which General Roberts was prepared to limit his troops, and, apparently, the bayonet and the sabre were to be relied on in all subsequent engagements.

To diminish the camp equipage of the British and Native soldier may have been a disagreeable necessity, but to expect the camp-follower to cross the Shutargardan without any, was to condemn him to intense suffering and, in many cases, to death. Half-clothed camel-drivers

¹ At this Parade, Captain John Cook was decorated with the Victoria Cross for saving Major Galbraith's life in the attack on the Spin Gawai Kotal, and the Third Class Order of Merit was conferred on a Native officer and several men of the 3rd Gurkhas.

² Throughout the advance great hospitality had been exercised by the officers of the Native Contingents. The Chief of the Nabha Contingent, whose troops occupied Badish Khel, had a mess tent pitched in the shade of a great chunar tree "which many a weary, hungry, and thirsty traveller" had cause to remember with gratitude.—See Major W. C. Anderson's Report.

and doolie-bearers feel cold more than men in uniform, and, apart from all humane considerations, a prudent commander, recognizing that the efficiency of his Force depends largely on their capacity for work, would be equally solicitous for their well-being.¹

¹ The tendency to reduce baggage for officers and men to a point at which health cannot be maintained, commented on by Sir Donald Stewart (see his *Life*, p. 229) is, at all times, greatly exaggerated in the case of camp-followers. I have known an officer's servant die of cold outside his master's tent, and numbers of servants perished on the march to Kandahar for lack of shelter and proper clothing; whilst warm coats and blankets and a tiny tent, just big enough to creep under, weighing less than fifteen pounds, kept others in perfect health; but to give them these necessaries, their master had to cut down his own allowance of baggage.—H.B.H.

NOTE TO WHOLE CHAPTER.

This chapter is based upon one authority only, viz., Major Colquhoun's *With the Kuram Field Force*, a most valuable and painstaking work, enriched with many extracts from Divisional Orders. Since the war, no other writer has given his impressions of this particular period, and no contemporary information of any importance bearing upon it, is to be found in English or Indian newspapers, an omission explained by the fact that, on the 7th of February General Roberts had summarily ordered Mr. McPherson, of the *London Standard*, the only independent Special Correspondent with the Kuram Field Force, back to India, on the ground that in his letters he had made "statements which kept the English public in a state of constant apprehension regarding the safety of the Kuram Force, which in the General's opinion had never been in peril," and "had been guilty of adding to a telegram after it had been approved of, and countersigned."

As regards the first of these accusations, no one who has read the accounts of the Peiwar episode given in chapters vii., ix. and x., can believe that, in "making statements which kept the English public in a state of apprehension regarding the safety of the Kuram Field Force," Mr. McPherson sinned against truth; and, as regards the second—the offence had been committed and condoned, on a promise being given that it should not be repeated, before the Khost Expedition, in which the offender was allowed to take part.

In *Forty-One Years in India* Lord Roberts charges McPherson with having broken that promise, telegrams having appeared in the *Standard* which he, the General, had not seen before despatch, and which were most misleading to the British public; but the letter of the Assistant Quarter-Master-General, ordering the Correspondent to leave the Kuram, alludes only to the one telegram, and it

was impossible that others should have been sent off without Roberts's knowledge, since they would not have been passed by the Telegraph Master unless signed by himself or by one of his Staff Officers.

It would seem, therefore, that McPherson's expulsion was solely due, as he himself asserted, to the severity with which he had criticized General Roberts's strategy in his letters, the newspapers containing which had reached the Kuram, just before the Khost Expeditionary Force got back to Hazir Pir.—H.B.H.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Retirement of Biddulph's Division

ACTION AT BAGHAO

THOUGH nearly a third of Stewart's Forces were employed in keeping open his communications, the poverty and physical difficulties of the country rendered it impossible to maintain more than four posts between Kandahar and Quetta. The first of these, at Mundi Hissar, eleven miles from Kandahar, was held by the wing of the 1st Gurkhas which subsequently joined the troops returning from Khelat-i-Ghilza by the Arghassan Valley ; the second, at Deh-i-Haji, the point where, twenty-one miles from Kandahar, the road *viâ* Kushab joins that *viâ* Mundi-Hissar, by 6-11 Royal Artillery and a company of the 59th Foot ; the third, at Chaman, seventy-two miles from Kandahar by—

Peshawar Mountain Battery, 2 guns,
Bombay " " " "
8th Bengal Cavalry,
1st Punjab Infantry,
26th Punjab Infantry ;

and the fourth, at Haikalzai, a hundred and six miles from Kandahar by a detachment of the 29th Bombay Infantry, whilst Quetta itself originally garrisoned by—

Bombay Mountain Battery, 2 guns,
2nd Sikh Infantry,
Wing 19th Punjab Infantry,
Wing 30th Bombay Infantry,

was strengthened, towards the end of January, by the arrival of the 1st Gurkhas from India. In the wide gaps between Deh-i-Haji and Chaman, Chaman and Haikalzai, the Achakzais roamed at will; and hardly had Biddulph's Division quitted Chaman than, abandoning their friendly attitude, they waylaid and murdered two native soldiers and a camp-follower, and attacked a convoy which had halted for the night at Killa Abdulla. Fortunately, Subadar Faiz Tullah, in charge of the escort of forty men of the 1st Punjab Infantry, was warned of their approach in time to throw up an entrenchment, from behind which, with the advantage of superior weapons, he beat off his assailants, though they outnumbered his Force ten times over, and advanced with such boldness that the Sepoys had, in the end, to have recourse to their bayonets. News of this affair was carried to Chaman, and Major F. J. Keen started at once for Arambi Karez, to which village some of the persons implicated in it, were believed to belong; but the culprits, as was usual in such cases, had made good their escape, and Keen wisely abstained from punishing the villagers, as a whole, for the misdeeds of some of their number. Later, the Kadani plain—the great desert tract lying between Takt-i-Pul and the Khwaja Amran mountains, where the Achakzais make their winter home—became the scene of their predatory activity; and to the very end of the war, the crossing of this particular district was never free from danger, though Lukhan Khan, a chief who had long been the terror of the Kafilas trading between Kandahar and India, pursued by a force under Major A. Tullock, was brought to bay by Lieutenant Wells and Surgeon O. T. Duke, at the head of a small body of Cavalry, and shot, with nine of his men, on refusing to surrender.

To the east of Quetta, where the responsibility for Stewart's communications lay with General Phayre and the Bombay troops, the nature of the road placed them in constant jeopardy. In the narrow Bolan, convoys, full and empty, were perpetually jostling

and impeding each other; and, day by day, the task of accumulating enough supplies above the pass to ensure the troops in Southern Afghanistan against starvation, whilst they waited for the harvest to renew the sources of local supply, became harder and, at the same time, more pressing, for the time was not far off when all intercourse with India must cease. To relieve the congested traffic, Sir Richard Temple opened up a second route to the Pishin valley, *viâ* the Mula Pass, to guard which a wing of the 30th Bombay Infantry was placed at Khelat; but this circuitous road was never sufficiently used to serve as an antidote to a continually increasing evil the magnitude of which—impressed upon him from all quarters—at last, extorted from Lord Lytton a reluctant consent to that reduction of the troops in Southern Afghanistan which their commander had early seen to be imperative. Yet, the Viceroy seems not to have grasped the meaning and consequences of the step he sanctioned, for, whilst directing Stewart to bring down the forces under his command to seventeen thousand five hundred men—a number barely sufficient to hold the Kandahar Line—he allowed the Siege Train, of which the first section was still at Dadar, the second at Jacobabad, and the third at Sukkur,¹ to go on to Quetta, though that reduction destroyed all chance of its ever being used against Herat, and its presence in the Bolan added enormously to the difficulties of the convoys, struggling to push through to relieve the straits to which the army of occupation had been reduced.²

¹ Each Section consisted of a Battery—

Section I. 13-8 Royal Artillery.

„ II. 8-11 „ „

„ III. 16-8 „ „

Section II. never reached Quetta.

² “ Ever since we left Pishin we have been living on the country; two small convoys have reached us, and that is all I have heard of.”—Letter of Sir D. Stewart, dated 26th January, 1879. See p. 249 of his *Life*.

“ Depending on the Commissariat for a daily ration is a farce; one day

The Viceroy's orders, as embodied by the Commander-in-Chief in a telegram despatched early in February, 1879, directed General Stewart to retain for disposal at Kandahar and on his line of communications, the following troops belonging to the Bengal Presidency: Three Field Batteries, two Mountain Batteries, two Heavy Batteries, one of which was to be broken up to complete the carriage of the other, and its guns placed in position on the walls of Kandahar, two British Infantry Regiments, three Native Cavalry Regiments, seven Native Infantry Regiments, and two companies of Sappers and Miners. The Corps selected, in obedience to this order, together with the troops belonging to the Bombay Presidency, were distributed as follows:—

KOKERAN.

11-11 Royal Artillery (Mountain Guns).
 2nd Punjab Cavalry.
 29th Bombay Infantry.

KANDAHAR.

A-B Royal Horse Artillery.
 D-2 Royal Artillery.
 G-4 „ „
 5-11 „ „
 6-11 „ „
 19th Bengal Lancers.
 1st Punjab Cavalry.
 59th Foot.
 2-60th Rifles.
 15th Sikhs.
 3rd Gurkhas.
 25th Punjab Infantry.
 10th Company of Sappers and Miners.

you can get a little wood ; another day you can get rice instead of flour ; other days you can get nothing, and if barley is issued for the horses, ten to one whether the bhoosa or dried lucerne is not withheld. The prices one has to pay are startling, and the forage of dried lucerne for one horse costs as much as Rs. 2 per day"—equivalent in 1879 to 3s. 4d.—Major Le Messurier's *Kandahar in 1879*, p. 72.

PISHIN.

Wing 3rd Sind Horse.
 2nd Sikhs.
 1 Company 19th Punjab Infantry.

QUETTA

13-8, Royal Artillery } Siege Train.
 16-8, „ „ }
 19th Punjab Infantry (7 Companies).
 Wing 30th Bombay Infantry.

KHELAT.

Wing 30th Bombay Infantry.

BETWEEN QUETTA AND SUKKUR.

1st Sind Horse.
 1st Bombay Infantry.
 19th „ „
 Nos. 2 and 5 Companies Bombay Sappers.

Approximate strength, 17,500 of all ranks, and 40 guns.

All other Regiments and Corps were to return to India—

E-4 Royal Artillery,¹
 I-1 „ „¹
 12th Khelat-i-Ghilzais,
 26th Punjab Infantry,
 326 Sick,

via the Bolan Pass ; and the

Peshawar Mountain Battery,
 Jacobabad „ „
 15th Hussars,
 8th Bengal Cavalry,
 70th Foot,
 32nd Pioneers,
 1st Gurkhas,
 1st Punjab Infantry,
 9th Company Sappers and Miners,

by the Thal-Chatiali route ; these latter joining hands in the Leghari Barkhan Valley with a force consisting of—

¹ These Batteries were to park their guns, ammunition and equipment at Quetta.

15th Bengal Cavalry,
 Detachment 21st Madras Infantry,¹
 „ 30th „ „¹
 „ Bhawalpur Contingent,

which, under Colonel Prendergast, was to advance to meet them from Multan.

As the object of the march through the Kakar country was to ascertain its fitness to serve as an alternative route from India to Pishin, to pave the way for the construction of a military road and railway, and to select a site for a future British Cantonment—Captain W. J. Heaviside, R.E., and Captain T. H. Holdich, R.E., were attached to the retiring Force; the former, to connect the territory now to be explored, with the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India; the latter, to fill in the topographical details. The command fell naturally to Biddulph, but all the arrangements for the march were made by Stewart, in consultation with Sandeman, before that General's return from the Helmand. There were to be three columns, all of which were to *rendezvous* at Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa, at the upper end of the Pishin Valley; but the first of them, accompanied by Sandeman, was to start so long before the other two as to be entirely independent of them.

FIRST COLUMN OF FORCE RETIRING BY THAL-CHOTIALI ROUTE.

Commanding, Major F. J. Keen.
 Staff, Major G. V. Prior.

ARTILLERY.

2 guns Jacobabad Mountain Battery.
 2 „ Peshawar „ „

CAVALRY.

1 Squadron 8th Bengal Cavalry.
 1 „ 2nd Sind Horse.

INFANTRY.

1st Punjab Infantry.
 Strength, 775 men of all ranks, and 2 guns.

During a whole month, the troops under orders to return to

¹ These two regiments had been ordered up from the Madras Presidency to strengthen Multan, which had been entirely denuded of its ordinary garrison.

India, were slowly making their way to the appointed *rendezvous*; how slowly and with what difficulty can best be shown by taking a single case, that of the 15th Hussars. So sudden and violent were the floods which poured down from the Khwaja Amran Mountains and filled to overflowing the streams and watercourses on their western side, that this regiment was nine days in marching from Mand-i-Hissar to Chaman. Here it was detained by the state of the Khojak Pass, which, blocked by snow when its foot was reached, was swept on the third day by a heavy flood, following on a rapid thaw. On the 4th of March, the Hussars crossed the Pass, the men carrying their kilts and blankets on their horses, and halted at Abdul Khan-ka-Killa to rest the baggage animals. On the 7th, a fearful duststorm occurred, followed, in the evening, by heavy rain. In heavy rain, the march was continued for three consecutive days, the bad weather culminating, on the night of the 10th, in a terrific thunderstorm, which left the camp knee deep in mud; and it was not till the 14th of March that the regiment arrived at Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa, having taken twenty-two days to accomplish nine marches.¹

The troops that started later, fared no better. Biddulph and his Staff, who left Kandahar on the 7th of March and reached Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa on the 20th, were as much hampered as the 15th Hussars by the swollen state of the rivers and drainage lines, in trying to ford one of which Captain Macgregor Stewart narrowly escaped drowning; and the heaviest flood of the season occurred about the middle of March, sweeping, in a single hour, from the top of the Khojak to the bottom.² But the worst feature of the journey for all concerned, especially for those who came last, was the terribly insanitary state of the camping grounds, and the stench from the dead camels that strewed the entire road, and blocked a portion of the Khojak.³ So

¹ Mr. T. C. Hamilton's *Diary of the March of the 15th Hussars*.

² *The Indian Borderland*, by Sir T. H. Holdich, p. 15.

³ With the increasing heat the insanitary condition of the road grew worse.

many of these had belonged to the retiring force—the 15th Hussars lost a hundred and eighty-seven in one march—that but for the strenuous exertions of Mr. Bruce, the Assistant to the Governor-General's Agent in Baluchistan, it would hardly have got further than Pishin.

The first column of Biddulph's Force marched for India a week before its nominal Commander arrived at Khusdil Khan-ka-Killa. Its advance was slow, for the country was difficult, and one of the duties assigned to it was the collecting of supplies, and the establishing of depôts for the use of the succeeding columns. On the 23rd, a series of low hills, barring the way, were found to be strongly occupied by the Damars of Smalan. A warning to disperse sent to them by Sandeman, was disregarded, and Keen, with two guns and a detachment of Infantry, was just on the point of dislodging them, when a prisoner, captured the previous day under curious circumstances,¹ shook himself free of the men in charge of him, and, rushing up a hill, dashed among his clansmen, shouting: "I have surrendered; who are you to dare to oppose the British

Major Le Messurier, who rode over it on the 6th of April, writes: "The road is all fair to Mand-i-Hissar, but the stench from the dead camels along the line was only just bearable. There are thirty sabres at Mand-i-Hissar, but all round the camp are some forty dead camels, unburied and stinking enough to poison the post. . . At Deh Haji there were the usual number of dead camels. . . All stages seem to have a fair stock of dead camels, and the men tell me that, although the beasts manage to get in with their loads, it is even betting that a large percentage cannot get on their legs in the morning, and are left to die. Poor beasts, what a tale they could tell of our want of care and forethought; and will the broad hint of their dead carcasses have any effect on our future campaigns?" (pp. 149, 150).

¹ "Just before we arrived at the crest of the Charri Momand plateau, I received notice that it was held by one man, who, sword in hand, refused the troops a passage. He had erected a small barricade, and there he stood alone, apparently determined to oppose us—a veritable Roderick Dhu. . . On nearing him, the friendly headmen of the night before advanced rapidly on his position and throwing their long *chuddars*, or shawls, over him succeeded in bringing our opponent to the ground. . . . When once captive the man soon became quite quiet and docile."—See Thornton's *Life of Sandeman*, p. 130.

after I have submitted." The tribesmen's answer to this question was to disperse; but, about 3 o'clock the next afternoon, the headmen of Baghao, a village near which Keen had just pitched his camp, came to tell him that a large body of tribesmen from the Zhob and Bori valleys, under a certain Shah Jehan, a faithful adherent of the Amir of Kabul, was about to fall upon him. Scouts having confirmed these tidings, Keen left Major G. U. Prior, with the two guns of the Peshawar Mountain Battery, one squadron Sind Horse, and two hundred and fifty men of the 1st Punjab Infantry, to fortify and defend the camp against any attack from the Smalan direction, and sallied forth with the two guns of the Jacobabad Mountain Battery, one Squadron 8th Bengal Cavalry and the remaining two hundred and fifty men of the 1st Punjab Infantry, to reconnoitre the enemy whom he almost immediately discovered, moving forward in a line some seven hundred yards long. Perceiving that his opponents were only armed with swords and matchlocks, he determined to read them such a lesson as would take from them all desire to interfere with him again; so, sending Major Chapman with his squadron to see to the safety of his left flank, which they had begun to overlap, he threw forward a party of Infantry in skirmishing order, under Major Vallings, covered by the guns. After a few rounds of the latter, the enemy began working round to some hills commanding the British right, a movement which Keen met by sending Major Higginson, with another detachment of the 1st Punjab Infantry, to seize the position. The near side of the hills was very difficult, the further side almost perpendicular; so, when once Higginson and his men had reached the summit, the tribesmen, unable to escape, were shot down or captured in large numbers. Vallings, meantime, had driven the tribesmen with whom he had been engaged towards the same hills, and but for an intervening precipice would have come into touch with Higginson's party. The rout of the enemy was, however, complete, and Keen ordered the pursuit to stop, judging it unwise to adventure

his men further in an intricate country, leaving the troops in camp unsupported.

In this action, the British had two men killed and one non-commissioned officer and four privates wounded, whilst the tribesmen's loss in killed and wounded was very heavy. Higginson, reconnoitring the scene of the engagement the next day to ascertain if any armed men were still lurking in the neighbourhood, counted a hundred and three bodies, and learned that parties of the enemy had returned during the night, and carried off some of the dead and all the wounded left on the ground. The gathering, according to the statements of some of its leaders, who came in to tender their submission, had numbered three thousand men; but fourfold numbers and equal courage could avail nothing against superior weapons.¹

The following officers were mentioned in Major Keen's despatch :—

Major H. Chapman.
 „ T. Higginson.
 „ A. Vallings.
 „ G. U. Prior.
 Captain L. R. H. D. Campbell.
 „ C. A. de N. Lucas.
 „ H. F. Showers.
 „ R. Wace.
 Lieutenant R. W. P. Robinson.
 „ R. A. C. King.
 „ H. L. Wells.
 „ T. C. Ross.
 „ T. C. Pears.

No further opposition was met with, and towards the middle of April, the first column of the retiring force emerged from Afghanistan at Fort Monro, and crossing the desert at its narrowest point, reached

¹ “The people who have never before seen Europeans object to our marching through their country and try to stop us. . . . Poor wretches! They fancy we are no better armed than we were forty years ago, and it is not till they feel the power of our rifles that they see the hopelessness of interfering with us.”—*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, pp. 265–6.

Dera Ghazi Khan, where its units were dismissed to their respective stations.

On the day of his arrival at Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa, Biddulph organized the troops awaiting him there, and those that had already gone on to Balozai, 15½ miles ahead—the 15th Hussars and the 1st Gurkhas—into two columns.

2ND COLUMN.

Major-General M. A. Biddulph, Commanding Division.

HEADQUARTERS STAFF.

Lieutenant S. F. Biddulph, Aide-de-Camp.

Major G. B. Wolseley.

Captain R. M. Stewart.

„ W. G. Nicholson.

„ W. Luckhardt.

Dr. Surgeon-General J. Hendley.

Colonel J. Browne, Political Officer.

Colonel R. S. Hill, Commanding Column.

STAFF.

Major H. H. F. Gifford.

Lieutenant W. G. Smith.

„ J. J. Money-Simons.

ARTILLERY.

2 guns Peshawar Mountain Battery.

2 „ Jacobabad „ „

CAVALRY.

15th Hussars.

INFANTRY.

32nd Pioneers.

1st Gurkhas.

Approximate strength, 1,350 men and 4 guns.

3RD COLUMN.

Major-General T. Nuttall, Commanding.

STAFF.

Major H. B. Hanna.

Captain W. W. Haywood.

ARTILLERY.

2 guns Jacobabad Mountain Battery.

CAVALRY.

2 Squadrons 8th Bengal Cavalry.

INFANTRY.

6 Companies 70th Foot.

9th Company Sappers and Miners.

Approximate strength, 870 men and 2 guns.

Both columns having filled up with supplies—thirty days for European, seven days for Native troops—the Second moved to Balozai on the 21st of March, where it halted two nights in order that the watershed separating the drainage lines which flow into Pishin, on the one hand, and into the Gumal River, on the other, might be surveyed, in performing which task a glimpse was caught of the open Zhob Valley.¹ In consequence of this delay, the Third Column entered Balozai the evening before the Second left it; but, from that point onwards, the former was a day's march behind the latter, till, on the 27th, at Chinjan, a village 57 miles from Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa, their respective positions were reversed. The depôt of supplies established by Sandeman at this point, was found to have been plundered by the tribesmen dispersed by Keen, and as the people of the village, though friendly, could not meet the requirements of two columns, Biddulph ordered Nuttall to make a double march to Dargai, whilst he himself halted at Chinjan for the purpose of visiting the singular, detached, oval-shaped, table mountain of Siazghai, which, rising abruptly from the floor of a wide valley, dominates the Damar country for many miles round.

This interesting piece of survey work accomplished, the Second Column pursued its way, nearly due eastward, down the Bori Valley to Chimalang. Here it turned south, to reach Nahar-ki-Kot in

¹ "Amongst the Generals who, throughout the course of that much chequered war of two years' duration, showed the keenest and most determined interest in clearing away geographical mists, in leaving no stone unturned that might add something to our knowledge of that strange combination of high-land, plain and rugged mountain . . . General Biddulph ranked first. . . . It was consequently a happy omen for the success of the Chotiali Field Force, which was to find its way to India through an untraversed wilderness, that General Biddulph was placed in command of it."—*Indian Borderland*, p. 11, by Staff T. H. Holdich.

the Leghari Barkhan Valley, where it was to unite with the force under Prendergast, whilst the Third Column, following in the steps of the First, marched to the same *rendezvous* through Smalan and Baghao, Thal and Chotiali.

During the thirteen days, from the 30th of March to the 11th of April, that the two columns were moving independently of each other, neither encountered any resistance, except that a small body of Ghazis rushed one of Nuttall's camping grounds, and wounded a man of the 70th Foot; but two incidents betrayed the existence, in both forces, of that under-current of nervous tension which has always to be guarded against among troops on active service. One morning, as the Second Column, half its day's march accomplished, was halting for breakfast, some one spread the report that there was no water at the next camping ground. Instantly a scare set in, and though no one, so far, had been suffering from thirst, the soldiers now drank up all the water left in their tins, and the camp-followers scattered in every direction, seeking vainly for some spring. "Had we," writes Holdich, "been caught at that juncture by anything like an organized attacking force, we should have fared very badly indeed."¹

On the other occasion referred to, the troops of the Third Column had turned in after an unusually long march, and both soldiers and followers were wrapped in profound sleep, when a dreamer uttered a piercing shriek. Some camel drivers instantly took alarm, and with loud cries, crowded with their camels into the spaces between the tents, stumbling over the ropes in their haste. Instantly, the whole camp was afoot; the men seized their arms and fell in, the outlying pickets opened fire, and it was not till the General and his Staff were in their saddles that the cause of the disturbance was discovered, and order restored.

At Nahar-Ki-Kot, Biddulph, assembled a committee of civil and military officers to select a site for a permanent cantonment, which

¹ *The Indian Borderland*, p. 23.

should command all the passes leading through the Kakar country into Peshin, and be within easy reach of the Indian frontier. The choice of the committee fell upon a place named Vitakri, at the southern end of the Barkhan Valley, and there Prendergast's men established themselves for the hot weather. Their experience soon showed that the site was very unhealthy, and the cantonment was subsequently abandoned.

In the Leghari Barkhan Valley the retiring Force again divided, the bulk of both columns retracing their steps northward to Hun Kua, whence they marched, *viâ* Fort Monro, to Dera Ghazi Khan, and crossed the Chenab and the Indus in steamers without hitch or accident, whilst the 15th Hussars, 1st Gurkhas and 32nd Pioneers, under their respective commanders, made for Mithankot by the Chachar Pass and entrained at Khanpur, on the eastern side of the Indus.

With the arrival of General Buddulph and his Staff at Multan, on the 1st of May, 1879, the Thal Chotiali Force ceased to exist. All its units, except the 15th Hussars and the 1st Gurkhas, had belonged originally to the 2nd Division of the Kandahar Field Force, and their General, in parting from them, could assert with pride that they had marched twelve hundred miles, in intense heat and bitter cold, through a rude and inhospitable country, without slackening in the performance of their duties, without losing any of their cheerfulness in the face of privations and hardships, and without being guilty of any act of cruelty or oppression—a record of discipline never excelled, and seldom equalled.

Of fighting, Buddulph's troops had had little, and their roll of killed and wounded was very small; but on the march to Kandahar, in the expedition to the Helmand, and on the way to Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa, fever, pneumonia, and dysentery had ravaged their ranks. At Kushdid Khan-ka-Killa all sick had been weeded out,¹ and it was

¹ 66 men of the 70th Foot were reported unfit to proceed by the Thal Chotiali route. ♪

a thoroughly efficient Force which started from thence to find its way back to India; and though the road was always rough, though provisions were not too plentiful, and water sometimes scarce and often bad, the pleasant weather and the knowledge that every step was bringing them nearer home, kept the men in good spirits and good health. Yet in this last stage of its long journey, the Force lost one of its best officers—Colonel H. Fellowes, the Commander of the 32nd Pioneers. On the march, always in front, smoothing the road for those behind; at the camping grounds, struggling with the terrible water supply difficulty—his work, arduous and incessant, had worn him out, and he died before reaching Chinjan, just after crossing a most difficult and exhausting pass.

Difficult passes, alternating with terrible defiles, were frequent all along the route, and, so far as exertion and the need for constant vigilance were concerned, there was little to choose between the road through the Bori and that through the Thal Chotiali Valley, though, as regards supplies, the first named had the advantage. Except between Spira Raha and Obushkai, where the hills were clothed with forests of juniper,¹ that most weird and fantastic of trees, there was little shade; but the pure, high air tempered the sun's rays, though only to intensify the suffering of the troops when, at the end of their long march, they dropped suddenly from an elevation of several thousand

¹ "A juniper forest is picturesque with a weird form of attractiveness. No ordinary forest tree could imitate the attitudes, or follow the fantasies, of the juniper. White skeleton arms, twisted and gnarled, riven and bent, with but a ragged covering of black foliage, lift themselves to the glowing sky and cast intense shadows over the stunted yellow grass-growth below them. Each tree separates itself from the crowd, so that it is a dispersed and scattered forest, owning no friendly connection with trees of other sorts, but preserving a grim sort of isolation. Nevertheless, with a backing of snow peaks and the light of spring sunshine upon it, the strange beauty of that juniper forest became crystalized in the memory, ranking as a Baluch speciality with the olive groves of the more eastern uplands, and the solitary group of magnificent myrtles which stand near Sinjas."—*The Indian Borderland*, p. 18, by Sir T. H. Holdich.

feet, into the desert below.¹ The 15th Hussars, on their way to Meerut, lost many men from cholera, as the result of travelling in carriages recently used by pilgrims returning from Hurdwar, and the 32nd Pioneers were detained at Multan, owing to the prevalence of the same disease at Jhelam ; but once across the Indus, all other corps and regiments proceeded without let or hindrance, to their appointed stations.

Whilst General Biddulph's columns were making their way slowly back to India, General Stewart was engaged in providing for the health and comfort of the troops that, under any circumstances, would now have to spend the summer in Kandahar. In consultation with his Principal Medical Officer, his Quarter-Master-General, and his Engineer Staff, he resolved to house his English regiments in the old cantonment buildings erected by the Army of Occupation, in 1839, and the necessary repairs and improvements were entrusted to Lieutenant C. F. Call, R.E. The first step was to put the whole place in a sanitary condition by thoroughly cleansing and draining the ground ; and when this had been accomplished, the defects in the existing buildings were made good, and a new barrack erected for the accommodation of A.B. Battery, Royal Artillery. The old buildings, consisting of a series of blocks forming a great, hollow square, had been constructed of sun-dried bricks, with domed roofs and massive walls, and were very lofty in proportion to their other dimensions. To avoid over-crowding, platforms were now erected in the barrack squares, on which tents were pitched for a number of the men. Within the cantonment, a detached block was allotted to the 25th Punjab Infantry, and, outside it, three villages were made over to the 19th Bengal Lancers, the 1st Punjab Cavalry, and the 3rd Gurkhas, the dispossessed inhabitants receiving compensation for the temporary loss of their homes. The European sick were placed in a special square of considerable size.

¹ At Zorodan, at the foot of the pass in which Fort Monro stands, 6,158 feet above sea-level, the thermometer registered 105° Fahrenheit in the shade.—H. B. H.

and the 5-11 Royal Artillery, two Companies of the 59th Foot and the 15th Sikhs garrisoned the Citadel, where a large number of Departmental Officers also resided, and General Stewart found comfortable quarters for himself and his Staff in a country house, surrounded by a walled garden, prettily laid out with fruit trees and beds of flowers. His European guard occupied an enclosure on one side of this garden, and his Native guard, some old buildings on the opposite side. Another walled garden accommodated the Engineer officers, the Field Park and the Company of Sappers and Miners. The city, which was in a filthy condition, received its share of attention. Under the superintendence of Major M. Protheroe, assisted by the Subadar Major of the 26th Punjab Infantry, himself a Pathan, drains were renovated, streets opened out, and the whole place cleaned and disinfected; changes little to the taste of the inhabitants, but greatly to the advantage of their health, which was further benefited by the establishment of a dispensary, under Dr. Brereton, whose knowledge of Persian put him in touch with the people.

All these arrangements and improvements took time to effect, and building operations and repairs were delayed by heavy rains, which, on more than one occasion, destroyed the sun-burned bricks when just ready for use; in consequence, the hot season was well advanced before the troops were properly housed; but, though under canvas they suffered severely from heat and flies, except for a few cases of typhus,¹ the health of the Kandahar Field Force was, for a time, satisfactory, a result to which the amusements provided contributed their share. A racecourse was laid out, a polo ground selected, and both officers and men were permitted to go out shooting small game—duck, black partridge and sand-grouse; but always armed, and in parties large enough for defence, since, even within a mile of the cantonment, the only security against attack was the ability to meet it.

Between the departure of Biddulph's Division and the end of the

¹ Lieutenant Lendrum died of typhus on the 30th of March

war, nothing of importance occurred in and around Kandahar, though late in March there were rumours that a considerable Afghan force, composed both of regular and irregular troops, was about to leave Ghazni to re-occupy Khelat-i-Ghilzai, and it was persistently reported that the Amir's younger brother, Ayub Khan, was busy at Herat preparing for a resumption of hostilities.

There was, however, always a certain amount of trouble on the line of communications, and on one occasion a large body of Afghans attacked a detachment of thirty sabres, 1st Punjab Cavalry and a hundred and seventy-six men of Jacob's rifles, commanded by Major F. J. Humphrey and accompanied by the Political Officer, Dr. O. T. Duke, who were collecting supplies and camels in an outlying district of the Pishin Valley.¹ A spirited action ensued, resulting in the defeat and dispersion of the tribesmen, who left sixty dead, including two leaders, and twenty-five wounded on the field, whilst, on the British side, only four men of the 1st Punjab Cavalry were wounded.

OBSERVATION.

The vicious system of breaking up a small force into insignificant detachments denounced by Kaye "as one of the great errors which marked our military occupation of Afghanistan," in the first war, has no more striking exemplification, in the second, than the march of General Biddulph's Division from Khushdil Khan-ka-Killa to Dera Ghazi Khan. From the outset, one of its three columns was so completely separated from the other two, that it could not, under any circumstances, however critical, have fallen back upon them for support, or have entrenched itself to await their coming, with any reasonable hope of their arriving in time to rescue it from its difficulties. What those difficulties might prove to be, there was no means of knowing, but it was safe to assume that the inhabitants of this *terra incognita* would not look favourably on its invaders, that the route to be

March 29th, 1879.

followed would present endless points at which an enemy, lying in wait, might attack with advantage, and that it would be impossible to protect the column's long baggage train by flanking the heights along the road in the daytime, or to protect its camp at night, by adequately picketing the hills surrounding it. This error, the responsibility for which must be borne by General Stewart, was without excuse, there being no valid reason, military or political, for starting off the first column seven days before the other two; but the separation of the second and third columns at Chignan was forced upon Biddulph by the same scarcity of food and fodder which had obliged him to divide his troops on the Helmand; and he and his subordinate officers showed their appreciation of the risks they were running by the unusual precaution, enforced throughout the whole period during which the two columns were moving independently of each other, of making all the officers and half the men, in each, sleep fully accoutred and with their arms beside them. An expedition, however, in which such risks had to be accepted, ought not to have been undertaken so long as a safer line of retirement—that by the Bolan—was open to the troops, and the only military object in view was the transference of a certain proportion of Stewart's army from Afghanistan to India. That no harm befell any one of the three columns is beside the question. A military movement is not justified by its success; and the point of view of the military critic should always be that of the responsible Commander *before*, not that of the man in the street *after*, the event. Judged by his inability to constitute and equip a strong and self-sufficing force, General Stewart's action in sanctioning the return of Biddulph's Division through the Kakar country, must be condemned as an unjustifiable yielding to the counsels of Major Sandeman; for the Government of India would hardly have maintained the order to adopt that route, had the General on the spot opposed the plan, even if he had based his opposition on purely military grounds, and had abstained from pointing out the contra-

diction between the aims of the proposed movement and the Proclamation of the 20th of November, 1878¹—a point which Generals like the Duke of Wellington and Sir John Malcolm, men who believed that a reputation for good faith was England's most valuable political asset, would not have failed to raise.^{2 3}

¹ "With the sirdars and people of Afghanistan this Government has still no quarrel, and desires none. They are absolved from all responsibility for the recent acts of the Amir, and as they have given no offence, so the British Government, wishing to respect their independence, will not willingly injure or interfere with them."—See *Lord Lytton's Proclamation*, vol. i. Appendix ii.

² "I would sacrifice Gwalior, or every portion of India, ten times over, in order to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith. What brought me through many difficulties in the (Maharatta) war, and the negotiations for peace?—The British good faith, and nothing else."—*The Duke of Wellington's Despatches* Despatch, dated March 17th, 1804.

³ "An invariable rule ought to be observed by all Europeans who have connection with the Natives of India from the greatest occasion to the most trifling, to keep sacred their word. This is not only their best but their wisest policy."—Kaye's *Life of General Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.*, vol. i. p. 23.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Negotiations

CONCLUSION OF PEACE

THOUGH Yakub Khan had received Cavagnari's original overtures with coldness, he could not be indifferent to the anarchy into which his country was falling in consequence of the British invasion; and, when it became clear that he would soon be called upon to rule in his own name and in his own right, he determined to ascertain the temper and intentions of the British Government by offering himself as a mediator between it and his father.¹ The letter containing the proposal was written on the 20th of February, 1879; on the 21st, Shere Ali died; on the 26th, his death was known in Kabul; and on the 28th, the Political Officer at Jellalabad received the tidings direct from the new Amir, and telegraphed to the Viceroy, suggesting a friendly letter of condolence, as a first step towards the opening of negotiations with the dead man's heir.² Lord Lytton fell in with the suggestion, and followed up the telegram sanctioning it, by a second, in which he laid down the four conditions on which he was prepared to treat for peace,³ viz. :—

[1. The renunciation by the Amir of all authority over the Khyber and Michni Passes, and over the independent tribes inhabiting the territory directly connected with them.

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 7 (1879), p. 11.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* pp. 12, 13.

2. The continuance of British protection and control in the district of Kuram, from Thal to the crest of the Shutargardan, and in the districts of Pishin and Sibi.

3. The conducting of the foreign relations of the Kabul Government in accordance with the advice and wishes of the British Government.

4. The permission to European British officers, accredited to the Kabul Government, to reside, with suitable personal guards, at such places in Afghanistan as might be determined on later.

There was nothing new in the third of these conditions. Shere Ali had agreed to a similar restriction on his liberty of action in the foreign relations of his kingdom, and Yakub Khan had no hesitation in accepting it as "a good and proper proposal." It may seem strange that he should have offered no objection to the fourth—the "essential preliminary," against which his father had fought so stoutly; but something had to be yielded to the demands of men who were in possession of his chief highways, and of one of his three principal cities; and by showing himself compliant with regard to a British envoy in Kabul—he did stipulate that only one European British Officer should reside in Afghanistan—he hoped to secure the withdrawal of demands which would limit his authority, and diminish his dominions; or, at least, to place himself in a better position for combating them; for, as he argued in writing to Cavagnari, on the 12th of March, by agreeing to conduct his foreign relations in accordance with the advice and the wishes of the British Government, and to allow a British officer to watch over the manner in which he discharged his obligation, he was giving all necessary guarantees for the safety of India, and might fairly look for the extension, rather than for the curtailment, of his kingdom.¹ Lord Lytton had no intention of yielding either in the matter of the control of the Pass tribes, or of the transfer of Kuram, Sibi and Pishin from the Afghan to the British Government;

¹ *Ibid.* p. 15.

yet, he felt so strongly that an entirely one-sided bargain would be difficult to strike, and still more difficult to enforce, that he telegraphed to Lord Cranbrook, on the 4th of April, asking that Cavagnari who, with the consent of the Amir, was about to proceed to Kabul, should be allowed to offer to the son, the concessions which Sir Neville Chamberlain had been empowered to grant to the father.¹ Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues were inclined, in the first instance, to look at the question from a purely British point of view. They had gone to war to secure India, once and for ever, against Russian ambition and Afghan treachery; they had been assured by the Viceroy that the presence of British officers in Afghanistan, and the acquisition of a certain frontier, now in their possession, would effect this end, and they saw no reason for promises which might involve them in the quarrels of two states, whose governments they had ceased to fear. To a subsidy and a qualified recognition of Yakub Khan's heir, they were willing to agree, but not to a guarantee of Afghan territory. Eventually, however, the urgent representations of the Viceroy wrung from Ministers the desired concession, couched in the following terms:—"If Yakub faithfully conducts his foreign policy under our direction, we shall be prepared to support him against any foreign aggression which may result from such conduct, with money, arms and troops, to be employed at our discretion, when and where we may think fit."²

Lord Lytton had good reasons for desiring to sweeten the pill which he was bent on administering to the Amir, for, whilst public opinion in England was showing itself, more and more, impatient of the protraction of the war, the prospect of bringing it to a conclusion, by force of arms, was growing daily more remote. There was trouble all along Browne's long line of communications, the very Jezailchies in the Khyber, hitherto faithful, lending themselves to outrages which they existed to suppress. The whole of the North-West Frontier of

¹ Ibid. p. 17.

² Ibid. p. 17

India, from Jumrud to the mouth of the Gomal Pass, had been thrown into a state of ferment by Roberts's invasion of Khost. In Afghanistan proper, the inhabitants were ripe for a holy war; the Amir's counselors scouted the idea of surrendering a foot of Afghan territory, and the common people of Kabul were violently agitated by the report that an Englishman was about to visit their city.¹ And, as the spirit of the defenders of the country had risen, the resources of its invaders had declined. Sir S. Browne had found it impossible to concentrate the whole of his Division at Gandamak; his Forces there were three thousand short of eight thousand men, the smallest number with which he was willing to risk an occupation of Kabul. It was intended that his deficiency in this respect, should be made good by a simultaneous advance of the Kuram force; but the chances of a successful combined movement were poor where, for lack of transport, one General was unable to say when he should be able to stir, and the other wanted to start at once, lest *his* transport should perish whilst he waited.² Cholera, too, had broken out at the great fair at Hurdwar; the dispersing multitudes had carried it to their homes; it had already reached Peshawar; any day it might fall upon the British camps and sweep away hundreds of tired and sickly men. In such disquieting circumstances, though Colonel Macgregor may have expressed the prevailing feeling among soldiers, when he wrote to Roberts:—"I sincerely hope, for our sakes, that Yakub Khan may *not* treat,"³ the Indian Government had no stronger wish than to be spared the necessity of a further advance.

¹ Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, pp. 320, 321.

² General Roberts to Colonel Macgregor:—"I shall be ready to move any day after the twentieth; a move will be advantageous, but I trust there will be no great delay, or camels may disappear."—*Life and Opinions of Sir C. Macgregor*, vol. ii. p. 84.

³ Macgregor suggested that the advance should be by the Lakari Pass, by which a junction of the two forces would have been made at Tezin, but Roberts preferred to march by the Shutargardan, on the double ground that the latter

For a time, it seemed as if an advance, however dangerous and futile, would have to be risked, for days and weeks went by without Yakub Khan giving effect to his promise to receive a British envoy, though Cavagnari's messenger, Bukhtiar Khan, was constantly at his elbow, urging him to do so. Then, just when it looked as though the negotiations were at an end, came the welcome intelligence that they were to be renewed at Gandamak.

Weary of finding himself the centre of an administrative chaos, too short-sighted to recognize the elements of national strength underlying a military collapse, and too weak of will to dare to place himself at the head of a movement, which was threatening to carry him with it, or to sweep him from its path—the Amir had made up his mind to rid himself of the British by yielding what he must to their demands, in the hope that, when he had only his own people to deal with, he should be able to make order follow upon peace; and as, in Kabul's angry mood, it would be unsafe for Cavagnari to come to him, there was nothing left but for him to go to Cavagnari.

The letter announcing his resolve¹ was brought to Gandamak by Bukhtiar Khan on the 24th of April, and, on the 25th, the same messenger took back the reply, in which Cavagnari assured Yakub Khan, in the Viceroy's name, of the most honourable treatment so long as he remained the guest of the British Government.² The arrangements for the journey, which was divided into seven stages,³ were left to the Afghan officials; and the Amir, having regard to the fact that the British army was in "light marching order,"¹ undertook to provide tent equipage for himself and his four hundred followers.

route was known to be practicable for camels, and that, by entering Kabul from different sides, the area from which supplies and forage might be collected would be enlarged.—Ibid. pp. 82-4.

¹ *Afghanistan*, No. 7, (1879), p. 18.

² Ibid.

³ Begrami, Butkhak, Samu-Mulla Umr, Sibi-baba, Jugdallak, Surkhpul, Gandamak.

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Leaving the Bala Hissar on the 2nd^d of May, Yakub Khan reached Surkhpul¹ on the 7th. On the 8th, he was met by Cavagnari, with an escort of one squadron of the 10th Hussars and one of the 11th Bengal Lancers, six miles from Gandamak ; and, four miles further on, by Sir S. Browne, who accompanied him to his camp, through two lines of troops drawn up under General Macpherson's command, on either side of the Kabul road. On the 9th, he paid a ceremonial visit to the British Commander in Cavagnari's Durbar tent. So far, all had gone smoothly ; the guest's good looks had pleased his hosts, and the hosts' courtesy had laid to rest any misgivings which the guest may have felt in placing himself so unreservedly in their hands ; but with the beginning of business came hitches and delays. The Indian Government saw in the Amir's visit, a token of his unconditional acceptance of their terms ; he, on his part, was of opinion that so conspicuous a mark of his confidence and friendship, should be rewarded by the withdrawal of the most obnoxious of the British conditions. From the 10th to the 17th, negotiations dragged on ; then Cavagnari, who had conducted them throughout with scant ceremony,² insisted on a private interview—so far, the Mustaufi and the Commander-in-Chief, Daud Shah, had been present at the conferences. What passed at that interview has never been made public ; it was currently reported, however, at the time, that Cavagnari boasted of having rated the Amir as if he had been a mere Kohat Malik ; i.e. a petty border chieftain.³ But, whether browbeaten or reasoned into submission, Yakub Khan ceased to struggle ; and though Sibi,

¹ It was uncertain whether Surkhpul was in British or Afghan possession, but, for the pleasure of the guest and the convenience of the host, the doubt was decided in favour of the latter.

² *Afghanistan*, No. 7 (1879), p. 20.

³ Confirmed by a letter from Cavagnari to Lord Lytton, dated 23rd of May, 1879 :—" Their arguments were so feeble," he wrote, " and far from the point that I at once made up my mind to deal with the case as if it concerned an ordinary affair connected with border Pathan tribes."—Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, p. 322.

Peshin and Kuram were not formally alienated from his dominions, but retained by the British Government under an assignment, he really agreed to all that originally had been asked of him, except that, as a personal favour, the limits of British administration in the Kuram were fixed at Alikhel, instead of at the crest of the Shutargardan.

The treaty of peace signed at Gandamak on the 20th of May, and ratified on the 6th of June, contained articles by which the Amir further bound himself to grant an amnesty, to give trade facilities, to permit the construction of a telegraph line to Kabul, and to guarantee the safety and honourable treatment of all British agents, whether permanently resident in the capital, or temporarily deputed to the Afghan frontier; also others, by which he received from the British Government the promise of a subsidy, and a conditional guarantee against foreign aggression, but *not* an undertaking to recognize and support his heir.

In the opinion of Lord Lytton, Yakub Khan left Gandamak not merely submissive, but satisfied, trustful, and friendly.¹ Some men would have been disturbed to find in the Amir's farewell letter² not one word of praise for the instrument by which peace had been re-established between the British Government and his own; but the Viceroy seems not to have been troubled by the omission. His aim had been "to secure for British interests and influence in Afghanistan, a position substantially independent of the personal caprices of any Afghan ruler"; and as "the territorial conditions of the Treaty," by placing "the British Power in permanent command of the main avenues from India to Kabul," had provided "strong natural guarantees" for the "effectual maintenance of that position"³ he could afford to be indifferent to the distaste which they had inspired in the

¹ Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, p. 326. The above are not Lord Lytton's own words, but the biographer's summing up of his impressions.

² *Afghanistan*, No. 7 (1879), p. 22.

³ *Ibid.* p. 36.

man, on whom he had imposed them. Nor does he appear to have had any misgivings as to the feelings of the Afghan people in respect of the practical transfer of a portion of their country to a foreign power, and of the approaching advent of British officers in their midst. He had Cavagnari's assurance that in Afghanistan "so long as we have wealth and strength on our side, we shall always be able to count on having plenty of supporters";¹ and what better proof of the probable acquiescence of the subjects in the arrangements accepted by their ruler, could be desired, than the fact that Yakub Khan should have returned quietly to Kabul, after repeatedly protesting that he would either take back a settlement satisfactory to his countrymen or else go to India as a pensioner.² Yet the most noticeable feature of the despatch in which Lord Lytton reaffirmed the objects of his Afghan policy, explained the military measures adopted for its attainment, and counted up its gains—is its studied moderation. No one reading it would suppose that the writer had ever dreamed of driving the Russians across the Oxus, or that the army which halted at the Helmand, had dragged across the Sind desert heavy cannon intended to batter down the walls of Herat. Something of the old boastful spirit peeps out in the remark³ that "the capture and occupation of Kabul offered no military difficulty," but, for the most part, the desire to conciliate public opinion at home by showing that operations had been kept, of set purpose, within the narrowest limits, and had inflicted the least possible loss on everybody concerned—colours the whole document, and lends to it a cautious and sober tone. Its value as a measure of Lord Lytton's statesmanship, cannot be estimated till it has been studied in the light of subsequent events; but its trustworthiness as an historical document, will be understood by the readers of the foregoing chapters when they discover that it contains not a

¹ Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, p. 326.

² *Ibid.* p. 323.

³ *Afghanistan*, No. 7, p. 28.

single admission from which the true state of the British armies in Afghanistan could be inferred, not a hint that the Indian Government's ability to keep up their strength and efficiency was exhausted, and not an allusion to the fact that, three weeks before peace was signed, a third of Stewart's force had returned to India, because, in the richest province of Afghanistan, there was not food enough, without starving the inhabitants, to feed twenty thousand alien troops.

The conclusion of the peace was hailed in England with nearly universal satisfaction. To the Government, the treaty of Gandamak brought increased confidence in its stability at home,¹ and the hope of greater influence abroad ;² to the great mass of the people, who had begun to tire of the war while continuing to lend it their support, it meant liberty to dismiss the subject from their minds ; to the minority who had opposed the war, and who still condemned it as begun on flimsy pretexts for foolish ends, it was welcome as an escape from the worse things threatened by an indefinite prolongation of hostilities. The only malcontents were to be found in the advanced section of the Forward Policy party, men who had always desired for India a frontier that should include Kandahar and Jellalabad, and who now refused to be convinced that to be within striking distance of strategic points, was tantamount to having them in actual possession ; and even they had the satisfaction of knowing that Kandahar must be retained till the cold weather,³ since there was always the chance that Yakub

¹ See Lord Beaconsfield's letter of 11th August, p. 331 of Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*.

² "The great military success has done us yeoman's service in negotiating with Russia, and I hope that the moderation of your terms will be of no smaller utility at Constantinople."—Letter of Lord Salisbury to the Viceroy, 23rd May, 1879; Lord Lytton's *Indian Administration*, pp. 330-1.

³ Yakub Khan was much annoyed when informed by Cavagnari that Kandahar would not be evacuated till the beginning of winter. He must have known that the troops could not re-cross the desert during this hot weather, but he may have hoped that they would be withdrawn to Quetta.—H. B. H.

Khan's inability to fulfil his engagements, might release the British Government from theirs.

Yet, had the whole truth as to the situation created by the Treaty of Gandamak, or which continued to exist in its despite, been known in England, public satisfaction over its signature would have been qualified by much anxiety, for never did a state of peace bear a stronger resemblance to a state of war, than in the countries which it was supposed to have reconciled to each other. There was unrest, throughout the summer of 1879, all along India's North-West Frontier, tribes, once trustful and friendly, showing themselves suspicious and hostile; and not only in the ceded province of Kuram, but also at Kandahar, an army of occupation had to be maintained on a war-footing; even on the Khyber Line, the troops could only be slowly and partially withdrawn. But the maintenance of large forces on a war-footing, meant a continuance of the waste of India's resources. Convoys and transport trains still toiled through passes reeking with fever and cholera, and left their toll of dead camels and dead men behind them. In the Punjab, supplies of every kind were at famine prices, and agriculture and commerce languished for lack of beasts of draught and burden. The finances of the whole country were in the utmost confusion; no one knew what the war had cost, and, in this uncertainty, Civil Officers were forbidden to introduce administrative improvements, however desirable, if they involved increased expenditure; the Provincial Governments were warned that it might be necessary to decrease the sums allotted to public works, and the Central Government had already reduced its grant of capital for reproductive public works, an economy which, as the *Times* pointed out, "went far to impoverish the whole future of India."¹

¹ *Times*, 23rd May, 1879. All quotations from this Journal have been taken from its weekly edition.

APPENDIX I

TRANSLATION OF LETTER from HIS HIGHNESS the AMIR of KABUL, to His Excellency the VICEROY, dated 19th November, 1878.

BE it known to your Excellency that I have received, and read from beginning to end, the friendly letter which your Excellency has sent in reply to the letter I despatched by Nawáb Ghulám Hassan Khan. With regard to the expressions used by your Excellency in the beginning of your letter, referring to the friendly character of the Mission and the good-will of the British Government, I leave it to your Excellency, whose wisdom and justice are universally admitted, to decide whether any reliance can be placed upon good-will, if it be evidenced by words only. But if, on the other hand, good-will really consists of deeds and actions, then, it has not been manifested by the various wishes that have been expressed, and the proposals that have been made by British Officials during the last few years to Officials of this God-granted Government—proposals which, from their nature, it was impossible for them to comply with.

One of these proposals referred to my undutiful son, the ill-starred wretch Muhammad Yákúb Khan, and was contained in a letter addressed by the Officials of the British Government to the British Agent then residing in Kabul. It was written in that letter that if the said Yákúb Khan be released and set at liberty, our friendship with the Afghán Government will be firmly cemented ; but that otherwise it will not.

There are several other grounds of complaint of a similar nature which contain no evidence of good will, but which, on the contrary, were effective in increasing the aversion and apprehension already entertained by the subjects of this God-granted Government.

With regard to my refusal to receive the British Mission, your Excellency has stated that it would appear from my conduct that I was actuated by feelings of direct hostility towards the British Government.

I assure your Excellency that, on the contrary, the Officials of this God-granted Government, in repulsing the Mission, were not influenced by any hostile or inimical feelings towards the British Government, nor did they intend that any insult or affront should be offered ; but they were afraid that the independence of this Government might be affected by the arrival of the Mission, and that the

friendship which has now existed between the two Governments for several years might be annihilated.

A paragraph in your Excellency's letter corroborates the statement which they have made to this Government. The feelings of apprehension which were aroused in the minds of the people of Afghánistán by the mere announcement of the intention of the British Government to send a Mission to Kabul, before the Mission itself had actually started or arrived at Pesháwar, have subsequently been fully justified by the statement in your Excellency's letter that I should be held responsible for any injury that might befall the tribes who acted as guides to the Mission, and that I should be called upon to pay compensation to them for any loss they might have suffered; and that, if at any time those tribes should meet with ill-treatment at my hands, the British Government would at once take steps to protect them. Had these apprehensions proved groundless, and had the object of the Mission been really friendly, and no force or threats of violence used, the Mission would, as a matter of course, have been allowed a free passage, as such Missions are customary and of frequent occurrence between allied States. I am now sincerely stating my own feelings when I say that this Government has maintained, and always will maintain, the former friendship which existed between the two Governments, and cherishes no feelings of hostility and opposition towards the British Government.

It is also incumbent upon the Officials of the British Government, that, out of respect and consideration for the greatness and eminence of their own Government, they should not consent to inflict any injury upon their well-disposed neighbours, and to impose the burden of grievous troubles upon the shoulders of their sincere friends; but, on the contrary, they should exert themselves to maintain the friendly feelings which have hitherto existed towards this God-granted Government, in order that the relations between the two Governments may remain on the same footing as before; and if, in accordance with the custom of allied States, the British Government should desire to send a purely friendly and temporary Mission to this country, with a small escort not exceeding 20 or 30 men, similar to that which attended the Russian Mission, this Servant of God will not oppose its progress.

APPENDIX II

TREATY between the BRITISH GOVERNMENT and HIS HIGHNESS MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN, Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, concluded at Gandamak on the 26th May, 1879, by His Highness the Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan on his own part, and on the part of the British Government by Major P. L. N. Cavagnari, C.S.I., Political Officer on Special Duty, in virtue of full powers vested in him by the Right Honourable Edward Robert Lytton, Bulwer-Lytton, Baron Lytton of Knebworth, and a Baronet, Grand Master of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Grand Master of the Indian Empire, Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

The following Articles of a Treaty for the restoration of peace and amicable relations have been agreed upon between the British Government and His Highness Muhammad Yakub Khan, Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies :—

ARTICLE 1.

From the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Treaty there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government on the one part and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies, and his successors, on the other.

ARTICLE 2.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies engages on the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, to publish a full and complete amnesty, absolving all his subjects from any responsibility for intercourse with the British Forces during the war, and to guarantee and protect all persons of whatever degree from any punishment or molestation on that account.

ARTICLE 3.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees to conduct his relations with Foreign States, in accordance with the advice and wishes of the British Government. His Highness the Amir will enter into no engagements with Foreign States, and will not take up arms against any Foreign State, except with the concurrence of the British Government. On these conditions the British

Government will support the Amir against any foreign aggression with money, arms, or troops, to be employed in whatsoever manner the British Government may judge best for this purpose. Should British troops at any time enter Afghanistan for the purpose of repelling foreign aggression, they will return to their stations in British territory as soon as the object for which they entered has been accomplished.

ARTICLE 4.

With a view to the maintenance of the direct and intimate relations now established between the British Government and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and for the better protection of the frontiers of His Highness' dominion, it is agreed that a British Representative shall reside at Kabul, with a suitable escort in a place of residence appropriate to his rank and dignity. It is also agreed that the British Government shall have the right to depute British Agents with suitable escorts to the Afghan frontiers, whensoever this may be considered necessary by the British Government in the interests of both States, on the occurrence of any important external fact. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan may on his part depute an Agent to reside at the Court of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and at such other places in British India as may be similarly agreed upon.

ARTICLE 5.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies guarantees the personal safety and honourable treatment of British Agents within his jurisdiction; and the British Government on its part undertakes that its Agents shall never in any way interfere with the internal administration of His Highness' dominions.

ARTICLE 6.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies undertakes, on behalf of himself and his successors, to offer no impediment to British subjects peacefully trading within his dominions so long as they do so with the permission of the British Government, and in accordance with such arrangements as may be mutually agreed upon from time to time between the two Governments.

ARTICLE 7.

In order that the passage of trade between the territories of the British Government and of His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan, may be open and uninterrupted, His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan agrees to use his best endeavours to ensure the protection of traders and to facilitate the transit of goods along the well-known customary

roads of Afghanistan. These roads shall be improved and maintained in such manner as the two Governments may decide to be most expedient for the general convenience of traffic, and under such financial arrangements as may be mutually determined upon between them. The arrangements made for the maintenance and security of the aforesaid roads, for the settlement of the duties to be levied upon merchandize carried over these roads, and for the general protection and development of trade with and through the dominions of His Highness, will be stated in a separate Commercial Treaty, to be concluded within one year, due regard being given to the state of the country.

ARTICLE 8.

With a view to facilitate communications between the allied Governments and to aid and develop intercourse and commercial relations between the two countries, it is hereby agreed that a line of telegraph from Kurram to Kabul shall be constructed by and at the cost of the British Government, and the Amir of Afghanistan hereby undertakes to provide for the protection of this telegraph line.

ARTICLE 9.

In consideration of the renewal of a friendly alliance between the two States which has been attested and secured by the foregoing Articles, the British Government restores to His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies the towns of Kandahar and Jellalabad, with all the territory now in possession of the British armies, excepting the districts of Kurram, Pishin, and Sibi. His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees on his part that the districts of Kurram and Pishin and Sibi, according to the limits defined in the schedule annexed, shall remain under the protection and administrative control of the British Government: that is to say, the aforesaid districts shall be treated as assigned districts, and shall not be considered as permanently severed from the limits of the Afghan kingdom. The revenues of these districts, after deducting the charges of civil administration shall be paid to His Highness the Amir.

The British Government will retain in its own hands the control of the Khyber and Michni Passes, which lie between the Peshawar and Jellalabad Districts, and of all relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with these Passes.

ARTICLE 10.

For the further support of His Highness the Amir in the recovery and maintenance of his legitimate authority, and in consideration of the efficient fulfilment in their entirety of the engagements stipulated

by the foregoing Articles, the British Government agrees to pay to His Highness the Amir and to his successors an annual subsidy of six lakhs of Rupees.

Done at Gandamak, this 26th day of May 1879, corresponding with the 4th day of the month of Jamadi-us-sani 1296, A.H.

(Sd.) AMIR MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN.

(Sd.) N. CAVAGNARI, *Major,*
Poltl. Officer on Special Duty.

(Sd.) LYTTON.

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THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

“ A people who can understand and act upon the counsels which God has given it, in the past events of its history, is safe in the most dangerous crises of its fate.”—*M. Guizot.*

“ As to holding Afghanistan, it would be folly equalling that of the attempt to conquer it.”—*Sir Charles Napier.*

“ The troops would force their way through a wild, disunited people, only to find the commencement of their difficulties.”—*The Duke of Wellington on the Invasion of Afghanistan.*

“ Fortresses so much in advance of the main territories and strength of a country, add neither to the offensive nor defensive powers of a state, but compromise a certain portion of its strength in men and means by isolating them at vast distances from support in the midst of a hostile people.”—*General Sir Henry Durand, Royal Engineers.*

“ After an enormous waste of blood and treasure, we left every town and village of Afghanistan bristling with our enemies. Before the British army crossed the Indus, the English name had been honoured in Afghanistan. Some dim traditions of the splendour of Mr. E. Elphinstone's mission had been all the Afghans associated with their thoughts of the English nation ; but, in their place, we left galling memories of the progress of a desolating army.”—*Kaye's History of the First Afghan War.*

“ 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 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.”—*Proclamation of the Governor-General of India, 1st of October, 1842, on the withdrawal from Afghanistan.*

THE SECOND
AFGHAN WAR

1878-79-80

ITS CAUSES, ITS CONDUCT, AND
ITS CONSEQUENCES

BY

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During the last part of the War on Army Head-Quarters Staff
in charge of all matters connected with the campaign
Late Commanding at Delhi
Author of "Indian Problems," "Defence of India," etc.

WITH NINE MAPS

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* *Note.*—As both Actions were fought near Charasiab they are shown in the same Map.
See page, 286 for Second Action.

CHAPTER I

The March of Death

THE summer of the year 1879 was a season of suffering for the people of India. In the south there was famine, due to a failure of the spring crops, and further north, where Nature had shown herself more bountiful, the poverty of the peasant denied him the enjoyment of her gifts, even the necessaries of life often exceeding his purchasing powers. But it was in the Punjab that the burden of the moment was heaviest and the outlook least hopeful. Lying nearest to Afghanistan, that province had contributed far more than its share of the labour and transport which had been used up on the three lines of advance, and with the troops still beyond the frontier, and still needing to be fed and kept supplied with the carriage, without which there could be no withdrawal when the word to withdraw should be given, the demands on its resources were nearly as constant and as exacting as during the continuance of hostilities. Agriculture languished under the scarcity of labour, and trade was carried on with difficulty in a country from which animal transport had almost disappeared, and where railways continued to be diverted from their normal uses to the service of the military authorities.

There were other troubles besides those flowing directly from the war. The winter rains had failed and the spring showers saved only a portion of the crops. The season was a sickly one for man and beast.¹ An outbreak of foot and mouth disease swept away thirty

¹ "The death-rate in this Province was higher during the year under review than during any previous year since the introduction of registration in 1868. In

thousand head of cattle in the Rawal Pindi district alone, and fever and dysentery, rife in every village, had long been preparing the way for cholera, whose advent might safely be predicted since the press of pilgrims to Hurdwar was unusually great—no less than six hundred thousand men, women, and children being gathered together at one time to bathe in the waters of the Ganges, where they issue from the hills, and to take part in the great fair, known as the Kumbh Mela, which is held every twelfth year in that sacred spot.¹ The first case of cholera occurred on the 24th of March and by the end of April the returning multitude had carried the disease to every corner of the province.² About the middle of May, it spread from the civil population to the garrison of Peshawar, and the European troops were hurriedly moved out into camp.³ As a rule, one or two removals stay the plague, but on this occasion no good results were obtained, nor could they have been looked for because, for military and political reasons, the sites chosen for the camps were near cantonments, the furthest not more than six miles away. The disease was of the most virulent type, so fatal that, out of a hundred and seventy-one Europeans admitted into hospital between May and July, a hundred and twenty-one died.

The Government of India had watched the spread of the epidemic with ever deepening anxiety, and on the 16th of May a Conference, presided over by Lord Lytton, assembled at Simla to consider a plan of withdrawing the large body of troops belonging to the First and Second Divisions of the Peshawar Valley Field Force, whom peace

1877 the death-rate was 20 per 1,000, and the mean of the previous six years 23; in 1878 it was 36, and in 1879 it was 38, or 'nearly double the ratio for 1877.' (*Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India for 1879-80*, p. 75.)

¹ *Report on Sanitary Measures in India in 1879-80*, p. 82.

² In 1878, there were only 215 deaths in the Punjab from cholera; whereas, in 1879, 26,135 deaths were registered. (*Ibid.* p. 77.)

³ The Peshawar garrison consisted of one Battery of Artillery, a Battalion of British Infantry, two Bengal Cavalry and two Bengal Infantry regiments.

would set free to return to India, by the Kabul River route, to Michni, and marching them thence to their respective stations along the high and comparatively healthy left bank of that stream, thus avoiding the Khyber Pass and the Peshawar Valley.¹ Considerations of health were all in favour of this route, but these were balanced by military and political disadvantages. The transference of the supplies stored in the Khyber to new depôts must be a work of time and difficulty, and as the returning troops would probably come into collision with tribes so far neutral, every such depôt would need to be fortified and strongly guarded. In the end, the conference, unable to come to a decision, adjourned *sine die*, to be succeeded by a purely Medical Committee, appointed, not to choose between alternative routes but between bringing back the bulk of Browne's and Maude's Forces in the teeth of the cholera, which had already laid its deadly hand on Ali Masjid and other points on the line of communications,² or leaving them in their present positions till the disease should disappear with the passing of the hot weather. The three members of this Committee—Surgeon-General J. H. Ker Innes, Surgeon-Major J. L. Brydon, and Surgeon-Major J. A. Marston, Secretary to the Surgeon-General—were unanimously of opinion that as the troops, except those at Gandamak³ where conditions were more favourable to

¹ The medical officers consulted by this Conference were Surgeon-General Ker Innes and Surgeon-Major J. M. Cunningham.—H. B. H.

² Deputy Surgeon-General J. Hanbury, Principal Medical Officer of General Maude's Division, adopted stringent measures to arrest the advance of the disease into the Khyber Pass. Cholera camps and examining posts were established at Jamrud and Ali Masjid, and all troops and camp-followers were examined on their arrival and departure. Notwithstanding these precautions, before the Committee met, seventeen cases of cholera, of which twelve proved fatal, had occurred among the coolies employed by the Engineers at Ali Masjid, and two coolies had been attacked at Jellalabad, one of whom died.—Hanbury's Report.

³ There was much sickness among the troops at Gandamak, but this was due, not to the place, but to the reaction following on a long and arduous campaign.—H. B. H.

health, would be equally a source of anxiety whether they remained in Afghanistan or returned to India, the sanitary reason in favour of the former course did not outweigh the political and financial reasons which they understood to press for immediate withdrawal.

There was much independent medical opinion on the other side, and many senior officers, amongst them General Macpherson and General C. Gough, condemned withdrawal, both on sanitary and political grounds;¹ but the Committee's views fell in, no less with Lord Lytton's desire to give immediate relief to India's overstrained finances, than with the wishes of the great majority of the officers and men concerned, who, in their eagerness to get back to India, gave no thought to the terrors of the road that lay before them, to the murderous heat of the sandy wastes and stifling ravines, to the intolerable suffering from thirst, to the deadly disease sweeping up the passes to meet them.

The order for the retirement by the Khyber line was issued by the Commander-in-Chief, under instructions from the Government, on the 31st of May. Lundi Kotal, Ali Masjid, and Jamrud alone were to be retained, and the following troops were allotted as their garrisons :—

LUNDI KOTAL.

Artillery.

11-9 Royal Artillery.

No. 4 Mountain Battery.

¹ "There is great talk of sending the troops back to the Punjab if peace is concluded—a most insane idea, I think, and one that if carried out, would probably cause great loss of life." (General Macpherson's Diary, May 11, 1879.)

Gough, who, on two or three occasions, discussed the question with Cavagnari, not only represented the risk attending a march at such an unseasonable time, but also the impolicy of withdrawing from Gandamak until things had settled down at Kabul, where they were still in a very disturbed state. To these objections Cavagnari replied that, having made the Treaty, we were bound to carry it out fully and without delay, and that there was no need to take any steps to ensure its fulfilment by the Afghans.—H. B. H.

Cavalry.

2 Squadrons 10th Bengal Lancers.

British Infantry.

1st Battalion 12th Foot.

1st „ 17th „

24th Bengal Infantry.

45th „ „

JAMBUD.

1 Squadron 10th Bengal Lancers.

2 Companies Bengal Infantry.

The first step in the process of evacuation—the removal of six thousand camel loads of Government property from Jellalabad to Lundi Kotal—was quickly taken, stores of every description being placed on rafts, constructed by Major H. F. Blair out of lumber and inflated bullock skins, or light pontoon casks, and floated down the stretch of river lying between the two places ; the same method of transport being used later for the conveyance of the sick.

The 25th King's Own Borderers, belonging to Maude's Division, was the first European regiment to re-enter India. On the 30th of May it left Dakka for Peshawar, where it was at once attacked by cholera and sent into camp. All Native regiments marched separately, but the European troops of the First Division were grouped in five sections, each from six to seven hundred strong, in charge of an experienced medical officer :—

1st Section.

Brigadier-General C. Gough commanding.

I-C Royal Artillery.

10th Hussars.

Surgeon-Major H. Cornish in medical charge.

2nd Section.

Brigadier-General Macpherson commanding.

13-9 Royal Artillery.

4th Battalion Rifle Brigade.

Surgeon-Major J. F. Supple in medical charge.

3rd Section.

Lieutenant-Colonel S. A. Madden commanding.
 E-C Royal Artillery (2 Divisions).
 51st Foot.
 Surgeon-Major G. J. H. Evatt in medical charge.

4th Section.

Major W. D. Tompson commanding.
 1st Battalion 17th Foot.
 Surgeon-Major J. E. Fishbourne in medical charge.

5th Section.

Lieutenant-Colonel T. Rowland commanding.
 E-3 Royal Artillery.
 5th Fusiliers.
 Surgeon-Major A. H. Ratigan in medical charge.

This last section was drawn from Jellalabad and its outposts.

The troops at Gandamak began to move at the beginning of June, and on the 9th the rear-guard, consisting of the Hazara Mountain Battery, Guides Cavalry, 27th Punjab Infantry, and 45th Sikhs, commanded by Brigadier-General Tytler, rolled up the Field telegraph, handed over the defensive works erected by the British forces to an official of the Amir's, and marched for Lundi Kotal, where it arrived on the 16th, having been detained a day or two at Jellalabad by the congested state of the traffic.¹ Sir S. Browne, who with his staff had started for India as soon as he had seen the main body of his Division under weigh, could take no formal leave of his scattered Force, but in a Report he brought the general good conduct of his men and the services rendered by many of his officers to the notice of the Government, and stayed a week in Peshawar—from the 15th to the 22nd of June—rendering all the help he could to those on whom the care for his late troops had now devolved. His own services

¹ Tytler, on arriving at Lundi Kotal was desired to assume command of all the troops in the Khyber, but, falling sick, was succeeded by Gough.—H. B. H.

were rewarded by a disappointment. Certainly, when he accepted the command of the First Division of the Peshawar Valley Field Force, he did not suspect that this compliance was to carry with it the loss of the position of Military Member on the Viceroy's Council, to which he had so recently been appointed; but his independence of character, and the divergence between his views on many military and frontier questions and those of Lord Lytton, a divergence which had disclosed itself in the few weeks of his tenure of office, had rendered him a *persona ingrata* at Simla, and at the close of the campaign he had to content himself with the temporary command of the Lahore District vacant by the continued absence of Sir Donald Stewart. Meanwhile, Cavagnari who had accompanied him through the Khyber, had gone straight up to Simla to report on the political situation created by the treaty, and to receive the reward of his success in overcoming Yakub Khan's unwillingness to accept the British terms, in his own appointment to the post of Resident at Kabul, to which city the Amir had returned in a mood between joy at the departure of the invaders of his country, and fear of the troubles that his unruly subjects might be preparing for him, and for the Englishman whom he had pledged himself to receive and protect.

Travelling rapidly and in comparative ease between Jellalabad and Lundi Kotal—they had made use of Major Blair's rafts—Browne and his Staff had passed unscathed through the infected area: not so the troops who followed in their steps; for them the march was protracted and full of horror. The temperature by day ranged from 110° to 118° Fahr. in the shade; the nights were so hot that sleep was impossible; there were constant dust storms and swarms of flies; water was scarce and generally bad. Surgeon-General Ker Innes's Report gives a graphic picture of the state to which the miseries of this terrible march had reduced both officers and men. "Their clothes were stiff from profuse perspiration and dust. Their countenances betokened great nervous exhaustion, combined with

a wild expression difficult to describe. The eyes injected and even sunken ; a burning skin, black with the effects of sun and dirt ; a dry tongue, a weak voice, a thirst which no amount of fluids seemed to relieve. Many of the men staggered, rather than marched into their tents, and threw themselves down utterly incapable of further exertion until refreshed by sleep and food." Men thus weakened and dispirited fell an easy prey to disease of every kind. Those struck down on the line of march, suffered tortures in the rough bullock carts which carried them slowly forward to the nearest temporary hospital. At each camping-ground, every regiment and corps left its toll of dead. The Rifle Brigade lost two officers and forty-six men of cholera, besides six men of sunstroke. The 10th Hussars, numerically much weaker, lost thirty-four men. Deputy Surgeon-General J. A. Hanbury had to report, on the arrival of the 17th Foot at Lundi Kotal, that every officer and soldier in the regiment was more or less sick.

Bad as things were, they would have been far worse if the Tribesmen had followed their usual custom of harassing a retiring foe. Luckily, they kept unexpectedly quiet—an attack on the baggage of the 9th Lancers near Jamrud, and the murder of two grass-cutters in the neighbourhood of Lundi Kotal, being the only outrages committed by them—and once within British territory military precautions could be relaxed. As regards disease, matters were no better on one side of the frontier than on the other. Peshawar was a charnel house. All the hospitals were full of patients. On the parade ground there was a large cholera camp ; quarters were allotted to sick combatant officers and a large bungalow set apart for sick medical officers, of whom there were, at one time, no fewer than twelve.¹ A picket

¹ "The doctors died and were invalided freely. Kelsall sleeps at Dakka ; Wallace, whom all described as a fine type of soldier-surgeon, lies at Lundi-Kotal ; Grey died at Peshawar of cholera ; Wright, who was with the Rifle Brigade and was a singularly sweet, nice fellow, died at Attock of exposure,

was posted on the Jamrud road to keep the convoys of sick that were continually pouring along it, out of cantonments ; yet, on one occasion, a member of General Ross's Staff was called up in the middle of the night to find a cart filled with corpses at his door. It had started from Jamrud with a number of sick men, in charge of four soldiers, and all, but one man of the escort, had died on the way.

The mass of business arising out of the influx of a large body of cholera-stricken troops into the Peshawar District, was enormous, and Brigadier-General C. C. Ross in command had only his District Staff, consisting of one officer of the Adjutant-General's Department, Major W. J. Boyes ; one of the Quartermaster-General's Department, Major H. B. Hanna ; one medical officer, Surgeon-Major J. H. Porter ; and one Commissariat officer, Major S. A. T. Judge, to help him in coping with it ; for, in an acute fit of economy, the Government had disestablished the Divisional and Brigade Staffs of each Division on its arrival at Ali Masjid, and ordered the officers composing them to rejoin their regiments, or to resume their former appointments.

Ross and his assistants had their time already fully taken up by the supervision of the camps to which the cholera patients of the Peshawar garrison had been removed, when thus suddenly called upon to discharge duties which more than doubled their work. Had the troops, day by day streaming out of the Khyber, been free from disease, it would still have taxed their powers to the uttermost to

whilst getting his sick across the then unbridged river ; and Dr. Gibbons, worn out by the campaign and the anxieties of the return march, survived one year and died in England, a broken man from the day he left the Khyber." (*Personal Recollections of the Afghan Campaign*, by Surgeon-Major J. H. Evatt.)

Surgeon-Major J. H. Porter reported that most of the medical officers on their arrival at Hari Singh-ke Burg, were in a painfully helpless and prostrate condition, owing to the constant strain and incessant work, night and day, to which they had been subjected, coupled with the anxiety and depression caused by so much disease, misery, and responsibility. There could be no relief from toil, for, as one comrade after another fell ill or died, the duties falling on those who remained at their posts doubled and trebled.—Porter's Report.

arrange for the march of the various regiments to their different destinations and to meet the demands of the staff officers who crowded into Peshawar, clamouring to be sent on at once to their respective stations, demands with which, in the absence of a railway, and with only a limited number of mail carts available, it was often impossible to comply; but the strain was rendered far greater by the miserable condition of the men thus suddenly thrown on their hands. Fortunately, Ross was singularly well fitted to face a crisis. Calm, courageous, even-tempered, of great practical ability and excellent common sense, he met every difficulty as it arose with energy and resolution, and his example instilled confidence and strength into all his subordinates.¹ Fortunately, too, the Commissioner and Deputy-Commissioner of the District, Mr. D. Macnabb and Mr. H. B. Beckett, were men of the same stamp. Ever ready to accept responsibility and prompt in devising measures to relieve suffering, they seconded the efforts of the military authorities with unfailing zeal and tact. In every camping-ground they caused well-thatched shelters to be erected and stocked them with ordinary supplies and, as far as possible, with the comforts of which men worn out with sickness and fatigue stood so much in need. They organized sanitary staffs to keep the camps clean and look after their water supply, and, last but not least, Mr. Macnabb, with the General's concurrence, kept open the bridge over the Indus at Attock to a much later date than was usually

¹ As the work performed by the author, who had just returned from Kandahar, during this epidemic was the most arduous and the best during his 32 years of service, perhaps he will not be considered egotistical if he quotes the district order issued by General Ross on the 10th July, 1879:—

No. 377. "Major Hanna, A.Q.M. General, having been relieved of his duties in the District, Brigadier-General Ross desires to thank him for the great energy and intelligence with which he has performed them, especially during the march through the Peshawar District of the large body of troops returning from Afghanistan, stricken with cholera and in the middle of the hot season; circumstances requiring no little zeal and energy in the Quartermaster-General's Department; and the Brigadier-General is of opinion that Major Hanna has shown these qualities in an eminent degree."

considered safe, thus sparing the leading batteries and regiments the delay, exposure, and danger attendant on crossing a broad and rapidly rising river in clumsy flat-bottomed boats.

This march of death extended over a period of five weeks, from the end of May to the beginning of July, and during that time there were three hundred and fifty-four deaths from cholera among the European troops.¹ Their Native comrades suffered less severely, yet, even in their ranks, the mortality was heavy, and numbers of camp-followers fell victims to the disease.

Cholera was already on the decline in the Peshawar District before it showed itself in the Kuram. Beginning among the camp-followers at Thal, it spread up the valley from village to village. Still, among the troops, it never assumed the proportions of an epidemic, and only one civil officer, Mr. D. B. Sinclair, C.S., Political Officer, died of it. There were in all twenty-one deaths among European and a like number among Native soldiers; the ratio per thousand being 7·03 for the former and 6·04 for the latter. But if the outbreak of cholera in the Kuram was comparatively slight, enteric and intermittent fevers, dysentery, liver complaints, and, among the Native soldiers, lung diseases of all kinds were steadily at work, diminishing the numbers and sapping the efficiency of the troops occupying India's newly acquired province.

Crossing the desert in the first day of June, the cholera swept rapidly up General Stewart's long line of communications. At Kandahar, the outbreaks were, at first, of a sporadic nature. About the middle of June, the disease showed itself in the citadel where it carried off a few camp-followers; next, two cases occurred in cantonments on the side furthest from the city; only on the 1st of July, when several European soldiers sickened simultaneously, did it declare

¹ "The mortality which resulted from cholera alone equalled 74 per 1,000." (*Sanitary Measures in India, 1879-80, p. 52.*)

itself as an epidemic. The usual remedial measure of moving the troops on to fresh ground was promptly adopted. Some regiments pitched their tents in the shady gardens south of cantonments; others went westward to the banks of the Argandab; others again encamped eastward of the city in an open treeless plain; and, as the time for the evacuation of the province drew near, many were despatched to Pishin.¹ In some cases the change was attended with good results; in others, it did little, or nothing, to stay the plague; indeed, the troops quartered in new buildings suffered most,² whilst those who remained in their old barracks escaped unscathed. The following table when compared with the figures given for the Peshawar Valley Field Force, shows that whereas in the latter the epidemic was worst among the European troops, in the Kandahar Field Force the contrary was the case.

<i>Europeans.</i>	<i>Attacked.</i>	<i>Died.</i>
Officers	7	7
Soldiers	104	83
<i>Natives.</i>		
Officers	2	2
Soldiers	288	161
	—	—
	401	253

Four hundred and fifty-eight camp-followers were also attacked, out of which number two hundred and fifty-nine died, but in this case it is impossible to institute a comparison, as, neither in the Khyber nor in the Kuram, was any record kept of the losses that occurred among the men by whose toil armies live and move and fight; but in both they were undoubtedly very heavy.

¹ "Cholera is still so bad (5th of August) that more than three-quarters of the troops are in camp, and I am sending them to Pishin as fast as I can." (*Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 281.)

² "A very strange circumstance." (*Ibid.* p. 280.)

Taking all the three lines of advance into account, the death rate among European soldiers in the first phase of the second Afghan war, was much the same as in the Mutiny; but, whereas the death rate in 1858, when a large body of British troops was under canvas in the plains of India during the whole of the hot weather, was 111·07—on the Khyber line, in 1878–79, it was 138·15; and in the Peshawar Cantonments, 141·84 per 1,000 as against 5·33 in Fort William, Calcutta, and 5·34 in Bareilly.^{1 2}

OBSERVATION

When medical experts are consulted on a question of health, they should be left free to give an opinion uninfluenced by any but sanitary considerations. It is for the Government, to whom that opinion is submitted, to weigh its conclusions against the political and financial considerations—supposing the two to clash—which may need to be taken into account before a decision can be reached and action taken. Had Surgeon-General Innes and his colleagues been simply asked to say which course was fraught with greater risk to the health of the Peshawar Field Force—the bringing it back to India at the hottest season of the year in the teeth of a great epidemic, or the leaving it in its present positions till the weather should grow cool and the disease die out—they would probably have advised the adoption of the latter course: firstly, because, though cholera was creeping up the Khyber, it would clearly be easier to take measures to control it among stationary troops than among troops on the march; secondly, because Gandamak, where far away the largest body of men was stationed, presented fairly favourable sanitary conditions; thirdly,

¹ *Moral and Material Progress in India, 1879–80*, p. 107.

² “The results generally repeat the experience of the Mutiny years, and show that European troops cannot be exposed in the field during the hot weather in India without great sickness and mortality.” (*Sanitary Measures in India in 1879–80*, p. 49.)

because the evacuation contemplated was so far from being total that both European and Native troops were still to garrison Lundi Kotal, Ali Masjid, and Jamrud, the most unhealthy posts along the entire line. Such advice might not have changed the decision at which Lord Lytton ultimately arrived, but, by deepening the sense of responsibility under which that decision was taken, it ought to have saved him from the mistake of disestablishing the Divisional and Brigade Staffs of the Peshawar Valley Field Force just when their services were most needed by the troops whom, in the interests of economy, he felt it his duty to expose to exceptional risk of suffering, disease, and death.

CHAPTER II

Arrival of the British Mission in Kabul

ON the 6th of July, Cavagnari, accompanied by his Secretary, Mr. W. Jenkyns, C.S., left Simla to take up his appointment as British Envoy at the Court of the Amir. He carried with him no written instructions: in the uncertainty as to the state of things awaiting him at Kabul, they could not have been made precise, and general instructions were rendered unnecessary by the identity of view and aim existing between him and the Viceroy. Both men regarded the Treaty of Gandamak as a beginning, not an end, as "the inauguration of a sound and rational policy" rather than "its crowning result"; and Lord Lytton could feel certain that Cavagnari would use it as an instrument for bringing Afghanistan more and more under British influence. Yet, known only to one of the two, there was a point on which they differed. Lord Lytton looked with equal confidence to the near and to the distant future; Cavagnari, better informed as to the confusion into which Afghanistan had been plunged by the war, was not blind to the possibility that the next step towards the complete triumph of the Forward Policy might be precipitated by a catastrophe. He breathed no hint of this suspicion in the ears of his official superiors; it had no influence on the spirit of proud resolution in which he accepted the high position to which his energy and zeal had raised him; but some among his friends who saw him depart, knew that he believed himself to be going to his death.¹

¹ "When he started for Kabul, with his new honours fresh upon him, he told his friends that the chances were four to one that he would never return from his mission." (*Pioneer*, July 3rd, 1899.)

It is probable that the smallness of his escort—it consisted only of twenty-five sabres and fifty rifles of the Guide Corps, all picked men, commanded by Lieutenant W. P. Hamilton, V.C., with Surgeon A. H. Kelly in medical charge—was due to these forebodings. He may well have felt that, as nothing short of an army could protect him against the dangers latent in a discontented soldiery and an angry people, the fewer persons to share those dangers with him, the better.

It had been decided that the Envoy should travel by the Shutargardan route, and nothing that he saw and heard on his way to the Afghan frontier was of a nature to render the outlook more hopeful. The Kuram showed no signs of a return to peace and order. Except for the withdrawal of the Punjab Princes' Contingent, there had been no reduction in the strength of its garrison, and the troops constituting it were still to all intents and purposes a Field Force, waging a fatiguing and harassing war with tribes quite indifferent to treaties of peace and cessions of territory made by one Government to another. All along the line of communications, soldiers and camp-followers were still frequently murdered, baggage animals stolen, camels carried off by deserters; and, on the Shutargardan, caravans conveying fruit from Afghanistan to India were stopped and plundered by the Ghilzais. The marauding bands were not afraid to fly at higher game—on one occasion, at the very highest, for, on the 15th of June, General Roberts himself, when accompanying a survey party in the Ahmed Khel territory, was set upon by a large body of Mangals, and only saved from capture or death by the gallantry of Major McQueen and a dozen men of the 5th Punjab Infantry. On the 20th, Surgeon W. B. Smyth was stabbed to death at Chapri, and, a week later, a Native officer of the 21st Punjab Infantry and his orderly were attacked at Balish Khel and killed before the escort, who were close behind, could come to their rescue.

In view of the disturbed state of the whole region, stringent measures were adopted to ensure Cavagnari's safety. Before his

arrival at the Kuram Forts, Brigadier-General Dunham Massy who now commanded the 1st Brigade, Cobbe having been appointed to the Agra Command, occupied the Hazara Darakht Defile with four guns, and No. 2 Mountain Battery, a squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, three companies of the 72nd Highlanders and the 5th Gurkhas; and it was under the protection of this force that the Envoy's party, accompanied by General Roberts and a large number of his officers, encamped on the 18th of July, at Kassim Khel, about three miles short of the cliff known as Karatiga, or the white rock, which marked the spot where British territory ended and Afghan territory began. At that boundary the party were met the next morning by Sirdar Khushdil Khan, the Amir's representative, and Padshah Khan, the Head of the Ghilzais.¹ Thenceforward the responsibility for the safety of the Envoy rested with these two men, so Dunham Massy and his troops went back to Kassim Khel, leaving Cavagnari, Roberts, and some fifty British officers to the protection of a squadron of Afghan Cavalry. In an upland valley, lying between the Sarkai Kotal and the Shutargardan, a tent had been pitched, and here the two Khans entertained their British visitors. The meal concluded, hosts and guests remounted and all rode forward together to the summit of the Shutargardan, where the Envoy and his escort took leave of the friends who had so far borne them company. No sign of anxiety or despondency marred that parting, yet after the farewells had been said, by a sudden impulse, Roberts and Cavagnari

¹ "Khushdil Khan's face was not a pleasing one; heavy dark eyebrows shaded his eyes and a heavy moustache his mouth, but the expression of his eyes when seen, was sinister, and the whole face was cruel; and though to some his very studied abstraction seemed to denote good manners, to others his silence, with downcast eyes, did not betoken a willing performance of the duty he was engaged in."

"Padshah Khan was an elderly man with a thin face, hooked nose and grey beard, the eye hungry-looking and restless, like all the half-starved mountaineer robbers of his clan."

(*With the Kuram Field Force*, by Major Colquhoun, p. 383.)

turned back to grasp once more each other's hand, and in that last warm pressure, Cavagnari may have recognized the echo of his own forebodings.¹

The mission camped that night at the western foot of the Shutargardan and five days later entered Kabul, where it took possession of the quarters provided for it within the Bala Hissar. Roberts meantime had returned to the Kuram Forts, handed over the command of his troops to Dunham Massy, and started for Simla to enter on his duties as member of a Committee appointed to inquire into the defects in the organization of the Indian Army which the war had brought to light.

On the 12th of July, the Viceroy issued a General Order, in which, after congratulating "the Commander-in-Chief on the skilful conduct and satisfactory conclusion of the war, the political objects of which had been obtained by its military results," he thanked the General Officers, commanding the different Field Forces, for the success with which they had carried out the task allotted to them, recognized the ability shown by the General Staff of the Army, and bestowed high praise on the steady courage and discipline which throughout the vicissitudes of the campaign had marked the conduct of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the British and Native Forces engaged. The publication of this Order was quickly followed by a vote of thanks from both Houses of Parliament, and on the 29th of July, the *London Gazette* contained a long list of honours and promotions. The five column commanders, Generals Stewart, Browne, Maude, Biddulph, and

¹ "I could not feel happy as to the prospects of the Mission and my heart sank as I wished Cavagnari goodbye. When we had proceeded a few yards in our different directions we both turned round, retraced our steps, shook hands once more and parted for ever." (*Forty-one Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 179.)

Roberts mentions that, in ascending to the Sarkai Kotal, Cavagnari pointed out to him a solitary magpie, and begged him "not to mention the fact of his having seen it to his wife, as she would be sure to consider it an unlucky omen." (*Ibid.* p. 178.)

Roberts, were made Knight-Commanders of the Military Division of the Bath ; Cavagnari, Knight-Commander of the same Order in the Civil Division ; and Colonel Pomeroy Colley, who had left India for South Africa a few days after the conclusion of peace, Knight-Commander of the Star of India. The Companionship of the Bath was bestowed on several junior officers ; others obtained Brevet rank, but, in this distribution of rewards, the Forces on the Kandahar side were so strangely overlooked as to draw from their commander a sharply worded protest. " Before taking any official action in the matter," so wrote Sir Donald Stewart to the Adjutant-General, General Lumsden, " I want you to tell me, *if you can*, the principle on which the Brevets have been granted as well as the Decorations. It would seem that these rewards have been confined to the few officers of this Force who have been under fire. If that be so, then I and several others have been most improperly rewarded for our supposed services. I don't grudge rewards to men who have done good work according to their opportunities, but I think, if rewards are given to selected men, my opinions should have been asked for, even if they had not been allowed any weight. Comparisons are odious, but you know officers will draw them, and though we have had little excitement in the fighting line, the work done by the troops here will not compare unfavourably with that done in the North, where the light has not been placed under a bushel."¹

With these expressions of Parliamentary gratitude and Royal favour, the untoward episode in the relations of India and Afghanistan was supposed to be finally closed. Lord Lawrence might greet the news of the departure of Cavagnari and his companions to Kabul with the cry, " They will all be murdered, every one of them," and

¹ *Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, pp. 299, 300.

In a letter to his wife he refers to the same subject. " I have to-day (31st July) got a copy of the Gazette containing the Kabul honours, and I am not at all pleased with the distribution and feel that I have almost got my K.C.B. on false pretences." (*Ibid.* pp. 280, 281.)

persist to his last hour—he died on the 25th of July, after a few days' illness—in believing that nothing but evil could come to India from the contest which her Government had provoked,¹ but the British Ministry continued to share Lord Lytton's confidence in the stability of the situation which that contest had created. "The war is over," cried Lord Salisbury, speaking in the City on the 9th of July, in a general atmosphere of contentment and self-satisfaction; "the war is over; peace is signed; Afghanistan is left; Afghanistan is not annexed, and the frontier of India is secured."² A week later Lord Cranbrook assured an audience at the West Kent Conservative Association, that under the influence of kindness and civilization, both the people of Afghanistan and the Independent Tribes would become our fast friends. The tone of the Press as a whole was equally hopeful. The *Times* lauded the terms of the Treaty of Gandamak as honourable to both parties, and predicted that India was about to enter upon a new era, in which the rulers were to be free from the fear of Russian invasion and her borders were no longer to be vexed by marauding raids, whilst commerce, ever expanding, was to prove a sure bond of good feeling and lasting friendship between the late foes.

The confidence born of a frontier line "drawn at the points of our own choice" was not so firmly rooted, however, as to be quite unshaken by the news that General Lasareff, the hero of Kars, was organizing a force on the south-eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, with a view to the punishment of the Tekke Turkomans, a plundering, slave-raiding tribe, the terror alike of Persia and Bokhara.³ The small minority of Englishmen who would fain have drawn the North-West

¹ Bosworth Smith's *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. II. pp. 649, 652, 654.

² *The Times*, July 11th, 1879.

³ "Respecting Russia's right to conquer Central Asia and England's wisdom in opposing her, much argument may be expended and many opinions expressed; but there is one fact which stands out beyond all controversy—the Conquest of Central Asia has been a blessing, not only for Central Asia itself, but for all the nations abutting upon it."—Charles Marvin.

frontier line at Kandahar and Kabul, were ready at once with the cry of "India in danger," and even the *Times* thought it necessary to declare that whatever Russia did, or threatened to do in Central Asia, would be looked upon with jealous eyes in India, though three weeks earlier it had boasted that thenceforth India need fear no enemy either near or far. The expedition, badly conducted and disgraced by most impolitic inhumanity, ended disastrously for the Russians; but as it was safe to prophesy that they would return, again and again, to the charge till they had turned defeat into victory, the alarmists retained their right to warn an easy-going public of trouble in store for them.¹ If these prophets, instead of directing their far-seeing gaze to the further side of the Hindu Kush, had fixed their eyes on Afghanistan, they would have found ample occasion to utter warnings which a few months would have fulfilled. In that distracted country the Mullahs were everywhere preaching a holy war against the British troops still occupying a large portion of its territory. There was a revolt in Turkestan, and the province of Badakshan, bordering on Kabul, was in open rebellion. At Herat, where the Governor, Ayub Khan, was the Amir's brother, the Kabul and Kandahar regiments, some of which were under orders for the capital, were so deeply tainted with disaffection that the officers had lost all

¹ The Expedition failed, primarily, through delays in starting caused by the difficulty of getting supplies and transport; and, secondarily, through the death of Lasareff, which threw the command into the hands of Lomakin, an incompetent general and cruel man, who in his eagerness to extirpate the Tekko Turkomans refused to treat with their chiefs, shut every avenue of escape, turned back the women and children flying from the fire of his artillery, and then, with a force of only 1,400 men, at a point miles from his base, assaulted a strongly fortified, unbreached enclosure, in the teeth of 15,000 desperate men and their equally desperate wives and daughters. The attack was beaten off and the Russians might have been annihilated the following night, had the Turkomans known how to take advantage of their victory. As it was, the retreat, begun the next day, ended in utter demoralization, and only a small proportion of the force, which had left the shores of the Caspian in August, regained them in October.—H. B. H.

power over the men ; throughout the province, trade and industries had ceased to be carried on ; in the city, all shops, except those of butchers, bakers, and grocers, were closed ; and everywhere the people, harried by a lawless soldiery and plundered by the authorities, who, trembling for their tenure of office, were mercilessly collecting a year's revenue in advance, were trying to escape utter ruin by burying their money and valuables. In Kabul, the Amir, compelled to despatch existing regiments to put an end to the disorders in Turkestan and Badakshan, found great difficulty in raising fresh troops to take their place, and those he did succeed in enlisting, badly disciplined and ill-paid, were a danger to the city and himself, and, above all, to the British guests for whose safety he was bound to provide.

In Kandahar alone, where Sir Donald Stewart had firmly refused to surrender his authority to the Afghan Governor, Sirdar Sher Ali Khan, order prevailed, and the arrangements for the return of the troops to India could be quietly carried on. In the middle of August, preparations for the evacuation of the city were begun, and on the 4th of September, the Second Infantry Brigade left their cantonment and marched for Quetta. On the 5th, the First Brigade accompanied by the General and his Staff, moved out into camp ready to follow in the wake of the leading column ; but at mid-day came a telegram from the Viceroy, on receipt of which Sir Donald Stewart promptly re-occupied the citadel and barracks,¹ and recalled the troops that were already on their way home. The telegram ran thus :—“ All troops at present under orders to return to India, stand fast until further orders. Please telegraph present distribution of troops and what are at Kandahar ; and also transport available at Kandahar and between this and Quetta, and what reserve of supplies you have.”²

¹ During the short period the barracks had remained empty, they had to a great extent been gutted of their windows and doors by the Afghans. (*Kandahar in 1879*, by Major Le Messurier, p. 253.)

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 46.

CHAPTER III

Cavagnari in Kabul

THE entry of the British Mission into Kabul was marked by no untoward incident. Saluted by Afghan Artillery, escorted by Afghan Cavalry, mounted on elephants sent out to meet them, the Envoy and his European companions passed slowly through orderly and respectful crowds to the dwelling prepared for them in the Bala Hissar, where the Prime Minister, Sirdar Habibulla Khan, and the Commander-in-Chief, Daud Shah, were waiting to welcome them. In the evening, when Cavagnari paid a visit of ceremony to the Amir, he was received with the utmost friendliness, and the next day Yakub Khan showed his readiness to fulfil his treaty obligations by laying before him some letters which had passed between himself and General Kaufmann, and gave signal proof of the confidence he placed in his British guests by acceding to the Envoy's request that the members of the Mission should be free to receive visits from Afghan officials and Sirdars. The correspondence, which was merely one of congratulation on Kaufmann's side, and of polite acknowledgement on the Amir's, was forwarded to Lord Lytton, who, taking into account the disturbed state of Turkestan and the Amir's natural anxiety to conciliate a man who had Abdur Rahman in his keeping, was wise enough to abstain from making it a subject of complaint.¹

If Cavagnari built any hopes for the success of his Mission on

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 7, 9.

the peaceful nature of his reception in Kabul, those hopes were of short duration. A very few days disclosed to him the dangers by which he was surrounded. Into a city devastated by cholera,¹ the Herati Regiments were pouring, fresh from the plunder of the Hazara villages, deficient in discipline, clamorous for pay. A Foreign Minister might assure the Envoy that the disturbances were the work of "a few wild spirits," that in a day or two the troops would receive their arrears and be sent away on furlough²; but he must have known that the men had already refused to go to their homes till the last penny of their back pay had been counted out to them, and that there was not money enough in the treasury to give them what they claimed.

It had been arranged that Cavagnari should communicate with the Indian Government in two ways—in detail, by means of weekly diaries, and more briefly, as need might arise, by letter or written message to be carried by special runners to the British outpost at Ali Khel, and thence telegraphed on to Simla by the Political Officer.

The Diary ending August 9th gave a full account of the condition of the town after the arrival of the Herati regiments, and of the Envoy's interview with the Foreign Minister; but already on the 8th, the Viceroy had received the following telegram from Cavagnari:—

"Kabul, August 6th. Alarming reports personally reached me to-day from several sources of the mutinous behaviour of the Herati regiments lately arrived here, some of the men having been seen going about the city with drawn swords, and using inflammatory

¹ Munshi Bukhtiar Khan, the pro tem. representative of the British Government at Kabul, died of cholera the day before Cavagnari arrived. In *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 339 and 340, it is stated that "considerable evidence was brought forward later to prove that he (Bukhtiar Khan) was poisoned by the Amir." There is no published official evidence in support of this grave charge; certainly Cavagnari never dropped a hint of foul play. Perhaps the author did not know how easily evidence is manufactured in Afghanistan, especially evidence likely to damage a fallen man and to please his enemies.—H. B. H.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 28.

language against the Amir and his English visitors, and I was strongly advised not to go out for a day or two." ¹

It is strange that a message of such grave import should have aroused so little anxiety in Lord Lytton's mind that he could delay forwarding it to the Secretary of State till the 18th, and then send it on without a word of comment ; but it is stranger still that Cavagnari himself should have failed to recognize its full significance. Had he done so, he would hardly have declined to make immediate use of the Viceroy's offer, telegraphed to him on the 24th of August, to give Yakub Khan pecuniary aid, if such aid were necessary to extricate him from his difficulties, on the ground that he hoped, later, to turn such aid to account as a lever for obtaining reforms in the Afghan Administration. Only a man whose eyes were holden so that he could not see clearly, would have been writing about administrative reforms when the problem of the hour was how to uphold the Amir's authority against the chaotic forces that were threatening to sweep it away, for it is impossible to believe that Cavagnari courted destruction in order to furnish Lord Lytton with an excuse for the renewal of the war, and the annexation of Afghanistan. It is true he spoke words on which such a construction might be put, as when he said to a friend : " If my death places the red line on the Hindu Kush, I don't mind," or when he answered the earnest warnings of Ressaldar-Major Nakshband Khan, a former Native Officer in a Bengal Cavalry regiment, with the words : " They can only kill the three or four of us here, and our death will be avenged." It was one thing for him to find consolation for a possible catastrophe in the belief that it would bring about the complete triumph of the forward policy, and quite another, deliberately to sacrifice his own life, the lives of his three European companions, of the seventy-five men of his escort, and of the numerous servants who had followed

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 18.

the Mission to Kabul, to so doubtful a prospect of ultimate advantage to India ; and the answer to Nakshband Khan may fairly be taken as representing his conviction that in an attitude bold, even to defiance, lay the Mission's best chance of safety, for his words were sure to be repeated, and might give pause to the "wild spirits" who were going about the city abusing him by name, and threatening to kill him. And, from first to last, just such an attitude did he maintain ; yielding nothing to the warnings that daily reached him ; insisting on the withdrawal of the guard placed at the gate of the Residency in part, at least, for its protection ; riding out, day after day, attended by a troop of Afghan Cavalry and a few men of his own mounted escort ; and in his frequent interviews with the Amir and his Ministers, resolutely speaking out his mind on every point that presented itself for discussion.

If further proof be needed that it was blindness to the pressing nature of the crisis in which he was involved, not desire to precipitate its catastrophe, which prompted Cavagnari to postpone availing himself of the Viceroy's liberality, it is to be found in his projected tour round India with the Amir, before accompanying his royal charge to Agra to attend the Durbar which Lord Lytton had arranged to hold there in February 1880,¹ for at the very time when he was busying himself with the details of this journey, he was writing down in his Diary such reports of disaffection and mutiny in every province of the kingdom as should have convinced him that, for years to come, Yakub Khan's hands would be too full, his position too insecure, to allow of his leaving his country for a single day.²

¹ See letters of Dr. Kelly. *Life of Sir Louis Cavagnari*, by Kally Prosono Dey, pp. 158-161.

² In the Diary ending Aug. 16 he reported (see *Afghanistan* (1880), pp. 28, 29, 30) that the ammunition of the Herati regiments at Kabul had been taken from them ; again, that a large number of troops sent to Ghazni had deserted on the march, and that General Ghulam Hyder Khan had been defeated by the rebels in Turkestan ; in his last Diary, that the troops in Turkestan were

It is, of course, impossible to affirm that any pecuniary aid given to the Amir would have done more than postpone the catastrophe which was now close at hand ; but in such aid, promptly given, lay the one chance of saving the Mission from immediate annihilation at the hands of the troops, for the mutinous spirit which pervaded the whole Afghan Army was so largely due to the men's poverty that it might have been dispelled by the satisfaction of their just demands. No doubt there were risks attendant on investing the British Envoy with the character of paymaster to his host's creditors, but these could have been lessened by giving the money, not as a concession to the demands of the soldiery, but in fulfilment of the treaty obligation to pay Yakub Khan a yearly subsidy of six lakhs of rupees. No expedient, however, could do more than lessen the dangers threatening the Mission, for its mere presence in Kabul evoked hopes it could not fulfil, whilst detracting from the authority of the prince on whom it had to depend for protection. Only a few days after his arrival in Kabul, Cavagnari had reported to Lord Lytton that the populace expected him not only to obtain for the soldier his arrears of pay, but also to secure the removal of oppressive taxation and the abolition of compulsory military service. As might have been foreseen, the British Envoy represented to all classes of Afghans not so much the power, as the wealth of the British Empire ; and, with that inexhaustible fund to draw upon, it was believed that he could buy from the Amir whatever redress of public grievances, whatever private boon he might be induced to demand. Thus, with or against his will, Cavagnari

supposed not to be sufficiently in hand to be used to restore order in Badakshan, that six regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery under orders for the first-named province had only been brought to march by the payment of two months' arrears, and that many desertions were expected en route. He also gave details of mutinies in Turkestan and at Ghazni, and reported that the Amir had sent the Prime Minister to say that, owing to the unruly conduct of the troops, it would not be prudent for Major St. John (Political Officer at Kandahar) to travel to Persia through Herat.—H. B. H.

was bound to become a centre round which public and private discontent would seek to gather, with the result that he must either break the promise of non-interference given to the Amir, making him his enemy, or, by keeping it, expose himself to the resentment of all disappointed suitors for the exercise of his influence in their favour. So far this inevitable source of difficulty and danger had only revealed itself in that general feeling of expectancy of which he had taken early note. Little use had been made of the Amir's consent to freedom of intercourse between his subjects and the members of the Mission ; in part because such intercourse, though permitted, was not encouraged by Yakub Khan and his Ministers, in part because the Envoy was chary of receiving the persons most likely to visit him, namely the Sirdars who had assisted the British during the war, and who now desired that the amnesty guaranteed to them in the Treaty of Gandamak should be interpreted so as to cover a claim to the restitution of their former appointments and allowances—pretensions to which he could not lend his support. "There can be no question," so he wrote on the 30th of August, "as to his (the Amir's) perfect right to grant these men whatever allowances he thinks proper, or to give or withhold lucrative appointments they are desirous of obtaining. All that we can properly contend for is that their persons and private property shall not be subject to molestation on account of their connection with us." ¹

The letter from which the above passage is quoted, and to which attaches the melancholy interest of being the last written by Cavagnari to Lord Lytton, is of great value as showing what were the writer's views on points which were subsequently to become matters for investigation. It proves that, in the Envoy's opinion, nothing calling for complaint could be laid to the charge of the Afghan Government ; that the religious element in Kabul had abstained from exciting bad

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 345.

feeling against the Mission ; that the conduct of the populace had all along been orderly ; and that, though stories hinting at treachery on the part of Yakub Khan were being poured into his ears, they had not shaken his confidence in the Amir's good faith. The letter further shows that Cavagnari had fallen into the characteristic error of confounding^{*} discontent at Native bad administration with eagerness to welcome Foreign rule, and of attributing the weakness of Yakub Khan's authority to Shere Ali's tyranny, instead of to the self-evident fact that the son had had no opportunity of restoring the order, which the father had established and the British invasion broken down.

How weak the Amir's authority, even in his capital, was perhaps better known to the men of the escort than to the members of the Mission. No Sikh or Hindu dared show his face in the city ; only in parties of ten or twelve could they venture down to the river to bathe or wash their clothes ; even the Mahomedans always went into the streets armed, and four or five together ; and the scowling looks and taunting words which met them at every turn, and which they were ashamed to report to the Sahibs, were talked over by the men in their quarters at the Residency with many prophecies of coming doom.¹

¹ Statement of Hassan Gul, Sepoy. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 127.

In the statement of Allal-ud-Din it is mentioned that a few days before the outbreak there was a quarrel in the street between some Kabulis and some Sepoys about a woman, and that on the 3rd of September three Kabuli women were brought out of the Hammam of the Residency, and killed by the mutineers. (Ibid. p. 87.)

CHAPTER IV

The Last Hours of the Kabul Mission

It is impossible to give an accurate account of the last hours of the British Mission to Kabul; no Englishman survived to tell the tale from the point of view of those inside the Residency; the three or four men of the Guides who, by one or other strange chance, were preserved from sharing their comrades' fate, could only speak with certainty on matters which had come within their notice, and, even as regards these, were liable to error, by reason of the haste and pressure of events, which left them no time for careful observation of details of time and place; whilst the stories told by Afghan witnesses, especially by the enemies of the Amir on the one hand, and by the Amir himself on the other, require to be received with great reserve. There is not a single point, from the number and composition of the regiments that began the attack on the Residency, to the manner and moment of the death of its last defenders, on which all are agreed¹; yet from this cloud of clashing statements three things emerge clearly:—viz. that the outbreak was a purely military one; that its immediate cause was the denial to certain troops of their full arrears of pay; and that, at the moment, it was quite unpremeditated, though weeks of fuming over the presence of foreign infidels in Kabul had prepared the way for just such an explosion.

A clear and well-connected account of the events of the 3rd of

¹ See *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 65, 66, 77, 79, 86, 88, 93, 115, 124, 128.

September, as seen from outside the Residency, was given to Mr. G. B. Scott of the Survey Department, by a Mullah with whom he had a long conversation, some months after the entrance of Sir Frederick Roberts's troops into Kabul. It bears, perhaps, traces of a desire to place the conduct of the priesthood in a favourable light, but the part which it assigns to the narrator and his brother-mullahs is in harmony with Cavagnari's statement, that the religious element in the capital had done nothing to excite public feeling against the Mission; and as Scott, who knew the Afghans better than most men, saw no reason to doubt the *bona fides* of his informant, the story may safely be used to supplement or confirm the statements published in the Blue Books.

Using all sources of information, and, where one witness contradicts another, selecting the account that seems, in itself, the more probable, the story of the attack on the Residency and the massacre of the British Mission runs thus :—

On the 1st or 2nd of September some regiments, probably three of the six that had come from Herat,¹ sent a deputation to the palace to represent their miserable condition to the Amir. The deputation was received either by Daud Shah, or by the Amir himself, and was sent away with the promise of a speedy payment of all arrears. If this interview took place, Cavagnari would know of it, and would regard the promise given to the troops as a hopeful augury for the peace of the city. Certainly, on the evening of the 2nd of September, he had no special reason for uneasiness; so the next morning a foraging party issued from the Residency bound for some waste grazing lands near the village of Ben-i-Hissar.² It consisted of a non-commissioned

¹ Three Herati regiments had been paid up most of their arrears and had dispersed to their homes, terrified by the cholera, which was raging so violently that a hundred and fifty men had died in one day. See Deposition of Ressaldar-Major Nakshband Khan. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 81.

² Foraging only began on the 1st of September; up to that date, forage had been brought to the Residency.—H. B. H.

officer, Kote Duffadar Futteh Mahomed, and two Sowars—Akbar Shah, a Mahomedan, and Narain Sing, a Sikh. It had an escort of four Afghan troopers and was accompanied by Lieutenant Hamilton and Dr. Kelly, to see that the grass-cutters did not trespass on any cultivated fields; and when they had satisfied themselves that there was no danger of damage being done to the villagers' crops, the two English officers rode back to the Residency.

About an hour later, the foragers were startled by the sound of continuous firing, coming from the direction of the Bala Hissar. The Kote Duffadar, well aware of the angry feelings entertained towards the Mission by the Herati troops, knew at once that mischief was afoot. His first action was to despatch twenty-three of the grass-cutters, in charge of the four Afghan troopers, to the care of Ibrahim Khan, an ex-officer of the Bengal Cavalry, at this time commanding an Afghan regiment of horse cantoned close to Ben-i-Hissar; then, with the sowars and the remaining two grass-cutters, he started for the Residency, the roof of which, as they drew nearer, they saw to be crowded with men—an unprecedented circumstance, for, to avoid giving umbrage to the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, no one was allowed access to that roof. Undeterred by this proof of the terrible nature of the peril into which they were running, the five men pressed on till brought to a sudden standstill by the sight of a crowd of armed ruffians rushing towards them from the town. To reach the Bala Hissar being now out of the question, Futteh Mahomed and his companions turned off in the direction of a fort belonging to the Amir's father-in-law, Sirdar Yahiya Khan, but before they had gone far, they were overtaken by the Afghan troopers, who had done their duty by the grass-cutters, but were now bent on killing the Sikh soldier, Narain Sing. The bold front shown by him and his Mahomedan comrades kept them from carrying out their purpose, and the little band gained the fort, to find, to their joy, that the garrison was partly composed of Kazalbashis, men of Futteh Mahomed's

and Akbar Shah's own tribe, who now carried off the fugitives to the Murad Khana, their particular quarter of Kabul, and stoutly refused to give them up to the furious rabble clamouring for their blood. In the night, however, they smuggled Narain Sing out of the Murad Khana and hid him safely in a dharamsala in another part of the city.¹

Meanwhile the tragedy, the first act of which these men had beheld from afar, was going rapidly forward to its consummation in blood and fire.

Soon after the foraging party had started for the grazing grounds, two or three regiments in uniform and wearing their side-arms, but without their rifles, marched into the Bala Hissar and formed up on the open space below the Palace. From the first moment their conduct was disorderly, and when they were offered a part, instead of the whole, of the arrears owing to them, they broke out into open mutiny.

The Amir sent Daud Shah to try to pacify them, but his attempts to make them hear reason only increased their anger. Several accounts attribute the suggestion that they should address themselves to the British Envoy, to Abdul Karim Khan, Colonel of one of the disaffected regiments, but the Mullah told Scott that it came from the ranks, a voice suddenly calling out :—" Let us go to Cavagnari. He will pay us." ²

Whoever put the thought into the men's heads, once there, they were quick to act upon it. Breaking their ranks, they knocked down and severely injured Daud Shah, who strove to stop them, and rushed shouting towards the Residency. Pouring into its compound, their attention was at first attracted by the stables, and for a quarter of an hour the looting of these kept them busy ; then something happened which exasperated them to fury. One witness declares that the men

¹ Statement of Futteh Mahomed Khan. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 79.

² Wali Muhammad Khan's Memorandum speaks as if the Amir had personally interviewed the troops. (*Ibid.* p. 115.)

of the escort were forbidden to fire on the looters, and that the order was obeyed¹; another asserts that the guard at the Residency door fired without orders, killing six or nine of the mutineers.² The Mullah, speaking from hearsay, told Scott that after the troops had been a little while in the compound, the Envoy came out upon the roof and called down to them, demanding what they had come for. A spokesman cried back that the regiments wanted their arrears of pay, and looked to him for them. Cavagnari answered briefly that he could not interfere between the Amir and his troops; whereupon the soldiers, maddened with disappointment, pressed so fiercely against the house that the door burst open, and the guard within fired in self-defence.³

It is so probable that speech did pass between the ringleaders of the troops and the Envoy, that this story might be accepted, but for the difficulty of believing that, at a moment when the lives of all those who had followed him to Kabul were hanging on his answer, Cavagnari, with Lord Lytton's offer of pecuniary aid to the Amir in his possession, should have given a point-blank refusal to the soldiers' demands: yet pride and disdain of lesser men were such marked features of his character that they may have triumphed over prudence and the sense of responsibility, and betrayed him into words which were the death-warrant of the Mission.

Whatever happened to change for the worse the temper of the troops, this is certain, that, yelling furiously, they burst out of the compound in search of arms. Some ran to their camp outside the city to fetch their rifles, others broke into the Arsenal, close at hand, to supply themselves with ammunition. The respite thus afforded

¹ See Sepoy Russul's Statement, *Ibid.* p. 63; also the same Sepoy's Cross-examination, p. 121.

² See Taimur's Statements, *Ibid.* pp. 94, 95; also Russul's, p. 121.

³ Another witness testifies to Cavagnari's having addressed the troops, but in the opposite sense, promising them twelve months' pay if they would desist. (*Ibid.* p. 124.)

them was used by Cavagnari in preparing for a stubborn resistance. A really successful defence was out of the question, for the house, commanded on the South by the fort, on the North and West by houses higher than itself, with a steep fall to the Kabul River on the East, was, in Sir Charles Macgregor's emphatic words, "a regular rat-trap";¹ but the longer the besieged could hold out, the more chance would there be of the Amir's taking steps to pacify or overawe the mutinous regiments. So the men of the escort were withdrawn from their quarters into the main building, Cavagnari himself helping to cut slits for the rifles in the parapet of the roof.

The soldiers who had forced their way into the fort soon began firing on the Residency, and Cavagnari is said to have fired the first shot in reply, which killed a man standing in the doorway of the Arsenal. Then the troops that had gone back to camp, reinforced by three other corps, and all the scum of the city, armed with swords and knives, came streaming into the Bala Hissar, and took cover, from which they so harassed the defenders of the Residency that, about nine o'clock, Cavagnari, Jenkyns, Hamilton, and Kelly, followed by twenty-five men of the escort, charged out and drove them off—"the Afghans," according to an eye-witness, "running like sheep before a wolf." This charge was followed by three others—the first led by all the Europeans except Cavagnari, the second by Hamilton and Jenkyns, the third by a Sikh Jemadar.²

About mid-day Cavagnari was wounded in the head by a rifle bullet, and, apparently by his orders, Jenkyns despatched a letter to the Amir asking for instant help, which Ghulam Nabbi, a resident

¹ "We rode mostly all through the Bala Hissar and then to Cavagnari's house, which is a poor place and a regular rat-trap, closely surrounded by houses, and completely looked into by the upper hill." (*Life of Sir C. Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 131.)

² Deposition of Ressaldar-Major Nakshband Khan, Sirdar Bahadar *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 83.

in Kabul who had once served in the Guides, succeeded in delivering.¹ Soon afterwards a second letter was sent by a Hindu, but he was killed on emerging from the Residency.

About 2 p.m. guns were brought to bear on the Residency, and at the same time ladders were reared against its walls, up which the troops swarmed on to the roof. Its defenders rushed down the staircase with the Afghans at their heels, to find the interior of the building already in the hands of enemies who had crept in through a hole in the wall. A few seconds later, the house was in a blaze, fired, some accounts say, by the mob, others, by the survivors of the garrison to cover their retreat to the Hammam (bath-house). The wooden supports on which the house rested soon burnt through, and the walls fell, burying under smoking ruins all the dead and wounded—among them Cavagnari. A little later, the door of the Hammam was blown in and the men inside, headed by Hamilton and Jenkyns, rushed out to meet the entering crowd, and died, fighting bravely to the last. Kelly is believed to have perished in the Residency, and one account says that he was not killed till the following morning.

The attack on the Embassy, which began at eight o'clock in the morning, came to an end, so far as resistance went, about four in the afternoon, though single shots were heard as late as seven in the evening. Accounts differ as to what was going on in the precincts of the Palace during those seven hours, but all agree as to their having been the scene of terror, confusion, and indecision. For the early part of the day, the story of Mr. Scott's informant is very simple and graphic. It tells how, alarmed by the noise of firing and the sight of

¹ Nakshband Khan, Allal-ud-Din, brother of Padshah Khan, Akbar Shah, one of the troopers who had gone out with the grass-cutters, and Hamilton's syce Husein attribute the letter to Cavagnari, but one and all spoke from hearsay (Ibid. pp. 81, 87, 79), whereas Trooper Taimur and Ressaldar Bahaw-ud-Din say positively that it was written and sent by Jenkyns (Ibid. pp. 94-95, 85).

all the *badmashes* of the town rushing towards the Bala Hissar, he went out into the street to see what was wrong, and how he received a message bidding him hurry to the mosque near the Palace. There he found several of the oldest Mullahs and Syuds, and, after a hasty consultation, it was decided to urge the Amir to go to the help of his guests. They found him outside the Palace, looking towards the Residency, crying and tearing his hair and clothes, many high officials around him, and, close at hand, three companies of artillery standing to their guns. The head Mullah went up to him, and, pointing to the fighting, said:—"Are you crying here, and your guests being murdered?" "My Kismet is bad, what can I do?" asked the Amir. "Order your artillery to fire," answered the Mullah. "What use? they are thousands and will eat us all up." "Then go and die rather than disgrace Islam," cried the Mullah; but Yakub only wept and tore at his hair and clothes. Then the Mullahs turned to Daud Shah, and after a little the Commander-in-Chief mounted his horse and tried to force his way to the Residency. From where the Amir and the Mullahs stood, they saw him pass through the stragglers on the edge of the tumult—saw the crowd turn upon him—saw him draw his sword, and, a moment later, fall from his horse under a shower of stones. "Then Yakub, covering his face with his hands and crying, walked into the Palace," and the Mullahs went away "to pray." "The noise at that time was awful," so the Mullah ended his story:—"the Residency was hidden in dust and smoke. Every now and again a cannon roared and the musketry fire was incessant. I know no more till the mob began to flock back through the streets, crying that all the Kafirs were dead. Then I knew the English would come to Kabul."

One witness—Allal-ud-Din, brother of Padshah Khan—says that Yakub Khan was anxious at one time to go himself to the help of the Mission, but that Mullah Shah Mahomed and the Mustaifi restrained him, fearing that the crowd would treat him as they had

treated Daud Shah.¹ This was probably after the receipt of Jenkyns's letter, across which the Amir is said to have written :—" If God will I am making an arrangement " ; certainly, just before the Residency was seen to be on fire, he did send out the heir-apparent, a boy of eight, with his tutor, bearing the Koran, his grandfather, Yahiya Khan, Habibulla Khan, Padshah Khan, and other Sirdars, to try to turn the mutineers from their bloody work ; but to no purpose. The Koran was snatched from the tutor's hands, the voices of the chiefs were drowned in the yells of men, the rattle of musketry, the crash of falling walls ; and the terrified ambassadors turned back discomfited.² It is improbable, however, that anything the Amir could have done would have made a difference in the fate of the Mission. In the quarter of an hour during which the troops were away arming themselves, he might, perhaps, have made an attempt to save the four Europeans, but the time was far too short to allow of withdrawing the men of the escort and the many servants and camp-followers into such protection as the Palace could afford ; and Cavagnari, Jenkyns, Hamilton, and Kelly were not men to accept the chance of safety for themselves alone. Later, with half the people of the town and nearly all the troops taking part in the attack on the Residency, there was no force that he could have sent to its relief, and to have ordered the gunners to fire on the enormous crowds of armed men surrounding it—supposing them to have obeyed—would only have involved him and all his people in the tragedy which was being enacted before his eyes—a sacrifice which might have preserved the honour of Islam, but could not have saved the lives of his guests.

The Mission had been five weeks and six days in Kabul when the end came, and Shere Ali's warning that, even in his capital, no Amir of Afghanistan could safeguard the lives of British Officers had fulfilled itself with startling speed. Not faster, however, than

¹ See *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 87

² *Ibid.*

might have been foreseen, for to throw men, whose presence must ever be obnoxious to the national sentiment, into a semi-barbarous country, the nominal ruler of which was unpopular with his people and without any authority over his troops, was to condemn them to an early death. Prudence should have delayed the departure of Cavagnari from India till Yakub Khan, securely seated on his throne, could have offered him, at least, the ordinary amount of protection which an Afghan prince can afford to foreigners. Impatient to reap the most coveted of the fruits of the war, Lord Lytton despatched Cavagnari in haste to Kabul to add to the Amir's difficulties and provoke his own tragic fate.

CHAPTER V

Preparations for a British Occupation of Kabul

THE Simla season was an unusually busy and brilliant one that year, and neither the higher military officials, absorbed in the work of the Commission of inquiry into the defects in the administration of the army revealed by the late campaign, nor the crowds of younger men who had flocked up to the hills to enjoy themselves and recruit after the hardships and fatigues of the war, gave more than a passing thought to the position and prospects of the Mission, on whose safety depended the maintenance of the peace over which all were rejoicing. Such news of it as reached the general public was good. Cholera had passed it by, the Amir was friendly, and soon Cavagnari would be bringing him to India to strengthen his sense of the value of the alliance that had been forced upon him, by the contrast between his own poverty and impotence, and the wealth and strength of the British Government. If Lord Lytton and the Members of his Council, pondering over the Envoy's Diaries, had misgivings, they kept them to themselves, and, on the whole, were content to believe that Cavagnari's telegrams, from which the words "all well" were seldom absent, referred to more than the health of himself and his companions.

It was therefore into a society unprepared for evil tidings that the news of the attack on the British Residency fell like a thunderbolt. To the Government, it came very early on the morning of the 5th of September, in the following telegram from Conolly to Sir F. Roberts :—

“A man who says he is in Sir Louis Cavagnari’s service, has arrived in hot haste from Kabul, and solemnly states that yesterday morning the Residency was attacked by three regiments who had mutinied for their pay, they having guns and being joined by a portion of six other regiments. The Embassy and escort were defending themselves when he left Kabul about noon yesterday. I hope to receive further news.”¹

Roberts hurried with the alarming message to the Viceroy, who immediately summoned his Council to consider with him the steps that would now have to be taken. As the telegram left a loophole for hope that the members of the Embassy might still be living, it was decided to keep the bad news secret for the present, and to order Brigadier-General Dunham Massy, the senior officer in the Kuram, to hold two Mountain Batteries, a Squadron of Cavalry, a company of Sappers and Miners, and three thousand Infantry, half of whom were to be European troops, in readiness for a rush on Kabul should the next news give grounds for believing that relief might still be possible. At the same time an alternative plan of a far more extensive character, based on the assumption that the Embassy had ceased to exist, and that a punitive, not a relief, expedition must be organized, was anxiously discussed, and General Roberts nominated to its command.²

All through that day the few men who shared the sad secret worked hard at preparations for one or the other course of action; and before night they knew which it was to be, for at dinner the Viceroy received a second telegram from Conolly, reporting that two letters had arrived from the Amir which left “no hope as to the fate of Embassy and escort.”³

The blow was the worst which could have befallen Lord Lytton, but the desire to keep the general public a little longer in ignorance

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 42.

² *Ibid.* p. 37.

³ *Ibid.* p. 42.

helped him to conceal his distress ; and, by his wish, Lady Lytton, accompanied by two guests, who had no inkling of the load of anxiety weighing on their hostess, attended a performance at the theatre got up by his aides-de-camp. She returned home to find that, in her absence, Conolly had telegraphed an epitome of the Amir's two letters—the first, dated September the 3rd, 8 a.m., the second, September the 4th.¹ With the loss of the last glimmer of hope, all need for concealment had vanished, and next morning the officers who were to accompany Sir F. Roberts, received orders to be ready to start that afternoon for the Kuram and Kabul. The news of the massacre of the Embassy, passing from mouth to mouth, quickly plunged Simla into gloom, whilst one telegram carried the fatal intelligence to the Secretary of State for India and the British people, and another warned Sir Donald Stewart to recall the troops that had started for India, and to stand fast at Kandahar.

That same day, Brigadier-General Dunham Massy was directed by the Commander-in-Chief to occupy the Shuturgardan with a Mountain Battery, the 5th Gurkhas, 23rd Pioneers, and a company of Sappers and Miners ; and Conolly was instructed to inform the Amir that a British Force, under General Sir F. Roberts, would soon be on its way to his assistance, *viâ* that pass, and to request him to do all in his power to facilitate its advance.

Dunham Massy at once began carrying out his orders, and Conolly

¹ “ We were a small party—the Barnetts, Lady Anne Kerr and Colonel Stansfield—no A.D.C.'s, and Sir Michael Kennedy the only guest. But he and the others knew nothing of what was going on, so we had to keep up appearances even when the look which passed over his Excellency's face when he read the telegram told us pretty well that there was little hope left. . . . Nothing was to be known as yet, so Lady Lytton went to the theatre with Mrs. Barnett and Sir Ashley (Eden). . . . I heard no more until this morning, when a letter came from Lady L. telling me it was all true ; when she was coming home last night she met Z. ; he passed without a look or word or bow, and she knew worse news had come. She got up to Lord L. and found it was a letter from the Amir.” (Letter from Lady Colley to her husband, dated September 6th, 1879. See *Life of Sir G. Colley*, pp. 239, 240.)

communicated both with the Amir and with the Ghilzai Chief, Padshah Khan, desiring the latter to come himself to the Shutargardan or to send his brother—Allal-ud-Din—or his uncle, Sirkai Khan, to arrange for the safe passage of British convoys through Ghilzai territory.¹

Sir F. Roberts, accompanied by Colonel C. Macgregor, the Chief of his Staff, arrived at Ali Khel on the 12th of September to find the Shutargardan occupied by a force under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Currie, the Pioneers entrenching the position taken up, and the Sappers and Miners improving the rough and steep ascent to the Sirkai Kotal. The force at his disposal for the advance on Kabul numbered only six thousand five hundred men of all ranks—the line of communication between the Shutargardan and Thal was to be held by four thousand troops under General T. E. Gordon—yet, moderate as were its proportions, the question of how to equip it with the necessary transport was a difficult one to answer. Very few of the beasts of draught and burden collected for use in the late campaign had survived its rigours, and most of those survivors had disappeared or been dispersed over the district in search of grazing grounds; whilst the transport organization—never much to boast of—had been broken up.² To meet the latter difficulty, the Government of India created a new office—that of Controller-General of Supply and Transport—and appointed as its head Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Kennedy, R.E., who, during the recent famine, had given proof of great administrative ability. As he was to be solely responsible for the supply of commissariat and regimental transport to the columns detailed for active service in the Khyber and the Kuram,³ Kennedy was invested with special powers for the expeditious

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. I, p. 43.

² *Memorandum on the Supply and Transport Arrangements during 1879–80*, p. 1, by Sir M. Kennedy.

³ The Supply and Transport of the Kandahar troops was transferred to the Bombay Government.—H. B. H.

conduct of the business of his department, and, though still under the Civil Government, was authorized to communicate direct with the Commander-in-Chief. The transport, once handed over to the corps to which it was assigned, was to become a part of its regimental equipment, and the responsibility for it to rest thenceforward entirely with the commanding officer.¹ This was but an extension of the system in vogue in the Punjab Frontier Force, thanks to which the troops composing that body had been in a fit state to take the field at the beginning of the war. But the best of systems, even with a capable and energetic man to administer it, takes time to get into working order, and, in Sir Michael's own words, of "time there was none to spare"; and as the authorities, military and political, "had been caught in a state of unreadiness, everything had to be improvised."² Unfortunately this improvising included the denuding of the Peshawar Valley Field Force of all its available transport³—a loss which seriously crippled its activity, whilst the gain to the Kuram Field Force was so insufficient for its needs that the 3rd Sikhs, a frontier regiment always well equipped, had to give up ninety of its camels, the 9th Lancers sixty out of a total of eighty,⁴ and the 14th Bengal Lancers marched from Kuram on foot, the horses carrying five days' supplies for themselves and their riders.⁵ Even with these economies, transport was so scarce that Macgregor had to issue orders to send on every beast, however-sick and feeble, that "was able to take the road" because the army "could not afford to lose even the services of a broken-down bullock."⁶

Whilst Colonel Macgregor was wrestling with this initial difficulty,

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 38.

² Sir M. Kennedy's Supply and Transport Report, p. 2.

³ Viceroy's Despatch to Secretary of State, dated September 15, 1879. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 37.

⁴ *Life and Opinions of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. pp. 111, 114.

⁵ *To Kabul with the Cavalry Brigade*, p. 3, by Major Mitford.

⁶ *Life and Opinions of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 110.

and Brigadier-General J. D. Baker, on whom had devolved the command of the Expeditionary Force's vanguard, now reinforced by the 72nd Highlanders, was preparing the road over the Shutargardan for the passage of artillery,¹ Sir F. Roberts was trying what diplomacy could do to divest the advance on Kabul of some of its dangers. Well aware that the news of the disturbances at Kabul had greatly excited the tribes, and hearing rumours—which apparently he was never able to verify²—as to letters from the Amir calling upon them to oppose the invaders, he summoned the leading men of the neighbouring districts to Ali Khel, and, by promises of liberal payment for all services rendered to the Expedition, enlisted, so he hoped, their interests, if not their sympathies, on his side. With the Ghilzais he came to an understanding through Allal-ud-Din, who, on the 14th of September, arrived unexpectedly on the Shutargardan, and with him Nawab Sir Ghulam Hassan Khan.

There had been much anxiety in Simla as to the safety of this distinguished Indian diplomatist. It was known that he had left Kandahar for Kabul, where he was to join Cavagnari, on the 18th of August, and it was feared that he might have fallen into the hands of the mutineers. The fear was not groundless; at one point he had had difficulty in avoiding a Kabul regiment marching down the road, and at Ghazni he had been so alarmed by the aspect of affairs that he had left the main road and continued his journey by

¹ "While holding the pass, two difficulties were offered to the Commissariat, one being the water-supply, and the other, forage for cattle, which could only be obtained in the smallest quantities and at exorbitant rates. The mules of the battery obtained little forage beyond the daily issue of grain. They persistently neighed and whinnied at night in consequence, and, in spite of the cold, ate up their own or their comrades' blankets, and even the hair on each other's tails." (*Recollections of the Kabul Campaign, 1879 and 1880*, by Dr. J. Duke, p. 108)

² "Ghilzais report that Amir has called upon (them) to stop all roads leading from this towards Kabul. I am trying to get one of the Amir's letters to this effect." (Telegram from General Roberts. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 55.)

a comparatively unfrequented path. Two marches from the capital he had heard of the massacre, and was just beginning to feel its effects in the hostile attitude of the people, when he was joined by Sirdar Allal-ud-Din, whom the Amir had sent to meet him, and under whose protection, avoiding Kabul, he arrived safely at the outposts of the British army on the Shutargardan. Here Allal-ud-Din proposed to turn back, but Ghulam Hassan Khan succeeded in persuading "him to come on and see what General Roberts required of him."¹

The result of the meeting between the British Commander and the Ghilzai chief was an agreement by which Allal-ud-Din pledged himself to keep his people quiet and to provide as much as he could in the way of transport and supplies, and Roberts undertook to pay him two thousand rupees monthly during the continuance of the campaign, and to give him a present of three thousand in addition—all supplies, of course, to be handsomely paid for.²

Not content with taking steps to secure the good will of the chiefs and headmen of the country, Sir Frederick Roberts did his best to conciliate the people at large by issuing a proclamation calculated, so he hoped, to allay the anxiety with which they were watching his movements. In it, after stating that the object of the expedition was to take public revenge on the murderers of the Embassy, and to strengthen the authority of the Amir so long as he used it to maintain friendly relations with the British Government, he assured all, "small and great," who had taken no part in the attack on the Residency, that unless they opposed his advance they had nothing to fear from his force, and that full price and hire would be paid for all supplies and carriage brought into his camp.³

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 62.

² "I think all this blackmail paying is very wrong in principle, but our force is so small that it requires all such help." (*Life and Opinions of Sir C. Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 107.)

³ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 63.

The result of all these efforts to tranquillize the country through which Roberts's troops were about to pass was, for the moment, satisfactory; chiefs and headmen were profuse in their promises of aid, and the inhabitants of Kushi, which place was occupied by Baker on the 24th, seemed friendly; but the true temper of the people at large soon broke through the restraint which their leaders were trying to impose upon them. On the 22nd of September, a telegraph-construction convoy, escorted by a non-commissioned officer and ten men of the 5th Punjab Infantry, was waylaid near the Sirkai Kotal by a large body of Mangals and Ghilzais. The non-commissioned officer and six of his men were killed, also twenty-four linesmen and muleteers. At the same time an attack was made on the blockhouse on the top of the Kotal, and though the garrison of fifty men of the 5th Punjab Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant A. W. M'Kinstry, held its own, it was unable to be of any assistance to the convoy. Troops, however, were sent from the Shutargardan, but they arrived on the scene of the fighting to find that the enemy had disappeared, carrying off the convoy mules which were never recovered.¹

The same day a rumour reached Baker of an intended attack on his camp, and, though this proved false, an attempt was made upon Karatiga, a post on the eastern side of the Sirkai Kotal, and, far and near, the attitude of the tribesmen had become so unsatisfactory that General T. E. Gordon had good reason for feeling anxious about the line of communications for the safety of which he was now responsible; and when a telegram from the Peiwar Kotal warned him that that important post was threatened, and he had hurried to the spot, and contracted, as far as possible, the space covered by the camp, he telegraphed to Roberts asking to be allowed to detain the 67th Foot. The request was refused, and Gordon, in the end, had to fall back upon the dangerous expedient of raising a levy from

¹ *Recollections of the Kabul Campaign*, by Dr. J. Duke, p. 110.

the so-called friendly tribes to supplement a force, whose inadequacy is shown by the following table :—

TABLE SHOWING TROOPS ON LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

Brigadier-General T. E. Gordon, C.S.I., Commanding.
 Captain H. G. Grant, Brigade-Major.
 Lieutenant E. Burrell, D.A.Q.M. General.
 Major A. P. Palmer, Assistant Road Commandant.

Brigadier-General J. A. Tytler, V.C., C.B., Commanding in
 Lower Kuram.
 Major H. T. Jones, Brigade-Major.

ALI KHEL.

Half Battery C-4 Royal Artillery.
 2 Companies 2-8th King's Own.

ZABARDUSHT KILLA.

11th Bengal Infantry.
 1 Wing 21st Punjab Infantry.

PEIWAR KOTAL.

4 Companies 2-8th King's Own.

KURAM.

Half Battery C-4 Royal Artillery.
 2 Companies 2-8th King's Own.

BADESH KHEL.

No. 1 Mountain Battery, 2 guns.
 1 Squadron 1st Bengal Cavalry.
 20th Punjab Infantry.

THAL.

2 Squadrons 1st Bengal Cavalry.
 29th Punjab Infantry.

Approximate numbers 3,000 men of all ranks and eight guns.

Kohat, which had also been drained of troops to feed Roberts's force, was reinforced from Peshawar.

If General Roberts was anxious to make the Afghans believe, that the force he commanded was entering Afghanistan with the Amir's consent and for his protection, he was still more concerned to make sure that Yakub Khan recognized its friendly character, and could be trusted to act as became one who believed that his interests were bound up with those of the British Government.

With a view to forming a better judgment on this point than could be arrived at by an interchange of letters, he had written, the day after his arrival at Ali Khel, asking that a confidential agent might be deputed to converse with him and make him acquainted with the Amir's objects. In answer to this request the Mustaufi, Habibulla Khan, and the Wazir, Shah Mahomed Khan, arrived at Ali Khel, where, on the 23rd of September, they laid their master's views very frankly before the British General.

The Mustaufi, speaking for himself and his colleague, declared that the Amir was ready to do whatever the British Government wished, but that he could not conceal from himself that his people —ryots as well as soldiers—were in fear of an indiscriminate revenge. Reminded by Roberts of the tenor of his proclamation, he answered that the Afghans were too ignorant to be acted upon by proclamations, and then went on to urge that the advance of the British Force should be delayed, so as to give the Amir time to disarm the regular troops, raise new levies on a much smaller scale, and himself punish the perpetrators of the late abominable outrage. By asking for time in which to establish his power, the Amir did not mean to imply that an Afghan army, however strong, could resist the British power ; but that that army was drawn from all the Afghan tribes, and, if destroyed, the whole country might rise and combine against the British and against him who was already looked upon as an infidel, because of the way in which he had thrown in his lot with the British

Government. Things might perhaps go right if the mutinous troops kept together and made a stand, but in the Amir's opinion they were more likely to raise the country, and trust for victory to the interrupting of Roberts's communications and the cutting off of his supplies; under any circumstances these would be hard to collect and winter was already not far off. The Amir's advice to delay the advance was that of a sincere friend and the best he could give, but if it was not taken, then the British Army must be strong enough to put down all opposition.

Roberts in reply acknowledged that the Amir's advice was of great importance and must be carefully considered, but the Viceroy had, from the first, taken the possibility of a general rising into account and had provided against it. The punitive force was not the only one with which the insurgents would have to reckon. The Kandahar troops were already in motion; a third force was collecting at Peshawar; and the several armies were of such strength that all Afghanistan combined could not stand against them. The Amir's advice was the advice of a friend, but he must remember that the honour of the English Government was concerned, and that the English people expected a British force to enter Kabul and mete out adequate punishment for the crime committed there. Had the Mustaufi anything further to urge?

Yes, there were other things which the Amir had bidden him mention. There were twenty-four regiments of infantry, six of cavalry, and fifty-six guns in Turkestan, where Abdur Rahman and the sons of Azim Khan were waiting their chance. Herat, too, was doubtful, and, if Abdur Rahman could ingratiate himself with the people of Herat and Turkestan, those provinces would be permanently severed from the Afghan dominions. To give the Amir time to gain over Herat and Turkestan was another reason for delaying the advance.¹

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 108, 109.

The upshot of the interview was that Roberts took two days to consider the arguments submitted to him, and then informed the Agents that there could be no delay—firstly, because the Viceroy^{Rc} would be greatly distressed if any misfortune befell the Amir for lack of British support, and secondly, because the English people would never be satisfied till a British force had entered Kabul and recovered the bodies of the murdered officers and men. He trusted the Amir would be able to protect himself and maintain peace in his capital till he should arrive.¹

The Afghan Ministers accepted the British General's decision as final, and having discharged their mission were in a hurry to return to their posts. Roberts would fain have kept one of them with him ; but, when they pointed out that they could ill be spared from Kabul, he did not press his wish, and only asked that some trusted servant of the Amir's might be sent to him without delay, as a sign to the people that there was no disunion between the British and the Afghan Governments.

The Agents, evidently afraid that the British might be in Kabul before them, would have left Ali Khel that evening, but, yielding to Roberts's desire that they should spend the night under his protection, put off their journey till the next morning. They were not destined, however, to rejoin their master in Kabul, for, on the 27th of September, the Amir arrived unexpectedly in Baker's camp at Kushi. He came, practically, a fugitive, without tents or equipage of any kind, and escorted only by three hundred sowars, two hundred of whom returned at once to Kabul. He had thrown in his lot definitely with the British, and could never hope to re-enter his capital except in their train, or to retain his position except with their constant support.

¹ Ibid. p. 110. The notes of this important interview were taken by Mr. H. M. Durand, General Roberts's political secretary.—H. B. H.

CHAPTER VI

Concentration of Expeditionary Force at Zargan Shahr*

WHEN Yakub Khan wrote to General Roberts, that the catastrophe in Kabul had "utterly damaged and broken up" his State, and that he himself was "greatly distracted," and "in distress and confusion as to what he should do," he said no more than the truth.¹ His authority, the only tie which bound together the different parts of Afghanistan, had practically perished with the British Mission. In Kabul there were no troops on whom he could rely to support it; he was on bad terms with his Commander-in-Chief; he had little confidence in his Ministers; he knew that members of his own House were intriguing against him; and, look where he would, there seemed no quarter from which he could hope for help. Rulers of provinces were beginning to revolt,² or were themselves in danger. In the Zemindawar his uncle, Sirdar Mahomed Yusaf Khan, had shut himself up in a fort, and sent to Kandahar for assistance.³ At Herat the troops had killed his most trusted servant, Fakir Ahmed Khan, the real head of the civil and military administration; and Ayub Khan, the titular head, whilst throwing the blame of the murder on him—the Amir⁵—was rumoured to have instigated the deed.⁶ And in the midst of all this turmoil and confusion, he had to decide between two courses of action neither of which could promise him security. Either he must side with the British Government against

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 41.

² *Ibid.* p. 61.

³ *Ibid.* p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 73.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 74.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 53, 54.

* See, *Strategical Map*, No. 1.

his troops, or he must side with his troops against the British Government.

There is no proof that he hesitated between these courses ; his letters to Sir F. Roberts were consistent in their professions of loyalty to the British Alliance, and no evidence has ever been produced to confirm the rumours that, whilst undertaking to do all in his power to help the British advance, he was inciting the tribes to oppose it. Yet it is certain that both courses must have been pressed upon him ; certain that he must have had to weigh one against the other ; certain that he must have recognized how much was to be said against each ; how little for either. If, remembering that behind the troops was the Afghan people, he threw in his lot with the men who had brought him to this miserable pass, what guarantee had he that they would accept him as their leader ? Yet, if he elected to stand by his ally against his subjects, could he count upon that ally's continued fidelity to himself ? So far the Indian Government had accepted his assurance that he had been powerless to protect the Mission ; but how if, later on, it should listen to his enemies, who were already saying that he could have saved it had he wished to do so ;¹ that Daud Shah's attempt to reach the Residency was a blind, his wounds a sham ;² the sending out of the heir-apparent and the Koran a piece of acting which deceived no one on the spot ?³ How if, after he had placed himself in General Roberts's hands, that commander should give credence to the accusations of his traducers,

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 57.

² *Ibid.* p. 45.

Dr. Duke, who, at the Amir's request, examined Daud Shah's wounds some weeks after they had been received, had no doubt as to their reality. He found five in the head and forehead, one above the eyes not yet healed, and some in the stomach, which, but for the thickness of his kummerband, might have proved fatal. Some at least of these injuries were received at the hands of the troops, when first they mutinied before the attack on the Residency, (Duke's *Recollections*, p. 120.)

³ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 85.

and from being his protector, become his judge, his jailer, perhaps his executioner? There can be no doubt that this fear, which later events were to justify, was constantly present to Yakub Khan's mind, and it was a deeply anxious man who rode into Baker's camp to claim British protection and hospitality. The immediate impulse to that decisive step was given by the news that Wali Mahomed and other Sirdars, more or less his enemies, were intending to join Roberts—the prospect of being left without the power of choosing, driving him into choice. He could not leave the city openly to betake himself to the British camp, so he spent the day in his pleasure gardens outside the walls, and, at dusk, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by Daud Shah, rode through the night up the Logar Valley to Kushi.

The desire to forestall his rival in securing Sir Frederick Roberts's ear was probably not Yakub Khan's only motive for this hasty move. His heart was still set on delaying the British advance, and he may have thought that the arguments against an immediate occupation of Kabul which he had instructed the Mustaufi and the Wazir to use in his name, would come with greater force from his own lips when, by a signal proof of his trust in British friendship, he had earned the right to ask that no steps should be taken that must bring him into collision with his subjects. This was the same miscalculation which had led him to Gandamak, and it was doomed to an equally speedy disappointment. Even before he reached Kushi, Baker had invaded the Logar Valley, and, by training his guns upon its villages, had compelled the inhabitants to surrender their precious stores of grain and fodder. He had kept the letter of Roberts's proclamation by paying for the supplies taken; he had violated its spirit, and the spirit of the agreement with Allal-ud-Din, in taking the supplies by force, and in so doing had kindled in the hearts of the men thus despoiled a fire, which, fed with ever fresh fuel, was to spread and spread till all Northern Afghanistan rose in arms against

an army that could only live by condemning its people to die of starvation.

So far from being in the mood to listen to arguments in favour of delay, Roberts was already so weary of the checks imposed upon his movements by the unprepared state of the Expeditionary Force, that he had determined to march boldly forward, trusting to the country to furnish what he lacked. As early as the 21st of September, Colonel Macgregor, who had returned to the Kuram, feeling "the need of some directing hand behind," before there could be any going forward, was dismayed to receive by telegraph "a programme of intended movements," and complained in his diary of Roberts's "forgetting or ignoring that there was (is) absolutely no carriage."¹ Had he written that there was but half what was needed he would have been within the truth, since only by robbing regiments of the greater part of their baggage animals, and exacting double work from the commissariat mules and camels, were the necessary supplies being collected at Kushi.

Nor were the organization and discipline of the troops more to Macgregor's satisfaction. At Karatiga, on the 29th of September, fresh from riding along the line of advance from the Kuram to the Shutargardan, he described what he had seen in bitter words :—

"The march was a lamentable instance of the carelessness and happy-go-lucky style in which we do things. There was a small advance-guard, a few men with the guns, others scattered about, and the rest in rear; no attempt was made to keep the baggage and troops within a reasonable space, and the consequence was, the whole line of march was sprawling along three times as long as it need. Up through the Hazara Darakht Defile all precautions were thrown to the winds, and everything was allowed to go on as it pleased. Everyone was complaining there were no orders, and there seemed to be no head. Then the march was

¹ *Life and Opinions of Sir C. Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 114

much too long, considering the state of the baggage-animals: it should not have been more than ten miles; it was eighteen, and many animals marched double marches from Pindi to Peshawar, and only got in late last night, were loaded at three, and did not get their loads off till nine, fifteen hours; the consequence was that fifty camels were lost, and many mules, and the inevitable result will be considerable disorganization of the train.”¹

Two days before this entry was made in Macgregor's diary, this same happy-go-lucky style of doing things had nearly deprived the Expedition of its commander; for, on the 27th of September, at the narrowest part of the Hazara Darakht Defile, Sir F. Roberts, riding away from the infantry part of his escort, had found his passage barred by hundreds of Afghans, and a volley from some men concealed among the rocks had severely wounded the Principal Medical Officer, Dr. Townsend, with whom he was talking at the time. Luckily, a note from the officer commanding on the Shutargardan, warning him of dangers ahead, had reached him just in time to prevent the attack coming as a surprise; and, when the infantry came up, he was able to continue his march without further molestation, the road in front of him having meanwhile been cleared of the enemy by Colour-Sergeant Hector Macdonald and Jemadar Shere Mahomed, who had come with eighteen men of the 92nd Highlanders and forty-five men of the 3rd Sikhs to the help of a detachment of the latter regiment which had fallen into an ambush, whilst repairing the telegraph-line.²

The country through which this disorderly advance was being conducted is one that calls for the utmost care and watchfulness. No road in Afghanistan presents greater difficulties than this “bye-

¹ *Life of Sir C. Macgregor*, Vol. II. pp. 116, 117.

² “Macdonald having subsequently further distinguished himself was given a commission,” and “Shere Mahomed was rewarded with the Order of Merit.” (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 200.)

way" to Kabul. As far as the Shutargardan it has already been described; beyond that pass, it drops by many steep zig-zags, flanked by overhanging rocks, into the bed of a rivulet, strewn with porphyry, hornblende, and syenite pebbles of brilliant and varied hues, one of the sources of the Logar River.¹ Following this stream it turns sharply to the right and enters the Dobundi Defile, whose stupendous perpendicular sides draw closer and closer together till, at a point called by the local tribesmen the Dur-i-Dosukh, or Gate of Hell, they so nearly meet that men can only pass between them in single file, and baggage animals have often to be relieved of burdens too wide to squeeze through the narrow opening.² Emerging out of this gloomy fissure, the track crosses a narrow valley, then threads its way between huge fragments of rock up the face of a high hill to the Shinkai Kotal, and finally descends by a succession of stony shelves to the valley of the Logar, where, hidden in a great ravine some three miles long by half a mile wide, the numerous hamlets known by the collective name of Kushi, lie among meadows and orchards—a true "delight" to the tired traveller, whether seen as Dr. Bellew saw them in 1857 with all their trees in bloom, or as they presented themselves to Roberts's thirsty troops, teeming with ripe fruit—"grapes and apples and pears and the luscious melon."³

Sir F. Roberts joined the Advanced Guard of his Force at Kushi on the 28th of September, and the same day paid his respects to the Amir who, breaking through the etiquette usually observed at a first ceremonial visit, at once broached the question of delaying the march on Kabul, pleading earnestly for time to restore order among his troops, and dwelling on the fate which might befall his family and the families of his adherents if the terror inspired by

¹ *Mission to Afghanistan in 1857*, by Dr. H. W. Bellew, p. 165.

² *To Kabul with the Cavalry Brigade*, by Major Mitford, p. 13.

³ "Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough. *Pall Mall Magazine* for February, 1899, p. 276.

the approach of an avenging army should take the form of a second outburst of popular fury.¹ Roberts, very unfavourably impressed by the Amir's appearance—his description of Yakub Khan differs greatly from that given by men who saw him at Gandamak—and convinced that he desired delay solely in order to mature plans for opposing the British advance, received his representations with scant sympathy, for the promise that all women and children should be given the opportunity of leaving Kabul before an attack was made on that city, was no comfort to a man who believed that his particular women and children might meanwhile have fallen victims to the popular anger against himself, which his presence in the camp of the invaders must naturally provoke. Yakub Khan's request that he should be allowed to pitch his tents, which had now come up, outside the limits of the British camp was granted; but, under colour of doing honour to his guest, Roberts took care to assign to him an escort strong enough to be a check on all his movements.²

The following morning, the General, accompanied by the Cavalry Brigade under Dunham Massy, to which were attached two companies of the 72nd Highlanders and the 5th Punjab Infantry, rode to Zargan Shahr, where he met Wali Mahomed and other Sirdars whom he desired to keep apart from the Amir. Here he interviewed some of the Logar Valley chiefs on the subject of local supplies, with regard to which he was very anxious now that personal observation had shown him that his transport was far too weak to be able to carry on all the stores collected at Kushi, even if he split his Force into two, halted every other day, and sent back the mules and camels of the first Brigade to bring up the second.³ It was a relief to his mind that the headmen were able to promise a certain amount of

¹ Telegram of Sir F. Roberts, dated 2nd of October, 1879. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 101.

² *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. pp. 202-204.

³ *Ibid.* p. 206.

grain, but the very unfavourable reports of the Amir's past conduct, and the warnings against trusting him for the future poured into his ears by Wali Mahomed and his friends, made him so uneasy that, in the evening, he rode back to Kushi determined to keep a vigilant eye on the proceedings of his unwelcome guest.¹

On the 1st of October, the last of the troops destined for Kabul crossed the Shutargardan, leaving Colonel G. N. Money with

No. 1 Kohat Mountain Battery, Captain H. R. L. Morgan ;
3rd Sikhs, Major C. J. Griffiths ;
A Wing 21st Punjab Infantry, Major F. W. Collis ;

to keep that pass open till snow should render the position untenable, when he was to despatch the Mountain guns and the Sikhs to Kabul, and to send back the 21st to the Kuram Valley. The next day the Kabul Expeditionary Force concentrated at Zargan Shahr, and its Commander, for the first time, was able to judge of its composition and conditions with his own eyes, and to measure its strength and resources against the opposition that it might have to overcome, and the difficulties it must certainly encounter.

STAFF.

Captain G. T. Pretyman, Aide-de-Camp.
,, R. Pole-Carew, Aide-de-Camp.
Colonel C. M. Macgregor, Chief of the Staff.
Major W. Galbraith, Assistant Adjutant-General.
Captain R. C. Kennedy, Assistant Quartermaster-General.
,, B. A. Combe, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Lieutenant C. H. M. Smith, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Major C. A. Gorham, Deputy Judge Advocate.
Captain R. B. McEwen, Provost Marshal.
,, E. Straton, in charge of Signalling.

ENGINEER DEPARTMENT.

Lieutenant Æ. Perkins, Commanding Royal Engineer.
Captain R. G. Woodthorpe, in charge of Survey.
Lieutenant F. Burn-Murdoch, in charge of Engineer Field Park.

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 207.

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT.

Brigadier-General Hugh Gough.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. M. Heathcote, Director of Transport.

COMMISSARIAT DEPARTMENT.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. V. Hunt, Principal Commissariat Officer.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Deputy Surgeon-General S. C. Townsend, Principal Medical Officer.

Surgeon-Major A. J. Dale.

VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.

Veterinary-Surgeon G. A. Oliphant, Principal Veterinary Surgeon.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

Major E. G. G. Hastings, Assistant Political Officer.

Mr. H. M. Durand, C.S., Political Secretary.

ARTILLERY.

Lieutenant-Colonel B. L. Gordon, Commanding.

Captain J. W. Inge, Adjutant.

F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, Major J. C. Smyth-Windham.

G-C, Royal Artillery, Major Sidney Parry.

No. 2, Derajat Mountain Battery, Captain G. Swinley.

Two Gatlings, Captain A. Broadfoot.

ORDNANCE FIELD PARK.

Captain E. D. Shafto.

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General W. G. D. Massy, Commanding.

Lieutenant J. P. Brabazon, Brigade-Major.

1 Squadron 9th Lancers, Captain S. G. Butson.¹

5th Punjab Cavalry, Major F. Hammond.²

12th Bengal Cavalry, Major J. H. Green.

14th Bengal Lancers, Lieutenant-Colonel T. G. Ross.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel R. S. Cleland arrived at Kabul later on with the two remaining squadrons of his regiment.—H. B. H.

² Major B. Williams, who was on furlough, rejoined his regiment at Kabul.—H. B. H.

1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson, Commanding.

Captain G. de C. Morton, Brigade-Major.

67th Foot, Colonel C. B. Knowles.

72nd Highlanders, Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. J. Clarke.¹

28th Punjab Infantry, Colonel J. Hudson,

2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General T. D. Baker, Commanding.

Captain W. C. Farwell, Brigade-Major.

92nd Highlanders, Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Parker.

5th Punjab Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Macqueen.

23rd Pioneers, Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Currie.

5th Gurkhas, Major A. FitzHugh.

No. 7 Company Sappers and Miners, Lieutenant C. Nugent.

STRENGTH.

Officers, 192 ; men, 6,425, of which 2,558 were British Troops ;
18 guns, and 6,000 camp-followers.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow, who was on leave, rejoined his regiment at Kabul.—H. B. H.

CHAPTER VII

First Engagement at Charasiab

THE experience gained in the advance on Zargan Shahr destroyed all hope of keeping the army intact. Seven hundred and fifty camels, two thousand mules, a hundred donkeys, and six hundred and fifty bullocks were so clearly incapable of carrying the baggage and supplies of six thousand six hundred men,¹ that even Macgregor had to accept the necessity of splitting the Force into two parts, and marching on alternate days. The danger of such a division in the case of troops operating *en l'air*, because too weak to maintain their communication by establishing fortified posts in their rear, had already been placed beyond dispute by the news that the Ghilzais had occupied the Shinkai Kotal and were threatening Money's none too strong entrenchments on the Shutargardan.

In accordance with the new arrangement, only the Cavalry and the First Brigade left Zargan Shahr on the 4th of October. The advance was over an arid plain, deeply scarred by dried-up drainage lines, a plain described by Macgregor as a land of *sugs and sangs*—dogs and stones—till, on rounding a spur of the hills on the right of the valley, the Logar River came in sight, crossing the road from west to east before turning northward in the direction of Kabul. On reaching its banks, its actual stream was found to be about a

¹ Equivalent to the carrying powers of 2,125 camels. The Central Asia Russian Expeditionary Forces are, as a rule, equipped with one camel for each fighting man.—H. B. H.

couple of hundred feet wide, spanned by a bridge too narrow for the guns, so they and the troops crossed by a deep ford,¹ leaving the bridge for the use of the transport. This relief, however, failed to avert confusion and delay. The approach to the river ran between high banks, and long before the bridge was reached, hundreds of animals of all sorts and sizes got mixed up in a struggling, frightened mass, out of which, after dark, marauders succeeded in snatching many a load of booty. It was midnight before the last bullock limped into camp, which had been pitched about two miles from the river, near the hamlet of Safed Sang. Here, Commissariat officers were waiting to pick out the strongest of the weary beasts, equivalent in carrying power to twelve hundred camels.² These were at once fed and after a few hours' rest sent back to Zargan Shahr, where Baker, anxious to get the march of his Brigade over by daylight, was eagerly awaiting their arrival. The start was quickly made, but progress was so slow that the head of the column only entered Roberts's camp at eight o'clock in the evening, and its tail some five hours later.³

The Natives had again shown themselves hostile, so, before dawn the next day, a force surrounded the village of Koti Khel, whose inhabitants were known to have been specially active in harassing the troops, and some of whom had wounded Captain Kennedy of the Quartermaster-General's Department. Three villagers were killed on the spot and five captured, three of whom were shot by Roberts's orders, for being in unlawful rebellion against their sovereign.⁴

At Safed Sang, Roberts heard from Colonel Money that he had repulsed an attack on his camp, and heliographed back hearty

¹ "Some of the men were swept off their feet by the force of the current; but, as the stream was only fifty or sixty yards in width, no lives were lost." (Hensman's *Afghanistan* 1879-80, p. 24.)

² *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 122.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 124, also Hensman's *Afghanistan* 1879-80, p. 26.

congratulations and the promise of additional supplies of food and ammunition to be sent up to him by Gordon.¹

From this point he also issued the following proclamation to the People of Kabul :—“ Be it known to all that the British army is advancing on Kabul to take possession of the city. If it be allowed to do so peacefully, well and good ; if not, the city will be seized by force. Therefore all well-disposed persons, who have taken no part in the dastardly murder of the British Embassy, or in the plunder of the Residency, are warned that if they are unable to prevent resistance being offered to the entrance of the British Army and to the authority of his Highness the Amir, they should make immediate arrangements for their own safety, either by coming into the British Camp or by such measures as may seem fit to them. And as the British General does not make war on women and children, warning is given that all women and children should be removed from the city beyond the reach of harm. The British Government desires to treat all classes with justice, and to respect their religion, feelings, and customs, while exacting full retribution from offenders. Every effort will therefore be made to prevent the innocent suffering with the guilty. But it is necessary that the utmost precaution should be taken against useless opposition. Therefore after the receipt of this proclamation, all persons found armed in or about Kabul will be treated as the enemies of the British Government ; and, further, it must be clearly understood that if this entry of the British force is resisted, I cannot hold myself responsible for any accidental mischief which may be done to persons and property, even of well-disposed people who may have neglected this warning.

“ October the 2nd, 1879.”

¹ “ The General congratulates you heartily ; husband your ammunition and supplies, and go in at the brutes. General Gordon has been ordered to send you per man one hundred rounds ammunition more, and more supplies.” (Heliogram from Macgregor to Money.)

It was now the turn of Macpherson's Brigade, to which were attached 3 Field guns and a squadron of Cavalry, to remain stationary, whilst Baker's, reinforced by the 92nd Highlanders, moved on another stage, fortunately so short a one that there was no need to strike camp before 11 a.m., thus securing a little additional rest to the transport animals, many of whom had just done forty-five miles in thirty-six hours.¹ The march proved an easy one, the road running parallel to, but out of sight of the Logar, through a fairly open, cultivated country. About midway, near the village of Chilhal Dukhteran (Forty Daughters), some low hills were crossed, on which squatted numerous groups of armed men, watching the advance of the Force with the same air of indifference displayed by the Mangals just before they fell upon Roberts's rear-guard in the Mangiar Pass.² Beyond these hills, a much higher, crescent-shaped range came into view. A group of hamlets, known collectively as the village of Charasiab,³ lies at the foot of this crescent's south-western horn, whilst the north-eastern horn is pierced by the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge,⁴ the deep ravine through which the Logar forces its way into the Kabul Valley. About two miles north-east of Charasiab, near the village of Khairabad, the Kushi road divides into two branches, one of which first crosses

¹ Hensman's *Afghanistan*, p. 25.

² "A private of the 72nd particularly pointed these men out to me, remarking: 'You see, Sir, those men sitting there, doing nothing; well, that is just the way the Mangals sat and looked at us when they afterwards caught us in the Mangiar Pass.'" (Duke's *Recollections of the Kabul Campaign*, 1879-80, pp. 131, 132. See, also, Second Volume of this History, p. 100.)

³ This, not Charasia, is the correct spelling. The name means Four Water Mills. Mitford, in his interesting book *To Kabul with the Cavalry Brigade*, mentions that "these mills, which are much valued by the Afghans, frequently give the name to a village or district; e.g. Haft Asiab—the Seven Water Mills."—H. B. H.

⁴ Sang-i-Nawishta—Written Stone—so named from a stone bearing a written inscription, stating that the road was made in the reign of the Emperor Shah Jehan. Major Mitford mentions that "this stone was afterwards removed to the front of Sir F. Roberts's quarters in Sherpore" (p. 24).

the valley from east to west and then runs due north, past the village of Indaki, in the Chardeh Valley, to Kabul, whilst the other reaches that city by following the course of the Logar River.¹ A number of small detached hills scattered about the lower end of the valley, within musketry range of each other, added to the defensibility of the position, and the final touch was given to its strength by the stony slope, like a natural glacis, over which each of these detached hills would have to be approached.

Charasiab had been reached early in the afternoon, and while the troops were encamping in the fallow fields to the South of that village, Cavalry patrols pushed right up to the mouth of the Sang-i-Nawishta Defile without discovering any signs of the presence of an enemy. From rising ground within the village, the General and his Chief of the Staff obtained a good view of the whole position, and noted the importance of a conical hill on the east of the valley, by which the approach to the gorge was commanded. Macgregor desired the immediate seizure of this point,² but Roberts, for once the more cautious of the two, wisely decided to put off occupying it till the next day.³

Towards evening groups of Afghans were noticed on the sky line of many of the hills, a sure sign of mischief brewing;⁴ nevertheless, the night passed quietly, and it was with no expectation of serious resistance that a working party consisting of

2 Guns No. 2 Mountain Battery,
284 Rifles 92nd Highlanders,
450 Rifles 23rd Pioneers,

¹ A second road leads to the Chardeh Valley, starting from Charasiab and piercing the hill to the west of the village, but no use of it was made during the action.—H. B. H.

² *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 124.

³ “Now, more than ever, I felt the want of sufficient transport! Had it been possible to have the whole of the force with me, I should have advanced at once, and have occupied that evening the range of hills I have described; but Macpherson’s Brigade was still a march behind, and all I could do was, immediately on arrival, to send back every available transport animal to bring it up.” (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 211.)

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 212.

under Colonel Currie, set out early in the morning, preceded by Cavalry patrols, to render the road practicable for artillery. The discovery, made almost immediately, that a formidable force was preparing to dispute the passage of the defile with the punitive expedition, came, therefore, with a shock of surprise to the General and all under his command. Both sides of the Nawishta Defile were found to be crowned by the enemy, whose right extended to the heights dividing the Logar from the Chardeh Valley. The coolness and skill with which important points were being occupied and guns placed in position, revealed the presence of regular troops and a well-prepared scheme of opposition to the British advance,¹ whilst tribesmen swarming on the hills, on both sides of the British camp, pointed to an attack to be made upon it at the first favourable moment.

In this emergency, four courses were open to the British Commander: he could fall back on the range of low hills lying midway between Charasiab and Safed Sang, with a view to the quickest possible concentration of his entire force; he might entrench his present camp and there await the arrival of Macpherson's Brigade; he might try to draw the Afghans from their strong position by tactics similar to those so successfully used by Charles Gough at Futtehabad;² or he might elect to drive them out of it by an immediate direct attack. Against the first plan had to be placed the doubt whether the hills in question were not already in the hands of the enemy,³ and the certainty that, as the bulk of the transport had been sent away to bring up Macpherson's Brigade, a retreat, however short, would mean the abandonment of a large part of the baggage and stores. The second plan was condemned by the situation of the camp, overlooked on all sides by hills in the occupation of the enemy, and by the lack of time

¹ Roberts's Despatch, dated October 20th, 1879.

² See, Second Volume of this History, p. 289.

³ A report had reached Roberts that Macpherson's Brigade had been intercepted and that it and its long string of camels would certainly be opposed. (See *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 214.)

to put it into a proper state of defence before nightfall, as the troops would be too busy covering the Sappers and Miners to be able to give them much assistance in their work. The objection to the third scheme—one generally successful against undisciplined men—lay, firstly, in the possibility that the Afghans had, for once, a leader capable of seeing through it, and strong enough to compel his followers to keep out of the net spread to ensnare them; secondly, in the probability that, if the plan succeeded, Currie's tiny column would be swept away by the downward rush of the Afghans; and, thirdly, in the knowledge that, if it failed, the position of the camp at night would be worse than if the second plan had been the one adopted. The last plan had against it the immense risks attendant on pitting a small force, with nothing to fall back upon in case of failure, against a large one in an exceptionally strong position; and, in its favour, the superiority given to the former by the skill of its officers and the discipline of its men, and the moral effect which often waits upon bold and rapid action. These considerations determined Roberts's choice, and, once made, he acted on it with his customary vigour and decision.

To strengthen the troops in rear and to afford additional protection to the fifteen hundred baggage animals which, under the escort of two companies of the 5th Gurkhas, had gone back the previous evening to bring them up, he despatched a squadron of Cavalry to Safed Sang, and, with this reinforcement, sent urgent orders to Macpherson to strain every nerve to join him at Charasiab before dark. To Baker he entrusted, unreservedly, the task of dislodging the enemy and driving him back upon Kabul, and for that purpose he assigned to him the following troops:—

LEFT COLUMN.

4 Guns No. 2 Mountain Battery
12th Bengal Cavalry, 25 Sabres.
2 Gatlings

Captain G. Swinley.

Captain A. Broadfoot.

FIRST ENGAGEMENT AT CHARASIAB 69

72nd Highlanders, .	700 Rifles	Lt.-Colonel W. H. Clarke.
Half Battalion 5th Gurkhas	300 Rifles	Major FitzHugh.
Half Battalion 5th Punjab Infantry,	300 Rifles	Captain C. McK. Hall
No. 7 Company Sappers and Miners,	100 Rifles	Lieutenant C. Nugent.
Total strength 1,400 Rifles, 25 Sabres, and 6 Guns.		

The working party, which, reinforced from camp, had now become the right wing of the attacking force, was thus constituted :—

RIGHT COLUMN.

G-3 Royal Artillery, 3 Guns		Major Sidney Parry.
9th Lancers	20 Sabres	Lieutenant H. W. Apperley.
14th Bengal Lancers } .	120 Sabres	Major R. C. Mitford.
5th Punjab Cavalry }		Major F. Hammond.
92nd Highlanders, 284 Rifles .		Major G. White and Major J. C. Hay.
23rd Pioneers, 550 Rifles .		Captain H. Paterson.
Total strength 834 Rifles, 140 Sabres, and 3 Guns.		

Roberts instructed its commander, Colonel Currie, to take up a defensive position and to consider himself thenceforward under Baker's orders.¹

When all these arrangements had been made there remained under the General's own command, for the defence of the camp and to be used as a reserve in case of need, only the Battery of Horse Artillery, 450 Cavalry, and between 600 and 700 Infantry² made up of Highlanders, Punjabis, and Pioneers; in all, including the gunners, hardly 1,250 men and six guns. In its character of feeder of the fighting forces, it was almost immediately drawn upon by Baker, who, after reconnoitring the enemy's position, had decided to leave his reserve ammunition at a convenient spot within the precincts of the village, and heliographed to Roberts to increase the strength of the small guard

¹ Roberts's Despatch of the 20th October.

² *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 216.

From the strength of all the columns some deduction must be made for sick and non-effectives.—H. B. H.

he was placing over it. A hundred men of the 5th Punjab Infantry were at once despatched to Charasiab, followed by the rest of the regiment as soon as sufficient transport for the carrying of its ammunition could be procured; a necessary step, but one which reduced by several hundreds the troops available for the protection of the camp.¹

Baker's reconnaissance had shown him that the enemy's first line occupied a bare, rocky ridge of no great height, beginning about a mile north of Charasiab and ending to the east of the Indaki road; that, five hundred yards further back, their second line was drawn along a chain of detached, but mutually supporting hills, stretching from a little west of the Indaki road to the centre of the valley; and that, behind these detached hills, rose a still more formidable position in the shape of an unbroken ridge, two and a half miles long, which, culminating at its most northerly point in a peak 2,200 feet high, embraced in its irregular curve the whole of the lower end of the Logar Valley and both the roads leading to Kabul. This formidable position was only accessible in a few places and it commanded the entire front of Baker's advance.² Recognizing the necessity of bringing as large a force as possible to bear upon the enemy's weakest point, which his observation had proved to be at the western side of the valley—the bulk of the Afghans were massed on the heights at its north-eastern extremity—Baker summoned Colonel Currie to join him with four hundred and fifty rifles of the 23rd Pioneers, and at the same time ordered Major G. White, who now succeeded to the command of a dangerously weakened body of troops, to move forward to within artillery range of the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge, and, in so doing, to keep on the alert, lest, when he—Baker—advanced to

¹ Roberts's Despatch of the 20th October, 1879.

“The remainder of the regiment were sent out soon after, though this left the camp very weakly guarded, only 1,000 cavalry and infantry, with 6 9-pounder guns being left at headquarters.” (Hensman, p. 31.)

² Despatch of the 20th October.

the assault, the Afghans should sweep down upon Charasiab through the wide gap lying between the two British columns. Once within artillery range of the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge, White was to halt whilst the main attack was being developed, and as soon as he saw the Afghans retreating, not a moment sooner, he was to push his cavalry through the defile, so as to close it to the fugitives.

About 11.30, Baker's column issued from the shelter of the wooded enclosure by which Charasiab is surrounded, and in a very short time the 72nd Highlanders were engaged with the Afghans; one company, under Captain R. H. Brooke-Hunt, trying to drive them from the heights on the right of their (the Afghans') position, whilst the rest of the regiment, under cover of the mountain guns, delivered a direct attack on its centre. Both onsets were made with great courage and determination, but, in each case, the weight of the attack was too light to make any impression on the obstinate resistance offered to it, till Baker, seeing that little progress was being made, sent two companies of the 5th Gurkhas to the help of Brooke-Hunt, and other two, under Major FitzHugh, and two hundred men of the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Captain Hall, to reinforce the main body of the Highlanders. The effect of this addition to the British strength at once became apparent to the Afghans on the other side of the valley, who, now alive to the fact that a British success at this point would jeopardize their whole position, poured down in crowds to the aid of their overmatched comrades. The result was a race for the disputed position between the two opposing forces, a race in which the assailants won; for, at sight of the swiftly approaching Afghan reinforcements, the British troops redoubled their efforts, and almost simultaneously swept the western hills clear of the enemy and carried the whole of his first line of defence, though, to the last, the Afghans disputed every inch of ground, gathering in groups behind the rocks scattered over the surface of the ridge, and charging out upon their pursuers with a fury which carried

them once to within thirty yards of the Gurkhas, who, no less brave, received them with a steady fire under which, at the last moment, they wavered and broke. Lieutenant A. R. Martin, adjutant of the regiment, specially distinguished himself on this occasion.¹

Covered by the mountain guns and gatlings—the latter soon jammed—the 72nd Highlanders and the 5th Gurkhas, led by Lieutenant D. Chesney with a company of the 23rd Pioneers, now advanced to the capture of the enemy's second line of defence. In a few bold rushes, they crossed the five or six hundred yards lying between it and them, and as they dashed upon its centre two companies of the 92nd Highlanders under Captain R. H. Oxley, belonging to White's Force, fell unexpectedly upon its left flank. Confused by the double attack, the Afghans split up into two, their right flying towards Indaki, pursued by a wing of the 72nd under Major C. M. Stockwell, their left falling back on their main position. But here they offered no such stubborn resistance as had marked the defence of their first line, the fear of being taken in reverse—two companies of the 23rd Pioneers had quickly gained a footing on the ridge—and the temptation to avail themselves of the many avenues of escape open to them, proving too strong for men with nerves already shaken by defeat. A few of the better disciplined troops joined their comrades still holding out on either side the Nawishta Gorge, but the greater number were soon in full flight—some hurrying back to Kabul over the hills, others taking advantage of the British lack of Cavalry to dash across the open ground at their foot to the shelter of the Chardeh Valley²; and, by 3.45, the whole of the centre and right of their strong position was in Baker's hands.

To explain the timely help afforded to the left British Column

¹ Roberts's Despatch of the 20th October.

² "The want of Cavalry was here painfully apparent, as the retreating masses of the Afghans could easily have been overtaken, the sloping ground between Indaki and the hills being admirably suited for a pursuit." (Hensman, p. 33.)

by the right, the latter's fortunes must now be followed, from the moment when its commander received instructions to get his artillery within range of the Nawishta Gorge, and to hold his cavalry in readiness to dash through it at the first sign of a weakening of the enemy. White's first act was to push forward the patrols of the 9th Lancers and 14th Bengal Cavalry, which, early in the day, had fallen back on finding themselves in the presence of a strongly posted Afghan army, and to support them by two companies of the 92nd Highlanders, whose commander, Captain Oxley, was directed to drive in the pickets immediately in his front; his second, to order Parry to shell a hill, swarming with Afghans, on the British right flank, with the three guns G-3 Royal Artillery. Oxley soon drove in the pickets, but shell after shell burst in vain over the crest of the hill. Protected by a strong line of sangars the Afghans stood steadfastly to their standards, crouching as they saw the guns sighted and after each discharge springing to their feet with derisive cheers to pour a volley into their opponents below.¹

Perceiving that neither artillery nor infantry fire had any practical effect upon the enemy, White determined to storm the position in person. At the head of Captain H. F. Cotton's company of the 92nd Highlanders, he promptly scaled the hill, and, in the teeth of a volley which laid low five of his men, clambered over the breastwork, and fell upon the Afghans who, incontinently, gave up the game and ran for their lives.² The capture of this hill gave White's troops some security on their right; nevertheless their position during the halt that followed was one of great peril; and had the forces opposed to them been composed of tribesmen fighting in the

¹ Duke's *Recollections of the Kabul Campaign*, p. 136.

² "The dark green kilts went up the steep, rocky hill-side at a fine rate, though one would occasionally drop and roll several feet down the slope. Both sides took advantage of every available atom of cover, but still the kilts pressed on and up, and it was altogether as pretty a piece of Light Infantry drill as could well be seen." (Major Mitford, p. 26.)

way natural to mountaineers, they would probably have been overwhelmed. Luckily, their opponents were sepoys, just sufficiently trained to have forgotten their old tactics, but not disciplined enough to profit by the advantage conferred on them by their numbers and the strength of their artillery ; so the interval, during which victory might have been theirs, remained unused, and when White, observing that Baker's attack was making good progress, ordered a general advance, their opportunity had gone by for ever.¹

The order to advance was quickly executed. Oxley, with two companies of the 92nd, wheeled to his left to assist Baker's troops in capturing the enemy's second line of defence ; a small detachment of the same regiment stormed another isolated hill on White's right ; and Major Hammond, leaving the 14th Bengal Lancers to escort the guns, pressed forward with the 9th Lancers and 5th Punjab Cavalry, and after seizing two pieces of cannon at the mouth of the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge, penetrated nearly to its centre. Here, finding that the enemy had crossed the river and taken shelter among the precipitous hills rising abruptly from its right bank, he halted to allow Major Hay to come up with the infantry, consisting of a company of the 92nd under Lieutenant D. F. Gordon, and Paterson's detachment of the 23rd Pioneers. These troops had followed hard on the heels of the cavalry till, on arriving at the foot of the steep conical hill, the importance of which had been noted by Roberts and Macgregor, they discovered that they had got on the flank of a Battery of Armstrongs, so well concealed by the inequalities of the ground that the Lancers had ridden past it without suspecting its existence. Eager to outstrip each other, Scot and Sikh raced for the prize, and the Afghan gunners fled without firing a shot.²

¹ " Our comparatively small loss and easy victory were, no doubt, due to the fact of the enemy opposing us being chiefly composed of sepoys, who do not fight like the mass of the people we had opposed to us afterwards." (Duke's *Recollections*, pp. 143, 144.)

² Duke's *Recollections*, p. 138.

The Highlanders then climbed the hill, killed its few remaining defenders, and captured twelve mountain guns in position near its summit, whilst the Pioneers joined the Cavalry, and the two together pushed up the gorge to its narrowest point, where they bivouacked near a small mud fort.¹

By 5 p.m. Baker had collected the scattered units of his force, joined hands with White's column, and made his dispositions for the night. The 5th Punjab Infantry and Currie's Pioneers bivouacked in the plain on the Kabul side of the enemy's main position; the 72nd Highlanders, the 5th Gurkhas, and the Mountain Battery on the heights above the gorge. No water was procurable, and for a time the wounded suffered from lack of attendance, as the Field Hospital did not come up till 2 o'clock the next morning.² Fortunately, as will be seen from the accompanying Table, they were but few, remarkably few, considering the strength of the positions taken by direct assault:—

KILLED AND WOUNDED IN THE ACTION OF CHARASIAB.

OFFICERS.

Lieutenant C. H. Fergusson, 72nd Highlanders, wounded.
 Captain C. Young, 5th Punjab Infantry, severely wounded.
 Surgeon A. Duncan, 23rd Pioneers, dangerously wounded.

MEN.

	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>
9th Lancers	0	1
5th Punjab Cavalry	1	2
72nd Highlanders	4	34
92nd Highlanders	4	10
23rd Pioneers	1	2
5th Punjab Infantry	4	4
5th Gurkhas	4	10
7th Company Sappers and Miners	0	2
	—	—
Total	18	65

Five dhoolie-bearers were also killed and four wounded.

¹ Regimental Records, 5th Punjab Cavalry, p. 45.

² Duke's *Recollections*, p. 144.

From information subsequently received, it was ascertained that the Afghan forces engaged at Charasiab consisted of thirteen regiments of regular troops supplemented by contingents from the city and adjacent villages, under the command of the Amir's uncle, Sirdar Nek Mahomed Khan, whose lieutenants were Generals Mahomed Kazim Khan, Ghulam Hyder Khan, Afzul Khan, and the Governor of Khost, Sirdar Mahomed Zaman Khan. Their losses Roberts estimated at three hundred men killed and many wounded. Duke states that fewer than a hundred bodies were counted on the field, and that local reports placed the total number of the dead and wounded at about five hundred, but, as all the latter, and probably many of the former, were carried off by their retreating comrades, it is impossible to say which guess came the nearer to the truth.

Great as were the anxieties borne, that 6th day of October, by Baker and White, they were less than those which weighed upon their Commander. To watch for hours the fluctuations of a fight—so near as to be able to note individual acts of gallantry¹—to know that one can do nothing to determine its issue, that all the troops one could give, have been given, and that those left behind are too few to provide a sure refuge for themselves and their comrades in case the attack should fail, as more than once seemed likely, needs a higher courage and stronger powers of endurance than to direct an engagement or lead a storming column; and no man could have gone through the ordeal more bravely than Sir Frederick Roberts. Racked with fear for the safety of his troops, of his sick, of his stores, of the thousands

¹ In his account of the battle of Charasiab, Lord Roberts mentions having watched a young soldier, Private MacMahon of the 72nd Highlanders, scramble up the crags at the head of a few Gurkhas with whom, on reaching the summit, he charged home with the bayonet. For this act of gallantry MacMahon received the Victoria Cross. (*Forty-One Years in India*, pp. 218, 219.)

In his despatch Roberts also mentions the gallant conduct of Lieutenant R. A. Grant, who with a small party of the 92nd Highlanders had dislodged a body of the enemy, who were causing much annoyance to one of the outlying pickets.—H. B. H.

of camp-followers who looked to him for protection, he attended calmly to every detail by which the peril could be lightened, sending out cavalry patrols, to drive off the tribesmen, establishing strongly fortified outposts, and seeing to it that the work of putting the camp into a state of defence went on without intermission. All that he did was well done, but inexpressible must have been his relief when the danger, against which he was providing, had been dispelled, and the road to Kabul lay clear before him.

OBSERVATION

Sir F. Roberts's temerity in leaving behind him a great mountain barrier and invading a hostile country with a weak force, equipped with hardly half its proper complement of transport, recalls the recklessness of Sir John Keane when, in 1842, he marched on Kabul without his heavy guns, though he knew that the strong fortress of Ghazni lay between him and his goal. Both commanders escaped the natural consequences of their rashness, but both invited the censure passed on the elder of the two by Sir Henry Durand, when commenting on the success which crowned Keane's illegitimate tactics, and the rewards which it earned for him :—

“ A grateful country may on such an occasion pour forth its titles and its honours, not making men's merits the measure of its bounty ; but it will nevertheless act wisely in remembering that war has its principles, and that to hazard, heedless of military prudence, soldiers' lives and a country's fame upon a gamester's throw is to court a stern rebuke.”¹

What made Roberts's march specially censurable was the absence of any urgent necessity for incurring the risks he elected to run. His object was not to bring succour to the living but to avenge the dead, and vengeance could have waited till those deputed to execute it were

¹ *The First Afghan War*, by Durand, p. 184.

properly organized for the task. Possibly the question of time did enter into the Indian Government's decision to abandon its original plan of occupying Kabul simultaneously with *two* forces, the one advancing by the Khyber, the other by the Shutargardan; but it cannot have contemplated sending *one* into Afghanistan under conditions opposed to "military prudence," and certainly the Commander-in-Chief believed Roberts to have all the transport he needed.

There is a passage in one of Napoleon's letters¹ to his brother Joseph which is so applicable to this march on Kabul as to deserve to be quoted in full.

The King of Spain had conceived a plan for the occupation of Madrid, which involved the abandonment of his communications and the placing of a deep and lofty chain of mountains between him and France, and the greatest of strategists rejected this scheme in the following pungent words :—

"The proposal is to march on Madrid with 50,000 men, keeping them together, and abandoning all communications with France.

"The art of war is an art founded on principles which must not be violated. . . . To lose one's line of operations is a movement so dangerous that to be guilty of it is a crime. To preserve it is necessary in order to avoid being separated from one's *depôt*, which is the point of rendezvous, and the place to which one's prisoners, wounded, and sick are to be sent. But at this instant to rush into the interior of Spain, without any organized centre or magazines, with hostile armies on one's flanks and in one's rear, would be an attempt without precedent in the history of the world.

"If, before Madrid was taken, and *depôts* of subsistence for eight or ten days and of ammunition were provided, this army were beaten, what would become of it? Where would it rally? Where would it send its wounded? whence would it draw its supplies? For it is only provided for its current wants. Nothing more need be said.

¹ September 16th, 1808.

Those who dare to recommend such a step would be the first to lose their heads as soon as the results began to show its absurdity. . . This scheme, opposed as it is to all the rules of war, must be given up. A general who attempted such an operation would commit a crime."

The one point in which this stern condemnation does not apply to the author of the march through the Logar Valley, is the prediction that those who would dare to recommend such an operation would be the first to lose their heads when brought face to face with its results. Whatever might have been the case with Joseph Bonaparte, Sir Frederick Roberts kept his head, and by his decision and coolness in the hour of peril averted the catastrophe which his rashness had invited. "To Baker and White," to quote Macgregor's generous words, "belong principally the honours of the fight,"¹ but it is questionable whether that fight would have proved a victory, if these officers, and not only they, but every man under their orders, had not felt the inspiring influence of their commander's indomitable courage, and unshakable confidence in himself and them.

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 125.

CHAPTER VIII

Operations before Kabul

EARLY on the morning of the 7th October, the march was resumed. Roberts led the way with the Cavalry and a portion of the 2nd Brigade ; Baker and the remainder of his troops followed a few hours later ; whilst Macpherson, who had arrived in camp the previous evening too late to take part in the action, remained a second night at Charasiab. Except in the Gorge, no resistance was offered and there the Infantry easily swept it aside. So far as distance was concerned, Kabul might have been reached that day ; but as it was unsafe to approach too near the city till the whole force was at its commander's disposal, the halt was made at Ben-i-Hissar, a large village lying two miles to the south-east of the Bala Hissar. Cavalry patrols that had pushed on ahead of the Brigade, returned to report that, so far as they could judge, both the Citadel and the city were deserted by the enemy, and from the chief merchants of the town, who came in to visit him, Roberts learned that the Afghan troops, reinforced by some of the townspeople, had withdrawn to the hills behind the city. With morning came the news that they had abandoned the Sherpur cantonments and were falling back in the direction of Ghazni. To cut their line of retreat, Roberts despatched Dunham Massy, with 725 sabres, in such haste that there was no time to properly provision either men or horses.

Keeping the Bala Hissar and Kabul on their left, Massy and his men galloped nearly north, through a richly cultivated country, studded

with fortified villages, crossed the Siah Sang plateau and descended to Sherpur, to find that the Afghans had left behind them seventy-three pieces of cannon of different calibres, and five howitzers, but had blown up the magazine, the explosion damaging a corner of the cantonments' defences. Looking westward, they could see that the enemy, with guns, was still strongly entrenched on the heights overlooking the city and the Deh-i-Mazang Gorge, through which the Kabul River breaks its way from the Chardeh into the Kabul Valley. After heliographing these important facts to Roberts, Massy detached two squadrons to watch the open country, and with the remainder of his little force started afresh to carry out the main object of his expedition. In front of him, stretching for three miles north-westward, from the Deh-i-Mazang Gorge to the Nanachi Pass, lay a steep, rocky ridge, a thousand feet high, known as the Asmai Heights. The shortest way into the Chardeh Valley is by the Aliabad Pass, which pierces the ridge very near its centre ; but thinking that road would, probably, be closed against him, Massy took the longer route, through the wider and shallower depression which separates the Asmai Heights from the chain of hills to which they really belong. In the Pass, five villagers, apparently on the way to join the enemy, were captured, and on their reporting that everything was quiet in the Chardeh Valley, were pressed into the British service as guides. Once through the gap, Dunham Massy wheeled his men sharply to the left, and as they rode down the reverse side of the Heights they were fired into by unseen foes. No one was hurt ; but for a moment there was some confusion, taking advantage of which the prisoners made a dash for freedom. Easily overtaken, they were at once brought back and shot.¹ Leaving the bodies of these unfortunates in the "sheltered

¹ Major Mitford, *With the Cavalry Brigade to Kabul*, pp. 44, 45. Hensman, however, gives a different version of this incident. "They," the five villagers, he writes, "treacherously fired into the Lancers after having salaamed to them as they passed"; but Major Mitford, who was second in command of the Lancers, would certainly not have omitted to mention an excuse for the shooting

nook" which had witnessed their execution, the Cavalry galloped on till they came in sight of the Afghans encamped near the village of Deh-i-Mazang just where the Ghazni road emerges from the Gorge of the Kabul River. Bearing to the right, Massy struck the same road some distance to the west of the camp, and across it established a long line of observation posts. These fully served the purpose of containing the enemy, and if Roberts's infantry had attacked at any time during the day and driven the Afghans from the hills, Dunham Massy's well-placed cavalry would have inflicted heavy loss on the fugitives; but no attack was made, and, at nightfall, Massy, recognizing that, in the dark, pursuit over a country cut up by watercourses would be impracticable, withdrew the whole of his force to the shelter of some walled enclosures near the village of Aliabad.

Roberts was as anxious to give the Cavalry an opportunity of pursuing the enemy as they to avail themselves of it, but though on receipt of Massy's heliogram he despatched Baker with the mountain guns, the repaired gatlings, the 92nd Highlanders and the 23rd Pioneers, to drive the Afghans from the hills above the city, and sent on Macpherson's vanguard as soon as it came up, to reinforce him, he failed to concentrate a sufficient force early enough in the day, at a point from which an attack could have been delivered. Baker made all possible haste, but the march over the steep Sher Darwaza Heights—the range of hills which overlook the Bala Hissar—was so arduous that the afternoon was well advanced before he could gain a position in rear of Kabul and its Citadel, and bring his guns to bear on the Afghans facing him on the northern side of the Deh-i-Mazang Gorge, a yawning chasm, sixteen hundred feet in depth¹; and it was past of these men, if there had been one to plead. Possibly, other villagers met the same fate, for Hensman attributes the absence of any attack on Massy's force "to the exemplary severity we have shown in shooting all men caught in arms against us" (Hensman, p. 49).

¹ Before Baker could have attacked he would have had to descend 1,600 feet and then climb up the opposite side, which was nearly as high and quite as steep.—H. B. H.

five o'clock before the first of Macpherson's troops came up. They brought him the announcement that he might count on further reinforcements early on the morrow, and for these, in his ignorance of the enemy's strength and dispositions, he determined to wait.

The sun went down that evening on a scattered British force. On the Sher Darwaza Heights lay Baker with the bulk of his Brigade and the mountain guns; on one side of the Asmai Heights, Dunham Massy and a few hundred troopers; on the other side, the two squadrons he had left to guard his communications; further north, Hugh Gough with the guns of F-A Royal Horse Artillery and a squadron of cavalry, which Roberts had despatched to watch the Kohistan road, on hearing that the three mutinous regiments which had gone off to Kohistan after the destruction of the Residency, were on their way back to Kabul; and, at Ben-i-Hissar, Roberts with the remainder of the guns, a fragment of Baker's Brigade, and, for a few hours, Macpherson's main body, waiting for the moon to rise to light it on its rough way up the Sher Darwaza Heights;—an anxious outlook for a commander burdened with the consciousness that his supplies were nearly exhausted,¹ his communications lost, and harassed with reports of the approach of fresh foes—three regiments hurrying up from Ghazni—and the Ghilzais from Tezin and Hissarak, who had arrived too late to take part in the engagement at Charasiab, hanging about in the neighbourhood, watching events.² But with the dawn came relief from anxiety. At 1.30 a.m., a strong patrol under Captain H. Paterson had started out by moonlight to discover if any change had taken place in the enemy's dispositions. Between four and five

¹ Extract from the Diary of Colonel Charles Macgregor, Roberts's Chief of the Staff, dated 8th October:—"We have nearly eaten all our provisions, and if we were to be worsted, not only would the whole country be up, but we should get no supplies. I hope Roberts's luck will carry him through; but we are playing a risky game, and if a disaster takes place? what then? It is all very well as long as things go smoothly." (P. 128.)

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 119.

o'clock the patrol returned, bringing with it some prisoners, captured on the river bank, from whom Paterson had ascertained that the Afghans had abandoned their camp, guns and elephants, and dispersed ; 800 mounted men, under their leader Mahomed Jan, alone keeping together and making for Ghazni. When Macpherson arrived at daybreak to take, as senior officer, the command of the troops on the Darwaza Heights, he found no enemy to engage ; and Massy's men scoured the country practically in vain, for, with the exception of a few small parties overtaken and cut up by the 5th Punjab Cavalry, the whole of the large force, which a few hours before had presented so formidable an aspect, had disappeared ; some to hide in nullahs, some to seek safety among the hills, but the greater part to return to their homes, there to lay aside their weapons and resume their ordinary lives as townfolk or villagers, till some fresh opportunity of striking a blow at their invaders should again call them to arms.

In the course of the day, Roberts shifted his camp from Beni-Hissar to the Siah Sang Heights, the low plateau crossed by the Cavalry the previous day. It lies between the direct road to India and the Kabul River, and commands the city of Kabul, half a mile away on the West, and the walled cantonment of Sherpur, distant a little over a mile on the North-west. Here, late at night, the whole British Force was once more assembled, except two squadrons of the 12th Bengal Lancers, who had been ordered to continue the pursuit of Mahomed Jan and his followers ; the 5th Gurkhas and four guns No. 2 Mountain Battery, left in occupation of the Sher Darwaza Heights ; and the 5th Punjab Cavalry, who had moved into Sherpur to protect the captured guns.

No casualties had attended the operations which had come to so sudden and satisfactory a close ; but both men and horses were greatly in need of rest after three days of hard work on little to eat, and some of the latter subsequently died of the fatigue and hardships they had undergone :—a loss, small in itself, but none the less of importance to

a force weak in cavalry, in a country where there was no possibility of making it good.¹ Fortunately, supplies were abundant, for though strict orders were issued forbidding any member of the Force from entering the city, merchants were encouraged to bring their goods into camp, which was soon filled with their stalls, among these the most attractive being those laden with fruit of many kinds and exquisite quality—the one product in which the province of Kabul excels all other countries.

¹ “Horses and men of all the regiments out with General Massy were quite exhausted when they at last reached their quarters here. Some score of horses were lost on the road, having literally died in harness.” (Hensman, p. 48.)

CHAPTER IX

The Abdication of Yakub Khan

ON the 11th of October, Sir Frederick Roberts and his Chief of the Staff inspected the Bala Hissar, and visited the still smouldering ruins of the Residency. A few field and mountain guns were discovered and there were indications that the Arsenal contained large quantities of powder.

This visit was to be the precursor of another on a very different scale, and before evening it was known in camp and city that on the morrow a great Durbar would be held within the walls of the citadel, at which the British Commander, accompanied by the Amir, his Ministers and a number of Sirdars, and escorted by his entire Force, would announce to the people of Kabul the will of the British Government with regard to them and their city; that, at the close of the ceremony, four of Yakub Khan's most powerful adherents were to be arrested, was known only to a few. Blue Books are silent as to whether it was intended that this plan should include the Amir, and the same reticence is observed in Lord Roberts's Autobiography; but this negative evidence in favour of the view that Yakub Khan never came within its compass, is more than balanced by Sir Charles Macgregor's direct testimony to the contrary, given under conditions which exclude all doubt as to its truth and genuineness. Not years later, but at the time; not to impugn or vindicate the credit of the person responsible for the scheme, but as an ordinary entry in a diary never intended to meet the public eye, the Chief of the Staff, fresh

from a consultation at which the arrest of the Amir had been decided on, briefly recorded the fact and signified in blunt terms his own approval of the decision, and the disapproval of the Political Secretary, Mr. Mortimer Durand. "Morty," so Macgregor wrote on the evening of the 11th of October, "is very much concerned about the Amir, and says he is being treated badly and condemned without a hearing. I think there is quite enough proof to make us suspect him, and, if we suspect him, we should quod him. Wrote out programme for to-morrow, when we are to make our entry into the Bala Hissar, never to go out of it again I hope. The troops are to line the road, and a salute is to be fired and the flag hoisted; then we are to go into the Diwan-i-Am, and the Amir and all his people are to be quoded."¹ The entry, so positive as to the decision arrived at, ends on a note of doubt. Durand and Hastings had got at Roberts and shaken him in his intentions, and the writer did not know what he would do. Whether the Politicals did persuade Roberts to spare Yakub Khan is uncertain, for events took a turn which resulted in the Amir's dropping altogether out of the programme arranged by Macgregor; but, since the grave resolve to arrest him had once been taken, the question arises of how it had been reached, and by what facts and arguments Roberts justified it to himself.

Coming distrustful to his first interview with the Amir, unfavourably impressed by his guest's manner and appearance, the British Commander, whilst yielding to Yakub Khan's request to be allowed to live outside the British camp, had sought to hinder any misuse of this privilege by assigning to him a strong British escort. Unfortunately, this guard, though it could control the Amir's movements and mark who went in and out of his tent, could not hear what passed between him and his visitors, nor ascertain what instructions the mounted messengers who frequently met him, carried back to

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. pp. 130, 132.

Kabul.¹ Day by day, Roberts's uneasiness as to the meaning of all this coming and going—an uneasiness skilfully fostered by Wali Mahomed and other enemies of the Amir—increased and deepened, till, in the end, he came to put on it the worst possible construction, and to attribute to Yakub Khan every hindrance that stood in the way of his advance, from the unfriendliness of the inhabitants of the Logar Valley² to the armed opposition which he found awaiting him at Charasiab.³ His published telegrams and letters to the Indian Government are no evidence of his real feelings; it is in *Forty-One Years in India*, that they are to be found; there, every page on which Yakub Khan's name occurs, reveals the distrust, contempt, and dislike with which the writer regarded him. One instance will suffice to show the contrast between the tone of the despatches and that of the Autobiography. It relates to an incident which occurred, or is said to have occurred, the day before the fight at Charasiab, the official version of which is given in the following extracts from two letters to the Government of India, the first dated Kabul, 20th October, the second, 4th November, 1879.⁴

“I think it desirable to mention here that some doubt has been thrown upon the conduct of his Highness, the Amir, in connection with the fight at Charasiab. It is said that Sirdar Nek Muhammad, Uncle of Yakub Khan, who had been left in charge at Kabul during his Highness's absence, came out and had an interview with his Highness on the 5th; that he was directed to return at once and stir up the troops and city people to oppose us, and that the action of the 6th

¹ “He was in constant communication with Kabul, and was frequently being met by mounted messengers.” (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 209.)

² “It was plain from these occurrences . . . that the people generally were not disposed to be friendly. From the Amir I could extract no information on this head, although he must have been fully aware of the feelings and intentions of his subjects.” (*Ibid.*)

³ *Ibid.* pp. 210, 211.

⁴ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 154 and 166.

was fought in direct obedience to the Amir's orders. Nek Muhammad, after an attempt to treat for pardon, has now disappeared, and it is not easy to ascertain the truth of the story ; but I have reason to believe that an interview took place, as stated, that Nek Muhammad thereupon called out the troops and city people for a holy war in the name of the Amir, and that he commanded in person during the action of the 6th. I shall do my best to obtain further evidence in the matter."—"I mentioned in my letter of the 20th October that some doubt had been thrown on Yakub Khan's conduct in connection with the fight at Charasiab. The suspicion has, to a certain extent, been strengthened by the production of a letter supposed to have been written by Yakub's Uncle, Nek Muhammad Khan, in which he states that he was personally ordered by the Amir to raise a holy war against us. . It is not, however, conclusive proof of Yakub's bad faith, for there is some doubt as to its being authentic, and it was brought to me by Sirdar Wali Muhammad, whose feelings towards Yakub are openly unfriendly. I have been unable to ascertain the name of Nek Muhammad's supposed correspondent."

In *Forty-One Years in India* the story runs thus :—"An Uncle of the Amir, Sirdar Nek Mahomed Khan, came out to meet Yakub Khan at this place (Charasiab) ; he remained some time in earnest conversation with his nephew, and, as he was about to remount his horse, called out in so loud a tone that it was evidently meant for us all to hear, that he was now going to disperse the troops.'"¹ Here, Roberts not only asserts that the interview took place, but writes as though he had been personally cognizant of it at the time. Doubt, whether it had even happened in 1879 ; certainty as to its details in 1897. But this is not all. Following on this purely imaginary version of one incident, comes a prejudiced version of another. Contrasting Nek Mahomed's declaration that he was going back to Kabul to disperse the troops with what happened in that

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 210.

city, he writes :—“ Very different, however, was the story brought to me by an escaped Native servant of Cavagnari’s, who came into our camp later in the day. This man declared that preparations for fighting were steadily being carried on ; that the soldiers and townspeople were streaming into the arsenal and supplying themselves with cartridges ; that large bodies of troops were moving out in our direction ; and that, when we advanced next day, we should certainly be opposed by a formidable force. The Amir, on having this intelligence communicated to him, pretended to disbelieve it utterly, and assured me that all was at peace in the city, that Nek Muhammad would keep the troops quiet and that I should have no trouble ; but I was not taken in by his specious assurances.”¹

It would have been well if, before accusing the Amir of having deceived him at Charasiab as to the state of Kabul and the temper of the Afghan troops, Lord Roberts had re-read the following Memorandum, from which it is clear that the information as to the plundering of the Arsenal by the mutinous troops, and their determination to oppose the British advance at the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge, had been furnished by the Amir himself :—

“ This morning Major Hastings and Nawab Ghulam Hassan Khan, with Kazi Muhammad Aslam, under orders from Major-General Sir Frederick Roberts, V.C., K.C.B., went to see the Amir. The following is the pith of the Amir’s advice and conversation :—

“ (1) In my opinion the best thing is to occupy the hill commanding the Pass which leads to Kabul. The mutinous troops have lately occupied that hill, and, if they were allowed to keep it in their possession for the night, they are sure to fortify it, and it will be rather difficult to dislodge them from there to-morrow.

“ (2) I have received a verbal message from Kabul to the effect that the mutinous regiments have plundered the magazine. My

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. pp. 210, 211.

mother and wife have left the Bala Hissar and gone to the house of Sirdar Yahya Khan ; and that the other members of my family will soon follow them. The Bala Hissar is actually out of my possession. . . .

“ (3) I have been and am still the true friend of the English, and so long as I live I will remain a staunch ally of the British Government.

“ (4) On account of my coming to the British camp, all people call me an infidel (Kafir), and my private servants desert me every day. No one will obey my orders, or consider me the Amir.

“ Note.—The Amir appeared in a very unsettled and troubled state of mind.

“ (Signed) E. G. HASTINGS, Major, Political Officer.¹

“ CHARASIAB, the 6th October, 1879.”

Still, when all allowance has been made for prejudice on Roberts's part, enough remains in the character and situation of the Amir to justify a prudent man in taking steps to relieve himself of what must have been an almost intolerable burden. Yakub Khan had no personal attachment to the British Government, an alliance with which had cost him so dear ; nor yet to the British Commander of whose feelings towards himself he cannot have been ignorant, and he must have been tormented by doubt as to the success of the punitive expedition. How was so small a force, daily reduced to half its strength by the poverty of its transport, to overcome the opposition which it was certain to encounter ? and, even if it did penetrate to Kabul, what likelihood was there that it would be able to maintain itself there long enough to re-establish his sovereignty on sure foundations ? Doubtless, also, his Kabul visitors did play upon his fears, upon his

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 118, 119.

The Amir could not on the morning of the 6th October, the day on which the action took place, have advised the occupation of the hill above the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge on the ground that if left in the hands of the mutinous troops during the night they would fortify it ; he must have done so the previous day. Hastings, who was in constant communication with him, must have condensed two conversations into one.—H. B. H.

distrust of the foreigner, upon his natural sympathy with his own troops and people, on his disgust at having his name used to give a show of legality to the execution of his subjects. There is no proof that he betrayed his self-chosen protectors—information as to the numbers of the British force and as to the manner of its march could have been carried to Kabul by scores of the inhabitants of the Logar Valley, and it required no orders from him to stir up his soldiers to resist invaders whose threatened vengeance might fall upon themselves—but he must have been sorely tempted to give people and troops such signs of his sympathy as could serve to open to him an avenue of return, if the coming fight were to end in a British defeat ; and, because of this temptation, he should, in his own interest, have been deprived of all opportunity of incurring suspicion. From the first, no coming and going between his camp and his capital should have been sanctioned ; he should have been plainly told that, so long as Kabul was not in the undisputed possession of the punitive Force, so long he must be content to stand aside and leave the entire conduct of events to the man responsible for that Force's safety. Such treatment might have seemed harsh ; it would have been infinitely kinder than the liberty accorded to him—a liberty which so closely resembled the proverbial rope given to the dog that he might hang himself therewith.

A rumour of the fate in store for him and his Ministers must have reached Yakub Khan on the morning of the 12th of October, and in an agony of humiliation at the prospect of being arrested in his own Hall of Audience, before friends and foes, he rushed to the British General's tent, refused absolutely to accompany him to the Durbar, and insisted on resigning the Amirship. There is no account, except Roberts's, of what passed at this interview, and that is vitiated by the necessity under which its author lay of representing the Amir's determination to resign his crown as entirely spontaneous ;¹ but Yakub

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 135, 147, 148.

Khan afterwards declared that his abdication was extorted from him by ungenerous and cruel pressure, and that the British Government had no right to hold him to it, and no right to expect him to abide by it.¹

The pressure complained of must have consisted in the open disgrace which he believed to be designed for him ; for though his arrest was probably intended to lead up to his deposition at some future time, his sudden abdication cannot have been desired by Roberts, whom it deprived of a convenient excuse for punishing men who had taken no part in the attack on the Residency. Retrospectively, it might still be possible to put Afghan officers and soldiers to death for having fought against their lawful sovereign at Charasiab ; but when Afghanistan ceased to have a sovereign of any kind, no such charge could be brought against those who should continue to resist their British invaders. It would have been an advantage to the British General in other ways to be able to administer the country in Yakub Khan's name till his successor could be selected, but the Amir refused to withdraw his resignation, and Roberts had to content himself by extracting from him a promise to retain the title till the Viceroy had been communicated with and his instructions received. Lord Lytton's acceptance of Yakub Khan's resignation was telegraphed on the 23rd of October, and the Ex-Amir remained in the British camp, treated with courtesy, but carefully guarded, lest he should seek to escape, till the 1st of December, when he was despatched under a strong escort to India. During the interval, a Commission appointed to inquire into all the circumstances connected with the outbreak of the 3rd of September, had brought together evidence which satisfied Roberts " that the Amir could not have been ignorant that an attack on the Residency was contemplated " ;² but when this same evidence

¹ Private letter to Lord Cranbrook contained in *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 398, 399.

² *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 255.

was gone into by a committee "composed of gentlemen possessing long and varied experience in judicial investigation and in dealing with the testimony of Asiatics,"¹ they found that the massacre was a purely accidental occurrence, unpremeditated even by the regiments which committed the crime. Where they did attach blame to Yakub Khan and his Ministers was, in not having interposed effectively to protect, or rescue, Cavagnari and his companions during the attack on the Residency; for showing, subsequently, indifference to their fate; and for having failed to fulfil their treaty obligation to protect the British Embassy at Kabul.²

This summing up of the findings of the Committee covers only a portion of the charges into which that tribunal had to inquire. General Gordon, who had had access to its proceedings, stated three others: viz. the concealment of letters from the Russian Government; the attempt to form a Triple Alliance between Russia, Afghanistan, and Kashmir; and treacherous dealings with an Afghan leader—evidently Nek Mahomed—whilst living in Roberts's camp.³ It is a matter of regret that Lord Lytton forgot to say whether, on these counts, the accused was held guilty or innocent. The conclusions which the Viceroy did record, though they sufficed as reasons for excluding Yakub for ever from the throne of Kabul, yet seemed to him to err on the side of leniency; ⁴ and in a Minute left for the instruction and guidance of his successor in the Viceroyalty, he expressed the hope that the Government of India would never be induced to assent to the restoration of a prince whose hands were "deeply stained in the

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 375.

² *Ibid.* p. 376.

³ "Personal Reminiscences of General Gordon," by Demetrius Boulger, published in the *Pall Mall Magazine* of May, 1896, p. 143.

Extract from Gordon's Memorandum on the subject:—"Stokes (legal member), Arbuthnot, and another member of Supreme Council, all protested against the deposition of Yakub—also Sir Neville Chamberlain." (*Ibid.*)

⁴ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 376.

innocent blood of Sir L. Cavagnari and his brave companions." In Gordon's eyes—and he had gone carefully into the evidence on which these conclusions were based—Yakub, though "weak and timid in a critical moment," was guiltless of all treacherous action or intent; and he gave the most convincing proof of the strength of his conviction of the Ex-Amir's innocence by resigning his post as private secretary to Lord Ripon rather than participate in the injustice done to him.

CHAPTER X

Durbar in the Bala Hissar. Entry into Kabul

LEAVING Yakub Khan in the tent to which he had been conducted after the momentous interview recorded in the last chapter, Sir Frederick Roberts, preceded by his staff and accompanied by the Heir-Apparent, Musa Jan, descended from the Siah Sang Heights at noon, on the 12th of October. British troops lined the road for nearly a mile, and as he entered the Bala Hissar by the Peshawar Gate, the British flag was hoisted, the National Anthem played, and a salute fired by the guns of the Royal Horse Artillery, according to the programme arranged by Macgregor the previous day. As soon as the procession had passed inside the fortress, the 67th foot, which had held the gateway and its approaches, closed up and followed their General to the Royal Garden, lying to the North of the Arsenal, containing a pretty wooden house, which was to be the scene of the chief event of the day. There was delay at the garden gate, for the key was missing, and fresh delay after the house had been reached and the General and his Staff had ascended to the Diwan-i-Am, a large, open, upper room, for some of the Sirdars, among them the Mustaufi, who had been warned to attend, were discovered to have absented themselves.¹ Messengers were despatched in search of them, and when they reluctantly appeared, the following Proclamation was read out by Roberts in English, and indifferently translated into Persian by the Kazi :—

“ In my Proclamation of the 3rd October, Shawal, dated, Zargan Shahr, I informed the people of Kabul that a British army was advanc-

¹ Duke's *Recollections of the Kabul Campaign*, p. 161.

ing to take possession of the city, and I warned them against offering any resistance to the entry of the troops and the authority of His Highness the Amir : that warning has been disregarded. The force under my command has now reached Kabul and occupied the Bala Hissar ; but its advance has been pertinaciously opposed, and the inhabitants of the city have taken a conspicuous part in the opposition offered. They have, therefore, become rebels against the Amir, and have added to the guilt already incurred by them in abetting the murder of the British Envoy and his companions. For the treacherous and cowardly crime which has brought indelible disgrace upon the Afghan people, it would be but a just and fitting reward, for such misconduct, if the city of Kabul were now totally destroyed and its very name blotted out. But the great British Government ever desires to temper justice with mercy ; and I now announce to the inhabitants of Kabul that the full retribution for their offence will not be exacted, and that the city will be spared. Nevertheless, it is necessary that they should not escape all penalty, and further that the punishment inflicted should be such as will be felt and remembered. Therefore, such portions of the city buildings as now interfere with the proper military occupation of the Bala Hissar, and the safety and comfort of the British troops to be quartered in it, will be at once levelled with the ground, and, further, a heavy fine, the amount of which will be notified hereafter, will be imposed upon the inhabitants of Kabul, to be paid according to their several capacities. I further give notice to all that, in order to provide for the restoration and maintenance of order, the city of Kabul and the surrounding country, to a distance of 10 miles, are placed under martial law. With the consent of His Highness the Amir, a Military Governor of Kabul will be appointed to administer justice and punish with a strong hand all evil-doers. The inhabitants of Kabul and neighbouring villages are hereby warned to submit to his authority. This punishment inflicted upon the whole city will not, of course, absolve from further penalties

those whose individual guilt may be hereafter proved. A full and searching inquiry into the circumstances of the late outbreak will be held; and all persons connected with, or bearing a part in it, will be dealt with according to their deserts. With the view of providing effectually for the prevention of crime and disorder and the safety of all well-disposed persons in Kabul, it is hereby notified that for the future the carrying of dangerous weapons, whether swords, knives, or firearms, within the streets, or within a distance of five miles from the city gates, is forbidden. After a week from the date of this Proclamation, any person found armed within those limits will be liable to the penalty of death. Persons having in their possession any articles whatsoever which formerly belonged to members of the British Embassy are required to bring them forthwith to the British Camp. Anyone neglecting this warning will, if found hereafter in possession of any such articles, be subjected to severest penalties. Further, all persons who may have in their possession any firearms or ammunition formerly issued to or seized by the Afghan troops, are required to produce them. For every country-made rifle whether breech or muzzle-loading, the sum of Rupees 3 will be given on delivery, and for every rifle of European manufacture, Rupees 5. Anyone found hereafter in possession of any such weapons will be severely punished. Finally, I notify that I will give a reward of Rupees 50 for the surrender of any person, whether soldier or civilian, concerned in the attack on the British Embassy, or such information as may lead directly to his capture. A similar sum will be given in the case of any person who may have fought against the British troops since the 3rd September, Shawal, last, and therefore become a rebel against His Highness the Amir. If any such person so surrendered or captured be a captain or subaltern officer of the Afghan Army, the reward will be increased to Rupees 75, and if a field officer to Rupees 120.”¹

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, pp. 135, 136.

After the reading of this proclamation the Afghan portion of the audience was dismissed with the exception of the Mustaufi, Habibulla Khan, the Wizieer, Shah Mahomed Khan, the Governor of Kabul, Yahiya Khan, and Yahiya's brother-in-law, Zakariah Khan, who, after being briefly informed by Roberts that they were prisoners, into whose conduct in connection with the massacre of the Embassy and the resistance offered to the British advance at Charasiab, strict inquiry would be made, were placed in separate rooms and left in charge of Colonel Knowles, whose regiment, the 67th Foot, was to occupy the garden, whilst the 5th Gurkhas were to be quartered on the southern side of the Arsenal.¹

The next day Sir F. Roberts made a formal entry into Kabul, riding through the principal streets and squares, preceded by the Cavalry Brigade and followed by five Battalions of Infantry, the people "neither respectful nor disrespectful"² looking on with Oriental indifference. Probably the thought that these disturbers of their peace would trouble them only for a season, passing away as their predecessors of 1839 had passed, was in the minds of most of the men who left their shops and stalls, or laid aside their tools to watch the foreigners go by. Strong as was the force that escorted the British General and his Staff that day, it was just as well that the people were in this apathetic mood, for not even Kandahar lends itself better to street fighting than Kabul, with its few open spaces separated from each other by a tangle of dark, filthy, narrow streets and alleys; the whole divided into quarters, and the quarters into sections; each with its gateway, which can quickly be built up, thus transforming the city into a nest of fortresses. On nearer acquaintance, Kabul was found to contain no fine buildings of any kind—solid masonry and lofty minarets are out of place where earthquakes are of frequent occurrence—but its Bazaars were well stocked with goods of home manufacture, ornaments in silver, utensils of iron and brass, sheepskin

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, p. 133.

² *Ibid.*

(pushteen) gloves, boots, and coats, often beautifully embroidered, saddles and whips and other articles in leather, weapons of all kinds, from the two-edged Afghan knife to the rifle copied from British models. There was no lack, too, of carpets, silken stuffs, pottery, and other foreign products, and many rare curios were discovered in out-of-the-way nooks and corners of the city, the price of which rose quickly as the demand for them increased. The butchers' shops were well supplied with mutton ; one square was devoted entirely to vegetables, game, and poultry ; the fruit stalls were laden in autumn with apples, pomegranates, and, above all, grapes of the finest quality, and in the summer with mulberries, cherries, peaches, apricots, and plums.¹ These things, however, were luxuries, pleasant for those who could afford to buy them, but of no account when the question of maintaining a foreign garrison had to be considered ; and of wheat and other grains, the real necessities of life, there was barely enough to keep the inhabitants alive throughout the winter : yet Roberts could not break up his force and send them tax-collecting into other provinces, as is the custom of the Amir, till the season of scarcity should pass. The poverty of its immediate surroundings and its consequent dependence for the bulk of its supplies on more fertile districts, from which in winter it is cut off by snow, hinder the growth and development of Kabul ; but its situation at the point where the roads from India, Central Asia, and Southern Afghanistan meet, gives it a certain commercial value as a market and place of exchange ; whilst its remoteness from the borders of its enemies, and the difficulties that those enemies must experience in keeping their hold on it, supposing it to have fallen into their hands, mark it out as the best possible capital for Afghanistan in the present military stage of the world's development.

To preserve order and execute justice within the city, deprived of its Native ruler by the arrest of Yahiya Khan, Major-General James Hills, V.C., was appointed as its Governor ; and at the same time two

¹ Duke's *Recollections*, pp. 191-195.

courts were constituted, the one, political, to collect evidence against men accused or suspected of being offenders under the Proclamation, the other, military, to judge and sentence those whom the Court of Inquiry should pass on to it. Each consisted of three members; the first of Colonel Macgregor, Surgeon-Major Bellew, and Mahomed Hyat Khan, C.S.I., an excellent Persian and Pushtu scholar; the second of Brigadier-General Massy, Major M. P. Moriarty, Bombay Staff Corps, and Captain C. W. N. Guinness, 72nd Highlanders.

Hardly had the Political Commission entered on its work when a terrible catastrophe interrupted its labours. At 1.30 p.m. on the 16th October, the powder in the storehouses on the northern side of the Arsenal, fired by what accident was never discovered, suddenly exploded, blowing the buildings to pieces and burying under their ruins Captain Shafto, R.A., and six Kalassies who were assisting him in reducing their miscellaneous contents to order;¹ also a Subadar-Major, five pay-sergeants, and a corporal who, in the square occupied by the 5th Gurkhas, were counting out the regimental chest, and the occupants of the guard-room—a corporal and five sepoy. The officers of the regiment, who were just sitting down to lunch, escaped uninjured, and a Gurkha who had been doing sentry duty on the roof of the destroyed houses, and who had been carried up into the air to fall stunned and bruised among the wreckage, survived to tell the tale.² In the Royal Gardens only one man of the 67th was killed, the sentry on the roof of the house in which the Afghan prisoners were detained. As the smoke and dust cleared away, it was seen that a detached building known to contain 400 tons of gunpowder was intact; and as the fire, which constant slight explosions showed to be spreading, might reach it at any moment, Macgregor, who had closed his Court and hurried to the Bala Hissar, ordered every human being within its walls to quit it at once, and peremptorily refused to allow any search

¹ Duke's *Recollections*, p. 183.

² *Ibid.* p. 183.

to be made for the missing.¹ The 67th, taking their prisoners with them, withdrew by the Peshawar Gate ; the Gurkhas, partly by the same gate, partly through a hole cut in the outer wall. About half a mile from the citadel both regiments halted, waiting and watching for a second explosion, which came at 4 p.m., just when they had begun to hope that all danger was over. Its force was so great that masses of masonry were hurled hundreds of yards through the air and showers of stones fell among the Gurkhas ; and, yet, though the whole of the eastern wall with its huge turrets had been destroyed, next day brought the discovery that it was some smaller storehouses, and not the big magazine, that had exploded. Had the first explosion occurred in the Main magazine, the 67th Foot and the Gurkhas must have been annihilated ; the Afghan Ministers would have shared their fate, and part of the town have been wrecked. As it was, the town and the prisoners escaped injury, the 67th Foot had one man killed and a few slightly injured, the Gurkhas fourteen killed and seven or eight wounded, the 5th Punjab Cavalry lost two troopers who were acting as orderlies to Captain Shafto, and a few drivers and some camels and mules perished in the Arsenal square.

By the two explosions an immense quantity of war material was destroyed, and when the fire had burnt itself out, the loose powder contained in the buildings which had survived the catastrophe was flooded with water and thrown, little by little, into the moat, after which the military guards were withdrawn and the Bala Hissar handed over to the custody of sixty Native Chowkidars, under the orders of the headman of the Arab community in Kabul.²

¹ "Some men—Surgeon-Major J. Bourke amongst them—volunteered to go in and see if they could save any one in the Bala Hissar, but I did not see the good, so vetoed any such idea." (*Life of Sir C. Macgregor*, pp. 130–137.)

² Duke's *Recollections*, pp. 189, 190.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. The measures to secure the safety of his troops, announced by Roberts in the Proclamation, were no more stringent than was absolutely necessary. Buildings commanding a military position must often be destroyed, and, in a country where all men possess arms, nothing less than a general order against the carrying of them within five miles of the British camp would have protected soldiers and camp-followers against assassination. The fixing of a time-limit within which the penalties attached to the violation of this order should not be enforced, and the offering of payment for all rifles surrendered, were provisions conceived in a fair and liberal spirit; and there was nothing unusual, or cruelly harsh, in the imposition of a fine on a city in which an outrage on a foreign Embassy had been committed. Strong exception, however, must be taken to the Proclamation's assertion of a conqueror's right to raze a city to the ground as a punishment for that, or any other, offence. Every town contains at least a woman and three children to one man, and, of the latter, only a small proportion can ever be shown to have taken part in the commission of a crime. At Kabul, only a small number of the male citizens, and they of the lowest class, had been parties to the attack on the Residency;—the troops were the real culprits, and they were out of reach of retribution. That the claim advanced by Roberts was never intended to be acted upon, makes no difference to its morality—the morality of an Alva or a Tilly, not that of a Wellington or a Clyde; and it sinned against British dignity as well as against Christian and military ethics; for those bidden to see mercy in its withdrawal, knew perfectly well that the destruction of Kabul would condemn its destroyers to starvation. But if the preamble of the Proclamation reflects discredit on its author, much more is this the case with its concluding clauses. Cupidity and treachery are the traits of Afghan character most loudly denounced by Europeans, traits

on which Roberts himself was constantly harping, and he dishonoured himself in appealing to them for his own supposed advantage. To offer rewards for the surrender of persons implicated in the murder of Cavagnari was bad in principle, and little likely to serve the cause of truth and justice in a community torn by internal factions, each ever ready to bring false accusations against all the rest ; but to put a price on the heads of men who, in fighting against an invading force, had been guilty of no crime either in their own eyes or in the eyes of their prospective betrayers, was to strike at the best part of Afghan character—its love of independence and love of country—and at the same time to deal a blow to that sense of justice latent in the hearts of most Englishmen, which every wise Commander would seek to cherish in his subordinates ; because on it alone can any permanent or fruitful relation be established between them and the races with whom war may bring them into contact.¹

OBSERVATION II. The quartering of troops close up to an Arsenal known to contain vast quantities of war material scattered about and mixed up in disorderly and dangerous fashion, is a remarkable instance of lack of foresight and care. Because of the Arsenal, the Bala Hissar had to be under complete British control, but this object could have been attained by temporarily expelling its inhabitants, placing strong guards at its gates, and leaving a force on the hills by which the citadel is commanded. Responsibility for the lives lost in the explosion rests, primarily, with the General and his Staff, who were the first to visit the Bala Hissar and to note the state of the Arsenal ; secondarily, with the Commanding Officers of the 67th and the 5th Gurkhas, whose duty it was to call the attention of their superiors to the unnecessary risk to which their men were being

¹ Macgregor disapproved of treating men who had “merely fought against us” as criminals, and recorded in his diary his determination not “to sentence such men to death.” (*Life of Sir C. Macgregor*, p. 135.)

exposed. They may have done so and not been listened to. They certainly were not blind to the danger, for Duke in his *Recollections* mentions that the Gurkha officers "often told Shafto how pleased they (we) should be if he could remove the deadly stuff that lay between them (us) and the 67th below."¹

¹ Duke's *Recollections*, p. 178.

CHAPTER XI

Defence of the Shutargardan

ON the day following the explosion in the Bala Hissar, Sir Frederick Roberts despatched Brigadier-General Hugh Gough with four guns, No. 1 Mountain Battery, the 5th Punjab Cavalry, and the 5th Punjab Infantry, all corps belonging to the well-equipped Punjab Frontier Force, to the relief of Colonel Money, who was known to be holding his own with difficulty against a large gathering of tribesmen. Gough took with him a train of transport animals for the use of the beleaguered garrison, which, with the exception of the 21st Punjab Infantry, whose services were urgently needed in the Kuram, was to return with him to Kabul; and it was hoped that the remaining two squadrons of the 9th Lancers, drafts for various regiments, and a commissariat and ammunition convoy would arrive from India in time to join the relieving column.

On the 19th of October, Gough occupied the Shinkai Kotal, half-way between Kushi and the Shutargardan, and heliographed the news of his approach to Colonel Money. The attack on that officer's entrenched camp mentioned in a previous chapter, had been a critical business. A large body of tribesmen had, for a time, commanded the British position and broken its telegraphic communication with the Kuram. Major C. J. Griffiths, who went out with 250 Sikhs to dislodge the enemy, was wounded early in the engagement, but his men, led by Captain W. B. Aislabie, drove the tribesmen from the heights with the loss of their main standard, captured by Jemadar Gunesa

Sing, and of two or three hundred killed and wounded, whilst, including Griffiths and Signalling-Sergeant Browne, the victors had only eight men wounded.

For some days after this salutary lesson the little garrison was left in peace, but rumours were rife that the tribes were gathering again, and, on the 14th of October, Money sent Major F. W. Collis with two mountain guns, 50 Sikhs, and two companies of the 21st Punjab Infantry, to withdraw the outpost on the Surkai Kotal. Collis had not long left camp when news was brought in that the outpost was already hotly engaged with some five or six hundred Ghilzais; and 200 Sikhs and 100 men of the 21st, under Griffiths, who refused to remain on the sick list, were instantly hurried off to strengthen the relieving column. A little later it was discovered that a large body of tribesmen were advancing upon the hill from which they had been driven on the 2nd, and Money despatched two guns under Lieutenant J. C. Shirres, and two companies of the 21st under Captain H. H. Swetenham, so promptly that they crowned the ridge just in time to forestall the Ghilzais, who were swarming up its reverse slope. Foiled, but not beaten, the tribesmen quickly rallied and boldly renewed the attack, only to be again repulsed. Once more they reformed, but at sight of Money with two companies of Sikhs hastening to Swetenham's assistance, they suddenly changed their tactics, and, abandoning the hill to its defenders, poured down its sides with the intention of overwhelming the troops on their way to relieve the Surkai outpost.

Collis, on arriving at the foot of the Kotal, had seized a hill commanding the pass and sent forward two parties, each of fifty men, the one under Captain W. H. Gowan, the other under Lieutenant E. J. N. Fasken, to attack the enemy. The issue was still undecided when the second relief force overtook the first, and Griffiths, on assuming the command of both, found himself between hammer and anvil—in his front, seven hundred tribesmen in a strong position, and in his rear, the three thousand repulsed by Money. Quick to see the

best course of action, he ordered fifty men to turn the hill which Gowan and Fasken were trying to storm, and as soon as he saw the success of this movement, leaving Collis to collect his scattered troops, he faced about and ordered Lieutenant W. H. Young, who with a company of the 21st had been holding the enemy in check, to take the offensive. Young, supported by a company of Sikhs under Lieutenant W. Cook, attacked vigorously, capturing two standards, but his men, getting into broken, raviny ground, came to a standstill close to some breast-works to which the enemy had retreated. Seeing that their pursuers were in difficulties, the Ghilzais charged out, but, luckily at that moment, the guns came into action in rear of the infantry, with such accuracy and effect, that, for the second time, they had to seek the shelter of their stockades.¹ Here they were for the moment secure, for so small was the British force that merely to hold the ground it had won every staff-officer and non-combatant on his way to Kabul, had to take his place in the fighting line.² One of the former, Captain Waterfield, was severely wounded and carried out of danger by Cook, who was subsequently brought to notice for his gallant conduct throughout the whole engagement. Meanwhile Collis had collected his men and now dashed forward at their head, and the Ghilzais, no less eager to come to close quarters, burst from their defences under cover of a shower of stones, and rushed boldly down upon their new assailants. But short swords had no chance against rifle and bayonet, and this time the British were able to follow up their foes, capture their sangars, and, reinforced by a detachment of Sikhs, sent by Money in the very

¹ "The shells had to pass within six feet of the 21st Company and burst eighty yards in front; dangerous, of course, but necessary, and three shells fired exactly on the same spot, in the very place wanted." (Letter of an officer who took part in the action.)

² These were: Captain A. H. Turner, Political Officer; Captain D. M. D. Waterfield, R.A.; Captain W. G. Nicholson, R.E.; Lieutenant R. B. W. Fisher, 10th Hussars; Lieutenant J. Sherston, A.D.C.; and Mr. Josephs, Superintendent of Telegraphs.—H. B. H.

nick of time,¹ to pursue them for some distance, the guns doing considerable execution on the retiring masses. The bodies of forty Ghilzais were counted on the hill-side and there must have been many wounded, whilst the British had two Native soldiers killed, Private Macready, 72nd Highlanders, mortally wounded, and Waterfield and eight Native soldiers wounded.

But though Money and his subordinates had been victorious in the actual fighting, the outpost on the Surkai Kotal was still unrelieved; so that evening, after sundown, two hundred rifles under Collis, with a number of baggage mules, moved quietly out of camp to return at 2 o'clock the next morning with the ninety men who, for so many hours, had been in extreme peril.²

That day—the 15th of October—the enemy, strongly reinforced, reoccupied the hills overlooking the British position, and all Money could do was to send out the 21st Punjab Infantry to watch their movements. Many of the new-comers brought with them their Korans and their women, and so great was the confidence inspired in one and all by the knowledge of their enormous numerical superiority, that, in the evening, five headmen came into the camp to call upon its commander to surrender, offering, on payment of two lakhs of rupees—about £20,000—to provide him with carriage, and allow him and his troops to retire unmolested either on Kabul or the Kuram. Whether they would have kept faith is doubtful, but their sincerity was not put to the test. Money firmly refused to treat, and the delegates departed, fully convinced that the British camp with all it contained would soon be in their hands. Allal-ud-din Khan, who had been with Money—it was he who received the subsidy for keeping the Shutargardan open—followed them back to the hills to try to mediate

¹ This detachment was commanded by Jemadar Sher Mahomed, the Native officer who had distinguished himself in the Hazara Darakht Defile.—H. B. H.

² “A very anxious withdrawal it was,” wrote the officer who took part in the defence, “and we were all delighted to see them back again at 2 a.m. safe and sound.”

between his paymasters and his people, but the Ghilzais refused to listen to him, and the next day he himself was struck by the fragment of a British shell, which shattered his left arm above the elbow.

From morning to night of the 16th, the British guns kept up an incessant fire at long range upon the tribesmen, as they worked at the sangars which they were busy constructing. In the night an attack, easily repulsed, was made on the camp, and shelter trenches thrown up dangerously near to it. From these and from their nearest line of breastworks, they were driven at daybreak by the accurate fire of the mountain guns; nevertheless, Money deemed it necessary to withdraw his outlying pickets, strengthen his guards, and order Captain Nicholson to see to the improvement of the defences and the laying of wire entanglements at their weakest points. On the 18th, the tribesmen—now said to number 17,000 men—pushed up to within three hundred yards of the camp and cut off its grass and water supply, which, with his gun and regimental ammunition running short, Money dared not attempt to recover.¹ Fortunately, this embargo on his activity was removed next day by Gough's heliogram; with help close at hand there was no further need for him to husband his scanty resources, so, promptly resuming the offensive, he recovered the spring on the Kushi road, "got his guns into action, and shelled the enemy with shell and shrapnell right heartily."

It had taken the tribesmen days to collect; it took them only a few hours to scatter. The moment they got wind of Gough's approach the great gathering began to melt away, and by dusk the hills where they had swarmed were empty and silent, and the worried defenders of the Shutargardan camp slept that night in peace. Their loss during the five days that they had been practically shut in, was trifling—only eight men wounded and three horses killed—but the anxiety had been great, for the tribesmen might have rushed the camp

¹ "The garrison had only regimental ammunition with them, and this had been greatly reduced by the action of the 14th." (Hensman, p. 98.)

and, by sheer weight of numbers, overwhelmed its tiny garrison ; and the heartiness of the welcome which greeted Gough next morning, when, in a blinding snowstorm, he and his troops marched into Money's camp, was in proportion to men's sense of the peril from which his opportune arrival had rescued them. The relieving force spent some days on the Shutargardan waiting for the arrival of the convoy and troops that were coming up from India. During those days, snowstorm succeeded snowstorm, and provisions were so short that the men " were on half rations, and there was no forage for the animals beyond the wormwood scrub from the sides of the mountain." ¹ On the 26th the convoy crossed the Shutargardan ; on the 27th arrived 450 furlough men, and, last of all, two squadrons of the 9th Lancers, the sight of whose baggage, which included their full-dress uniforms and machinery for the manufacture of soda-water, rather staggered Gough.²

On the 29th of October, the 21st Punjab Infantry started for the Kuram and the rest of the troops for Kabul, in a snowstorm so heavy that it soon obliterated all trace of the camp which had been the scene of so gallant a defence. The column marched back unopposed, and, on the 4th of November, Gough and Money and their respective troops entered the Sherpur Cantonment, where Roberts met them with warm congratulations. By the abandonment of the Shutargardan the British force was left cut off from India, for the troops advancing from Peshawar had not yet opened up the Khyber road.

OBSERVATION

Much was risked ³ and nothing gained by retaining the position

¹ " Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough. *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 389.

² *Ibid.*

³ One of the Commanding Officers on the Shutargardan during the investment writes :—" If ever a General did a risky thing it was the way he hurried on to Kabul and left the 21st and Sikhs on the Shutargardan !! and we had a very narrow escape, to my mind."

on the Shutargardan. In the end Hugh Gough had to go back to reopen the road over that mountain for the passage of the convoys and reinforcements coming up from the Kuram, and to rescue Money from the formidable gathering of tribesmen that had closed round his camp. Having embarked on a difficult enterprise with a dangerously weak force, Roberts could not afford to spare a single man, nor, by division of his troops, to run the risk of defeat in detail. Had he been unsuccessful at Charasiab, Money must either have capitulated to the Ghilzais or been annihilated by them; and had Gough arrived too late to relieve Money and bring him and the other reinforcements safely back to Kabul, Roberts could not have coped with the formidable rising which was to take place in December; and he, too, would have had to choose between capitulation and annihilation. The abandonment of the Shutargardan would have made the risks that were being run glaringly clear, and caused great anxiety to the Indian Government and British public; but these were small evils when weighed against the success of the Expedition, which Roberts would have best secured by keeping his force intact.

CHAPTER XII

Disturbances in the Kuram. Zaimukht Expedition

It was well that Roberts was able to detach Gough to Money's assistance, for no help could have reached him from the Kuram. The state of that province, unsatisfactory during the summer months, grew worse as the days shortened ; and, on the 13th of October, the Political Officer, Mr. James Christie, warned General Gordon that the Mangals and Jagis were assembling, and that either Ali Khel or the Peiwar Mountain would probably be attacked. The warning came not a moment too soon, for, in the succeeding night, the tribesmen occupied the ravines on either side of the Ali Khel entrenched camp, and at dawn next day, a large body of them got quite close to its right face, held by the 29th Punjab Infantry, whilst another party engaged the pickets of the 8th King's. Successful sallies were made by Major C. E. D. Branson, Lieutenants H. P. Picot and R. W. MacLeod ; and Brigade-Major Captain H. G. Grant, with a handful of cavalry, completed the enemy's defeat in one direction, whilst Colonel P. H. F. Harris with detachments of the 5th Gurkhas and 11th Bengal Infantry cleared them out of the gullies on the left of the British entrenchments. Crossing the Rokian River, the tribesmen took up a second position on a wooded ridge ; but the guns of C-4 Royal Artillery soon rendered it untenable, and they fled, leaving many dead on the field and a few prisoners in the hands of their pursuers.

But in hill warfare a defeat is never final : dispersed at one point,

the active mountaineers quickly gather together to threaten others ; and at the very time when Gordon, hearing that the water supply of the Shutargardan camp had been cut off, was eager to send the reinforcements without which Money could not possibly have retreated through the Hazara Darakht Defile, his hands were tied by the news that three thousand tribesmen were approaching Balesh Khel, an important post commanding the principal road into Zaimukht territory. The relief of the Shutargardan force and the return of the 21st Punjab Infantry to the Kuram somewhat lessened his anxieties ; but they were still heavy, and it was with great satisfaction that he received from the Indian Government the permission to shorten his line of communications by withdrawing from Ali Khel and the whole of the Hariab Valley, and making the Peiwar Mountain camp his most advanced post. But though, in this matter, the advice of the man upon the spot was taken, Gordon paid the penalty of giving it in his recall to Simla, where he resumed his post as Deputy Adjutant-General, Brigadier-General John Watson, V.C., succeeding him in the Kuram command.

One of the evil effects of the occupation of the Kuram had been the cessation of the good relations which, ever since the Punjab had been annexed to British India, had existed between the frontier authorities and the Zaimukhts. No tribe had given less trouble ; only once, in 1855, had it shown signs of hostility ;¹ no punitive expedition had ever entered its territory. But neither its good will towards its friendly neighbour, nor its respect for that neighbour's power, was proof against the temptations put in its way by ill-guarded baggage trains and commissariat convoys, daily to be seen skirting

¹ " In the early years of the annexation (of the Punjab) the Zaimukhts gave little trouble, but in 1855 they assumed a hostile attitude, and among other acts of hostility they took part in the affair near Darsamand on 30th of April. After the expedition to the Miranzai Valley in 1856, however, their behaviour became good." (*Record of Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes*, pp. 416, 417.)

its borders ; and when, by the substitution of the road up the valley, on the left bank of the Kuram River, for that on the right bank, opportunities of plunder were multiplied, the inclination to avail itself of them grew apace, and violations of neutrality assumed a more and more barbarous character. Many a straggler was cut off by Zaimukht bands, and Surgeon Smyth's death lay at their door ; yet beyond imposing fines, which were never paid, no steps were taken to punish their evil deeds or put an end to their depredations, till a crowning outrage overcame the unwillingness of the Indian Government to increase the area over which it was openly engaged in hostilities with the tribes.

On the 29th of September, Lieutenant F. G. Kinloch, riding between Chapri and Mundari, fell into a Zaimukht ambush, and, on falling wounded from his horse, was literally hacked to pieces as he lay helpless on the ground.¹ To have abstained from exacting retribution for so dastardly a crime, would have been a confession of weakness such as no Government, claiming to be strong, could afford to make ; so Brigadier-General Tytler was ordered to organize a punitive expedition. Simultaneously, a proclamation was issued, setting forth the reasons for the expedition—the many misdeeds of which the Zaimukhts had been guilty—and the objects it had in view, namely, the safeguarding of the British communications and the constructing of a road between Torawari in Zaimukht, and Balesh Khel in British territory, and warning the neighbours of the offending tribe against rendering it any assistance.

The expedition was late in starting owing to the prior claims of the Kabul Force on the resources of the district, but the interval was profitably employed. Towards the end of October, Lieutenant-Colonel R. G. Rogers, with a flying column, consisting of the 85th Foot, 20th Punjab Infantry, and two mountain guns, dispersed the three thousand tribesmen, whose assembling near Balesh Khel had

¹ *Record of Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes*, p. 418.

stood in the way of Gordon's sending help to Money. On the 21st of November, Major T. R. Davidson, with a squadron of the 18th Bengal Cavalry, made a dash into the enemy's country and captured twelve men, who had taken part in a very serious and sanguinary raid into British territory; and about the same time Ressaldar Nadar Ali Khan, with only thirty-six troopers of the 18th Bengal Cavalry, attacked a thousand Zaimukhts who were threatening the British post at Chapri, and drove them off with the loss of thirteen killed and many wounded, his own casualties being only three men wounded.

On the 28th of November, Tytler shifted his headquarters to Balesh Khel, and on the 30th made a reconnaissance in person into Zaimukht territory. On the 1st of December, two strong reconnoitring parties penetrated into the country in a northerly direction; on the 3rd, Colonel Rogers explored the Tortung Defile, and, the same day, Major C. R. Pennington examined the old Kafil route. Each of these parties was accompanied by one or other of the two Political Officers attached to the Force—Major T. J. C. Plowden and Captain A. Conolly—and several of them by Mr. G. B. Scott of the Survey Department, who took ample advantage of the opportunities thus afforded him of correcting and adding to the existing surveys. The result of all these reconnaissances had gone to prove that the task that lay before Tytler's Force might prove a very difficult one if the Zaimukhts, who were known to be able to put three thousand five hundred fighting men into the field, were to offer a strenuous and well-considered resistance to its movements; for though the triangular piece of country inhabited by them is not large—it has an area of from three to four hundred square miles—its fertile valleys are separated from the outer world and from each other by lofty, rugged chains of mountains, which an invader must scale, or make his approach through narrow and dangerous defiles. Fortunately, there were reasons for hoping that the opposition to be met with would be slight; the exploring parties had not been interfered with, and many villagers

had shown their desire to conciliate their invaders by bringing in offerings of honey and eggs; also, there could be no doubt that the whole people were badly armed, their best weapons being old matchlocks, swords, and knives. Tytler, however, was a man to make sure of success, not to count upon it, and it was with a force strong enough to beat down all opposition,¹

6 Mountain Guns,		
259 Sabres	.	Bengal Cavalry,
753 Rifles	.	European Infantry,
1,820 Rifles	.	Native Infantry,

and with an ample supply of provisions—eleven days' supply for current use, ten days in reserve at Torawari—that, on the 8th of December, he at last crossed the frontier. His objective point was Zawo, the most northerly and distant of all the Zaimukht valleys, and one so difficult of approach that it was thought to be inaccessible; and the road selected by him was the old Kafila route, reconnoitred by Pennington.

For five marches the advance was uneventful, except that a halt was made at Manatu in order that three columns might scour the Watazai Valley, whose people had been implicated in many of the raids for which retribution was now to be exacted. Four villages

1 COMPOSITION OF FORCE.

1-8 Royal Artillery, 4 Screw Mountain Guns .	.	Major J. Haughton.
No. 1 Mountain Battery, 2 Guns	.	Lieutenant H. N. Jervois.
Detachment 2-8th King's	}	Captain D. A. Grant.
„ 85th Regiment .		
„ 1st Bengal Cavalry	}	Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Low.
„ 13th Bengal Cavalry		
„ 18th Bengal Cavalry		
8th Company Bengal Sappers and Miners	.	Lieutenant H. P. Leach.
13th Bengal Infantry	.	Lieutenant-Colonel W. Playfair.
4th Punjab Infantry	.	Lieutenant-Colonel H. P. Close.
20th Punjab Infantry	.	Colonel R. G. Rogers.
29th Punjab Infantry	.	Colonel J. J. H. Gordon.

were burned, but their inhabitants had fled, carrying off with them all their possessions. On the 12th of December, Tytler reached Chinarak, only eight miles short of Zawo, where the roads from Balesh Khel, Thal, and Torawari meet, and the next day, leaving a large part of his troops, under Colonel Rogers, to protect this important point, he started out to force the Zawo Defile. His diminished force he had organized into three columns: the left column, consisting of the 4th Punjab Infantry commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Close, was to crown the heights on the west; the right column, composed of two mountain guns, four companies 85th Foot, and four companies 29th Punjab Infantry under Colonel Gordon, those on the east of the defile; whilst the main body, comprising

2 Screw Mountain Guns
50 Sabres
100 Rifles .
200 Rifles .
Half-company

1-8 Royal Artillery,
13th Bengal Cavalry,
13th Bengal Infantry,
20th Punjab Infantry,
8th Bengal Sappers and Miners,

under his personal leadership, was to make its way up the defile itself. Two miles north of Chinarak, Tytler took up a position on a plateau overlooking the village of Ragha and the defile, and from this point of observation he brought the screw guns to bear on a crowd of Zaimukhts massed along a ridge which covers the Zawo Valley. As soon as he saw that their fire had shaken the enemy, he dropped back into the ravine, and, still protected by the flanking columns, pursued his difficult course up the boulder-strewn bed of the stream which flows through it. The Sappers and Miners did all in their power to smooth a way for the mountain guns, but the difficulties to be overcome were so many and so great that the day was far spent before the force reached Bagh, barely two miles beyond Ragha, and nearly four from its starting-point at Chinarak.¹ A cursory examination of the road

¹ Tytler's Despatch, dated 20th December, 1879.

in front showed it was even worse than the road behind, and, partly on this account, partly because he had had to send off all his water-carriers to Gordon, whose troops were suffering severely from thirst, Tytler resolved to bivouack for the night.

Those troops, after driving the enemy from the slopes of the hills east of Ragha, had found themselves confronted by a large body of tribesmen posted on a rocky ridge, from which the 85th Foot vainly tried to dislodge them. Direct attacks having failed, a flanking force consisting of two companies of the 29th Punjab Infantry under Lieutenant R. W. MacLeod, supported by a similar detachment under Major C. E. D. Branson, captured a hill from which an enfilading fire could be brought to bear upon the enemy's line. Instead of taking to flight the Zaimukhts flung themselves boldly on the troops, and there was some hard hand-to-hand fighting in which a Native Officer, Jemadar Fazl Ahmud, greatly distinguished himself. In the end discipline and good weapons prevailed as usual over undisciplined numbers, and Gordon's men slept that night in the position they had won.¹

Next morning, leaving his Cavalry, of which he could make no use, behind him, Tytler resumed his march and soon came in sight of large bodies of Zaimukhts occupying both sides of the ravine. The screw guns were quickly brought to bear upon the closely packed masses, and the shells bursting among them soon forced them to abandon their position. Some retreated up the ravine, others scaled its walls, only to be met above by the flanking columns and to come under the fire of Gordon's mountain guns. Unable to stand against foes so much better armed than themselves, the Zaimukhts scattered in all directions, and with his flanks fully secured, Tytler left the bed of the stream and moved up a precipitous path along which the men were obliged to advance in single file. On their upward way the troops

¹ *Record of Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes*, p. 422.

came under a heavy fire by which Lieutenant T. J. O'D. Renny, Adjutant of the 4th Punjab Infantry, and one of his men were mortally, and a non-commissioned officer of the same regiment, dangerously wounded.¹ From the summit of this precipitous pass the troops looked down upon Zawo, a horseshoe-shaped valley, shut in by lofty mountains and dotted over with villages. Tytler instantly sent down several detachments, protected by a covering party of the 4th Punjab Infantry, and in a very short time every house in Zawo was in flames and the punitive expedition on its way back to Bagh. On the 9th, a small force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Low, had penetrated into another Zaimukht valley, destroyed three villages and retired without loss. On the 15th of December, the whole of the punitive force was once again concentrated at Chinarak. On the 16th, it moved easterly to Nawakzi (nine miles); the following day to Sparkhwait (seven miles), a strongly fortified village on the edge of the country of the Urakzais, who, in defiance of the Proclamation, had mustered their fighting men and come to the help of the Zaimukhts. Shortage of supplies kept Tytler from marching straight into their territory, and whilst waiting for the return of the carriage he had despatched to his depôt at Torawari, he received orders from General Watson to bring his operations to a conclusion, as his troops were needed to make a demonstration towards the Shutargardan, with a view to reducing the pressure on Roberts who was reported to be surrounded at Kabul.² The order was peremptory, yet Tytler felt that he could not obey it without reserve. On the hills in front of his camp a large number of Urakzais had assembled who would undoubtedly seriously harass his retirement, should he enter on it without first dispersing them or receiving their submission; and the moral results of his expedition would be lost, should men come to think that it had so exhausted his resources as to leave him with no power to embark on a second.

¹ Tytler's Despatch.

² *Record of Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes*, p. 424.

Influenced by these considerations, he replied to Watson's summons by despatching a squadron of the 13th Bengal Lancers and the 13th Bengal Infantry, *viâ* Torawari to Thal, and kept his ground at Sparkhwait till the Urakzais, ignorant of what was happening at Kabul, and cowed by his firm attitude, gave hostages for the payment of a fine of Rs. 8,000 ; and the Zaimukhts, another of whose villages he had destroyed, agreed to pay all the fines owing by them, now amounting to Rs. 26,000, surrendered five hundred matchlocks and five hundred swords, and placed forty-eight hostages in his hands. These guarantees of better conduct in the future once obtained, he struck his camp and made a forced march to Chinarak and thence to Thal, where he arrived on the 23rd of December.

The British loss in the Zaimukht campaign was very small—only one private of the 4th Punjab Infantry killed in addition to Lieutenant Renny, and the non-commissioned officer of the 4th Punjab Infantry, and a private of the 29th Punjab Infantry wounded on the 14th of December ; but the name of the distinguished leader of the expedition must be added to this list. Of a constitution never robust and early enfeebled by wounds received in the Mutiny, Tytler's health had been severely tried by the hardships and anxieties of the Khyber campaign ; and the Zaimukht expedition so sapped his remaining strength that he could make no fight against disease, and when attacked by pneumonia, sank rapidly, dying at Thal on the 14th of February, 1880. Just and considerate, firm and kind, no officer in the Indian Army was more trusted and beloved than he ; and Surgeon-Major Evatt did not exaggerate when he wrote in his *Recollections*, that Tytler's memory was "a great bond," drawing together all who had ever served under him.

An excellent opportunity for withdrawing from the Kuram presented itself at the close of Tytler's expedition. Zaimukhts, Urakzais, Ghilzais had had their lesson, and as Roberts's line of communications with India had been definitely transferred to the Khyber, the Kuram had ceased to play any part in the military operations still being

carried on in Afghanistan. As a possession it was worthless, and the state of things existing in its garrison, faithfully reported by Watson to the Indian Government, was the strongest possible argument for abandoning it. The 1st Bengal Cavalry had a hundred and seven men on sick leave; the 1st Bengal Infantry two hundred and fifty men, and the 21st Punjab Infantry two hundred men, in hospital or on sick leave. Further, these regiments and the 20th Punjab Infantry, an exceptionally healthy corps, taken together were five hundred and forty-eight below their strength, and for this shortage there was no remedy, as their commanding officers informed Watson that recruits would not join them so long as they remained in this inhospitable and detested region. The preponderance of opinion among the higher political and military authorities in India, was in favour of acting on the advice implied in Watson's candid reports.¹ Sir Frederick Haines, the Commander-in-Chief, laid stress on the fact that, as a consequence of choosing the Shutargardan road for Sir F. Roberts's advance on Kabul, that commander had been obliged to cut himself off from his base and turn his force into a flying column;² but Lord Lytton could not be brought to abandon a route on which he had placed such high hopes, and the Kuram continued to absorb and wear down regiments whose services would have been useful elsewhere, till, at the end of the war, a new Viceroy recalled its garrison to India, and British claims on the province fell, for a time, into abeyance.

¹ "So far as I can judge, the present preponderance of opinion on the part of our higher military and political authorities is in favour of treating the Khyber as our main permanent line of advance towards Kabul, and either abandoning or leaving unimproved our present advanced position in the Kuram." (Minute by Lord Lytton, dated Simla, 20th May, 1880.)

² "As regards the Kuram line, it is certainly true, as pointed out by his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, that General Roberts, when advancing upon Kabul by this line, was obliged to cut himself off from his base of operations, and that, until that base was transferred to the Khyber, his force was virtually acting as a flying column." (Minute by Lord Lytton, dated Simla, 5th June, 1880.)

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. The forcing of the Zawo Defile is a fine example of how an operation of this kind should be conducted. The flanking columns, while securing the safety of the main body marching in the bed of the stream, continued to be in touch with it, and were able to support its turning parties. But, however deserving of praise as a military operation, the invasion of Zawo was of doubtful value from a political point of view. Its object was to impress the Zaimukhts and all their neighbours with the conviction that no corner of their territories was so remote that the arm of the Indian Government could not reach it; but, in teaching them this lesson, it also taught them another, viz. that though British troops may always be able to penetrate into the very heart of the hills, they can barely maintain themselves there for a day. It was this inability which drove Tytler into adopting a method of punishment repugnant to humanity and justice. For lack of time to destroy thoroughly the defences of the villages—a penalty that falls on the men of the tribe—he burned the villages themselves, thus inflicting great suffering on its women and children; and what makes his action in this matter the more indefensible is the strong probability that the people of that distant valley had had nothing to do with the outrages thus harshly avenged; the guilty villages—all known to the political officers—were those lying on or near the British border, and if there was to be any destruction of houses, it should have been confined to them.

OBSERVATION II. The successful invasion of the Zawo Valley demonstrates the great value of Mountain Artillery. Tytler himself expressed the opinion that in the absence of such guns the operation would have failed.

CHAPTER XIII

Re-Occupation of Gandamak

COMMUNICATION WITH KABUL TEMPORARILY OPENED

THE Indian Government's decision to send the force destined to avenge the massacre of the British Mission *viâ* the Shutargardan, was determined by the desire for rapidity of action, and with a full realization of the fact that Sir F. Roberts must be furnished, as early as possible, with some less precarious line of communication with India than that by which he himself had marched. With this object in view steps were taken to re-occupy the Khyber route as far as Gandamak, and to provide a moveable column to be employed in opening up, and keeping open, the road between that point and Kabul.

Major-General R. O. Bright¹ was appointed to the command of the Division mobilizing for these purposes, the composition of which was :—

Major-General R. O. Bright, C.B., Commanding.

Captain E. W. H. Crofton, Aide-de-Camp.

Captain J. H. Barnard, Aide-de-Camp.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. M. Wemyss, Chief of the Staff.

Major W. J. Boyes, Assistant Adjutant-General.

Captain the Hon'ble C. Dutton, Assistant Quartermaster-General.

Captain R. O'S. Brook, Provost-Marshal.

¹ Robert Onesiphorus Bright was born in 1824, and entered the Army in 1842. Served throughout the Crimean War of 1854-55 ; present at the battles of Alma, Inkerman, attack on the Redan, and final assault of Sevastopol ; Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel. Also the Hazara campaign of 1868, when he commanded the leading column in the attack on the Black Mountain. In 1879, he was commanding the Meerut Division. A man of good, sound common sense, always ready to accept responsibility and support his subordinates, Bright enjoyed the respect and confidence of all his officers.—H. B. H.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Deputy Surgeon-General H. B. Hassard, Principal Medical Officer.

COMMISSARIAT DEPARTMENT.

Major N. R. Burlton, Principal Commissariat Officer.

VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.

Veterinary-Surgeon F. F. Collins, Principal Veterinary Surgeon.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. A. Lockhart, Road Commandant.
Lieutenant E. B. Coke, Assistant Road Commandant.
Lieutenant A. A. Rawlinson, Assistant Road Commandant.
Lieutenant-Colonel H. St. G. Tucker, Director of Transport.
Major J. C. T. Humphrey, in charge of Field Treasure Chest.
Lieutenant J. B. MacDonnell, in charge of Signalling.

ARTILLERY.

Colonel C. R. O. Evans, Commanding.
Captain R. A. Lanning, Adjutant.
Captain R. H. S. Baker, Orderly Officer.
I-A Royal Horse Artillery, Major M. W. Ommaney.
C-3 Royal Artillery, Major H. C. Magenis.
11-9 Royal Artillery (Mountain Guns), Major J. M. Douglas.
13-9 Royal Artillery (Heavy Guns), Major C. W. Wilson.¹
No. 4 Hazara Mountain Battery, Captain A. Broadfoot.
Ordnance Field Park, Major S. Cargill.

ENGINEER DEPARTMENT.

Lieutenant-Colonel D. Limond, Commanding Royal Engineer.
Major E. T. Thackeray, V.C., 2nd in Command.
No. 2 Company Sappers and Miners, Lieutenant J. C. L. Campbell.
No. 3 Company Sappers and Miners, Captain H. Dove.
No. 5 Company Sappers and Miners, Lieutenant E. S. Hill.
No. 6 Company Sappers and Miners, Lieutenant W. F. H. Stafford.

¹ General Roberts having asked for Heavy Guns, Major Wilson's Battery marched into the Khyber Pass, but was sent back, owing to the difficulties of the road—H. B. H.

1ST BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General C. J. S. Gough, V.C., C.B., Commanding.
 Captain M. G. Gerard, Brigade-Major.
 Major A. A. A. Kinloch, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
 Major H. J. Hallows, Brigade Transport Officer.
 Lieutenant F. H. R. Drummond, Orderly Officer.
 Captain L. Tucker, Political Assistant.

Cavalry.

10th Bengal Lancers, Major W. H. Macnaghten.
 Guides Cavalry, Major G. Stewart.¹

Infantry.

2-9th Foot, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Daunt.
 2nd Gurkhas, Major A. Battye.
 Guides Infantry, Major R. B. Campbell.¹
 4th Gurkhas, Major F. F. Roweroft.
 24th Punjab Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Norman.
 45th Sikhs, Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Armstrong.

2ND BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General C. G. Arbuthnot, C.B., Commanding.
 Captain J. Cook, Brigade-Major.
 Captain C. A. Carthew, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.

Cavalry.

6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers), Lieutenant-Colonel J. Fryer.
 3rd Bengal Cavalry, Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie.
 17th Bengal Cavalry, Lieutenant-Colonel T. J. Watson.

Infantry.

51st King's Own Light Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel C. Ball-Acton.
 22nd Punjab Infantry, Colonel J. J. O'Bryen.
 27th Punjab Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel C. J. Hughes.

3RD BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General J. Doran, C.B., Commanding.
 Major H. P. Pearson, Brigade-Major.
 Lieutenant F. C. Maisey, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Jenkins commanded the Corps of Guides, which consisted of 2 squadrons Cavalry and 8 companies Infantry.

Infantry.

1-12th Foot, Colonel G. F. Walker.

2nd Bengal Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel T. N. Baker.

8th Bengal Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Smith.

30th Punjab Infantry, Colonel T. W. R. Boisragon.

31st Punjab Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel F. Tweddell.

Total 11,600 of all ranks and 24 guns.

From these figures considerable deductions must be made, for the troops in actual occupation of the Khyber included in Bright's force, were in a sickly condition, seven hundred and twenty men out of twelve hundred and eighty at Ali Masjid being in hospital; and those belonging to the Peshawar garrison were in little better case.¹ Five thousand men were to be held in reserve, partly at Peshawar, partly at Rawal Pindi; and as the Bengal Army was unable to furnish all the troops needed for both forces, the 1st, 4th, and 15th Regiments Madras Infantry, and A, C, and I companies Madras Sappers and Miners, were to be mobilized and sent to the last-named station. Bright's Division was divided into three Brigades, the first of which, under Brigadier-General Charles Gough, was to push on as quickly as possible to Gandamak, and from this point, acting in conjunction with Roberts's troops, to keep open communication with Kabul. The Second Brigade, under Brigadier-General C. G. Arbuthnot—head-quarters at Jellalabad—was to be responsible for the safety of the line of communications between Basawal and Gandamak; and the Third Brigade, under Brigadier-General J. Doran—head-quarters at Lundi Kotal—for the security of the road between Jamrud and Basawal. Bright's head-quarters, as well as Gough's, were to be established at Gandamak, where provisions for ten thousand men for two months were to be collected.

¹ One of the regiments of this garrison was in such a deplorable state that it had to be relieved and sent back to Peshawar.—H. B. H.

Bright arrived at Peshawar on the 15th September, to find to his dismay that all available carriage both in the cantonments and the District—even a considerable portion of the moveable column carriage, which might at any moment be needed to move troops to reinforce threatened outposts—was being diverted to Kuram. Driven to the risky expedient of employing Afridi transport—much of it stolen by the tribes during the first campaign—to throw supplies into Lundi Kotal, he offered such liberal terms that contracts were freely accepted; but owing to the great Mahomedan festival, the Id, their fulfilment was for a time delayed. Eventually, however, the Amir having written to prohibit all opposition to the advance of the British troops, supplies were taken forward as quickly as they could be collected.

By the 28th of September 1,385 British and 4,060 Native troops belonging to Bright's Division had concentrated at Peshawar, and Gough's Brigade consisting of

ARTILLERY.

I-A Royal Horse Artillery.

CAVALRY.

2 Squadrons 10th Bengal Cavalry.

2 „ Guides Cavalry.

INFANTRY.

2-9th Foot.

24th Punjab Infantry.

Guides Infantry.

Nos. 2 and 6 Companies Sappers and Miners.

started the same day for the Khyber, equipped with just half its proper allowance of transport.

Dakka was occupied on the 30th of September and Basawal on the 2nd of October. Here, defective carriage and lack of supplies resulted in a week's halt. All the mules on the Khyber line had been despatched to the Kuram, so Gough's transport consisted of camels and bullock

carts ; the beasts in poor condition, the carts in insufficient numbers. Between Dakka and Basawal his rear-guard had been eleven hours on the road, and the carts, as they came straggling in, deposited one load only to go back to bring up another. For supplies he had practically to look to the country through which he was marching, and, at first, the Afghan authorities—the Governor of Dakka and the Khan of Lalpura—refused to help him to collect them, on the ground that they could not do so without orders from the Amir. When these orders had been received, and they professed their willingness to obey them, the poverty of the people stood in the way ; for no price would they willingly surrender the food and forage which they needed for themselves and their livestock. In one way or another, enough was at last got together to warrant a further move, and Gough marched to Barikab and from thence, on the 13th, to Jellalabad, where the rumours that had already reached him of Roberts's arrival at Kabul were confirmed by a messenger from Major Hastings. The news was sent on to Divisional Head-Quarters at Lundi Kotal, and Bright's Chief of the Staff heliographed back the suggestion that Gough should send a flying column, under Colonel Jenkins, into Ghilzai territory to cut off fugitives from Kabul. The proposal may have appeared reasonable to men at a distance, but to the man on the spot it seemed little less than madness to ask him to split up a force numbering but three hundred cavalry and fourteen hundred infantry, and to scatter it over thirty or forty miles of wild and barren country, in the hope of capturing men who, at home among the hills, would have no difficulty in eluding the search parties ; so, with Jenkins's hearty concurrence, the General declined to be drawn aside from the work originally set him, and having collected a certain amount of supplies, marched on to Futtehabad, the scene of his brilliant action in the first phase of the war.¹ Here he found letters from Roberts, urging him to push on to Gandamak, and, having obtained Bright's

¹ See, Vol. II. Chapter XXV. of this History.

permission, he occupied that place on the 20th of October, with the Hazara Mountain Battery, 10th Bengal Lancers, 2-9th Foot, and the Guides. As soon as he could see his way to a further advance, he wrote to Roberts proposing that, on a day to be fixed by him (Roberts), one column should start out from Kabul and another from Gandamak to meet at some selected spot—a concerted movement which would, he believed, forestall and, probably, hinder a Ghilzai rising. Roberts accepted the proposal and named Seh Baba, a hamlet about midway between the two starting-points, as the place of meeting, and the 4th of November as the date of the movement.

During the interval of comparative rest thus secured to his force, Gough directed his efforts towards laying in supplies, nursing up his transport, and trying to ascertain the temper of the people around and in front of him. Local supplies were hard to obtain, those sent from India came in slowly, and the provision of transport was more difficult than ever, for at Gandamak the road came to an end, and the ponies drawn from Southern India that came dropping in, in batches, to replace the bullock carts, arrived sick and tired from their long journey and destitute of the equipment without which loads cannot be carried up and down mountain paths.^{1 2} As for information, there was little to be had of a trustworthy character, but by sending out some of the Pathans among the Guides, attired in ordinary

¹ Gough reported to Army Head-Quarters that these ponies were equipped with pad packs and had neither ropes nor fastenings to keep the pad in place, or to secure the loads in going up and down hill.—H. B. H.

² The *Daily News*' Own Correspondent gives the following description of the congested state of the traffic at the Lahore railway terminus, and of "the barbarities" to which the poor dumb animals were subjected on their way up to the front:—

"At this moment five hundred waggons full of ammunition, stores, provisions, bullocks, ponies, mules, donkeys, and camels are blocking the Lahore railway station. The other day I examined a long train of waggons in which the dumb, patient animals were packed like sardines in a box. Six camels were dragged the other morning out of a train dead, and such sights are anything but uncommon." (*Daily News*, 12th November, 1879.)

hill dress, he did succeed in learning a little of what the people of the neighbourhood were planning. Two of these men, who had fallen among thieves, were released by a Mullah in the Jagdallak Pass. Taking them for travellers, the priest questioned them as to the numbers and position of the British troops, and, when they had told him that British tents lined the road between Jellalabad and Gandamak, he confided to them that three sections of the Ghilzais were ready to fight, but that their chief, Asmatullah Khan, had written that he was unable to oppose the *Feringis*. As for the Khugianis and Shinwaris, he did not think they would rise.

Meanwhile Arbuthnot's Brigade had advanced to Jamrud, and from Jamrud to Dakka and Basawal, whilst Bright had arrived at Gandamak, where, by the 3rd of November, he had concentrated twelve guns, six hundred and fifty-five cavalry, and two thousand two hundred and ninety-three infantry, a force which he deemed sufficient to allow him to spare the following troops for the expedition to Seh Baba :—

- 2 guns I—A Royal Horse Artillery on elephants.
- 4 guns Hazara Mountain Battery.
- 100 sabres 10th Bengal Cavalry.
- 200 „ Guides Cavalry.
- 435 rifles 9th Foot.
- 500 „ 24th Punjab Infantry.
- 500 „ Guides Infantry.
- 2 Companies Sappers and Miners.
- Strength of all ranks 2,192 men and six guns.

Under Charles Gough's command this column left Safed Sang on the morning of the 4th November, Bright joining it at the Surkab River, where the night was spent and a fortified post established. During the next day's march to Jagdallak, the tribesmen showed in some strength, but the crowning of the heights on either side the road defeated any plan of attack which they might have formed, and only a few shots were interchanged. Leaving thirty sabres and two hundred

rifles to hold Jagdallak, the force marched on the 6th, for Seh Baba, but at Kata Sang, four miles short of that place, the advanced guard of the Kabul Column was seen approaching. This force, consisting of

4 guns F-A Royal Horse Artillery .	Major Smyth-Windham,
12th Bengal Cavalry	Major Green,
67th Foot	Lieutenant-Colonel Knowles,
23rd Pioneers	Lieutenant-Colonel Currie,
28th Punjab Infantry	Lieutenant-Colonel Hudson,

under General Macpherson, had entered on its part of the concerted movement on the 1st of November, in order that Sir F. Roberts might take advantage of its protection to examine personally the passes leading from Kabul to Jagdallak, with a view to selecting the least difficult of the two for the cart road which it was intended to construct between those places. As the slopes on either side the Lattaband Pass were found to be fairly easy, whilst the hills which shut in the Khud Kabul Defile were too rugged and steep to admit of a road for wheeled carriage being made over them,¹ the former was chosen, and orders issued that the work should be begun as early as possible and carried on by parties working from either end. The reconnaissance lasted two days ; on the 3rd of November Roberts returned to Sherpur, and on the 4th, whilst he was welcoming the Shutargardan garrison, Macpherson passed unopposed through the Khud Kabul Defile. On the 5th, he encamped in the Tezin Valley, and on the 6th joined hands with Gough's column at Kata Sang. The two columns remained only one day in touch with one another, just long enough to discuss the manner of their future co-operation. As Roberts required to keep

¹ Roberts telegraphed to Simla on the 4th of November as follows :—" I reconnoitred yesterday to within three or four miles of Tezin, proceeding by Charasia (? Chinari) Pass and returning by the Khud Kabul ; former is impracticable ; latter is easy as regards road, but there is a great deal of water even now. After rain, or when snow melts it would be impassable ; besides it is a difficult pass to force when occupied by an enemy. It can be turned, but it is doubtful if a cart road could be made over the hills which turn it."

one strong Brigade at Kabul whilst despatching another in the direction of Ghazni to collect supplies,¹ he naturally wished to place the greater part of the work of keeping open his communications with India on Bright's shoulders; and that General, when Macpherson had fully explained the position and difficulties of the Kabul Force, undertook to construct and hold a strongly entrenched fort two miles in advance of the Jagdallak Kotal, and to establish a fortified post at Pezwan, an important point about eleven miles beyond Gandamak. On the 7th of November, Macpherson marched for Kabul by the Lattaband route, the main body of his column which had halted at Seh Baba, being joined at Sarobi by the advanced guard from Kata Sang. The people of Sarobi, a village lying on the right bank of the Kabul River, in the midst of well cultivated lands, proved friendly; but with all their good will they could not furnish the troops with more food and forage than sufficed for their immediate needs, and Macpherson had to go further afield to make some provision for future use. He himself crossed the river with a small reconnoitring force, on the 8th of November, and from Naghalu, at the western end of the Laghman Valley, despatched foragers, escorted by a company of the 67th Foot, under Captain A. J. Poole, to Doaba, the point where the Panjsher, Togao, and Kabul rivers meet. The Safis of Togao, a peculiar race whom, on account of their light hair and eyes, the traveller Masson believed to be akin to the Kafirs, gathered quickly to defend their stores of grain and *bhusa*, and, on the 10th, some seven or eight hundred of them fell on the foraging party, killed three men of the escort, and wounded Poole and four privates of the 67th. This sudden attack threw the laden camels into such confusion that when the reinforcements sent off by Macpherson—four mountain guns,² a squadron of

¹ On the 8th of November, Roberts reported to the Commander-in-Chief, that "sufficient food for men has been arranged for, but *bhusa* (chopped straw) and forage are required in such large quantities some must come from a distance."

² These guns, which had belonged to Money's force, were sent up to Macpherson on Hugh Gough's return to Sherpur.—H. B. H.

cavalry, and two hundred and fifty infantry under Captain Swinley—arrived on the scene, they could not force their way through the disorganized transport train. Seizing the spur of a hill overlooking the road, Swinley brought his guns to bear on the enemy, and their accurate fire saved the foraging party from the toils that were rapidly closing round them. Unable to silence the guns, the Safis had no choice but to fly, followed up by the cavalry till Macpherson, fearing for the safety of a small unsupported force in a broken and tangled country, recalled them and withdrew with all his troops to his camp at Sarobi. On the 12th of November, he marched through the Lattaband Pass, and on the 13th, having detached two mountain guns, a wing of the 23rd Pioneers, and the 28th Punjab Infantry, under Colonel J. Hudson, to make the cart road over it,¹ he moved on to Butkhak, where he halted a few days to await the arrival from Kabul of a convoy of sick and wounded—sixteen officers, fifty-four European and forty-nine Native soldiers—and to see it safely across the Pass. This duty accomplished, he established a fortified post of fifty rifles at a convenient spot, and returned on the 19th November to Kabul with what remained to him of his Brigade. The same day telegraphic communication with India was opened, and Sir Frederick Roberts, having been given the local rank of Lieutenant-General, assumed command of all the troops from Kabul to Jamrud.

Whilst Macpherson was slowly making his way back to Kabul, Bright and Gough were busy looking to the safety of their part of the communications and preparing for the advent of winter. The Hazara Battery, a Squadron of the 10th Bengal Lancers, the Guides, and the 2nd Gurkhas, which had just joined the flying column, were left to construct and garrison the new forts near Jagdallak and at Pezwan, the Royal Artillery guns, a squadron of the 10th Bengal Lancers,

¹ Captain W. G. Nicholson, who had been with Colonel Money on the Shutargardan Pass, was sent from Kabul to superintend the construction of the road.—H. B. H.

the 9th Foot, and 24th Punjab Infantry, returning with the Generals to Gandamak, where large bodies of Khugianis and other tribesmen were employed in erecting defensive posts and shelters for the strong force which it was intended to concentrate there. On the 15th of November the 4th Gurkhas, reported by Gough to be "a splendid regiment in every way," arrived from India, and two days later, the work of laying out new cantonments on the site of the old having made sufficient progress, the greater part of the troops, organized in working parties, were shifted from Safed Sang to Gandamak.

On the 1st December, General Bright returned to Jellalabad with a view to preparing for an expedition into the Laghman Valley, whose inhabitants were proving no less hostile in this second phase of the war than they had shown themselves in the first.

Whilst Bright and his Brigadiers were struggling with the numberless difficulties attendant on moving and feeding troops with insufficient transport in a barren land, Sir Michael Kennedy had been busy organizing the new Supply and Transport Department, and when all the work which demanded his presence at Army Head-Quarters had been accomplished, he left Simla to inspect and superintend the arrangements in the field of operations from the railway terminus at Jhelam to Kabul, where he arrived on the 1st of December, accompanied by Colonel A. G. F. Hogg, Director of Transport, Bombay Army; Major H. B. Hanna, Army Head-Quarters Staff; Captain T. Deane, Assistant Secretary Military Department; Lieutenant A. F. Liddell, Aide-de-Camp to the Viceroy; and Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. A. Lockhart, who joined the party at Jellalabad, having been appointed Assistant Quartermaster-General at Kabul.

On his way, Sir Michael visited the equipping depôts of Jhelam, Rawal Pindi, and Peshawar, and the Transport base and Field Commissariat depôts at the last-named station; he also inspected the different posts on the Khyber line, where he had introduced the *étappen*, or staging system, thereby lightening the work of both troops

and transport. Taking into account the short time that the second phase of the war had been in progress and the extraordinary difficulties created for Bright's Division by Roberts's hasty advance, the general result of the inspection was not unfavourable, yet it revealed many serious defects. Too often the animals in use were ill adapted to the conditions of their work and equipped with defective gear. Most of the transport officers had little or no experience of their duties, and some displayed small aptitude for them. It was difficult to ensure intelligent, trustworthy, and practical supervision, and for lack of it the cattle were neglected, ill-treated, and frequently defrauded of their food by attendants who, to use Kennedy's emphatic phrase, were "the sweepings of the bazaars," men who knew nothing about, and cared not at all for the creatures in their charge; and there was a dearth even of these miserable substitutes for the properly qualified muleteer or camel-driver, classes which seemed to have died out, killed by the hardships of the former campaign.¹ Little by little, these defects were remedied, and the experience acquired by Kennedy on his inspection journey and during his eventful sojourn at Kabul, enabled him to suggest so many useful improvements in matters of detail that, in the end, the whole complicated machinery of Transport and Supply moved with remarkably little waste and friction, and reflected great credit on the Department of which he was the head.²

¹ "We were absolutely driven to engage the sweepings of the bazaars; and even then there was great difficulty in procuring the full number needed." (*Memorandum on Supply and Transport Arrangements in 1879-80*, p. 8, by Lieutenant-General Sir M. Kennedy, K.C.S.I., R.E.)

² Sir M. Kennedy was ably seconded in all his work by Captain E. H. H. Collen, whose services he gratefully acknowledged. "To my assistant," he wrote, "I am deeply indebted. The merits of this officer are well known to the Government of India, and the talents he has brought to bear on all branches of military administration have, on many occasions, been of very great public benefit."

OBSERVATION

Troops without transport are worse than useless, for, whilst waiting, they consume the supplies on which their future activity must depend ; yet at Army Head-Quarters there is always a tendency to order troops to move before the due provision for moving them has been made, and this tendency was never more noticeable than in the campaign of 1879-80.

“It has been the case all through these operations,” so wrote Sir Michael Kennedy in his Report, “that the first thing that has been considered and determined on has been that certain forces should operate in certain places and directions. Troops have been pushed forward by rail, or other means, as rapidly as possible, and it has been expected that they should nowhere be delayed for want of either supplies or transport ; but the arrangements in both these important matters have sometimes, apparently, been held to be mere minor details connected with the movements of troops, and have not been regarded, as they evidently should be, as conditions precedent of the possibility of any military movement.”

CHAPTER XIV

Martial Law in Kabul

THE work of retribution entrusted to the Military Commission appointed on the 16th of October went forward with ever increasing velocity till the 12th of November, the day after the proclamation of an amnesty, from the benefit of which all the leaders of the people were excluded.¹

At first the number of persons arrested for either of the capital offences specified in the proclamation of the 12th of October, was small, consisting chiefly of men in official positions, suspected of having planned the massacre of the British Mission or of having stirred up the Kabulis to oppose the British advance, and against these it was not found easy to obtain evidence, even the greediest and most unscrupulous informer shrinking from openly betraying men whose death, sooner or later, would certainly be avenged; but after the discovery of the muster rolls of some of the Amir's regiments, scores at a time were swept "into the net of the military commission"² by the simple process of surrounding a village and forcing its headmen to bring out every inhabitant whose name appeared on one, or other,

¹ Extract Proclamation by Sir F. Roberts, November 11th, 1879. "Further, I hold out no promise of pardon to those who, well knowing the Amir's position in the British camp, instigated the troops and people of Kabul to take up arms against the British troops. They have been guilty of wilful rebellion against the Amir's authority, and they will be considered and treated as rebels, wherever found."—*Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 162.

² Hensman's *Afghan War*, 1879-80, p. 132.

of these rolls. The difficulty with regard to evidence, was got over by permitting Mahomed Hyat, the Indian Civilian, to whom in the absence of Pushtu-speaking British officers the task of beating up witnesses was assigned, to examine informers in secret,¹ the Commission accepting his report of their depositions instead of insisting on their appearing before it in person; a procedure which left the accused in ignorance of their accusers, and deprived them of the chance of proving their innocence by the production of rebutting testimony.² In ordinary circumstances a tribunal consisting of three British officers, however destitute of judicial experience they might be,³ would have refused to send men to the gallows on doubtful and tainted evidence; but Roberts's Force, from the highest to the lowest, was so imbued with the conviction that, in intent, if not in actual fact, every Afghan was a participant in the crime it had been sent to avenge, that the duty laid upon the Commission seemed more that of selecting a certain number of scapegoats from a guilty population, than of carefully investigating and deciding each case on its merits. A similar state of mind had prevailed in the Mutiny and had found expression in indiscriminate and wholesale massacres; but, at that time, the Indian Government had at its head a wise and humane statesman—Lord Canning—and the Indian Army, a wise and humane soldier—Lord Clyde—both of whom did their utmost to stem the spirit of revenge which they saw to be breaking down the moral sense of their subordinates; whereas, in 1879, the Indian Government itself fanned the angry passions which policy and humanity should

¹ These informers may have been the personal enemies of the men they accused. Macgregor mentions such a case. "One of the accused was Abu Bakar, against whom there was a regular got-up case, the principal witness being his deadly enemy." (*Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 141.)

² Hensman, p. 82.

³ The only officer belonging to the Judge Advocate General's Department at Kabul—Major C. A. Gorham—was not placed on the Military Commission.—H. B. H.

have prompted it to allay. When it is remembered that, in flat contradiction of the great bulk of the evidence already in Lord Lytton's hands,¹ his instructions to Sir F. Roberts—a commander whose recent doings in Khost had proved him to have more faith in force than in justice—were based on the assumption that every Afghan might justly be held responsible for the massacre of the British Embassy, there is little to wonder at in the bitter and callous temper which animated the British officers and men occupying Kabul, and left its fatal mark on the proceedings of the Military Commission. That temper is fully revealed in the diary of Colonel Charles Macgregor and the letters to the *Pioneer* of Mr. Howard Hensman, the newspaper correspondent, whom, in contravention of the Government's orders, Roberts allowed to accompany him. Both men shared it, but there was this difference between them, that, whilst the civilian saw nothing to regret in summary executions following on secret investigations, the soldier was tormented by doubts as to their justice and wisdom. Hensman's comment on the shooting of prisoners by Massy's troopers on the 8th of October that "as we are an 'avenging army,' scruples must be cast aside,"² is in striking contrast to Macgregor's criticism on the Government's orders that the punishment of individuals "should be swift, stern, and impressive."³ "It cannot be short," so he wrote in his diary on the 15th of October, "unless we catch men whose guilt is patent. With all others we must inquire thoroughly.

¹ "So far as I am able to judge at present, the outbreak was entirely due to a quarrel about pay. The 'Ardel' regiment, stationed in the Bala Hissar, having demanded more than one month's pay offered to them, then maltreating and wounding Daud Shah, the general, and threatening the Amir and afterwards the Embassy. I should say that although there may have been disaffected and mutinous language, yet that the outbreak and its results were unpremeditated and unforeseen."—Memorandum dated September 14th by Colonel W. G. Waterfield, the experienced frontier officer, who examined all the escaped eye-witnesses to the attack on the Residency. See, *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 89.

² Hensman's *Afghan War*, p. 49.

³ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 98.

I do not believe it ever does good to kill men indiscriminately, and *I will not lend myself to it.*"¹ The difference is no less marked between the journalist's pleasure in the fact that Roberts's proclamation, issued from Zargan Shahr, "left no outlet of escape for all such persons as . . . offered armed resistance to the British troops advancing with the Amir under their protection,"² and the Chief of the Staff's objection to the killing of men "who merely fought against us," and his determination "not to sentence such men to death."³ A few entries in his diary show that Macgregor was able occasionally to give effect to this resolve:—"Oct. 22.—Saved five men's lives to-day, that is to say, if I had not inquired into their cases, they would have been hanged." Oct. 24.—"Let two fellows free."⁴ But the splitting up of what was originally intended to be a single Commission, over which he would have presided, into two—one for the collection of evidence, the other for the trial of suspected persons—left him with no power over the fate of the accused when once they had been passed on to the military tribunal. That there would have been fewer executions if he, instead of Massy, had been at the head of the Military Commission, may be inferred from his comment on the case of the Kotwal of Kabul, accused of issuing the proclamation that called upon the inhabitants of that city to oppose the British advance:—"There is no direct evidence to prove that the Kotwal ordered it to be made, and therefore there is not enough to hang him, though I daresay that will be done"⁵—a prediction quickly fulfilled; and his opinion of the kind of evidence which satisfied the Military Commission may be read between the lines in the following passage.

"SIAH SANG, Oct. 21.—I take the following from the notes of the proceedings of the Commission: (1) *Prisoner, Sultan Aziz.*—

¹ *Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 136. The italics are Macgregor's.—H. B. H.

² Hensman, pp. 82, 83.

³ *Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 130.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 140, 141.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 138.

Mahamad Hyat states, 'the city people are unwilling to come forward openly; but I have ascertained beyond doubt that this man was the moving spirit on the night of the 5th to get people to go out and fight us. He was also present himself at the fight with a standard.' Accused simply denies his guilt. The Commission sentence him to be hanged. The Commission is composed of Massy, a captain of 72nd, and Moriarty. Eleven men have been hung (including two ordered to-day) up to date. I therefore intend to see that no prisoner goes to the Commission without a clear statement of the nature of the evidence, and without a chance of bringing witnesses in his favour."¹

These entries all occur in October. From the 1st to the 4th of November, Macgregor was absent from Kabul, and from the day of his return till the 16th he was entirely occupied in drawing up the report on the events of the 4th of September, whilst the amnesty, rescinding that part of Roberts's Zargan Shahr proclamation which threatened with death, as rebels against their lawful sovereign, all persons who should oppose his advance, was issued on the 12th. The resolution to proclaim an amnesty, whether taken spontaneously or at the suggestion of the Home Government, must have reached Sir F. Roberts before the 9th of November, for, on that date, Hensman writes to the *Pioneer* that one was expected,² and on the 15th that journal published the following telegram, dated Kabul, November 10th:—"The amnesty is now being printed in Persian and will be published as soon as enough copies are ready;" yet, between the 9th and the 12th of November, a large number of men went to the gallows, condemned for a crime which that document admitted to have been no crime at all.³ In the letter in which Mr.

¹ *Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 140.

² Hensman, p. 135.

³ Extract from Roberts's Proclamation of Nov. 11th, 1879. "I have now received information which tends to show that some at least of those who shared in the opposition encountered by the British troops during their advance on

Hensman predicted the speedy publication of an amnesty, he also mentioned the discovery of the muster rolls of the Afghan regiments and described the action that followed on their discovery. "Flying parties of cavalry," so he wrote, "are sent out, some with sealed orders, to bring in such men as have been marked down by informers eager to earn the rewards offered for the apprehension of guilty persons."¹ On the 8th, one of these flying parties, under General Baker's command, drew a cordon round the village of Indaki. The headman, in obedience to Baker's command, brought out thirty unarmed men, but this sacrifice did not satisfy the British General; and though he withdrew after disarming the inhabitants and taking from them as a fine thirteen hundred maunds of grain and three hundred loads of *bhusa*, it was with the threat of returning and burning the village to the ground unless the last man on his list was given up. From other villages that were visited eighteen men were captured that day; and the next, between twenty and thirty were brought in from Indaki.² On the 10th of November, eleven of the captured, or self-surrendered, men were executed; twenty-eight on the 11th, whilst Roberts was telegraphing the text of the amnesty proclamation to Simla, and ten on the 12th, the very day of its issue; and there is strong reason for suspecting that many of them suffered death for no other cause than that of having resisted the invasion of their country,³ unless indeed Hensman's "inference that those who chose to fight against us must have so far committed themselves in prior

Kabul were led to do so by the belief that the Amir was a prisoner in my camp, and had called upon the soldiery and people of Kabul to rise on his behalf. Such persons, although enemies to the British Government, were not rebels against their own Sovereign."—*Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 162.

¹ Hensman, p. 132.

² *Ibid.* p. 134.

³ "These wholesale executions were mainly intended as a punishment to such as disregarded the proclamation issued at Zargan Shahr by General Roberts on October 3rd, and it is now thought an example, severe enough, has been made." (*Ibid.* p. 137.)

events as to make them in technical term ‘accomplices after the act,’”¹ be accepted as valid.

The punishments decreed by the Military Commission were certainly “swift and stern,” but the manner in which its sentences were carried out can hardly be described as “impressive.” Within twenty-four hours of their conviction, the condemned, under the escort of a commissioned officer and fifty British soldiers, were marched to the gallows that had been set up in the Bala Hissar, “a fatigue party following with picks and shovels as grave-diggers;”² and, “daily, a little crowd of soldiers, camp-followers and traders from the city gathered near the 72nd (Highlanders’) quarter guard, from which starts the road down the ridge. The soldiers, in shirt-sleeves, and with the favourite short pipes in their mouths, betrayed but faint curiosity, looking upon the culprits with hearty contempt;”³ and Hensman seems to have shared this contempt, for he writes, that “such poor specimens of humanity as those marched daily to execution are of but little account in our sight”⁴—yet men who, by his own admission, marched “quietly in, surrendering themselves as calmly as if they were our own soldiers who had over-stayed their leave and expected a slight punishment;” who did “not attempt to conceal their names,”⁵ nor “to deny their presence in the Bala Hissar or at Charasiab;” whose “fanaticism was (is) equal to all fortunes;”⁶ whose courage—callousness, he terms it—“when waiting their turn at the foot of the scaffold (ten men were hanged at a time) was remarkable,”⁷ might well have awakened a nobler feeling in the spectator of their fate; and though in a country, which breeds thou-

¹ Hensman, p. 83.

² Ibid. p. 86.

³ Ibid. pp. 87, 88.

⁴ *Daily News*, December 15th, 1879.

⁵ Hensman, p. 134.

⁶ *Daily News*, December 15th, 1879.

sands of such "fanatics," "they would (will) not be missed,"¹ they certainly would not be forgotten in their own village and by their own kin.² Macgregor's confession, that "we are thoroughly hated and not enough feared. We have been too cruel, yet we have not made them (the Afghans) quite acknowledge our supremacy; and they have not yet had time to appreciate our justice,"³ shows that once again the soldier saw the facts of the situation created by cruelty, edged with contempt, more clearly than the newspaper correspondent.

There was one point, however, on which the two were of one mind. Both were eager to bring men of higher station than these poor villagers within the judicial net. "It makes one exasperated to see the rank and file of these wretches being marched off to execution, while their leaders are still at large;"⁴ so wrote Hensman on the 9th of November; and again, on the 12th, he expressed his regret that leaders like Nek Mahomed and Khushdil Khan had not been in the ranks of the men who had daily passed on their way to the gallows in the Bala Hissar;⁵ and Macgregor did all in his power to bring home the charge of treachery, both as regarded the attack on the Residency and the resistance offered at Charasiab, to other leaders of the people. The entries in his diary between the 15th of October and the 5th of November, show him busy from day to day taking evidence, examining Daud Shah, Yahiya Khan, the Kotwal, the Wazir, the Mustaufi, Zakariah Khan, and lastly the Amir himself,

¹ *Daily News*, December 15th, 1879.

² "They have hitherto traded upon our known weakness—the worship of the quality of mercy—and it is only now that they understand the new principle of retribution we have introduced into our policy. But whether we withdraw again or not, there will be the tale of lives taken by our hangmen still to be counted over in the city and the villages; and who knows yet what powerful names may not top the list?" (Hensman, p. 139.)

³ *Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 158.

⁴ Hensman, pp. 134, 135.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 138.

but to no purpose ; none of the suspected men could be brought to incriminate himself or the others. On the 24th of October, he writes that he cannot "get at any sign that the attack on Cavagnari was premeditated," and admits that he is "inclined to think it was not, but perhaps it may come out later on."¹ On the 31st, he mentions that he has "got on the track of a letter of the Amir's" which will, he hopes, "lead to something."² Evidently it led to nothing, for it is never mentioned again. On the 1st of November he writes that "the General evidently suspects the Amir to be implicated in a plot," but that he has "no evidence to that effect as yet."³ Five days later, after taking the deposition of the Amir, who "let out nothing and complained of having been made a prisoner and being badly treated," he suddenly came to the conclusion that there was no use in going on with the inquiry and that the Commission should stop taking evidence and draw up its report. His own views of the result of the Commission's labours and the action that should be based upon them, he summed up in the following sentences :—"The upshot will be, there is no proof of the thing (the attack on the Residency) having been planned, though there are some grounds of suspicion that it was. There is no manner of doubt that the Amir was most apathetic, and did nothing ; and there are very strong grounds for suspecting that he was not quite free from conniving at the resistance offered to us at Charasiab. On the whole, he must never be again Amir, and had better be deported to India ; the same must be done to the Wazir, Mustaufi, Yahiya, Zakariah, and all that breed. The people are the very greatest set of brutes I ever heard of, and it is evident that they hate us—every one of them. I do not think Wali Mahomed's lot are one little bit better."⁴

¹ *Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 141.

² *Ibid.* p. 142. This was probably the unsigned letter attributed by Wali Mahomed to Nek Mahomed, discussed in a previous chapter.—H. B. H.

³ *Ibid.* 144.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 146, 147.

The words of this entry are very carefully chosen to express the exact state of the writer's mind after he had had before him all the obtainable evidence against men whom he hated and despised, and certainly desired to prove guilty. They show, firstly, that trustworthy testimony to prove the massacre of Cavagnari and his companions premeditated had not been forthcoming, and that Macgregor still believed that only culpable apathy could be laid to the Amir's charge; secondly, that though the evidence which connected Yakub Khan with the resistance offered at Charasiab might be strong, his connivance at that resistance was slight. These being his convictions on the 5th of November, it is a shock to the reader of the diary to come, two pages further on, upon the following entry:—"Nov. 16.—Finished that d—d report. Roberts telegraphed that it was very able and exhaustive, and completely made out the Amir's guilt."¹

In a letter to the Indian Government which accompanied the Report, Roberts expressed the hope that his Excellency in Council would "concur in the opinion that great credit is due to Colonel Macgregor and his colleagues for the patient and comprehensive inquiry, and for the skill with which the information elicited has been brought to bear on the main points at issue"—skill which had evidently been used to make that appear true which the Head of the Commission of Inquiry felt to be false. In this letter, moreover, Roberts did not go further than to claim that "the Amir's guilt" is "now established almost beyond question," and even this qualified opinion as to that guilt was followed by words which admitted the absence of all conclusive evidence in support of it:—"and I believe," so he went on, "that it only requires his removal from Afghanistan to produce such direct and certain evidence as will leave no room for future doubt, either as to his own complicity or as to that of his father-in-law and Ministers. Once the people are satisfied of the fact that

¹ *Life of Macgregor*, Vol. II. pp. 149, 150.

Yakub Khan and his Ministers will never again be in a position to take revenge on those who may have offended them, it will not be long before the *conclusive proof of their guilt* is forthcoming.”¹

The prediction cannot have been fulfilled. Had fresh evidence against the Amir and his Ministers been brought to light after their removal from Afghanistan, one or other of the persons whose interest it was to show they had only received their deserts, would have recorded the fact, and there is no mention of it either in *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, Lord Roberts's *Forty-One Years in India*, or *The Life and Opinions of Sir Charles Macgregor*. So far as the fate of the accused men was concerned, the presence or absence of conclusive proof of their guilt was of no consequence, for, before the Report of the Commission was despatched to the Viceroy, Roberts had “received the orders of his Excellency in Council to arrange for the Ex-Amir's journey to India,”² and on the 1st of December, as has already been mentioned, Yakub Khan left the British camp at Sherpur under a strong escort.

A week later Yahiya Khan, Zakariah Khan, and the Wazir followed him into what was to prove a life-long exile, for the conditions under which the British army evacuated Afghanistan, in 1880, effectually closed that country to their return. Daud Shah who had been of great use to Roberts “in supplying information regarding the Afghan army,”³ and the Mustaufi who was credited with being less unfriendly than the other prisoners and who might prove useful in the administration of the country,⁴ were, for a time, permitted to remain.

Public opinion in India acquiesced in the deposition and deporta-

¹ This letter is given in Macgregor's *Life and Opinions*, 2nd Vol. pp. 150-152, and the italics are either Macgregor's or Roberts's.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 185

⁴ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 259.

tion of Yakub Khan, but not in the methods of the Military Commission.

An article in *The Bombay Review* of the 1st of November contained the following outspoken passage :—

“ Now a word about the drum-head exemplary proceedings : it is plain that many facts under this head are being kept back, doubtless under orders from Simla. Is it according to the usages of war to treat as felons men who resist invasion ? . It is plain that the authorities at Simla are bound to let the world know what has been done in this apparently random work of vengeance.”

A week later the same Review showed that it had a prevision of the consequences to be expected from the cruelties it condemned :—

“ Instead of surprises during the week we have had some more depressing details of military executions with indications, here and there, that our campaign of retribution is sowing a harvest of hatred.”

Up to the middle of November, *The Bombay Review* was the only Anglo-Indian paper to protest against the policy of terror inaugurated by the Proclamation of the 12th of October ; but after the publication of the so-called Amnesty, journals in favour of the war and supporters of Sir F. Roberts were found denouncing the manner in which the work of vengeance had been carried out. “ The Amnesty,” so wrote *The Times of India* on the 17th of November, “ now offered to those Afghans who have fought against our troops since the 3rd of September, and indeed to all save those who were implicated in the Bala Hissar outrage, will be received with general satisfaction. The work of vengeance was so complete as to have become somewhat indiscriminate, and it is probable that General Sir F. Roberts received his orders to ‘ cease firing ’ direct from the Home Government who could scarcely venture to endanger their popularity further at this political crisis. In his Proclamation of the 11th inst. General Roberts confesses that he has been a little hasty . . . and it is to be regretted that a good many innocent persons should have been hanged while he

was making up his mind as to their degree of guilt. The story of the punishment of Kabul will probably never be really known, for with the exception of one correspondent, who was specially admitted to write a pleasant and safe account of the affair, the Government thoroughly succeeded in excluding all independent witnesses. The Proclamation offering head-money for all who fought against the British troops was in force for exactly a month ; the work of vengeance increased in rigour towards the end ; and just before the Proclamation of Amnesty was issued twenty-eight sepoys were hanged by way of emphasis, *although the printing of the Proclamation in Persian character had occupied some days.*"¹

Four days after the appearance in *The Times of India* of these strictures on the work of the Military Commission, *The Friend of India*, a prominent Calcutta journal, ended an article in which it had discussed Roberts's claim to punish all those who had resisted his march since the Amir came to his camp, with the words :—

“ We fear that General Roberts has done us a serious national injury, by lowering our reputation for justice in the eyes of Europe.”

Public opinion at home shared this fear and expressed it in far stronger terms ; but the story of the awakening of the English people to a sense of the cruelties that were being perpetrated in its name, will be better told at a later stage in this narrative.

¹ Italics not in the original article.—H. B. H.

CHAPTER XV

Foraging and Village-Burning

WHEN the fiction of governing Afghanistan in Yakub Khan's name came to an end with the public announcement of his abdication, Sir Frederick Roberts determined to dispense with "the declared aid of any Afghan chief or Sirdar" on the ground that "no good could result from the introduction of any Afghan element into the administration, pending the final orders of Government as to the disposal of the country."¹ Probably he shared Macgregor's belief that he and his troops were universally hated and that "Wali Mahomed and his lot" were as little to be relied on as the adherents of the Ex-Amir; but however great and well-founded his distrust of the Afghan leaders, it was not long before he saw himself driven to interpose Native authority between himself and the common people.

On assuming the reins of government he had proclaimed that, in future, the collection of revenue and the expenditure of public money would be regulated by him, and had threatened with severe punishment anyone who disputed or delayed such orders as he might issue "in regard to the payment of taxes and other connected matters."² So far supplies sufficient for the current needs of the troops had been obtained in the Kabul market or collected, day by day, from the

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 165.

"Advise General Cæsar Berthier to treat the inhabitants well, to make himself loved by them, to leave them their constitution for the present, and to be as little as possible a burden to them." (Napoleon.)

² *Ibid.* p. 160.

surrounding country by native agents sent out under military protection, and the Force might have continued to subsist in this hand-to-mouth fashion till the opening of the Khyber route should enable it to draw upon India ; but Roberts had set his heart on laying in a five months' store of all necessaries before the advent of winter, and his first step towards the realization of this aim was the appointment of Afghan governors to collect the revenue, which, in Afghanistan, is always paid in kind, and to see that each district brought in the amount of bhusa, grass, and grain for which it was assessed—direct collection from village to village being discontinued.¹ The Sirdars selected were Mahomed Hussein Khan, brother of Wali Mahomed, for Maidan, Abdulla Khan for the Logar Valley, and Shahbaz Khan, whose mother was a Kohistani, for Kohistan, all three of whom accepted their appointments with the understanding that they were not only to be held responsible for the whole amount of the revenue due by their respective districts, but also that they were to be the instruments for inducing or compelling the peasants to furnish the extra supplies which Roberts had decided to exact from them.

There was no intention of robbing the peasant : every seer of grain, every maund of bhusa over and above the tribute owing to the State, was to be paid for, and by confiscating eight or nine lakhs of rupees claimed by the Ex-Amir as his private property, Roberts was able to send each governor to his post well furnished with money for the purpose.² The fuel problem, usually almost insoluble in Afghanistan, presented less difficulty than had been anticipated, for the timber obtained by the dismantling of the Bala Hissar, after providing for the building of additional sheds and barracks, left over a

¹ Roberts's principal Commissariat officer estimated the quantity of forage required to keep the Cavalry and Artillery horses, the mules of the Mountain Batteries, and the transport animals supplied for five months at 150,000 maunds (5,357 tons).—H. B. H.

² Letter of Sir F. Roberts to Foreign Secretary. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 165.

surplus which, carefully stacked in the Sherpur cantonments, would, it was hoped, prove sufficient to carry the British Force through the winter.

It had been Roberts's intention to leave the collection of supplies in the hands of the newly appointed Afghan governors, and to use such of his troops as he could spare in overawing the population of Kohistan and Ghazni, but, on the 11th of November, an unexpected fall of snow put an end to this scheme. The snow soon melted, but the warning it had conveyed could not be disregarded; with winter at the door, it would have been the height of imprudence to despatch troops to points where, at any moment, they might be cut off from all communication with the main body; and unless the Cavalry Brigade were broken up and two of the Native Regiments sent away from Kabul, the pace at which supplies, especially supplies of forage, were coming in would have to be quickened.¹

Mahomed Hussein Khan seems to have entered on his post on the 17th or 18th of November, and on the 21st, the day after Macpherson's return to Sherpur, General Baker followed him to Maidan for the purpose of taking over the stores that were awaiting removal, and of settling the country, which was in a disturbed state owing to the preaching of a Mullah who was reported to be collecting men and stirring up the people to resistance.² The column accompanying him Roberts describes as small, but the subjoined table shows it to have been large compared to the size of the force from which it was subtracted:—

2 guns G-3 Royal Artillery.
 4 guns No. 1 Mountain Battery.
 1 Squadron 9th Lancers.
 2 Squadrons 14th Bengal Lancers.

¹ Only seventeen days' supply had been stored by the middle of November.
 —H. B. H.

² Telegram from Roberts to Foreign Secretary, Simla. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 164.

2 Squadrons 5th Punjab Lancers.
500 Rifles 92nd Highlanders.
400 Rifles 3rd Sikhs.
400 Rifles 5th Punjab Infantry.

Yet it was evident that it would only just suffice for the work it had in hand, since, on the line of march, a large proportion of it would be required to guard the transport trains, consisting of between 2,000 and 3,000 animals, and, together with the troops, covering a distance of seven miles.

After halting for the night at Argandeh, Baker entered the Maidan Valley on the morning of the 22nd, and pitched his camp near the village of Nâure Falad, 25 miles south-west of Kabul, where Roberts and his staff joined him the following day. The valley, about four miles wide, intersected by the river Kabul, was found to contain numerous villages and fortified enclosures, and to be rich in orchards and carefully irrigated cornfields, the produce of which had already been hoarded for winter use ; but, notwithstanding this appearance of plenty, Mahomed Hussein had failed to collect the whole of the supplies for which Roberts had made him answerable : all that they legally owed, the people had brought in, but nothing beyond that amount had he been able to induce them to surrender. Baker quickly broke down the resistance of the Maidan villagers by seizing their headmen ; but in the neighbouring Dara Nirikh Valley, Bahadur Khan, an influential Ghilzai Chief, refused to submit to the British demands. His obduracy was reported to Roberts on his arrival in camp, and he at once sent out a squadron of the 9th Lancers and one of the 14th Bengal Lancers with orders to capture the defaulter.

An eight miles' ride brought the little party into Khan Bahadur's territory, and after passing unmolested near several of his villages, it reached his stronghold. A number of men, gathered together in front of its gateway, rushed inside on the approach of the column, manned the walls, and fired a volley by which three horses were killed ; and

unsupported by infantry and guns, the cavalry had to confess its helplessness by immediate retirement.¹ Early the next morning, after placing tents and baggage for safety in a fort near the river in charge of the two field guns, a detachment of cavalry, and three hundred rifles, Roberts started out with the bulk of Baker's force to avenge the previous day's rebuff, and to teach the tribesmen, far and near, the danger of defying British authority. He met with no opposition on the march, and the valley itself was found to be deserted. The scenes that followed were graphically described by Hensman in a letter to the *Pioneer*, dated November 24th :—

“ All Bahadur Khan's villages, some ten in number, were marked down to be looted and burnt, and Sikhs and Sowars were quickly engaged in the work. The houses were found stored with bhusa, straw, firewood, and twigs for the winter, as well as a small quantity of corn, and as there was not time to clear them out, and we could not afford to leave a force for the night in such a dangerous position so near to the hills, orders were given to fire the villages and destroy the houses and their contents. No better men than Sikhs could be found for such work, and in a few minutes Bahadur Khan's villages were in flames, and volumes of dense black smoke pouring over the valley, a high wind aiding the fire with frantic earnestness.”²

Before applying the torch, the earthen corn bins, which are the special feature of all Afghan peasant houses, were smashed to pieces, and every hole and corner ransacked in the hope of discovering hidden treasure; whilst outside, soldiers and camp-followers vied with each other in chasing down ducks, fowls, and donkeys, and the cavalry scoured the country, driving in the villagers' few cows and sheep.

With so many hands ready to help, a few hours sufficed to complete the work of destruction, and by evening the force, with all the

¹ Mitford's *To Kabul with the Cavalry Brigade*, pp. 142, 143.

² Hensman, p. 168.

loot worth removal, was back in camp, leaving the Dara Nirikh Valley "full of smoking ruins and blazing stacks."¹

Next morning Roberts returned to Kabul, and Baker resumed his foraging. On the 27th, pushing on ahead of his infantry supports with only a handful of cavalry, he entered Ben-i-Badam, a village thirty miles from Kabul in the Wardak district, which was known to be full of disbanded soldiery. All the able-bodied inhabitants were out in the fields at their usual daily work, but the old men hastened to bring offerings of fruit and milk and grain and fodder. Troopers and horses were busily refreshing themselves when a number of armed men belonging to the Mullah's following were descried rushing down a neighbouring hill, evidently intent on cutting off the British retreat. A sharp skirmish ensued, and the little party had considerable difficulty in extricating itself from its awkward position and rejoining the infantry.

Returning next day with a large force, Baker drove the Mullah's men from the height above Ben-i-Badam, and burnt that village to the ground, believing, so he reported, that its inhabitants "were in league with the insurgents."²

By this time the process of settling the country by terrorizing its people, had borne fruit in such widespread disaffection that Roberts saw the necessity of concentrating his troops to meet emergencies that might, at any moment, have to be faced. Baker, recalled to Sherpur, left Maidan on the 30th of November, his withdrawal covered by his cavalry, lest the tribesmen should harass his march, and, perhaps, snatch from him a portion of the supplies that he had succeeded in wringing from them. Soon large stacks of bhusa and bags of grain near the Commissariat Gate³ testified to the thoroughness of his foraging; but four days after his arrival in cantonments came the news

¹ Mitford's *To Kabul with the Cavalry Brigade*, p. 145.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 178.

³ Hensman, p. 184.

that the unfortunate governor, Mahomed Hussein Khan, had been fallen upon and murdered, thus paying with his life for the assistance he had rendered to the despoilers of his people.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. No reasonable person will dispute the proposition that, in an enemy's country, a general's first consideration must be his troops ; but his duty does not end with them, especially when, as in Afghanistan in 1879, he has destroyed the national government and taken the administration of the country into his own hands, thereby making himself responsible for the welfare of its inhabitants. Had Sir Frederick Roberts contented himself with confiscating, for his own purposes, the revenue due to the Amir, he would have found himself in possession of ample supplies, wherewith to maintain his force until the Khyber route could be opened up, and provision convoys from India begin to arrive ; and the advent of that day would have been much hastened if, instead of employing nearly all his transport and a third of his troops in coercing the peasants into parting with food and forage necessary to their own existence, he had thrown his whole energy into the construction of a good cart road, the completion of which was soon to be retarded by dangerous and widespread disturbances due to his exactions and barbarities.

Even the appropriation of the supplies constituting the Amir's revenue to the maintenance of a foreign army, meant a heavy loss to the country, for the bulk of those supplies are always sold by the Afghan officials to merchants, and through them find their way back to the people.

OBSERVATION II. The policy of village-burning has been considered and condemned in connection with the invasion of Khost, and the condemnation pronounced upon it need not be repeated ; but the defence set up by Lord Roberts for the destruction wrought in the

Dara Nirikh Valley calls for comment. It is to be found in the 2nd Volume of *Forty-One Years in India*, p. 258, and runs thus : “Hearing that Baker was experiencing difficulty in collecting supplies, I joined him at Maidan to satisfy myself how matters stood. The headmen in the neighbourhood refused to deliver the *Khalsa* grain they had been ordered to furnish, and, assisted by a body of Ghilzais from Ghazni and Wardak, they attacked our Cavalry charged with collecting it, and murdered our agent Sirdar Mahomed Hussein Khan. For these offences I destroyed the chief *Malik*’s fort and confiscated his store of grain, after which there was no more trouble, and supplies came in freely.”

(1) Roberts left Kabul before Baker arrived in Maidan, therefore not because he had heard that his lieutenant “was experiencing difficulty in collecting supplies.”

(2) The headmen in the Maidan Valley, as in other districts, did not refuse “to deliver the *Khalsa* grain,” *i.e.* the Amir’s share of their crops ; on the contrary, the following passages from Macgregor’s Diary, and Hensman’s letter to the *Pioneer* of the 24th of November, show that they gave it without demur :—

“They have given the tribute grain and forage readily enough, but have evaded furnishing the amount we required in addition to this.”¹

Major Green, commanding the 12th Bengal Cavalry, “went as far as Killa-Haji and went to the different villages en route, and they expressed themselves quite ready to give up the grain due from them.”²

(3) “Our Cavalry” were not attacked by the headmen whilst collecting supplies, but whilst attempting to capture Bahadur Khan ;³

¹ Hensman, p. 165.

² Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 135.

³ “I at once ordered Captain Turner to go out to Nirikh with two squadrons of cavalry, and bring in Bahadur Khan quietly, if possible ; if not, by force.”—Roberts’s Political Diary, 23rd November, *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 177.

and the resistance met with was offered only at that chief's own fort and by his immediate followers.

(4) Sirdar Mahomed Hussein Khan was murdered not before, but ten days after, the punitive expedition into the Nirikh Valley; ¹ consequently instead of Bahadur Khan's villages being burnt to avenge his death, he was killed in revenge for their destruction.²

(5) Lord Roberts would have it appear that he only destroyed Bahadur Khan's fort; but the following extract from his Political Diary tells a different tale:—

“I gave orders that Bahadur Khan's fort and the whole of the Umar Khel villages in its neighbourhood should be destroyed.”³

OBSERVATION III. Baker's apology for the destruction of the village of Ben-i-Badam is as unsatisfactory as Roberts's defence of the burning of Bahadur Khan's villages. Seeing that he took the place by surprise, there could have been no collusion between the inhabitants and the so-called insurgents; and to avenge on them a rebuff, which he had brought on himself by temerity and lack of caution, was as vindictive as it was impolitic.⁴

¹ “Sirdar Mahomed Hussein Khan has been murdered in Maidan.”—Roberts's Political Diary, 4th December. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 191.

² “The men who killed him are said to have come down the Dara-Nirikh from the hills about Bahadur Khan's villages; and their action was in revenge for our burning of their villages.” (Hensman, p. 183.)

³ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 177.

⁴ Colonel Macgregor in his Diary of the 28th November, 1879, referring to these outrages remarks:—“I do not think this burning of villages a good plan; it exasperates them (the Afghans) and does not funk them. To me it is specially repugnant as it reminds me of the days when they used to do the same with the Highlanders.” (Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 154.)

CHAPTER XVI

The Rising Storm

ROBERTS returned to Sherpur on the 25th of November to find himself confronted by dangers which grew in gravity from hour to hour. The executions in the Bala Hissar, the raid into the Chardeh Valley, the burning of Bahadur Khan's villages and of Ben-i-Badam had roused the people from the apathy into which they had sunk on the destruction of their government; and the man who could give direction to the awakening spirit of resistance, and overcome the tribal and personal enmities which render it so hard for Afghans to combine, had been found in the person of the Mullah, mentioned by Roberts in a telegram of the 17th of November as collecting men and trying to create disturbances in the country round Ghazni.

Ninety years old, and so infirm that he had to be carried from village to village on a bed, Mushk-i-Alam might well be accounted no formidable foe, and Roberts was inclined to accept the reports which described him as having little influence with the people; but facts soon proved that his power extended far beyond the district in which he had first been heard of. Ghazni, which its governor had abandoned to seek a refuge in the British camp, remained his head-quarters; but in Kohistan, in Maidan, in the Logar Valley, in Tagao, even in the Mohmand country, his voice was heard, or his messages received, and chief and peasant answered to the call which summoned them to destroy Roberts and his army, as their fathers had wiped out the forces of Elphinstone.

In this sudden awakening of the national spirit, the Governors appointed by Roberts found themselves powerless and despised. The headmen of Kohistan defied the authority of Shahbaz Khan, and openly proclaimed their intention of waging a Holy War against their foreign oppressors.¹ Sirdar Abdullah Khan, deserted by the Logaris, had to fly before a party of the Mullah's adherents, and, as has been already stated, Sirdar Mahomed Hussein Khan was "murdered apparently by men of Mushk-i-Alam's raising."² Kabul was full of rumours of an impending night attack on the cantonments; the city bankers asserted that the Kohistanis, acting in concert with Usman Khan, the chief of Tagao, were in force at Khoja Serai and might at any moment appear before Sherpur; Daud Shah predicted a general outbreak of disorder, and warned Roberts that the rebellion would not lack leaders, for Usman Khan of Tagao, Mir Bacha, the principal chief of Kohistan, and Faiz Mahomed, the Afghan general, who had closed the Khyber in the face of the Chamberlain mission,³ had promised to throw in their lot with the insurgents.³

Day by day, Roberts chronicled in his Political Diary the reports that reached him, the steps he was taking to check disaffection, and the small success that attended on his efforts. He sent out Ibrahim Khan to help Shahbaz Khan, and between them they persuaded some of the Kohistani headmen to come in; but Mir Bacha held aloof, and there could be no certainty that those who did listen to the British General's exhortations and threats to destroy their villages would perform promises made to secure their dismissal to their homes.⁴ He wrote to the hard-pressed governor of Logar to come in, and promised to send to his assistance if he could not escape unaided.⁵

¹ Political Diary, 23rd to 29th November. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 178.

² Telegram of the 7th of December. *Ibid.* p. 180.

³ Kabul Diary, November 30th to December 6th. *Ibid.* p. 191.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 191, 192.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 191.

He held a durbar at which all were free to present petitions, but there were no petitioners.¹ Uncertain how far the predicted attack on cantonments might have for its object the release of the imprisoned Amir, he despatched Yakub Khan secretly in haste to India, and rid himself a week later of the dangerous presence of Yahiya Khan, Zakariah Khan, and the Wazir. He determined to retain Wali Mahomed to help him in settling the country round Kabul, and in his place appointed Hashim Khan as Governor of Turkestan ;² but neither in that distant province nor yet close at hand did the change exercise any influence on the course of events. In one direction only was he successful ; his unflinching cheerfulness inspired his troops with the fullest confidence in him and themselves. None of those who rode over the battle-field of Charasiab with him on the 5th of December, and heard him describe the action to Sir Michael Kennedy and the officers who had accompanied him to Kabul, could doubt that, whatever the difficulties pressing upon him, he felt certain of his ability to meet and overcome them ; and the eagerness with which on the following day, he joined in a paper chase at the close of a picnic given in honour of the new-comers, lightened the hearts of men of less buoyant temperament than their chief's. From no word or look of his could anyone have guessed the load of anxiety that he was carrying about with him, anxiety which was not confined to the state of affairs outside cantonments. The knowledge that a vast enclosure full of combustible materials—wood and grain and fodder—to which Afghans of all sorts—all at heart enemies—had access, might at any moment become the prey of fire, was constantly present to his mind ; and so, too, was the thought that the fidelity of his Pathan troops might not be proof against the efforts that he knew were being made to undermine it. In the Kuram he had learned to know that race feeling and the ties of blood could be stronger than the bonds of

¹ Kabul Diary, November 30th to December 6th. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 191.

² *Ibid.* p. 192.

discipline, and what had happened once might happen again; yet no precaution could be taken where it might be fatal to show distrust.¹

There can, however, be no doubt that, notwithstanding his many anxieties, Roberts's outward attitude corresponded to his real convictions; had it been otherwise, he could not have been content to leave ugly gaps in his defences, nor have tolerated, close up to the walls of the cantonments, buildings and enclosures that would afford shelter to an attacking foe.² On the 30th November, the Chief of the Staff, after riding round the position, had warned the General Officer of the day, and the Field Officer on duty, to look to its flanks, and ordered the Commanding Engineer to throw up shelter trenches and sink gun pits on the Behmaru Heights; but the next day Roberts telegraphed to Simla that the weather was very cold, and that all hands were well employed in providing winter shelter—a proof that in his opinion the comfort of the troops still took precedence of their safety.³ Up to the 6th of December, he seems to have thought that he could restore order by administrative measures only; but, on that day, the news that a number of Kohistanis were marching on Kabul, their leaders proclaiming a Holy War, must have convinced him of the futility of orders which had no display of force behind

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 300.

A very bad case of desertion had just occurred in the Kuram. A non-commissioned officer and two men of a distinguished Native regiment had walked off with their rifles, two hundred rounds of ammunition, and Rs. 4,000 belonging to the Telegraph Department; and General Tyler, to whom the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry had been sent, believed that the whole guard had been implicated in the crime.—H. B. H.

² “It is easy to understand both why Sir F. Roberts dreaded originally to occupy the Bala Hissar permanently, and why he was tempted to place his troops in a place so undesirable, from a military point of view, as Sherpur. Still it is impossible not to feel, in the light of present events, that the decision was erroneous and in distinct contradiction to all the teachings of the past.” (*Times*' Correspondent, Kabul, December 22nd, 1879.)

³ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 179.

them, for he advised Shahbaz Khan's immediate return to Kabul, and detailed a force under Macpherson to seize Baba Kushkar, Mir Bacha's fort, lying about twenty miles from Sherpur.¹ Even then he cannot have realized the full gravity of the situation, for a telegram, which he sent to the Indian Government next morning, treated it very slightly :—"Kohistanis are assembling and inclined to give trouble. Some men under a Mullah, named Mushk-i-Alam, have collected again near Ben-i-Badam ; these people and the Kohistanis are too far away at present to take notice of. I am endeavouring to settle matters without proceeding to extremities."² That day Mushk-i-Alam moved from Ben-i-Badam to Argandeh, only fourteen miles from Kabul ; and a second telegram, which began with the admission that affairs round the city had been less satisfactory of late, ended with the announcement that, anxious as he was to avoid any further expeditions at present, he might be forced to send the troops out again.³

This message must have been intended to prepare the Government of India for the news that the troops had actually taken the field, for hardly had it been despatched when Roberts summoned a Council of War and laid before it his plan of operations, in which two forces, the one under Macpherson, the other under Baker, were to take part. Macpherson's column was to enter the Chardeh Valley through the Nanachi Pass and halt at Aushar, three and a half miles from Sherpur ; whilst Baker's column was to march through the Sang-i-Nawishta Defile and over the battle-field of Charasiab, spend a night at Childukhteran, and next morning cross the mountains separating the Logar and Kabul Rivers, and strike the Maidan Valley at a point thirty miles west of Kabul and fourteen in rear of the enemy.⁴ Then both columns

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 157.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 179.

³ *Ibid.* p. 180.

⁴ Brigadier-General Baker's Despatch, dated Kabul, 16th December, 1879.

were to advance on Argandeh, and crush or disperse the forces led by the Mullah and the Wardak chief, Mahomed Jan.¹

No exception seems to have been taken to this plan, but Macgregor suggested that the Guides at the Jagdallak Pass should be directed to occupy the bridge over the Kabul River, near Butkhak, and Roberts accepted the proposal.² Inquiries, however, showed that the bridge in question was too far from the proposed scene of operations to make its occupation of any consequence, and the Guides were therefore ordered to march straight to Sherpur.

Before the Council broke up, it was settled that a Review of all the troops should be held the following day in the plain, lying between the Behmaru Heights and the lake of Waziristan, ostensibly for the purpose of presenting two non-commissioned officers and two men of the 72nd Highlanders with medals for distinguished conduct at the storming of the Spingawi Kotal in the previous December, but really as a preparation for the proposed military movements. Four thousand seven hundred and ten men of all ranks and twenty guns were present at that parade, whilst, to protect the cantonments and their precious stores, each infantry regiment furnished a guard of a hundred men ; all pickets were warned to be on the alert ; signallers were posted on the Behmaru Heights and over the Commissariat Gate, the gate nearest to the city ; and all Hazaras employed within the walls were temporarily shut out. Thanks to these precautions, no untoward accident marred the success of the parade ; and Roberts, returning to Sherpur, proud of his men and confident of their ability to carry his plan of operations to a swift and triumphant conclusion, despatched the following telegram to the Indian Government :—

“ Parade of all troops was held this morning to present distinguished

¹ Mahomed Jan commanded the Afghan Artillery at the taking of Ali Masjid.

² “ I suggested getting up the Guides and propose putting them at the bridge north of Butkhak, so as to try and keep the gentlemen at Baba Kushkar together till we can get the Maidan troops round them.” (Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 158.)

conduct medals to men of the 72nd Highlanders. The sight of the splendid-looking troops cannot but impress the people of Kabul, a large number of whom attended the parade. As the excitement in Maidan and Kohistan directions continues, General Macpherson will move this afternoon a short distance on road to Maidan, and to-morrow General Baker will proceed to Charasiab, and on Wednesday by the valley of the Kabul River to a point on the Ghazni road in rear of Maidan. As bringing up troops from the direction of Jellalabad will have a good political effect, I have ordered the Guide Corps to Kabul. They will probably remain only a few days here.”¹

OBSERVATION

The plan of operations by which Roberts thought to secure the safety of the Sherpur Cantonment ignored every canon of the art of War.

One of the principles most emphatically laid down by Napoleon was this—that an army should always keep its columns so united as to prevent an enemy from passing between them with impunity. Baker’s and Macpherson’s columns at the moment when their joint action was to begin, were to be so far apart as to leave the Afghans ample time to throw themselves on one or the other, if the Mullah and Mahomed Jan elected to fight, or to withdraw into the hills, if they should decide to avoid an engagement. For the strategy that he adopted, Roberts should have had not five thousand, but twenty thousand men. His army was far too weak to attempt extended operations; its safety lay in concentration; to disseminate it, was to court disaster. To quote Napoleon again:—the principles which have guided all great captains have been, “to keep their forces united; to leave no weak part unguarded; to seize with rapidity on important

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 180.

points." These principles were finely exemplified by Nott when, in January 1842, he found himself in a similar position to that held by Roberts in December 1879. Some fifteen to twenty thousand tribesmen under Prince Safter Jung had assembled about forty miles from Kandahar, and the Political Officer was urgent with the General to attack them. "I have repeatedly told you," wrote Nott in reply, "that if he (the Prince) approached within twelve or fifteen miles of this station, I would move out and disperse the rebels. . . 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 I have left, and thus be totally disabled at the proper season of moving ten miles in any direction from the city, or even of the means of falling back should that, unfortunately, ever become necessary." Four days after writing these words, Nott reaped the reward of his wisdom. He had said that he would move out if the rebels came within twelve or fifteen miles of Kandahar; he waited till they were within five or six miles of that city, and then issuing from cantonments with a compact body of troops, he crossed the river Argandab, attacked Safter Jung's position, and in twenty minutes' time carried it and dispersed the entire rebel army.¹

¹ "To have the greater force and then divide it so that the enemy can attack either or both fractions with decisively superior numbers, is the acme of military stupidity; nor is it less stupid because in practice it has been frequently done! In it has often consisted the vaunted operation of surrounding an enemy, bringing him between two fires, and so forth; pompous and troublesome combinations by which a divided force, that could perfectly well move as a whole, starts from two or three widely separated points to converge upon a concentrated enemy, permitting him meanwhile the opportunity, if alert enough, to strike the division in detail." (Letter of Captain Mahan to the *Times* of the 1st of December, 1898.)

If it is the acme of stupidity to divide the larger force, how must we characterize the dividing of the smaller one?—H. B. H.

CHAPTER XVII

Preliminary Operations of the 8th, 9th, and 10th of December, 1879

SOON after the close of the parade held on the plain of Waziristan on the morning of the 8th of December, Brigadier-General Macpherson left Sherpur with—

4 guns F-A Royal Horse Artillery,
4 guns No. 1 Mountain Battery,
1 Squadron 9th Lancers,
2 Squadrons 14th Bengal Lancers,
401 Rifles 67th Foot,
509 Rifles 3rd Sikhs,
393 Rifles 5th Gurkhas,

to take his share in the joint movement by which Sir F. Roberts hoped to break the backbone of the insurrection of which Mushk-i-Alam was the soul, and Mahomed Jan the most competent leader. In obedience to his instructions, Macpherson camped that night at Aushar, a village, as already mentioned, only three and a half miles from cantonments, on the western side of the Nanachi Pass, at the foot of the range of hills which separates the Chardeh Valley from Kohistan. He had just resumed his advance the next morning when he was stopped by an order from Roberts, bidding him remain at Aushar for the double purpose of drawing on the enemy by an appearance of hesitation, and of leaving Baker time to take up a position across the road by which the Afghan army

defeated by him—Macpherson—would try to escape.¹ This meant two days of inaction, for Baker's Brigade, which had only just left cantonments when the order was despatched, had thirty miles to march before it could place itself across the tribesmen's assumed line of retreat; and there were good grounds for thinking that the delay might have very serious consequences, as Lieutenant-Colonel Lockhart, who had been scouting towards Argandeh, had seen considerable bodies of men moving northward evidently with the intention of joining the insurgents in Kohistan.² Their number showed that the insurrection had already assumed very large proportions, and the direction taken by them pointed to the likelihood that, as the British troops at Aushar advanced on Argandeh, thousands of tribesmen would pour down in their rear, cutting their communications with their base, and perhaps capturing Sherpur before they could fall back to the assistance of its garrison, whilst a retrograde movement, whether successful or unsuccessful in its immediate object, would mean the abandonment and almost certain destruction of Baker's Brigade. These considerations weighed so heavily with Macpherson that, in transmitting Lockhart's report to Head-Quarters, he suggested the recall of Baker and a combined movement of the two Brigades against the Kohistanis.³ So far as Baker's recall was concerned, Roberts took no notice of the suggestion, but he directed Macpherson to march himself the next day into Western Kohistan, and disperse the insurgents assembled at Mir Karez, a village ten

¹ Roberts's Despatch, dated Camp, Kabul, 23rd January, 1880.

² Extract from Brigadier-General H. Macpherson's Diary, dated Camp Killa Aushar, 9th December, 1879.

“This morning I had just started with the Force when I got orders to halt in order to allow Baker time to get in rear of the enemy. The result has been that we missed a fight to-day, as the parties I sent out to reconnoitre came on the enemy going to Kohistan, right across the route we should have taken.”

³ “I have sent in to Roberts to suggest that Baker, who has gone towards Charasiab, should be recalled and sent to Kohistan direct from Kabul, while I move north.” (Ibid.)

miles to the north-west of Aushar, before they could be reinforced by the tribesmen seen by Lockhart ;¹ and as the country to be traversed was very difficult, he was directed to take with him only the infantry and mountain guns. There was no road through the mountains immediately behind Aushar, so Macpherson began his march on the morning of the 10th by recrossing the Nanachi Pass—a movement which, if observed, would lead the Afghans to believe that he was returning to Sherpur—and then, turning northwards, followed a path leading to the Surkh Kotal, on the further side of which he knew he should come upon the enemy. Reaching the foot of the pass at 10.30 a.m., and having carefully hidden his transport and baggage, he led his troops up a deep cleft in the hill-side. At the upper end of this ravine, he halted, whilst Colonel Lockhart and Captain Straton were trying to ascertain the state of things on the other side of the Kotal. At this time, some five or six thousand Kohistanis were occupying Mir Karez and in position on the hills covering that village, and as reinforcements were approaching from the west and south it seemed probable that all these different bodies would have to be fought at one time ; but fortunately, about noon, Lockhart and Straton discovered a considerable force, with several standards, just over the crest of the hill, within striking distance of the point where the British troops were lying concealed. Swiftly and silently, Macpherson made his dispositions. Colonel Money, with two mountain guns, one company of the 67th Foot, and five companies 3rd Sikhs, was to hold the Kotal ; two companies of the 67th Foot under Major G. Baker, and two of the 5th Gurkhas, under Captain J. Cook, were to creep to the top of the Pass and fall upon the unsuspecting Kohistanis ; the squadron

¹ Roberts makes no mention of Macpherson's suggestion in his despatch, but, in referring to Lockhart's report, he writes :—" At the same time I heard that a considerable force of Kohistanis had collected at Karez Mir, about 10 miles to the North of Kabul, and feeling how desirable it was to disperse them before they could be joined by the enemy hastening from the west, I directed General Macpherson to change his line of advance and attack the Kohistanis."

of the 14th Bengal Lancers was to threaten the enemy's line of retreat, and three companies of Sikhs were to harass their left flank and lend support to the cavalry. The plan was crowned by complete success. Taken by surprise, the tribesmen rushed helter-skelter down the hill, followed up by their assailants, the Sikhs supporting the cavalry in the pursuit, and the two together enfilading the fugitives' left rear with carbine and rifle fire, whilst the main body, abandoning the Pass which had no further need of defenders, hurried forward to take their part in the fray. So swift and certain were the British movements that the enemy never had a chance of rallying, and their panic, communicating itself to their comrades in and around the village, they, too, gave way, and the whole position was carried with extraordinary rapidity and ease, the guns, quickly brought up by Captain Morgan, inflicting severe loss on the flying rabble, and the few men who sought to defend the standards being bayoneted beside them,¹ whilst the only casualties on the British side were one officer,

Major FitzHugh, 5th Gurkhas,
One man, 67th Foot,
Four men, 3rd Sikhs,
One man, 5th Gurkhas,

wounded.

Having satisfied himself that the Kohistanis were, for the time being, completely broken up, Macpherson encamped his troops outside Mir Karez, the inhabitants of which village, thankful not to have their property plundered and their houses burnt over their heads,² readily brought in supplies. Here, in the course of the afternoon, he received a communication from Roberts which instructed him to march early next morning direct on Argandeh, to follow up the enemy, who had been observed to be retreating to the south and

¹ Macpherson's first Despatch, dated 27th December, 1879.

² Throughout the war Macpherson was distinguished for his humanity.—
H. B. H.

west, and to endeavour to drive them towards Baker. The Cavalry and Horse Artillery guns, so he was informed, would leave Killa Aushar at 9.30 a.m. and, marching by the Kabul-Ghazni road, rejoin the Brigade where that road meets the path from Mir Karez, fifteen and a half miles from Sherpur.

Instructions corresponding to this order were given by Roberts personally to Brigadier-General Massy, who was to command the Guns and Cavalry in the morrow's operations. Throughout his advance Massy was to communicate with Macpherson and to act in conformity with that officer's movements; to proceed cautiously and quietly, feeling for the enemy, but on no account to engage him till General Macpherson had come into action.¹ Roberts further explained to Massy that some fifteen hundred to two thousand Kohistanis were retreating from Mir Karez, and that these he was to stop and hold should they debouch from the hills into the Chardeh Valley, Baker intercepting them if they retired towards Maidan.²

All that day and the previous day, the last-named General with his Brigade, consisting of—

4 guns No. 2 Mountain Battery,
2½ Squadrons 5th Punjab Cavalry,
450 Rifles 92nd Highlanders,
450 Rifles 5th Punjab Infantry,
25 Men Sappers and Miners,

had been making his way to the point from which he was to co-operate with Macpherson. Leaving Sherpur on the morning of the 9th of December, he marched through the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, crossed the battle-field of Charasiab, and halted for the night at Childukhteran, a village about fourteen miles from cantonments. To deceive the Mullah and Mahomed Jan as to his real intentions, he had given out that his object was to disperse a large number of armed men who, for some

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² Massy's Despatch, dated 20th December, 1879.

time past, had been assembling in the Logar Valley.¹ At Childukhteran he learned that an advanced body of the Logaris had been the previous day within twenty miles of that village, moving in the direction of Maidan. The second day's march proved longer and harder than the first, the difficulties of the road being aggravated by the variations of temperature—bitterly cold in the early morning, then hot, then cold again.² For the first eight miles, the track ran through comparatively open country, but, in changing its direction from south-west to due west, it entered on a succession of stony downs, badly cut up by drainage lines, which led to the foot of the steep range of hills that separates the Logar from the Kabul Valley. It was nearly sunset when Baker's advanced guard gained the summit of the high main ridge, and darkness had fallen before the main body groped its way down the bed of a frozen torrent into the Kabul Valley, and pitched its camp within half a mile of the river, the rear-guard spending the night just below the top of the pass,³ whilst the Logaris, who had been crossing the same range further to the north, took up a position between the British column and Sherpur. The relative positions of the hostile forces on the night of the 10th were, therefore, as follows:—

BRITISH.

Horse Artillery and Cavalry at Killa Aushar, three and a half miles west of Sherpur and eleven miles east of the Argandeh Pass:—4 guns, 180 sabres.

¹ Brigadier-General Baker's Despatch, dated Kabul, 16th December, 1879.

² "The cold at starting was very severe, and now as we entered the lower barren hills, the wind dropped, whilst the sun's rays poured down with a fierceness out of all comparison with the previous cold, and men began to fall out." (Duke's *Recollections*, p. 221.)

³ "As the Mountain Battery to which I was attached emerged from the nullah, just enough light remained to see our camp was to be pitched on a stony plateau, sloping gradually down to the Kabul river, running about half a mile below. The camp was laid out in pitch darkness, and the coldness of the wind was intense. We all heartily pitied the position of the rear-guard, near the top of the pass, for it would be utterly impossible now to bring in all the baggage." (Ibid. p. 222.)

Macpherson's Brigade at Mir Karez, twelve miles north-west of Sherpur and eleven miles north-east of the Argandeh Pass :—4 guns, 75 sabres, 1,303 rifles.

Baker's Brigade on the right bank of Kabul river, 29 miles from Sherpur and fifteen miles south-east of the Argandeh Pass :—4 guns, 225 sabres, 925 rifles.

AFGHANS.

5,000 Kohistanis north of Mir Karez.

1,500 to 2,000 Kohistanis west of Mir Karez.

10,000 tribesmen at Argandeh, sixteen miles west of Sherpur.

3,500 Logaris on left bank of Kabul river between Baker and Sherpur.

See, Strategical Map, No. 11.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Disaster of the 11th of December, 1879

EARLY on the morning of the 11th of December, Captain Stewart-Mackenzie's squadron of the 9th Lancers, accompanied by Colonel R. S. Cleland commanding the regiment, left Sherpur and, three miles from cantonments, was overtaken by Brigadier-General Massy and his staff. Roberts himself was to ride out later in the day, to witness the defeat which the combined forces of Macpherson and Baker were about to inflict on the followers of the Mullah. On arriving at Aushar Massy despatched Captain J. J. S. Chisholme, with a troop of the 9th Lancers, to open communication with Macpherson,¹ whilst he, with four guns and 214 sabres, advanced cautiously across the Chardeh Valley in a south-westerly direction, with the intention of striking the Ghazni road near the village of Killa Kazi. The little force had ridden about three miles and was within a mile of the point for which it was making, when Captain Bloomfield Gough, the officer in command of the advanced guard, reported that he had come in sight of a considerable body of tribesmen on the slopes on either side of the Ghazni road. Almost immediately hills and plain were swarming with armed men, and Massy discovered to his astonishment that he was in the presence of Mahomed Jan's entire army. That astute leader, who, from his central position at Argandeh, had been watching the movements of the various British forces sent out to destroy him

¹ Chisholme got through, but was unable to get back.—H. B. H.

and his followers, had come to the conclusion that they were sufficiently far removed from each other and from their base to make it safe for him to venture an attack upon Sherpur, and, starting out even earlier than Massy, had secretly taken up a position across the Ghazni road, within nine miles of the British cantonment.

At a glance Massy grasped the whole situation, and understood that, for the moment, the safety of Roberts's entire force lay with him and his guns. To charge the enormous masses of armed men opposed to him with a handful of cavalry, would have been useless, even had the ground been smooth and open, instead of rough and much cut up by streams and ditches ; yet a hasty retreat would expose Macpherson's Brigade to attack by overwhelming numbers whilst entangled amongst the hills, and result in the capture of Sherpur ; for how should its weakened garrison defend a half-fortified enclosure of great extent against ten thousand men, flushed with victory and relieved of all anxiety as to their flanks and rear ? To delay the enemy's advance to the last possible moment, was the one thing that might yet avert disaster by giving timely warning to Macpherson—if only the sound of the firing should reach his ears—to hurry to the spot where his presence was so urgently needed.

For Massy to see the right thing to be done, was to do it, and hardly had the order to keep the enemy back been given to Major Smyth-Windham before the guns came into action, firing with such precision at a range of two thousand nine hundred yards that, for a time, the enemy's progress was checked.¹ Not for long, however ; soon, with a frontage of nearly two miles, the whole Afghan army, displaying thirty to forty standards, red, white, and green, and admirably led by numerous horsemen, again began moving forward, in crescent-shaped formation, evidently bent on outflanking the British and cutting them off from Sherpur. In the hope of intimidating his

¹ Massy's Despatch, dated 20th December, 1879.

assailants by a more searching fire, Massy moved the guns nearer to Killa Kazi and brought them into action, first at two thousand five hundred, then at two thousand yards, but no good resulted from this step. Where the shells burst, the Afghans were thrown into momentary confusion, but the enveloping movement went steadily forward, and to extricate his men from the net that threatened to close upon them, Massy saw himself forced to fall sharply back and take up a fourth position on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Kabul River, only seventeen hundred yards in advance of the Afghans, whose bullets now began to fall around the guns. Gough, who, with his troop of Lancers, had been hovering on the enemy's left flank, now dashed upon the leading horsemen, but though he killed a number and captured a standard, he failed to arrest the advance of the main body. Again and again, the guns fell back, firing at ever shorter range; for the enemy, following in quick, fierce rushes, with loud shouts of Allah! Bismullah! drew nearer with every rush.¹ As a last desperate expedient, Massy dismounted thirty men of the 9th Lancers to cover the retirement of the guns; but, armed only with carbines, their fire made no impression on the dense masses surging around them; and it was then, just when it had become apparent that no courage, no devotion could hinder the two wings of Mahomed Jan's army from overlapping both flanks of the retiring force,² that Sir Frederick Roberts and Sir Michael Kennedy appeared upon the scene.

The British commander and his guest, with their respective staffs, had left Sherpur at 10 a.m., starting in high spirits to witness the final act of the drama, the programme of which had been drawn up three days before. At first they rode slowly, for as Argandeh, where the Afghans were to be trapped, was sixteen miles off, both

¹ Sir Charles Wolseley's Diary. This officer, who belonged to the Yeomanry, was on the field as a spectator, but later on was attached to the 9th Lancers for duty.—H. B. H.

² Massy's Despatch.

Macpherson and Baker had a long way to march before they would come into action, and there was no need to hurry ; but, on emerging from the Nanachi Pass, their ears were greeted by the boom of artillery and the incessant crackle of innumerable muskets, unexpected sounds which made them put spurs to their horses and dash forward with foreboding hearts, soon to be brought to a standstill by a spectacle which might well daunt the bravest. There, in front of them, pressing forward in battle array, with waving banners and triumphant shouts, was the Afghan army, supposed to be supinely awaiting destruction at Argandeh, and, flying before them, the Horse Artillery guns and the Cavalry, still intact, but powerless to check the advance of thousands of men sweeping towards the Nanachi Pass, a goal they must never be allowed to reach, for beyond it lay Sherpur, with all its treasures of grain, of fodder, of fuel. In an instant Roberts had sent off a written order to Hugh Gough, whom he had left in command of cantonments, instructing him to secure the pass,¹ and a verbal message to Massy bidding him charge the enemy and delay, at least, if he could not arrest, his advance.² It was generally believed at the time that the cavalry were sacrificed to save the guns, but this was not the case ; incidentally, there was the hope that the guns would profit by the sacrifice, but it was made for Sherpur, the loss of which would have meant the annihilation of all Roberts's scattered forces, left with no rallying point and no supplies. Whether the cavalry understood the urgency of the need which sent them to destruction, or not, they accepted the part assigned to them with noble alacrity. Splendidly led by Colonel Cleland, a squadron of the 9th Lancers, supported by the 14th Bengal Lancers, rode straight into the seething, raging sea of armed men, whilst Gough's troop of the former regiment sought to

¹ " About this juncture, General Roberts, seeing that the enemy were working towards the Nanachi Kotal, sent me a written order to secure the Kotal at once." (" Old Memories," by Sir H. Gough. *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 396.)

² Massy's Despatch.

confuse the enemy by a flank attack. Received with a terrific discharge of musketry, clouds of dust and smoke quickly hid the devoted band from the eyes of the anxious spectators; then, out of those clouds, horses were seen to come galloping back, some riderless, some with riders swaying in their saddles. Among the wounded were the gallant Cleland, his bridle arm badly sabred, a bullet in his stomach, and young Hearsey, shot through the lungs, who fell to the ground dead, as his horse stopped short. The charge had done nothing to improve the general situation, and unfortunately, during its progress, Roberts stopped the retirement of two of the guns to cover the falling back of the cavalry,¹ and afterwards changed the line of retreat of all four, so that they were no longer moving towards the pass, in which direction only was there any chance of escape, but towards the city, over unknown ground, which proved so difficult that soon one had to be spiked and left lying in the ditch into which it had fallen.² The remaining three, by Roberts's orders, now made for the village of Baghwana,³ a strong position if held in force, for, surrounded by ditches, it was difficult of access, but for a handful of cavalry and for guns running short of ammunition, nothing better than a death-trap. A very few moments sufficed to make this clear, so, after one or two futile discharges, the guns made their way between the houses to the eastern side of the village, only to find their further progress barred by a broad, deep water-channel. Whilst, in feverish haste, the gunners were searching for a passage across this formidable obstacle, Roberts, seeing their desperate plight and hoping against hope that even yet the guns might be saved, directed Captain Stewart-Mackenzie,

¹ Massy's Despatch; see, also, *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 273.

² "The line of retreat which the circumstances indicated was different from that by which Massy had advanced and its features were unknown to him." (Letter of *Times*' Correspondent, dated January 4th, 1880.)

³ "I now ordered Smyth-Windham to make for the village of Baghwana with his three remaining guns, as the only chance left of saving them." (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 273.)

on whom the command of the 9th Lancers had devolved, to make a second charge.¹ The order was obeyed, but disheartened men, mounted on jaded horses, with hardly an officer left to lead them, could make no impression on the Afghans, and as Smyth-Windham's efforts to get the guns across the ditch had ended in their falling into it, and there was no time to drag them out again, there was nothing left to do but to order the artillerymen to spike them where they lay, cut the traces of the horses, and save themselves as best they could.² A terrible scene followed. Some of the cavalry had fallen back into Baghwana, others had followed Roberts and a few members of his staff round its southern wall; but one and all had to face the obstacle which had proved fatal to the guns. Most of those in the open got safely over; some, well-mounted, cleared the channel at a bound; others fell into it and had great difficulty in gaining a footing on the further side; a few were shot down in the very act of leaping;³ but those in the village, jammed together in the narrow street, with Mahomed Jan's men swarming at their heels, and the villagers firing down upon them from the roofs of the houses, in their frantic haste pushed each other into the water, where, struggling and floundering, they destroyed their own and their comrades' chances of escape. There were noble exceptions to this panic spirit. Here and there a man saved his friend, or stood by him to the death. Sir Charles Wolseley got Cleland into a dhoolie; Lieutenant E. Hardy of the Horse Artillery refused to

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² "I quite approved of Major Windham's spiking and leaving his guns, as, in my opinion, to have remained with them longer with the enemy rapidly enveloping him, would have only sacrificed the lives of all under his command." (Report of the action of the 11th of December by Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Gordon, Commanding Royal Artillery, Kabul Field Force, dated 26th December, 1879.)

³ "Just as I neared it (the ditch) a sowar of the 14th Bengal Cavalry passed me and jumped just in front of me; as he landed he was shot dead and fell back right across me; for a moment I thought I must be in the watercourse, but with a scramble my pony just got over." (Sir Charles Wolseley's Diary.)

leave a wounded subaltern, young Forbes of the 14th Bengal Lancers, who had been confided to his care, and the two died together. The Rev. J. W. Adams, Military Chaplain to the Force, pulled no less than three men out of the watercourse, two of them when the enemy were within a few yards of him, and would have paid for his devotion with his life, if a Staff Officer, dashing by, had not seen his danger and taken him up behind him on his horse.¹ Lieutenant C. J. W. Trower and Lieutenant E. B. M'Innes of the 9th Lancers, also distinguished themselves by their gallantry. Those who got clear of the village and over the ditch fled in all directions; some towards the Nanachi Pass; some over the Aliabad Kotal; but the majority followed Sir F. Roberts towards the Deh-i-Masang Gorge, their retreat steadily covered by Captain J. P. C. Neville's Squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers and by a few dismounted men of the 9th Lancers, rallied by Gough, the only officer of that regiment not *hors-de-combat*. Those who failed to get over the watercourse were killed by the Afghans, who, brandishing their weapons and howling like wolves closing on their prey, swept through the village, murdering the wounded, and stripping and mutilating the dead.

Fatal as were the doings in this part of the field to the defeated, they were but an episode so far as the victors were concerned. Only a portion of their host had taken part in them, the main body the while relentlessly pressing forward towards the Nanachi Pass. They had come within a thousand yards of it when, suddenly, their advance stopped, and after a short interval of hesitation and confusion, their left wing swung round and their whole force headed towards the Deh-i-Masang Gorge.² For some reason unknown to the anxious spectators of the change, Mahomed Jan had abandoned his plan of rushing Sherpur and was now intent on seizing the Sher

¹ Adams afterwards received the Victoria Cross.—H. B. H.

² "Enemy came on to within 1,000 yards, then turned east towards the city." (Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 161.)

Darwaza Heights and occupying Kabul. For a moment men breathed more freely, but Roberts knew that Sherpur was only respited, not saved, for, in the scattered state of his forces, an advance on cantonments through the city was hardly less to be dreaded than an immediate and direct attack, and, knowing this, he determined that into the city they should not enter, if courage and skill could keep them out. Its Governor, General Hills, who had just joined him, he despatched to Hugh Gough with a verbal message countermanding the previous order to occupy the Nanachi Pass, and directing him to seize the Deh-i-Masang Gorge with a wing of the 72nd Highlanders.¹ Hills galloped away with the message, and Roberts, following more slowly, soon found himself close to Wali Mahomed's camp, pitched there a few days earlier when that Prince was expecting to be sent as Governor to Turkestan. Here he was met by a group of terrified Afghans—Wali Mahomed himself, Daud Shah, and other Sirdars—all men who, having given aid to the enemies of their country, now found themselves in danger of a traitor's doom. If they were looking for words of sympathy and encouragement from the British General, their disappointment must have been keen; oppressed with care and enraged at the failure of his plans, Roberts overwhelmed the unfortunate men with reproaches for having misled him with false information. In vain they pleaded that they themselves had been ill-informed;²

¹ "Old Memories," by Sir H. Gough. *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 396.

In his Despatch of the 23rd January, 1880, Roberts omitted to mention the order to Gough to secure the Nanachi Pass, and claimed to have sent the order to hold the Deh-i-Masang Gorge "immediately on reaching the ground," whereas it was really sent after the movements of Macpherson had brought about a change in the enemy's line of advance.—H. B. H.

² "It was difficult to believe that this was the case, and I was unwillingly forced to the conclusion that not a single Afghan could be trusted however profuse he might be in his assurances of fidelity, and that we must depend entirely on our own resources for intelligence." (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II, p. 279.)

ERRATUM

For "west" read *east* at page 183, sixth line from the bottom.

he was not to be appeased, and the interview left them more anxious and depressed than ever, for it looked as if they would have to pay the penalty of treason whichever side got the better of the other.

The change in Mahomed Jan's tactics, which undoubtedly saved Sherpur, was due to no sudden caprice, but to the fact that Macpherson, issuing unexpectedly from the hills, had fallen upon the Afghan rear and thrown it into hopeless disorder. Leaving Mir Karez at 7.50 a.m. he re-crossed the Surkh Kotal to the west of the ravine up which he had led his troops the previous day, and once on its southern side, he saw that many tribesmen, singly or in groups, were moving towards the hills east of Argandeh, whilst others were coming over the Argandeh Pass. Sending forward Lieutenant-Colonel T. G. Ross with the squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers to reconnoitre, he was following with the main body when, through a gap in the hills on his left, near the village of Araban, he caught the sound of Horse Artillery guns and instantly understood the message they were intended to convey. There could be no question now of big combined movements; the little force that he had left at Aushar was evidently in sore straits and his duty was to go to its assistance; so sending off his orderly officer, Captain A. D. Macgregor, to recall the Lancers, and Captain G. W. Martin to carry to Colonel Gordon, whom he believed to be still in command of the cavalry and guns, the order to hold the enemy in check, and the assurance that he was coming on as fast as infantry could travel, Macpherson turned from the path leading to Argandeh and struck into a track which curves away to the south-east and strikes the Ghazni road a mile to the west of Baghwana. Placing his baggage in charge of six companies of Sikhs and Gurkhas under Major Griffiths, with orders to make their way back to Sherpur, he gave the remainder of his troops the word to step out; and never was order more willingly obeyed, for every man felt that the lives of his comrades and the safety of Sherpur depended

upon his speed, especially after Lieutenant Neville Chamberlain, who had gone on ahead to reconnoitre, returned with the report that he had seen the cavalry and guns engaged with an enormous body of Afghans. Many tribesmen, in hostile attitude, soon showed themselves on the British right, but Macpherson, who, to use his own words, "had no time to waste on anything but the main body of the enemy," pressed forward without a pause till the Chardeh Valley, swarming with the followers of the despised Mullah, came into view. To give notice to Massy that help was at hand, he now ordered Captain Morgan to open fire with the mountain guns; but quick as had been the British movements, the men for whom that signal was intended, had been swept away, out of sight and hearing, an hour before, and when, at 12.30 p.m., Macpherson's infantry deployed, it was with the rear of Mahomed Jan's force that it had to deal, and of this it made very short work. Believing¹ Macpherson's Brigade to be marching on Argandeh, the Afghans were unprepared for its sudden irruption into the Chardeh Valley, and even mistook the head of the column for Kohistanis coming to their assistance.¹ The fire of the guns showed them their mistake, and one large body of tribesmen "in regular line formation with their right resting on a fort close to the high-road" prepared to make a stand. Their courage failed them, however, at the decisive moment; and, before the attack could be made, they broke and fled, some, towards the Emperor Baber's tomb on the right bank of the Kabul River, pursued by the 3rd Sikhs; others, towards Indaki, with the 67th Foot on their heels. Their dispersal was so complete that Macpherson could write in his despatch that his troops had "almost boxed the compass," and driven, he might say "hunted the enemy in all directions, so that by 2 o'clock the mountains, crowded with black specks, looked like ant-hills, and later on, from the commanding

¹ Macpherson's Supplementary Despatch, dated 4th January, 1880.

position of Killa Kazi, not an Afghan could be seen on the Chardeh plain." ¹

In that commanding position, Macpherson reassembled his troops at 3.30 p.m., and there he decided to bivouack for the night to be ready to support Baker.

Meanwhile, in another part of the big battle-field the disaster of the morning was being partially retrieved. Captain T. Deane, one of the officers who had come up to Kabul with Sir Michael Kennedy, had headed off the troopers who had fled towards the Nanachi Pass, and hardly had he succeeded in stopping and rallying them than he was joined by Colonel Macgregor, Major A. Badcock, Mr. H. M. Durand, Lieutenant A. F. Liddell, and the bearer of Macpherson's message to Colonel Gordon, Captain G. W. Martin. Looking towards Baghwana, these officers could see that the village and the country lying between it and them, were comparatively speaking free from the enemy, and Macgregor instantly made up his mind to recover the guns. The bold scheme was crowned with complete success. Under Macgregor's inspiring leadership, the panic-stricken fugitives of a few minutes before unhesitatingly retraced their steps, and, reinforced by some men of Macpherson's baggage guard, that they chanced to come across, reached the guns, which on the arrival of General Massy with a squadron of the 9th Lancers, and one of the 14th Bengal Lancers sent from cantonments, ² were dragged out of the water and brought safe into Sherpur. By extracting the spikes and replacing by duplicates the moveable parts of which they had been stripped, they were soon made serviceable again, ³ and the garrison, in the anxious days which followed, had good reason to rejoice in their recovery.

Before nightfall, Macpherson's baggage train also got back to Sherpur; not without difficulty, however. The hills through which

¹ Macpherson's Despatch, dated 27th December, 1879.

² Massy's Despatch.

³ Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon's Report.

it had made its way were alive with tribesmen, hungry for spoil, and but for the strength of its original escort, and the additional protection afforded it by the squadron of 14th Bengal Lancers recalled by Captain Macgregor, many of the laden mules would certainly have been cut off and driven away. So persistent and so bold were the Afghans that, in the end, it was found needful to resort to a bayonet charge, which, gallantly led by Captain J. Cook, 5th Gurkhas, and Lieutenant W. Cook, 3rd Sikhs, taught them to keep their distance. Unfortunately, both brothers were wounded in the fight.

If the 11th of December was a day of disaster for Massy and a day of success for Macpherson, for Hugh Gough it was one of intense anxiety. Left in command of an immense cantonment, with only the 72nd Highlanders, a wing of the Pioneers, three squadrons of cavalry, and a few guns to defend it, he had been ordered by Roberts to guard against the approach of an enemy from Kohistan, and had made his dispositions on the assumption that it was from the North only that danger need be expected; but about an hour and a half after the General's departure, he began to receive messages from Lieutenant E. E. Robertson, the officer in charge of a signalling party stationed on the Sher Darwaza Heights, which, little by little, opened his eyes to peril of a far more acute nature, threatening Sherpur from the west. From his lofty post of observation, Robertson overlooked the Chardeh Valley, saw all that went on there, and in brief sentences reported each incident as it occurred—the sudden appearance of Mahomed Jan's army on the hills above Killa Kazi, the advance of Massy's force, the coming into action of the guns, the charge of the Cavalry, the great fight that followed. With ever-growing uneasiness Gough received each instalment of the tale, but when it came to the point of "I see our cavalry retiring; the enemy is advancing;" he knew that Sherpur would be that enemy's goal, the Nanachi Pass, his line of advance, and forthwith made every arrangement for the defence of the place which the miserably inadequate force at his

disposal would permit.¹ He posted his artillery so as to command the road leading to the Pass ; he laid down wire entanglement at the weakest points ; he telegraphed to Colonel Jenkins, commanding the Corps of Guides, at Seh Baba to march instantly to his assistance ; so far as was possible, he assigned to every man his post, and finally took up his stand on the top of the western gateway to watch for the first appearance of the victorious Afghans, determined to defend Sherpur to the death. Before long he received Roberts's written order to occupy the Nanachi Pass ; but before he could make arrangements to execute it, Robertson, who, with great courage, still maintained his position on the Heights above the city, signalled news that released him from the necessity of obeying it—the Afghan army had changed front and was no longer advancing on Sherpur. The relief was great,² for Gough had not a man to spare, and any force that he might have sent to defend the Pass would have been swept away by the main body of the victorious Afghan host, or cut off by the tribesmen swarming over the hills or across the Aliabad Kotal ; but he had little time for congratulating himself on dangers escaped, so urgent were those that still confronted him. Soon a line of fugitives came into sight, followed by Major Smyth-Windham and the artillery teams, and, last of all, by Sir Charles Wolseley and poor Cleland, no longer in a dhoolie—that had had to be abandoned—but on horseback, held up in his saddle by two wounded men of the 9th Lancers. The arrival of these survivors of Massy's ill-starred force, bringing with them wild reports of the enemy's strength and the speed with which they were rushing on, threw the camp-followers and

¹ Sir Hugh Gough's "Old Memories," *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 395. Hensman, at page 197 of his book, says that the men available for duty were "less than a thousand."

² "It was a great relief to find they were not advancing direct on us by the Nanachi Kotal as they originally intended—for, honestly speaking, I think we should have had a tough job to stop them." ("Old Memories," *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 396.)

even the troops in cantonments into such a state of alarm that, if Gough had been a man of less experience and resolution, a panic would have ensued.¹ The suggestion that he should evacuate Sherpur, he received with indignant scorn, and silencing all clamour and idle talk, went steadily about the business of succouring the wounded and making such preparations to send out troops to the assistance of Roberts that, when Hills galloped in with the message substituting an order to occupy the Deh-i-Masang Gorge for that which had bidden him secure the Nanachi Pass, he was able to execute it without a moment's delay. Two hundred Highlanders, led by Colonel Brownlow, doubled out of Sherpur, and reached the defile just in time to forestall the Afghans in the possession of the village at its further end.² Hurrying his men on to the roofs of the houses, Brownlow poured volley after volley into Mahomed Jan's long deep line, till that General, uncertain as to the strength of his new opponents and still pressed in rear by Macpherson's Brigade, took ground to his right; the huge column—that was the formation his followers had now assumed—heading towards Indaki, and occupying the Takht-i-Shah, the lofty hill which commanded the Sher Darwaza Heights and threatened the Upper Bala Hissar.

There was nothing reassuring in the situation on which the sun

¹ "Smyth-Windham and his artillerymen and the few straggling Lancers had carried the bad news in before us, and the feeling in camp almost amounted to a panic, and everyone seemed to expect the enemy to appear in sight in overwhelming force." (Sir Charles Wolseley's Diary.)

Lieutenant C. G. Robertson, who was in charge of General Macpherson's transport on the 11th December, says that on his arrival in Cantonments he found "every sign of an unwonted excitement," and when he was at last admitted through a barricaded gateway he was "assailed by volleys of questions from groups of men and officers, some cheery, chaffing, and confident, others veritably despondent and anxious." (*Kuram, Kabul, and Kandahar*, pp. 122, 123.)

² "The enemy streamed down upon the village but Colonel Brownlow's admirable disposition of his handful of Highlanders soon checked the rush" (Hensman, p. 195.)

went down that evening, but the presence of mind and clear insight displayed by Roberts in sending for the Highlanders the moment he perceived the change in the enemy's plans, had, at least, frustrated Mahomed Jan's hope of obtaining immediate possession of Kabul; a gain of great value at a time when Sherpur was denuded of three-fourths of its defenders, and Baker's and Macpherson's Brigades were both *en l'air*. The latter force, however, was not suffered to pass the night isolated at Killa Kazi. As soon as he felt certain that the Chardeh Valley was clear of the enemy, Roberts despatched his Orderly Officer, Lieutenant J. Sherston, to search for Macpherson, of whose whereabouts he was still ignorant, and to direct him, when found, to fall back on Deh-i-Masang. Sherston had no difficulty in discovering the Brigade, and, by 7 o'clock, Macpherson had taken up the position assigned to him; and his troops, with the exception of two companies of the 5th Gurkhas, whom he was able to spare to Gough, were hard at work entrenching themselves at the mouth of the gorge, "thus further securing the approach to the city."¹ Then having done all that knowledge and prudence could suggest to ensure the safety of his forces, inside and outside cantonments, Roberts returned to Sherpur, and about midnight, to the great relief of the garrison, the Guides arrived, having made a forced march of thirty miles.²

The troops in cantonments and those at the mouth of the Deh-i-Masang Gorge, spent a quiet night; not so, the signalling party on the Sher Darwaza Heights, and it was well that Gough had sent a company of the 72nd and one of the 67th under Captain R. E. C. Jarvis to strengthen the post; for, but for these reinforcements and the rough, but strong sangar erected by Robertson, it would certainly

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² "At 7 o'clock we heard that he (Colonel Jenkins) was at But Khak, and as I am writing (at midnight) his corps is marching in, over 700 strong—200 more will arrive to-morrow with the baggage." (Hensman, p. 198.)

have been lost before morning. Between 6 and 7 p.m. a number of Afghans got to the rear of the sangar, and Jarvis, seeing himself surrounded, drew in his outlying pickets and kept all his two hundred and fifteen men under arms. Again and again, the tribesmen advanced to the assault, and, again and again, British steadiness proved more than a match for Afghan impetuosity. The hillsides were lit up by the continuous fire of assailants and assailed, and by that light many anxious eyes watched from Sherpur the progress of the struggle. It was after 11 p.m. when the last attack was made. In the lull that had preceded it, a few Afghans had crept close up to the breastwork, and, hidden by the darkness, hurled taunts and threats at the men inside; but of these no notice was taken, nor yet of the storm of musketry under cover of which the assault was to be delivered. Silent and watchful, Jarvis's men reserved their fire till the enemy was within forty yards of the sangar; then, at the word of command, they poured such deadly volleys into the dimly seen masses rushing forward to overwhelm them, that the tribesmen lost heart and beat a hasty retreat down the hillsides. The bodies of twelve Afghans were found next day close to the sangar, but many dead and wounded must have been carried away; whereas, thanks to the strength of Robertson's improvised breastwork and the steadiness of its defenders, Jarvis lost not a single man killed and only ten wounded.

The Casualties on the 11th December were as follows:—

Brigadier-General Dunham Massy's Brigade:—

Killed.

Lieutenant E. Hardy, F—A Royal Horse Artillery.

Lieutenant C. J. R. Hearsey, 9th Lancers.

2nd Lieutenant W. P. Ricardo, 9th Lancers.

Lieutenant O. Forbes, 14th Bengal Lancers.

Sixteen men, 9th Lancers.

Seven men, 14th Bengal Lancers

Wounded.

Lieutenant-Colonel R. S. Cleland, 9th Lancers.
 Captain J. A. H. Stewart-Mackenzie, 9th Lancers.
 One man, F-A Royal Horse Artillery.
 Nineteen men, 9th Lancers.
 Three men, 14th Bengal Lancers.

Brigadier-General Macpherson's Brigade :—

Killed.

One man, 3rd Sikhs.
 One man, 5th Gurkhas.

Wounded.

Captain J. Cook, V.C., 5th Gurkhas.
 Lieutenant W. Cook, 3rd Sikhs.
 A Native Officer, 3rd Sikhs.
 Two men, 3rd Sikhs.
 Two men, 5th Gurkhas.

Captain R. E. C. Jarvis's Picket :—

Wounded.

One man, 67th Foot.
 Nine men, 72nd Highlanders.

TOTAL CASUALTIES.

	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Horses</i>
Killed	4	25	51
Wounded	5	37	16
	—	—	—
Total	9	62	67

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. "Reviewing the incidents of the 11th of December, as I have frequently done since, with all the concomitant circumstances deeply impressed on my memory, I have failed to

discover that any disposition of my force different from that I made could have had better results, or that what did occur could have been averted by greater forethought or more careful calculation on my part.”¹

If this retrospective verdict of acquittal pronounced by Lord Roberts on himself, had been intended to apply solely to the disposition made by him after his arrival in the Chardeh Valley on the 11th of December, no one would be likely to dispute it—the situation he found there was so bad that no other disposition of his force could have been more successful than that made by him—but the sentence that follows the one quoted above shows that he intended it to cover the whole of the strategy of which this hopeless situation was the outcome. “Two deviations from my programme (which probably at the time appeared unimportant to the Commanders in question) were the principal factors in bringing about the unfortunate occurrences of that day. Had Macpherson marched at 7 a.m. instead of at 8, and had Massy followed the route I had arranged for him to take, Mahomed Jan must have fallen into the trap I had prepared for him.”

The exact contrary of the three assertions made in this latter extract is true.

(1) Had Macpherson marched at 7 a.m. instead of at 8, he would have passed the gap in the hills, through which alone the sound of the guns could reach him, before Massy came into action, and would have arrived at Argandeh to find that the whole of Mahomed Jan’s army was between him and Kabul, too far on its way to Sherpur for him to be able to exercise any influence on its movements.

(2) Had Massy followed the route arranged for him, *i.e.* had he moved round two sides of a parallelogram, instead of diagonally across it, he would have sighted the enemy later than he did, and the guns summoning Macpherson to the Chardeh Valley, would have been fired in vain.

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 281.

(3) Mahomed Jan, well informed as to the movements of the British forces, was never in a trap. Unencumbered by transport, and with an army consisting of the most mobile military elements in the world, he was all along free to accept battle or to disperse his followers with a view to their reassembling a day or two later, as might seem best to him; and when he saw that the right moment had come to take the offensive, he simply walked out of the position in which he was expected to await Baker's and Macpherson's convenience, and brought all Roberts's "careful calculation" to nought.

The attempt to shift the blame for the inevitable failure of a plan which violated the fundamental principles of the art of war, on to the shoulders of a subordinate, was not made for the first time in the pages of Lord Roberts's Autobiography. In his despatch regarding the loss of the guns, he gave so misleading an account of Massy's proceedings as to result in that officer's being severely censured and removed from his command. Fortunately, the Duke of Cambridge, the then Commander-in-Chief, whose strong sense of justice was so often exercised in righting individual wrongs, was not deceived as to the quarter to which blame really attached, and Massy was soon reappointed to a Brigade.

No direct attempt to fix responsibility for the catastrophe on Macpherson was made at the time, but telegrams grossly misrepresenting the part played by him on the 10th and the 11th of December quickly appeared in the Indian and English newspapers. The real truth as to that part is contained in Sir Hugh Gough's frank admission that the change in the direction of the enemy's advance—a change which saved Sherpur—"was due to the sudden appearance on the scene of Macpherson and his Brigade, who had marched over the hills from Kohistan, and arrived just in the nick of time to attack them (the Afghans) in rear;"¹ and no one who carefully studies the

¹ "Old Memories," *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 396.

sequence of events around Kabul from the 8th to the 11th of December, can fail to agree with Gough that "he (Roberts) was fortunate in having so reliable a Brigadier as Herbert Macpherson, who, seeing the difficulties of the situation, was able to move his troops so effectually to his assistance." ¹ How Macpherson, one of the most modest of men, regarded his "deviation" from Roberts's programme, may be learned from the following extract from his diary, dated Kabul, January 7th, 1880:—" . . . paid me a long visit some days ago, and as he was very anxious to know what my Force had done, I let him have a copy of my despatch to read—he has not yet returned it. In sending him the copy, I said in my note that 'I claim by my Flank March, in battle of the 11th December, to have saved the position here entirely.' If I had done as I was ordered, gone to Argandeh, I should have been embroiled with the enemy there in a very difficult country, and could not have rescued Sherpur from Mahomed Jan and his hosts—estimated, I see, at 30,000—who would have been between me and Kabul. By my flank march, which I decided on in an instant, I cut in between half his army and Kabul, and actually pierced his centre, and after driving off from the plain of Chardeh the army that was in possession of our Horse Artillery guns, and was pursuing Roberts and the Cavalry into Kabul, I turned round and scattered the other half that was coming on. I had only 900 *Infantry and 2 Mountain guns*, and why it was that we were not overwhelmed, I say, was our never hesitating to attack at once everything that attempted to oppose us. If there had been any hesitation on our side, we should have been destroyed. After all this, it is pleasant to read in the *Bombay Gazette* and *Civil and Military* 'General Macpherson's check and reverse'!! . . . and the *Pioneer* gives a false colouring to my action on the 11th, as it says that having been drawn into an engagement with the Kohistanis, I was unable to turn on Mahomed Jan! This is just;

"Old Memories," *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 397.

what I was able to do :—having given the Kohistanis a good beating and prevented their junction with Mahomed Jan, I was quite free to attack Mahomed Jan, and my report shows how that was done. It seems like a blessing of Providence that I did not march at 7 a.m. ; had I done so we should have been committed with the enemy on the road to Argandeh and unable to rescue Kabul from his grip.”

OBSERVATION II. In a mountainous country, Artillery and Cavalry should be invariably supported by Infantry. Even Cavalry when acting alone should have an Infantry support handy on which to fall back. Had an infantry regiment been allotted to Massy's Force on the 11th of December, it is improbable that his guns would have been captured ; and that there was no regiment to spare to him, is in itself strong condemnation of strategy, which sought to do with three thousand men what would have been risky and difficult of accomplishment for three times that number.

OBSERVATION III. The first of the two cavalry charges ordered by Sir F. Roberts was delivered with great spirit and gallantry, and when the confusion which reigned among the 9th Lancers on emerging from a sea of enemies with hardly an officer left to rally them, is taken into account, the fact that, a little later, they charged a second time speaks volumes for their courage and discipline. The conduct of the Squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers, commanded by Captain J. P. C. Neville, which on both occasions followed in support, also deserves high praise. Though not pitted against the full strength of the enemy, it took its share in the terrible risks run and, after each charge, re-formed with wonderful steadiness to cover the retreat of its British comrades. Whether either charge was justified by a reasonable expectation of its serving to delay the Afghan advance is questionable ; but the situation was desperate, and there was no other measure that could have been resorted to.

CHAPTER XIX

March of Baker's Brigade

OPERATIONS ROUND KABUL ON THE 12TH AND 13TH OF DECEMBER, 1879

MANY times during the events narrated in the foregoing chapter had Sir F. Roberts tried to open communication with Baker ; but neither by heliograph, nor by messenger, was it found possible to reach him, and the General and his Brigadier had each to spend the night of the 11th of December in ignorance of all that had befallen the other.

Neither the main body of Baker's Brigade down in the valley, nor the rear-guard on the hill above, had been molested during the night of the 10th ; and early next morning the 5th Punjab Cavalry crossed the river and pushed forward to a point on the Ghazni road which commanded the approaches into Maidan and its adjacent valleys. "I had thus effected the first object of my march," wrote Baker in his Despatch, "and was hoping to find that General Macpherson had carried out his, as originally determined on,¹ which would have brought him then in direct communication with myself and have enabled us, had the main body of the enemy not made a forward movement in the direction of Kabul, to have assumed the offensive against them on most advantageous terms."²

At 9 a.m. the rear-guard reached camp, and Baker was able to hasten forward with the Infantry in support of the Cavalry. After fording the river, the column, for a time, turned its back on Sherpur,

¹ Baker did not even know that Macpherson's Brigade had been diverted to Kohistan.—H. B. H.

² It is clear from this extract that Baker had shared Roberts's expectation that Mahomed Jan would allow himself to be trapped at Argandeh.—H. B. H.

the track followed by it running, at first, nearly due west and then curving round in a north-easterly direction to the Pass that leads into the Maidan Valley. All along, on the heights, large numbers of tribesmen could be seen moving parallel with the British advance—hundreds of Wardaks on the left, thousands of Logaris on the right. Only a few shots were fired into the main body, but hardly had the long train of baggage animals left the encamping ground than the rear-guard, consisting of eighty men of the 92nd Highlanders and two hundred of the 5th Punjab Infantry, became hotly engaged. It was admirably commanded by Captain G. K. M'Callum ; but, so persistent and harassing were the enemy's attacks, that it took him four hours to get over four miles of good road, and on approaching the Maidan Kotal, the peril became so extreme that Baker himself went back with two mountain guns, a troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, and a hundred rifles of the 5th Punjab Infantry, to protect the baggage on its way through the Pass.¹ Meanwhile the advanced guard, on approaching the Argandeh Pass, had discovered that it was strongly held by the enemy, and that the road to Kabul was closed.² It was already late in the afternoon, but Baker felt that he must dislodge the Afghans, there and then, lest they should rush his camp under cover of darkness. The order to attack was quickly given, and Major White, with a detachment of the 92nd, supported by the mountain guns, dashed forward with splendid élan and drove the tribesmen headlong from their strong position.³ This success secured to Baker's tired troops a quiet night ; but Baker himself, certain that disaster alone could account for the absence of all news of Macpherson's Brigade, spent anxious hours. Again and again, he sent

¹ "This was effected in a very satisfactory manner, and great credit is due to Captain Wynter, 33rd (Duke of Wellington's) Regiment, who was the senior transport officer. My thanks are also due to Captain M'Callum, 92nd Highlanders." (Baker's Despatch.)

² Ibid.

³ "Altogether it was a brilliant little affair, the attack being made without the slightest hesitation and against very great odds, and every credit is due to Major White, 92nd Highlanders, for the manner in which it was conducted." (Ibid.)

out messengers, but only one got through the Chardeh Valley, into which fresh Afghan levies were continuing to pour, and not one returned with the desired tidings.

When the march was resumed soon after daybreak on the 12th, it was found that the tribesmen with whom the Brigade had been engaged the evening before, had occupied a strong position, two and a half miles in rear of the camp, from which they were now trying to work round the British right. Divining that their object was to cut him off from Kabul by closing the Argandeh Pass, Baker moved forward rapidly with his main body to reinforce his pickets, and occupy it in strength before they could carry out their purpose. From its summit, he was at last able to open heliographic communication with Sherpur, and the intelligence conveyed to him was of so serious a nature that even without the precise order to return immediately, he would have strained every nerve to reach cantonments in time to be of service that day ; and as it was vain to hope that the animals, worn out with three days of toilsome marching, could quicken their pace, or that the enemy would cease their incessant attacks upon the rear-guard, he, for a time, entertained the idea of rendering his Force more mobile by placing his baggage and transport in Ghulam Hyder's Fort, twelve miles short of Sherpur. It was a desperate expedient, yet he went so far as to make arrangements for victualling the fort and strengthening its defences ; but when he found that the rear-guard, constantly pressed by the enemy who clung in crowds to all the heights, had taken four hours from the camping ground to the mouth of the Argandeh Pass, he saw that, march as he might, after establishing the baggage and its defenders within its walls, he could not arrive in the vicinity of Kabul in time to come into action that day, and abandoned a plan from which nothing could be gained, and by which much must be risked.¹ Slowly, but surely, Baker

¹ "On the last march, such was the exhaustion of the transport animals, it was actually proposed at one time to pack the baggage in Gholam Hyder's

worked his way through the Chardeh Valley ; his main body unopposed ; his rear-guard, which absorbed more than the half of the Brigade, almost continuously in action ; the 5th Punjab Cavalry covering the movement,¹ and, from time to time, inflicting some loss upon the enemy, whose numbers grew from hour to hour. Near Killa Kazi the General set fire to the village in which the Governor of Maidan, Sirdar Mahomed Hussein Khan, was murdered, and left it enveloped in smoke.²

At the Deh-i-Masang Gorge, he found awaiting him an order to retire at once into Sherpur, and, marching straight on, entered cantonments with his main body a little before 6 p.m., followed at 8.30 by the rear-guard and the baggage.³

CASUALTIES IN BRIGADIER-GENERAL BAKER'S BRIGADE

Killed.

One man, 5th Punjab Cavalry.
Two men, 5th Punjab Infantry.

Wounded.

Four men, No. 2 Mountain Battery.
One man, 5th Punjab Cavalry.
Two men, 92nd Highlanders.
Five men, 5th Punjab Infantry.
One follower.

Total 3 men killed, and 13 wounded.

Fort, at the far end of the Chardeh Valley, from which not a man could have escaped alive. The expedition had been productive of much danger, and little or no profit." (Robertson's *Kuram, Kabul, and Kandahar*, p. 127.)

¹ Regimental Records of the 5th Punjab Cavalry.

² Duke's *Recollections*, p. 320.

A cruel and unjustifiable proceeding, as the villagers were not implicated in the murder, which was committed, as already said, by the Wardak people.—H. B. H.

³ Apparently, Baker kept to himself the bad news received on the Chardeh Kotal, for Duke writes :—" As we approached Kabul, the Bala Hissar and Takht-i-Shah Heights were constantly lighted up with gun-flashes, which somewhat surprised us ; nor, indeed, until we had entered the Deh-i-Masang Gorge did we hear of the severe encounter that had occurred the day before," (*Recollections of the Kabul Campaign*, p. 242.)

The return of Baker's Brigade was welcome to Roberts, both as strengthening the garrison of Sherpur and as enabling him to take the offensive more vigorously, and, as he hoped, more successfully, than had been possible in the absence of so large a part of his Force. Before dawn that morning, Lieutenant-Colonel Noel Money had left Macpherson's camp with—

2 guns No. 1 Mountain Battery,
205 men Detachments 67th and 72nd regiments,¹
150 men 3rd Sikhs,
195 men 5th Gurkhas,

to dislodge the Afghans from the Takht-i-Shah, on the slopes of which mountain, steep, scarped, broken with jagged masses of rock and strewn with huge boulders, they had erected tiers of breastworks, one above the other, each commanding the interior of the one below it. The position was shelled for hours and many gallant attempts were made to carry it, but, though Macpherson sent two more companies of Infantry to assist the frontal attack by taking the hill in reverse, the Afghans clung to their sangars with such tenacity that at 4.30—the guns having ceased firing an hour before for lack of ammunition—Money, who had lost touch with Macpherson, had to signal to Sherpur that he could get no further.² Roberts heliographed back that he was to hold on for the night, and the next day to co-operate with a force that would be sent against the Afghan position from the direction of the village of Ben-i-Hissar.³

In this day's fighting, three non-commissioned officers, Colour-Sergeant W. Macdonald, Sergeant W. Cox, and Sergeant R. McIlveen, greatly distinguished themselves; the first-named displaying

¹ Jarvis's picket on Sher Darwaza. Original strength 215.—H. B. H.

² "We could see nothing of him (Money), but saw enemy in great strength on top of a frightfully steep position. The result was that about 4.30 Money signalled he could not get on, so the attack failed. That is the second defeat in two days; one more, and we shall have to shut ourselves up all the winter." (Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 162.)

³ Roberts's Despatch.

conspicuous coolness and intelligence whilst superintending the construction of breastworks under a heavy fire.¹

CASUALTIES IN COLONEL NOEL MONEY'S FORCE

Killed.

Three men, 3rd Sikhs.
One man, 5th Gurkhas.

Wounded.

Major J. Cook, V.C., 5th Gurkhas (mortally).²
Lieutenant C. H. Fergusson, 72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant E. J. N. Fasken, 3rd Sikhs.
One Native Officer, 3rd Sikhs.
One man, 67th Foot.
One man, 72nd Highlanders.
Six men, 5th Gurkhas.

Total 4 men killed, and 4 officers and 8 men wounded.

It had been rumoured in Sherpur that, during the coming night, the enemy would attack the northern side of the cantonment, and the Behmaru Heights, which formed its sole defence, were occupied as a precaution. The rumour proved false, but though the troops within the walls were undisturbed, great anxiety was felt for Money, bivouacking on the hills above the Bala Hissar, and for Macpherson, who had been ordered "to hold the Deh-i-Masang Gorge at all hazards."³ Those hazards were great, for after posting a picket in a building above Baber's tomb, he had only two hundred and seventeen rifles of the 67th, and one hundred and six of the 72nd, left wherewith to repel an attack on the gorge, and was unable to take up the best position for its defence, because he dared not lose sight of Wali Mahomed's camp, having been warned by the Sirdar that his escort

¹ Ibid.

² "By Major John Cook's death Her Majesty has lost the services of a most distinguished and gallant officer, and the Kabul Field Force a comrade whom one and all honoured and admired." (Ibid.)

³ Macpherson's Despatch.

were not to be trusted.¹ Luckily, either the Afghans did not know his weakness or lacked the generalship which would have taken advantage of it; and, for him too, the night proved a quiet one.

At 9 a.m. on the 13th of December the following troops paraded near the King's Garden, preparatory to entering on the operation which was to retrieve Money's check of the previous day:—

6 guns C-3 Royal Artillery	Major W. R. Craster.
4 guns No. 2 Mountain Battery	Captain G. Swinley.
1 Squadron 9th Lancers	Captain B. Gough.
2½ Squadrons 5th Punjab Cavalry	Major B. Williams.
92nd Highlanders	Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Parker.
Wing 3rd Sikhs	Major C. J. Griffiths.
Guide Corps	Colonel F. H. Jenkins.

This column, the command of which was entrusted to Baker, even when reinforced by one hundred and fifty men of the 5th Punjab Infantry under Major Pratt, cannot have exceeded 450 sabres and 1,500 rifles, whereas the ten thousand Afghans whom Massy had had to face on the 11th, had had their numbers more than doubled by the arrival of the Kohistanis, and the Logar and Wardak contingents, which had harassed Baker's march on the 12th. These reinforcements had established themselves in Ben-i-Hissar and other villages lying between Kabul and the Sang-i-Nawishta Defile, whilst the main body of Mahomed Jan's army held in great strength a spur, which juts out in an easterly direction from the ridge that separates the Chardah from the Kabul Valley. The enemy's right rested on the eastern extremity of this spur, overlooking Ben-i-Hissar, and their left extended up to the level and strongly fortified summit of the Takht-i-Shah.

Soon after Baker's column had passed the Bala Hissar, the tribesmen began streaming out of the villages and swarming up the steep slopes of the spur to join their comrades on its crest, but a bold and rapid movement frustrated their purpose.

¹ "Sirdar Wali Mahomed had assured me that his men were not to be trusted, so I did not deem it expedient to move from his camp to the gorge." (Ibid.)

There is nothing in war more striking, more picturesque, than a fight on a hillside: the assailing infantry gradually opening out to right and left, like a huge fan, and slowly climbing upwards as they open; the sharp ring of the rifles, echoed and re-echoed from crag to crag; the dull boom of the guns, searching every nook and cranny with their fire; the shells rising high in air above the advancing troops and bursting as they fall amidst the groups of mountaineers, born soldiers, who know well how to cling to every available coign of vantage, and yet are swept back, step by step, by the irresistible advance of their disciplined foes. Such was the sight witnessed from the walls of Sherpur, as covered by a well-directed fire of the guns, the 92nd Highlanders, led by Major White and supported by the Guides, scaled the spur and seized the very centre of the enemy's position. The advance was led at first by Lieutenant St. John Forbes and his Colour-Sergeant H. Drummond, but, in an ugly rush of the Afghans, both were killed, fighting bravely side by side. Their fall, and "the numbers and fury of their antagonists," for a moment "staggered even the brave Highlanders;"¹ but Lieutenant Dick Cunyngham springing forward, careless of the heavy fire to which he exposed himself, by his example and encouraging words quickly rallied his men—a timely and gallant action, duly rewarded by the Victoria Cross. Again the Highlanders pressed upwards, and in a very short time both they and the Guides, no less eager and forward, had gained the summit of the ridge and cut the Afghans in two, many of them retreating into the Kabul Valley and occupying Ben-i-Hissar.

Whilst the Mountain Battery was being brought up to cover a further advance, the men had time to regain their breath before starting to scale the precipitous, rocky side of Takht-i-Shah. Fighting every foot of the way—for the Afghans grew more and more dogged at every step—they reached its summit about midday to find that it was already in the hands of a mixed body of Highlanders, Sikhs, and

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II, p. 284.

Gurkhas who, under Major Sim, had worked their way up from the position gained by Money the previous afternoon ; Colour-Sergeant J. Yule, who captured two standards with his own hands, being the first man to set foot within the enemy's last sangar.

The task set to Baker had been accomplished ; but the gain to result from it seemed, from the first, uncertain. Hardly had his troops established themselves on the top of a high mountain than large bodies of the enemy were seen to issue from the city and to occupy two fortified villages on either side the road leading to Sherpur, evidently with the intention of severing Baker's line of communication with cantonments. One of these villages was quickly captured by the Reserve of Highlanders and Sikhs, commanded by Colonel Parker ; but it proved no easy matter to gain possession of the other, for the field guns made no impression either on its ramparts or its solidly built gateway. In the end, the walls were scaled with ladders by a detachment of the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Lieutenant Jameson, who, together with Subadar Budh Sing, was brought to notice in Baker's Despatch "for the forward way in which they led their men."¹ Both villages were destroyed, and all the defenders of the one last captured perished.²

Notwithstanding these local successes the general situation was still very unsatisfactory, owing to the enormous number of tribesmen who were now in the field, and the many directions from which they were making their presence felt ; so Baker, well aware of the weakness

¹ "The artillery fire having failed to effect a breach in the gateway, I ordered that the gates should be set on fire ; an opening, however, was only partially effected by these means, and the fort had eventually to be captured by means of scaling ladders, which were constructed of poles and the men's puggrees." (Baker's Despatch.)

² "On retiring my force for further action, if required, in the vicinity of Siah Sang, I deputed the destruction of these two villages to the 5th Punjab Infantry, who carried out the work in a most satisfactory manner. . . The enemy in this village (the one last captured) fought to the last, and were necessarily all killed." (Ibid.)

of the Sherpur garrison, and warned by heliograph that the enemy were advancing towards Behmaru, made haste to draw in his scattered troops and to place the majority of them in a less isolated position. The Gurkhas, under Major Sim, he left to guard the Takht-i-Shah, whilst the 92nd, the Guides, and the Mountain Battery returned to the valley, to be at hand either to operate against the enemy on the Siah Sang Heights, or to re-enter Sherpur, as circumstances might determine.

Whilst the Infantry was engaged in storming the Afghan stronghold on the Takht-i-Shah, the Cavalry was kept busy breaking up large bodies of tribesmen pressing towards the cantonment from north and east. One of these was routed by a squadron of the 5th Punjab Cavalry under Major J. C. Stewart ;¹ another, by a squadron of the Guides commanded by Major G. Stewart, and a squadron of the 9th Lancers under Captain S. G. Butson ; and, later, the whole Cavalry Brigade, commanded by Massy in person, went out to disperse a still more formidable gathering, which from the Siah Sang Heights was threatening both Sherpur and Baker's flank. While Massy turned southward to dislodge the main body of the enemy, Major G. Stewart of the Guides was ordered to attack a number of Kohistanis who had been observed moving northward. With his subaltern, Lieutenant H. W. Hughes, Stewart galloped straight down upon the enemy, who steadily awaited his approach ; then, whilst still on the move, he suddenly changed the direction of his attack, and falling upon their flank, first rolled them completely up, and then drove them, panic-stricken, before him, riding down and killing many. Massy, meanwhile, finding that the enemy, though much shaken by the severe shelling to which their position had been subjected, were still holding

¹ " I avail myself of this opportunity of stating that the 5th Punjab Cavalry is one of the most efficient corps I have ever had the honour of serving with in the field, and I attribute it mainly to their officers being one and all good soldiers." (Baker's Despatch.)

on to the southern side of the Siah Sang Plateau, dismounted some of his men, and when their heavy fire compelled the Afghans to fall back, he launched against them Captain Butson's squadron of the 9th Lancers, the 5th Punjab Cavalry acting in support, and the rest of the Cavalry following in reserve. The charge was splendidly made and brilliantly successful; but it cost the life of its brave leader, shot through the heart, in the act of shouting to his men to follow him "for the honour of the old 9th."¹ Captain J. J. S. Chisholme, the next senior, though severely wounded, refused to leave the field and brought the Lancers out of action, and Lieutenant C. J. W. Trower, the only other officer left in the squadron, who twice had his horse shot under him, was also wounded.² In this encounter the tribesmen showed remarkable courage and determination, and though they suffered severely by the charge, numbers of them still clung to every nullah and ravine, where, safe from further pursuit, they kept up a galling fire on the temporary victors.

Satisfied that the day's operations had "broken up the combination of the tribes, and that the various sections had scattered and returned to their homes,"³ Roberts recalled the 72nd Highlanders to cantonments and ordered Macpherson to abandon the Deh-i-Masang Defile, and in its stead to occupy the Sher Darwaza Heights with the 67th, as a support to the Gurkhas entrenched on the Takht-i-Shah.⁴ The 67th were left undisturbed during the night, but the Gurkhas were so hard pressed that they signalled by lamp for artillery and ammunition. No artillery could possibly scale in darkness a steep and rugged mountain, but Macpherson sent off at midnight a supply

¹ Sir Charles Wolseley's Diary.

² Massy's Despatch.

³ Roberts's Despatch. This sanguine view, though not endorsed by officers of large frontier experience, was shared by many of the garrison. "We were in high feather," writes Robertson, "and the final defeat and dispersion of the enemy on the morrow was looked forward to with certainty." (*Kuram, Kabul, and Kandahar*, p. 150.)

⁴ Macpherson's Despatch.

of ammunition in charge of a hundred men of the 67th, and two guns followed at dawn.¹

The Casualties on the 13th December were as follows :—

BRIGADIER-GENERAL DUNHAM MASSY'S BRIGADE.

Killed.

Captain S. G. Butson	9th Lancers.
Four men	”
Three men	Guides Cavalry.

Wounded.

Captain J. J. S. Chisholme	9th Lancers.
Lieutenant C. J. W. Trower” .
Eight men”
Eight men . . . . .	. . . . .Guides Cavalry.
One man . . . . .	. . . . .14th Bengal Lancers.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL BAKER'S BRIGADE.

Killed.

Lieutenant St. J. W. Forbes .	92nd Highlanders.
Two men	”
Three men	5th Punjab Cavalry.

Wounded.

Nineteen men	92nd Highlanders.
One man . . . . .	. . . . .No. 2 Mountain Battery.
One man . . . . .	. . . . .Guides Infantry.
Four men . . . . .	. . . . .5th Punjab Infantry.
One man . . . . .	. . . . .3rd Sikhs.
One follower”

TOTAL CASUALTIES.

	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Followers.</i>	<i>Horses.</i>
Killed	2	12	—	20
Wounded	2	43	1	32
	—	—	—	—
	4	55	1	52

¹ Macpherson's Despatch.

CHAPTER XX

The Disaster of the 14th of December, 1879

THE sanguine expectations of the evening of the 13th of December were falsified by the aspect of affairs on the morning of the 14th. Instead of a break-up of the tribal combination and the dispersal of its different sections to their homes, the number of tribesmen under arms had greatly increased during the night, and, what was more serious, Mahomed Jan had taken advantage of the withdrawal of the Highlanders from the Deh-i-Masang Defile to occupy the city and the Asmai Heights—the south-western half of the ridge which stretches from the Deh-i-Masang Gorge to the Nanachi Pass—by which bold step he severed Macpherson's line of retreat, and secured for himself a position equally valuable for offensive and defensive purposes. The low hills lying between the ridge and cantonments formed his first line of defence; the Asmai Heights, the second; and the key to the entire position, which was held by some nine or ten thousand men, was a conical hill overlooking the Aliabad Pass, and connected with the main range by a narrow neck of land. At the north-western end of the ridge, a large contingent of Kohistanis had established itself independently of the main Afghan force. Sherpur and the Asmai Heights were within cannon shot of each other, yet, though cantonments would have been untenable had Mahomed Jan possessed artillery, great rocks and boulders afforded the tribesmen excellent shelter against the British guns.

The difficult task of dislodging the enemy from this strong position

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was assigned to Baker, who, about 9 a.m., marched out of the Headquarters gate with—

4 guns C-3 Royal Artillery	Major W. R. Craster.
4 guns No. 2 Mountain Battery	Captain G. Swinley.
3 Squadrons 14th Bengal Lancers	Lieutenant-Colonel T. G. Ross.
194 Rifles 72nd Highlanders	Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow.
100 Rifles 92nd Highlanders	Captain D. F. Gordon.
422 Rifles Guides Infantry	Colonel F. H. Jenkins.
470 Rifles 5th Punjab Infantry	Major H. M. Pratt.
Detachment Sappers and Miners	Lieutenant C. Nugent.

With a view to ascertaining the enemy's strength and dispositions Baker threw forward his cavalry, but its advance was soon stopped by the broken nature of the country, and it had to take up a post of observation on his right flank. Covered by the fire of the guns, posted on rising ground near the village of Killa Boland, the Highlanders and Guides soon carried the enemy's first line of defence, including the conical hill. Leaving Lieutenant-Colonel Clarke here with sixty-four men of the 72nd and sixty of the Guides, afterwards strengthened by four guns No. 2 Mountain Battery and a hundred rifles of the 5th Punjab Infantry, Jenkins now swung forward his right, and, under a brisk cannonade from the guns below and from Morgan's Mountain Battery on the Sher Darwaza Heights, pressed forward to the capture of the Afghans' second line. The Highlanders, led by Brownlow, climbed the steepest part of the ridge with great dash and resolution, the Guides, on their right, facilitating their advance by perpetually outflanking the enemy. Every point of importance along the ridge was stubbornly defended, but one after the other was taken at the point of the bayonet. In a last severe struggle for the possession of the ridge's highest peak, where a number of Ghazis had entrenched themselves, the gallantry of Lance-Corporal George Seller of the 72nd Highlanders "excited the admiration of all who saw it."¹ Nothing could have been finer than the whole

¹ Roberts's Despatch of the 23rd of January, 1880. Seller, badly wounded in the attack, was recommended for the Victoria Cross.

operation; but it owed not a little of its success to a piece of "splendid audacity." To create a diversion, Macpherson had sent the 67th Foot across the river, one of whose officers, Major G. Baker, seeing that the enemy's attention was absorbed by the frontal attack, crept up in their rear with two companies, and reached the summit of the ridge at the same moment as the Highlanders and Guides.¹

Whilst General Baker's Infantry had been fighting their way along the Asmai Heights, the Cavalry had been busy clearing off the enemy from the northern and eastern face of the cantonments. Soon after midday, Hugh Gough went out with two guns Royal Horse Artillery, a squadron of the 9th Lancers and one of the Guides, joined en route by a detachment of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, to drive back and, if possible, disperse a large body that was moving southward, evidently with the intention of re-occupying the Siah Sang Heights. At sight of the cavalry the tribesmen fell back; but, checked and hindered by numerous watercourses, Gough never came within striking distance of them, and when they reached the foot of the Kotal leading into Kohistan, he saw that it was vain to follow them up any longer and abandoned the chase. In his absence a brilliant little cavalry action had been fought. Captain W. J. Vousden, who, from the walls of the King's Garden, had been watching the movements of the enemy to the south of the cantonment, suddenly saw a favourable opportunity for a charge, and at the head of only two Native officers and eight men of his regiment, the 5th Punjab Cavalry, without waiting for a troop that was a hundred yards in his rear, he dashed into the middle of three or four hundred men. "I never in my life saw anything more gallant than the behaviour of this little band," wrote Colonel Money, who from the Sher Darwaza Heights had witnessed the affair, to Vousden's commanding officer, Major Williams. "The leader, whose conduct was imitated by the others, never looked

¹ Roberts's Despatch; see also Macpherson's of the 27th December, 1879.

behind to see if they were supported, but just went in for the enemy, cutting down man after man. There were at least two hundred firing at them, but they seemed to bear charmed lives. I fancy they owed their safety to their activity, for they wheeled and dashed about in such a way it would have been difficult to hit them." Despite their activity, four of the gallant band were hit, of whom one was killed outright and two died of their wounds.¹ All the surviving officers and men received the Order of Merit for Bravery, and Vousden was rewarded with the Victoria Cross.

So far, everything had gone well with the British troops, and Roberts, who, from the flat roof of the Head-Quarters Gate, had been watching through a telescope Baker's dispositions and the movements of the Afghans, was feeling quite satisfied with the success of his offensive tactics, when, about one o'clock, Macpherson heliographed that very large bodies of the enemy were moving northwards from Indaki, with the apparent intention of effecting a junction with the hostile force that still held the hills towards Kohistan, and of endeavouring to retake the original position.²

This serious news was very quickly confirmed by a report from Ross, commanding Baker's Cavalry, who, as soon as the Heights were in Jenkins's hands, had crossed the Aliabad Pass to find the Chardeh Valley full of tribesmen moving northwards, whose fire quickly compelled him to retreat.³ Baker, meanwhile, had directed Jenkins to withdraw his troops from the Asmai Heights to the enemy's

¹ "Ressaldar Amir Ali Shah wounded, Jemadar Thunda Sing (died of his wound), Kote Duffadar Jewant Sing (mortally wounded), one Sowar and three horses killed." (Regimental Records 5th Punjab Cavalry.)

² Roberts's Despatch.

³ "In the meantime the enemy from Indikee—to the number of fully 15,000 or 20,000; they covered the plain for miles—had marched out as if going to Killa Kazi, or Argandeh. Their array was orderly enough; and when they had all reached the plain, they suddenly faced about and came down in the shape of a crescent upon the heights we were holding." (Hensman, p. 211.)

first line of defence, with the exception of two hundred men of the 67th, who were to be left to hold the highest peak of the range. Unfortunately this message had been delayed in transit,¹ and before Baker's orders could be obeyed, the Kohistanis, who had hitherto taken no part in the action, swept down upon the Conical Hill. Baker hurried off his cavalry to Clarke's assistance and heliographed to Head-Quarters for three hundred infantry. Roberts sent two hundred men of the 3rd Sikhs, and Baker himself pushed forward a hundred of the 5th Punjab Infantry; but both detachments arrived too late to save the position. All that men could do was done by the little force by which it was held. Spens, of the 72nd Highlanders, flung himself upon the leading Kohistanis and continued to fight "in the most gallant and determined manner" till he was cut down.² The officers of the Mountain Battery, Captain Swinley, Lieutenant J. Montanaro, Lieutenant A. F. Liddell, stood to their guns till they were literally swept off the hill by the overwhelming numbers and irresistible onrush of the foe, two of the guns being lost in the retreat.³ Surgeon J. Duke, under very heavy fire, was unremitting in his attention to the wounded, whilst a Native Officer, Jemadar Abdul Rahman of the 5th Punjab Infantry, was the last man to abandon

¹ "This order was a considerable time in transit as the advance heliographic station was on the conical hill, and the message had to be forwarded from there by foot messenger." (Baker's Despatch of 20th December, 1879.)

² "I would ask that this might be considered as a special case, as I well know that the hearty wish of every officer and man in the regiment is, that the Victoria Cross might be awarded for this most gallant act in which the officer sacrificed his life, in the hope that his men might rally round him and regain a position occupied by the enemy some eighty yards in front of the Conical Hill." (Baker's Despatch.)

³ "The guns could only be partially mounted on the mules before the pressure of the enemy's masses and the difficult nature of the ground, converted the retirement from an untenable position into a confused retreat, which all the efforts of the officers failed to arrest." (Letter of the *Times*' Own Correspondent, dated Kabul, December 14th, 1879.)

the Conical Hill.¹ Witnessing for the third time in four days the defeat of his troops and the bringing to nought of his plans, Sir F. Roberts realized at last that courage and determination are qualities not confined to Europeans, and that a large irregular force must, in the end, prevail over a small disciplined army, if the disproportion between them passes a certain point.² A message from the Sher Darwaza Heights, received whilst he was anxiously following the fortunes of the retreating detachment, quickened his sense of what that disproportion had come to be. The Afghans, so Macpherson heliographed, advancing from north, south, and west, were increasing momentarily; to which intelligence the young signalling officer, Robertson, added the graphic touch that the crowds in the Chardeh Valley reminded him of Epsom on the Derby Day.³

With the testimony of his own eyes thus confirmed by the message from his experienced lieutenant, there was no further room for hesitation; however bitter the word "retirement" might be to a British commander,⁴ the moment had arrived when it must be spoken; so, closing his telescope with a snap,⁵ Roberts turned for a moment from watching the struggle on the Conical Hill to issue orders for the withdrawal of his scattered troops from their "isolated positions,"

¹ Baker's Despatch.

² "Up till noon on the 14th I had no idea of the extraordinary numbers they were able to bring together, and I had no reason to believe that it would be possible for them to cope with disciplined troops; but the manner in which the conical hill had been retaken gave me a more correct idea of their strength and determination, and shook my confidence in the ability of my comparatively small force to resist the ever-increasing hordes, on ground which gave every advantage to numerical superiority." (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 291.)

³ *Ibid.* p. 292. Lieutenant E. E. Robertson was not twenty-one years old.—H. B. H.

⁴ "It was a bitter thought that it might be my duty to retire for a time within the defences of Sherpur, a measure which would involve the abandonment of the City and the Bala Hissar, and which I knew, moreover, would give heart to the tribesmen." (*Ibid.* p. 291.)

⁵ Sir Michael Kennedy.

with a view to "securing the safety of our large cantonment, and avoiding what had now become a useless sacrifice of life."¹

To withdraw from a single isolated position, in presence of a foe flushed with victory and outnumbering the retiring force by ten to one, is no easy matter ;² but the difficulties are far greater when that force is broken up into half a dozen widely separated detachments, none of which can look for help to any of the others ; and never were troops more split up and scattered than those who had now to act on Roberts's orders to concentrate at Sherpur.

At Lattaband, twenty-five miles from the cantonment, were two mountain guns, part of the 28th Punjab Infantry, and a wing of the 23rd Pioneers, commanded by Colonel J. Hudson ; Butkhak, ten miles to the south-east of Sherpur, was held by the 12th Bengal Cavalry and fifty bayonets ; Macpherson's and Baker's Brigades were engaged with the enemy on the Sher Darwaza and Asmai Heights ; Gough's detachment of Artillery and Cavalry was four or five miles off, on the confines of Kohistan ; and the big, badly protected cantonment of Sherpur was held by only a few hundred men.³

The order for the recall of the troops given, Roberts returned to his post of observation to watch with "intense anxiety" the retirement of Baker's and Macpherson's Brigades. Under Colonel Jenkins's able direction, the Highlanders and Guides withdrew from the Asmai

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² "It is comparatively easy for a small body of well-trained soldiers, such as those of which the army in India is composed, to act on the offensive against Asiatics, however powerful they may be in point of numbers. But a retirement is a different matter. They become full of confidence and valour the moment they see any signs of their opponents being unable to resist them, and if there is the smallest symptom of unsteadiness, wavering, or confusion, a disaster is certain to occur." (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 293.)

³ "There is no denying that the night of Sunday, the 14th, was one of very considerable anxiety to all who knew the imperfection of the existing defences and the many points vulnerable to attack." (Letter of the *Times*' Own Correspondent of December 26th, 1879, published February 13th, 1880.)

Heights. The ground favoured the Afghans, who, shouting and brandishing their knives, swarmed down upon the handful of British troops retiring before them ; but the skill of their commanders, Colonel Brownlow and Major R. B. P. P. Campbell, and the dauntless bearing of every officer kept the men so absolutely steady that, aided by the skilful manœuvring of the 14th Bengal Lancers in the plain below, and by the efficient support rendered by the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Major Pratt, and of two hundred Sikhs, under Lieutenant W. B. Aislabie, held in reserve near the guns, the difficult movement was successfully accomplished, and at 4.45, just as evening was closing in, Baker's force got safely back to Sherpur.

Where all had done well, three officers had specially distinguished themselves—Captain A. G. Hammond of the Guides ; Captain Duncan Gordon, commanding the detachment of the 92nd Highlanders ; and Surgeon J. Lewtas. The first, who had been very forward in the storming of the Heights, held on to them, with only a few men, after the capture of the Conical Hill, until the enemy were within thirty yards of him ; and, later, during the retreat, stayed to assist in carrying away one of his wounded men, with the Afghans close at hand ;¹ the second, though twice wounded, continued to lead his men till compelled to leave the field ; the third was conspicuous for his devotion to the wounded under the most trying circumstances.²

If the withdrawal from the Asmai Ridge was attended with great difficulties, the retirement from the Takht-i-Shah and the Sher Darwaza Heights taxed to the uttermost the skill of the commander and the courage and coolness of his officers and men. Fortunately for all concerned, Macpherson was a man of great courage, excellent judgment, and calm temper, just the qualities needed to keep troops steady and confident in the midst of danger. During the morning,

¹ Roberts's Despatch. Hammond received the Victoria Cross.—H. B. H.

² Roberts's Despatch,

he had given all the assistance in his power to Baker's Force, sending Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Knowles, with the 67th Foot, across the Deh-i-Masang Gorge to operate on the enemy's rear, and enfilading, as has already been mentioned, the Afghans' position with his marksmen and guns, posted on the Sher Darwaza Heights. At one o'clock, in obedience to an order from Roberts, he recalled the 67th from the Gorge, and, an hour later, he received the message which bade him bring back the whole of his Brigade to Sherpur.¹

The evacuation of the Takht-i-Shah was deliberately and successfully carried through by Major J. M. Sim, in the face of a vigilant enemy, prepared to take advantage of any opening he might give them, and the troops once concentrated, the march back to cantonments began. The 3rd Sikhs, under their able commander, Colonel Noel Money, led the way, closely followed by Morgan's Mountain Battery, the 5th Gurkhas, and the Signalling party of the 72nd Highlanders, the 67th Foot bringing up the rear. The head of the column, after crossing the river and marching through the Gorge, traversed the city, and had just reached the suburb of Deh-i-Afghan when Macpherson was obliged to recall the Sikhs and Gurkhas to the help of the 67th, which was being hotly attacked in rear by one body of tribesmen, following it up through the Gorge, and on the left flank by another, descending from the Asmai Heights. Leaving a party of the 3rd Sikhs to hold the suburb and protect the baggage, Money instantly responded to the summons, and the manner in which the Gurkhas—now the leading regiment—fought their way back through the tortuous lanes which in Kabul are dignified with the name of streets, won high commendation from Macpherson, who in his Despatch made special mention of three officers, Major Sim, Lieutenant A. R. Martin, and Lieutenant C. C. Chevenix-Trench. Macpherson also brought to notice the courage and coolness of Lieutenant R. B. W.

¹ Macpherson's Despatch.

Fisher of the 10th Hussars, who was in charge of the transport animals, and also the gallant conduct of Hospital Assistant Nihal Chand in going under fire to the assistance of the wounded.

Once more the Brigade moved on, exposed to the enemy's fire from both flanks; the rear-guard perpetually pressed upon and harassed as it wound its way, first, through the narrow streets and, then, through the numerous gardens and orchards lying between Kabul and Sherpur. Again and again, it looked as if a further advance were impossible; but the well-considered dispositions of Colonel Knowles, the good judgment shown by Money in seizing a walled garden from which he kept down the enemy's fire, and, above all, the perfect steadiness of every officer and man, saved the Brigade from destruction, and Macpherson's troops marched into Sherpur at nightfall,¹ each regiment and detachment, as it filed through the Head-Quarters Gate, receiving Roberts's "warm congratulations and heartfelt thanks,"^{2 3} as their comrades of Baker's Brigade had received them a little while before.

As Macpherson's men marched through the Head-Quarters Gate, on the western side of the cantonment, Gough's Cavalry re-entered through the gap in its eastern wall. On approaching Sherpur it had been challenged by a fatigue party of the 23rd Pioneers, who were hard at work cutting down trees, constructing abattis, and laying

¹ "By dusk everyone was in cantonments and we could count our casualties. They were unusually heavy for Afghan fighting, but have given us valuable experience, as we no longer despise our enemy, . . . and we shall no longer send flying columns over the hills and break up our army into three weak parts." (Hensman, p. 214.)

² *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 293.

³ The author saw Colonel Lockhart, Macpherson's principal Staff Officer, soon after he got back into Sherpur, who exclaimed:—"Thank God! we have scraped through that business! At one time I expected we should have been overwhelmed." Lockhart attributed the safety of the Brigade to the courage and skill of Macpherson, Money, and Knowles (he might have added his own name to the list), and to the high discipline of the men and to the absolute confidence which they reposed in their officers.—H. B. H.

down wire entanglements. Subadar Nutta Sing, the Native officer in command of the party, took the astonished General aside and in graphic words told how Baker's small force, overwhelmed by a wave of thirty to forty thousand Afghans, had lost the position it had won; how all the troops had been recalled; and the whole Force was now fort-bound—*killaband*.¹ Dismissing his men to their quarters, Gough hastened to the General, to find "not a shadow of disappointment or despondency in Roberts's countenance" though the tale told by Nutta Sing was "all too true."² Such equanimity was of inca'culable value at this critical time; but the unshakeable confidence in the superiority of the European over the Asiatic, of the disciplined over the undisciplined man, which gave it birth, had its evil side. Even after the reverse of the 11th of December, so confident was the British General in his ability to disperse the huge gathering that hemmed him in, that he took only very perfunctory steps towards improving the defences of the cantonment; and had Mahomed Jan been aware of their defective condition and known the weakness of the garrison, he could have captured Sherpur almost at any hour between the 11th and the 14th of December, numerous villages and enclosures, reaching right up to the walls, affording ample shelter in which to make the needful preparations for the attack.³

¹ "Long as I had known the old man, I had never seen him give way to despondency before; but for the time he was very low! However he soon cheered up, for he was a rare, plucky old fellow." ("Old Memories," by Sir Hugh Gough. *Pall Mall Magazine*, March, 1899, p. 399.)

² *Ibid.* pp. 399, 400.

³ A senior officer wrote from Sherpur after the relief:—"Roberts has lots of pluck and determination, and never gives way to any sort of despair, and if he only had sound judgment, he would be first-rate; but I don't think he has ever shown himself a skilful or safe general, and it is universally admitted that the Afghans might have captured Sherpur with all his supplies, stores, guns and all, had they attempted it on the 11th, 12th, or 13th, during which days he had his troops scattered over the country and only a very small force in Sherpur."

It seemed so probable on the evening of the 14th, that the Afghans would follow up the success of the day by a night attack that every precaution possible was taken to repel one.¹ The walls were manned, the Behmaru Heights strongly guarded, guns being placed on their eastern and western slopes and at the gorge in their centre, and all night long two squadrons of cavalry patrolled the ground in the vicinity of the cantonment. Fortunately, the followers of the Mullah were as worn out with incessant marching and fighting as the soldiers of Baker and Macpherson, and the only incident of the night was a happy one, namely, the arrival of the Butkhak garrison after an adventurous march through country entirely in the enemy's possession.

For the moment, the Lattaband detachment had not been recalled. Believing that it was supplied with provisions and ammunition to last it till the 23rd, Roberts felt confident that the little force could temporarily hold its own ;² but the following telegram, which carried to Lord Lytton some intimation of the precarious position in which he found himself, shows what steps he was taking to provide for their ultimate withdrawal :—" We have been fighting all the morning and gained great success at first, but the enemy are coming on in such numbers that I have decided to collect my force within Sherpur entrenchments, giving up heights above city and Bala Hissar, as it is not possible to hold such an extended position while the enemy are so numerous. Keeping up communication with the outposts would be very difficult. I have ordered Gough to push on from Gandamak as fast as he can, withdrawing Lattaband detachments as he passes by. As this excitement and combination are now sure

¹ " The situation, however, was boldly faced. That very night something was done to give the troops shelter at the more exposed points in case of attack, and to dispose them where they could most readily form and rally if the enemy had the courage to come on." (Letter of the *Times*' Correspondent, dated December 26th, 1879, published February 13th, 1880.)

² The information was incorrect. The detachment was short of provisions, so short indeed that Hudson had to turn away his Hazara labourers.—H. B. H.

to spread along line of communication, I strongly recommend more troops being pushed up, so as to admit of General Bright being able to keep open communication and to enable me to clear the country, should I find it impossible to do so with my present force, which seems likely, looking to the overwhelming numbers and the great determination the enemy exhibit. Your Excellency may depend on my doing all that is possible, but I foresee that I shall not be able to do all I ought unless strongly reinforced, which should be done without delay. I have ordered Arbuthnot's Brigade from Jellalabad to Kabul immediately." ¹

Casualties on the 14th December were as follows :—

BRIGADIER-GENERAL DUNHAM MASSY'S BRIGADE.

Wounded.

Two Native Officers (one mortally)	5th Punjab Cavalry.
One Non-Commissioned Officer (mortally)	„ „
Five men (mortally)	„ „

BRIGADIER-GENERAL BAKER'S BRIGADE.

Killed.

Captain N. J. Spens	72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant C. H. Gaisford	„ „
One Native Officer	Guides Infantry.
One man	No. 2 Mountain Battery.
One man	14th Bengal Lancers.
Nine men	72nd Highlanders.
Two men	3rd Sikhs.
Twelve men	Guides Infantry.
One man	5th Punjab Infantry.

Wounded.

Captain F. D. Battye	Adjutant Guide Corps.
Captain D. F. Gordon	92nd Highlanders.

¹ Telegram despatched on the evening of the disaster

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Lieutenant G. G. A. Egerton	72nd Highlanders.
One Native Officer . . .	14th Bengal Lancers.
One Native Officer . . .	Guides Infantry.
One Native Officer	3rd Sikhs.
Six men . . .	No. 2 Mountain Battery.
Four men	14th Bengal Lancers.
Twenty-five men	72nd Highlanders.
Three men . . .	92nd Highlanders.
Twenty-six men . . .	Guides Infantry.
Four men . . .	3rd Sikhs.
Thirteen men . . .	5th Punjab Infantry.
Two followers (Bheesties).	

BRIGADIER-GENERAL MACPHERSON'S BRIGADE.

Killed.

Colour-Sergeant J. Yulé	72nd Highlanders.
One Native Officer	5th Gurkhas.
One man	72nd Highlanders.
Two men	5th Gurkhas.

Wounded.

Five men	67th Foot.
Three men	72nd Highlanders.
Two men	5th Gurkhas.
One follower (Bheestie).	

TOTAL CASUALTIES.

	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Followers.</i>	<i>Horses.</i>
Killed .	4	30	—	2
Wounded	8 ¹	93	9	10
Total	12	123	9 ²	12

¹ Includes the Native Officer mortally wounded.

² Includes 6 dhoolie-bearers wounded.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. From the night of the 11th of December till the evening of the 12th it was necessary for the safety of Baker's Brigade that Macpherson should hold both the Deh-i-Masang Gorge and the Sher Darwaza Heights, but, once the former's baggage and rear-guard had got back to Sherpur, the latter's troops should have been drawn into the cantonment. Nothing was gained by keeping them longer in a very perilous position, and as it was quite dark the withdrawal would have been unopposed by, perhaps unknown to, the Afghans, who, with the exception of those holding the Takht-i-Shah, had sought shelter for the night in the city and its adjacent villages.

OBSERVATION II. The events of the 12th, 13th, and 14th of December demonstrate the truth of Roberts's remark that "while the enemy were in such numbers, nothing was gained by capturing difficult hills which were far from Sherpur."¹ The abortive attack on the Takht-i-Shah of the 12th and the successful assault of the 13th on the same mountain, were equally unjustifiable. For the sake of a barren success, the cantonments were denuded of troops, and two mountain guns and some hundreds of men isolated on the top of a high hill, where they could contribute nothing to the improvement of the general military situation, and were themselves a source of anxiety and weakness. Nor was the fighting on the 14th of December more necessary, for, as the enemy had no artillery, to dislodge them from the Asmai Heights was not a matter of life or death; but, if the attempt was to be made, Macpherson's troops should have been added to Baker's to lessen the chances of failure.

OBSERVATION III. "It is not by placing troops everywhere, but by making them move about, that you will guard every point."

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 183.

(Napoleon.) These words of the great Master of the Art of War teach the tactics which should have been pursued at Kabul after the disaster of the 11th of December. Assuming all the troops to have been concentrated in Sherpur on the night of the 12th, the cavalry and horse artillery, supported by a couple of infantry regiments and the field guns, should have moved out at dawn next day and taken up a good position in the Kabul Valley, at no great distance from the cantonment—the Siah Sang Heights were well adapted for the purpose—to watch the Afghans and prevent their breaking out of the city, or descending from the hills into the plain. When so established, the cavalry, unencumbered by followers and baggage, should have “moved about,” and penetrating into every part of the valley, have rendered any formidable gathering of the tribesmen almost impossible, thus securing to the troops within the walls the time and freedom necessary for the strengthening of the fortifications and the levelling of all buildings within musketry range of the ramparts.

In the telegram in which Roberts admitted the inutility of wasting lives on capturing distant hills, he also announced the intention of adopting the “move about” tactics recommended by Napoleon;¹ but the intention, like the admission, came too late. Many lives had already been lost to no purpose on the Takht-i-Shah and the Asmai Heights, and their loss and the reverses attendant on it, had greatly reduced his ability to move about with success.

¹ “To-morrow the Force, if not attacked, will be employed in completing our defences; afterwards, shall move out daily and prevent enemy from surrounding our position.” (Telegram of the 14th December, wrongly dated 15th in Blue Books.)

CHAPTER XXI

Preparations for the Defence of Sherpur and for the Advance of Gough

No sooner had Baker and Macpherson re-entered Sherpur than their troops, with the exception of those needed to man the walls, were divided into working parties and told off to complete the defences of the cantonment, a task at which they laboured without intermission for forty-eight hours.

The shallow ditches connecting the six towers on the Behmaru Heights, were deepened, prolonged, and protected by abattis; the gorge which cut the ridge into two, was provided with flanking defences, so arranged as to bring a galling fire to bear on an enemy advancing from the north; and a two-gun battery was established on the eastern slope of the Heights and connected with the village of Behmaru, the walls of which, as well as some detached buildings in its vicinity, were loopholed. The big gap near that village, now deserted by its inhabitants, was fortified by ditch, earth-works, and abattis, constructed of fruit trees felled in the surrounding orchards, and the whole strengthened with wire entanglement. On the roof of the exposed Native Field Hospital, a parapet of sand bags was built up, the unfinished rampart on its flank raised by logs laid horizontally one upon another, and beyond this, again, abattis were constructed and everywhere wire entanglement was laid down. Lastly, the open space between the western end of the Behmaru Heights and the Headquarters Gate was strengthened by entrenchments, and the small

fort of Mustofi, the fire from which flanked the northern and western faces of cantonments, was held as an independent post.¹

All that skill and knowledge could do to improve a defective position was done by Colonel Æ. Perkins and his able staff of engineers, to which, at their own request, the officers of the Survey Department had been attached ;² and, in addition, Sir F. Roberts had the great advantage of Sir Michael Kennedy's wide experience ; but, with all hands busy improving the defences of the cantonment, there were, at first, none to spare for the almost equally important business of razing the numerous forts and levelling the walls of the enclosures in dangerous proximity to the ramparts ; and, after the 16th of December, forts and enclosures were in the occupation of the enemy. Neither was there any possibility of reducing the area to be defended, great as was the disproportion between the cantonment and its garrison, for the Behmaru Heights covered its entire northern side and "to have given up any portion of them would," in Roberts's words, "have placed in the hands of the enemy a vantage-ground whence no part of our camp would have been secure." The problem to be solved, therefore, was how to enable a small force to do the work of a large one, and Roberts did all that commander could do to solve it satisfactorily.

The defences were divided into five sections :—

Section I.—From the 2nd Brigade Gate, on the cantonment's southern face, to the Village of Behmaru—Brigadier-General Macpherson commanding ; Staff-officer, Captain C. W. N. Guinness.

Section II.—The Behmaru Village—Colonel Jenkins commanding.

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² " Captain T. Holdich, R.E., Major R. G. Woodthorpe, R.E., and Captain E. Martin, all of the Survey Department, having expressed a wish that their services might be utilized, I placed them at the disposal of Colonel Perkins, C.B., commanding Royal Engineers, who testifies to the great assistance they afforded him, and also to the good services done by Lieutenant Scott-Moncrieff, R.E." (Ibid.)

Section III.—From the Behmaru Village to the Gorge in the Behmaru Heights—Brigadier-General Hugh Gough commanding ; Staff-officer, Major H. B. Hanna.

Section IV.—From the Behmaru Gorge to Head-Quarters Gate—Major-General J. Hills commanding ; Staff-officer, Captain T. Deane.

Section V.—From Head-Quarters Gate to the 2nd Brigade Gate—Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow commanding.

A Reserve, formed at the foot of the Behmaru Heights, was placed under Brigadier-General Baker's command, with Captain W. C. Farwell as his staff-officer. Brigadier-General Massy with the whole of the cavalry was posted in the centre of cantonments to protect the commissariat stores—staff-officer, Lieutenant J. P. Brabazon ; and to Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. A. Lockhart was assigned the duty of keeping Baker informed as to the state of affairs in each section. To leave the Horse Artillery and Field Guns free to move from point to point, several of the cannon captured from the Afghans were mounted on the ramparts under the superintendence of Major C. A. Gorham, R.A., whose technical knowledge proved of great value.¹ The whole garrison bivouacked at the posts allotted to them, and, for the greater part of the time, the troops were all under arms, as, by day, the Afghans took up positions in the adjacent forts and gardens, and, though they withdrew at dusk, there were constant rumours of projected night attacks. With a view to such a contingency and to guard against the danger of the troops firing into each other in the dark, the following Divisional Order was issued on the 15th of December :—"General Roberts has far too much confidence in his troops to believe that the enemy could force an entrance ; but, if such a thing did happen, on no account are rifles to be used, but we must trust entirely to the bayonet."

As regards supplies, there was no fear of running short of food for man or beast, and there was ample firewood in stock, and medicines

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

and hospital comforts to meet all possible requirements ; but in the use of ammunition strict economy had to be exercised, for though, later, Roberts stated that there was sufficient for guns and rifles to have carried on “ an obstinate defence for three, or even four, months,” his Assistant Adjutant-General, at the time, sent round a Memorandum to all commanding officers warning them that “ two or three heavy actions would most seriously reduce the number of rounds available,”¹ a warning that tallied with Roberts’s telegram of the 16th of December, in which the supply was given as “ on an average about three hundred and fifty rounds per rifle,” and the Government was requested to send up more ammunition both for guns and rifles without delay.²

In addition to the question of ammunition there were three matters connected with the internal condition of the cantonments and the constitution of the garrison, which weighed heavily on the General and his Staff : the enormous amount of inflammable material within the walls ; the fact that the two regiments which counted the largest number of Pathans in their ranks, were posted, the one at the western, the other at the eastern extremity of the Behmaru Heights,

¹ Extract Memo. Kabul, 15th December, 1879:—

“ The Lieutenant-General wishes to impress on all the very vital necessity which exists for the most careful check being placed over the expenditure of ammunition, and in order to bring the importance of this home to all he cannot do better than inform them that the total amount of ammunition available is 320 rounds per rifle, while under the most favourable circumstances more could not reach this from Peshawar under 3 weeks. Unless the very greatest care is taken to see that no shot is fired uselessly, it is evident that two or three heavy actions would most seriously reduce the number of rounds available, while it is equally evident that our running short of ammunition would be simply disastrous.

“ By order,

“ (Sd.) G. DE C. MORTON, Captain,

“ Assistant Adjutant-General.”

² Telegram, Kabul, 16th December. From General Roberts to Viceroy:—
“ We are fairly off for ammunition, on an average about 350 rounds per rifle, and strict orders have been issued to economise expenditure, but it is desirable that more ammunition, both for rifles and guns, should be sent up without delay.” *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 194.

the points most exposed to attack ; and the presence in camp of a number of Afghan Sirdars. Every possible precaution was taken against an outbreak of fire, and by the expulsion of all the city people, labourers, masons, carpenters, etc., the chances of intentional incendiarism were greatly diminished ; yet no one could guarantee that some accident might not at any moment set the commissariat stores in a blaze. All that could be done to lessen the danger involved in the position held by the Native regiments most strongly leavened with the Pathan element, was to strengthen that position in each case by the addition of two companies of Highlanders ;¹ for the distrust that the removal of those regiments would reveal, might suggest to them the very conduct, to guard against which the change had been made.

The risks arising out of the presence in camp of Afghans whom it was impossible to expel, could only be met by cutting them off from communication with their countrymen outside, so the Mustaufi was re-arrested, and other Sirdars, who had hitherto been treated as guests, were placed in confinement, chief amongst them Daud Shah, who had retained his liberty when Yakub Khan's other Ministers were thrown into prison, because Roberts had heard nothing of importance against him, and anticipated nothing but advantage from his remaining at large.² The grounds, on which these anticipations had given place to suspicion, were weak ;³ but, weak or strong, the exigencies of the situation in which the British Force now found itself, justified its General in depriving the late Afghan Commander-in-Chief of the opportunity of using to its disadvantage his exceptional power of noticing its weakness, and the many defects in its defences.

Forty-One Years in India, Vol. II. p. 300.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 185.

“Daud Shah has been put under arrest ‘as a matter of precaution,’ and the Mustaufi is also again in confinement, as well as other Afghan Sirdars, whose honesty is a doubtful quantity.” (Hensman, p. 222.)

³ Macgregor, Vol. II. pp. 170, 171.

During the whole of the 15th and 16th of December, the business of remedying these defects absorbed the time and strength of the entire Force, but on the 17th the Cavalry moved out early to patrol around the walls. No enemy was discovered, but soon after their return to cantonments, large numbers of Afghans were seen collecting on the Asmai and Siah Sang Heights, and by noon at least twenty thousand tribesmen had assembled on the latter hills. Two Horse Artillery and six Field guns opened fire from the bastion at the angle of the eastern and southern walls with so accurate an aim that, notwithstanding the efforts of their mounted officers, the Afghans could not long be kept together. The great majority retired into the city, but a considerable number came down towards cantonments. The occasion was a good one for a sortie in force ; but Roberts, unwilling to run risks, abstained from availing himself of it.

The next day the Cavalry reconnoitred, and a detachment of the 5th Punjab Infantry was sent out to examine the King's Garden, while the 67th Foot, supported by the 72nd Highlanders, swept round the southern face of cantonments to dislodge any of the enemy who might have obtained a lodgment under its ramparts. At 4 o'clock all the troops were recalled ; but, after dark, the Sappers went out to level walls in the vicinity of Sherpur, which had been affording shelter to the enemy's sharpshooters.¹ That evening snow began to fall and continued falling all through the night. Welcome to the General as the best of safeguards against fire, it added greatly to the hardships of the troops ;² and though everything was done to mitigate those hardships by employing fewer men on the walls

¹ " Then Perkins came over to get an order for sappers to go out and knock down walls all round ; a thing I had suggested should be done at the very first." (Macgregor's Diary, 18th December, Vol. II. p. 164.)

² " At ten o'clock I visited the bastions held by the 72nd Highlanders, and gained some idea of the work our men are called upon to do. The sentries in their greatcoats were simply white figures standing rigidly up like ghosts, the snowflakes softly covering them from head to foot and freezing as they fell. . . .

and in the bastions, and causing hot soup and cocoa to be served out when those on night duty were relieved in the morning, it was plain that the troops could not indefinitely bear the incessant demands on their strength and vigilance imposed upon them by the inadequacy of their numbers to the work to be performed ;¹ and Roberts's desire for the arrival of Charles Gough and his Brigade grew stronger day by day, and was shared by every man in cantonments.

The order to that officer to advance, mentioned at the close of the last chapter, was despatched to him by telegraph on the afternoon of the 14th of December, and reached him at Jagdallak Fort about 10 p.m. It ran as follows :—" March to Kabul as soon as you can, and bring the Lattaband detachment with you. Hold on to all posts that are strong enough to resist attack ; others I should withdraw from. It is very probable the Ghilzais will rise. We have had hard fighting and have withdrawn our posts from neighbouring hills, and force is now collected at Sherpur, where we shall be more than a match for the enemy. They numbered nearly 30,000 to-day. I will look out for you on road from Butkhak, or Lattaband, if possible. Try and keep me informed of your movements."

Gough was already aware that things were going badly with Roberts, for the telegraph clerk at Jagdallak had communicated to him a number of alarming telegrams from newspaper correspondents at Sherpur, which had passed through the office on their way to India ; but the order to march to Kabul came as a surprise to a

Inside cantonments was one wide sheet of snowy brightness, the Behmaru Heights rising up in the background and looming through the snowflakes like a snowy barrier, blocking us from the outer world. It was bitterly cold on those Heights, over which a cold wind nearly always blows, and we knew that, hidden from our view, were 2,000 or 3,000 men sleeping at their posts with snow about them, every man ready to answer the first call of his officer, stalking about among the sentries." (Hensman, p. 238.)

¹ " This sort of thing cannot go on. The troops would not last long at this rate." (Diary, 18th December, Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 164.)

commander deeply conscious of the responsibilities by which he was already burdened, and the meagreness of the military resources at his disposal. Never once since he left Peshawar had his Brigade been brought up to its authorized strength, and recently it had been weakened by calls upon it from Front and Rear—Roberts having summoned the Guides to Kabul, and General Bright having recalled the larger part of the Gandamak garrison to Jellalabad, where he was organizing a punitive expedition into the Laghman Valley. These withdrawals had left him with only six Horse Artillery and six Mountain guns, two hundred and thirty Cavalry, and fifteen hundred and forty-five Infantry, nearly half of which force was absorbed by three outposts, Pezwan eleven miles, Jagdallak Kotal twenty-one miles, and Jagdallak Fort twenty-three miles from Gandamak. To make matters worse, his Brigade was miserably equipped with transport, and as there were no commissariat cattle available, the regimental carriage had to be employed in carrying up food and stores ; it was also badly off for ammunition, having only the cartridges in the men's pouches, and the first reserve carried by the regimental mules.

On the 13th of December, Gough had been directed by Bright to advance and reinforce the Pezwan and Jagdallak posts as soon as three companies of the 51st Light Infantry and the 24th Punjab Infantry, both of which regiments belonged to the leading Brigade, should reach Gandamak. They came in the same evening, and the next morning, leaving behind him the Horse Artillery guns, Gough marched with the troops set free by their arrival. At Pezwan he dropped a detachment of infantry, and continuing to advance slowly through a very hilly country, reached Jagdallak Fort only a short time before Roberts's telegram was received there. Gough telegraphed in reply that he had just arrived at Jagdallak ; had only five hundred men with him ; would advance as soon as he possibly could ; and then turned to considering how and when that promise could be fulfilled. The more he considered, the clearer it became to him that

it would be an act of madness to attempt to fight his way with only six mountain guns and 500 Infantry—his cavalry he had decided to leave behind—through the thirty thousand Afghans who had forced Roberts and his six thousand to shut themselves up in Sherpur. He was not the man to shrink from responsibility ; but, as soon as the sun was up next day, he despatched a heliogram to Bright—the telegraph line on both sides of Jagdallak had been cut during the night—in which he frankly laid before him his own views with regard to Roberts's order and sought his advice.

“The more I think of this advance that I have been ordered to make,” so ran the message, “the more risky and injudicious I think it. Even if I take all available force, my column would be a weak one to face the odds and difficulties I should have to encounter. Roberts with six thousand men is not able to keep the field, and has withdrawn into position at Sherpur, and it seems a great risk to expect me to force my way in. If any disaster happened, it would have a very serious effect ; whilst even success would leave this line so weak that communication would be instantly cut, and there would be no news from Kabul. I cannot help thinking it would be much wiser for me to wait till reinforcements come up from the rear, and when you are able to hold these posts during an advance. Of course, I know how weak the line is all the way down ; but by pushing up regiments along the line, troops may be accumulated at the front pretty quickly. I shall not be able to advance for two or three days yet ; and the responsibility thrust upon me is so great that I should be much obliged by your opinion as to what course I ought to pursue. The wire is cut on both sides of us, so that I cannot communicate either way.”

Bright shared his subordinate's views and wrote to Roberts to that effect, at the same time directing Gough not to move pending orders, which he had requested might be sent direct to Jagdallak from Sherpur. Meantime Gough's fear that there might be no news

from Kabul was in a fair way to be realized, for the weather, which so far had been clear and bright, changed suddenly; thick clouds obscured the sun, the heliograph ceased to work, and, thenceforward, Roberts, Gough, and Bright had to depend almost entirely, for news of each other, on disguised messengers. One such, a non-commissioned officer of the 28th Punjab Infantry, carrying a letter from Colonel Hudson, got safely into Jagdallak Fort on the 15th of December, from whom Gough learned that the detachment which he was to pick up at Lattaband, consisted of two guns and seven hundred Infantry. His own Infantry strength was brought up in the course of the day to a thousand and sixty-four by the arrival of Colonel W. Daunt, with a reinforcement. So far, however, from being in a better position to obey Roberts's summons, Gough saw himself more tied to his own immediate work than when he had heliographed to Bright; for, in the meantime, the Ghilzais had risen, seized the hills in the vicinity of the Fort, and cut off communication with Pezwan. To clear the road and help in the provision convoys which were coming up, Gough sent out Major W. H. Macnaughten with a small body of cavalry and infantry, with which Major E. T. Thackeray, commanding at Jagdallak Kotal, was ordered to co-operate. The tribesmen were dislodged from a position south of the Kotal that they had taken up, but they quickly reassembled, and to obtain trustworthy information and get in his supplies, Gough had to keep sending out small columns from Pezwan and Jagdallak to meet half-way, exchange laden for unladen transport animals, and return to their respective posts. This state of things continued till the 18th of December, when Bright, having succeeded in releasing some of the troops in the rear, was able to send forward Colonel F. B. Norman, with two Mountain guns, a detachment of the 24th Punjab Infantry, the 2nd Gurkhas, a detachment of Sappers, and forty men of the 72nd.¹ The

¹ Telegram of 18th December from Bright to Viceroy. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 193.

movement was opposed by the Ghilzais, but their leader, Syud Khan, was wounded, and they themselves dispersed. After bivouacking one night at Pezwan, Norman marched on to Jagdallak Fort, where his arrival brought Gough's Infantry up to a strength of seventeen hundred and fifty-two men of all ranks.¹

At dawn on the 20th, the non-commissioned officer whom Gough had sent back to Lattaband again appeared in camp, conveying the following message, which Roberts had succeeded in heliographing to Hudson the preceding day :—" Order Gough to advance without delay. This order is imperative and must be obeyed. There is nothing to stop him." This peremptory order, and Hudson's reporting that his supplies, unless replenished from Sherpur, would only last till the 22nd, decided Gough to begin his march next day, though he was far from sharing Roberts's opinion that there was nothing to stop him. With all the tribes on his line of operations in revolt and an enormous gathering of Afghans between him and Sherpur, his troops would have been few for the task imposed upon them, even had he abandoned all his posts and advanced with the whole of his Brigade. Bright had been in favour of this course ; but Gough could not make up his mind to cut himself off from his base and to abandon some seventy miles of country to the Ghilzais, who, set free to follow him, would certainly harass both his rear and front. Gain in numbers, too, would have been balanced by loss in time, as he could not take his cavalry on with him, and would have had to wait for the return of the infantry which must escort them to Gandamak. Bright, recognizing that the man on the spot was the better judge, had yielded to his subordinate's arguments, and when Roberts's peremptory order arrived, all the posts in advance of

¹ Norman seems to have made an exchange of troops on the way, for Gough in a telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy only mentions having been reinforced on the 19th by the 24th Punjab Infantry. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 193.

Gandamak had been strongly fortified, and Gough had only to select their garrisons as under :—

JAGDALLAK FORT.

Colonel F. B. Norman Commanding.

	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>
10th Bengal Lancers	4	210
24th Punjab Infantry	6	431
	—	—
Total	10	641

JAGDALLAK KOTAL.

Major E. T. Thackeray Commanding.

	2 guns.	
	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>
Hazara Mountain Battery .		
10th Bengal Lancers	—	12
24th Punjab Infantry	—	50
Sappers and Miners	5	190
	—	—
Total, 2 guns	5	252

PEZWAN KOTAL.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ball-Acton Commanding.

	2 guns.	
	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>
I—A Royal Horse Artillery		
10th Bengal Lancers	1	50
51st Light Infantry	6	150
24th Punjab Infantry	1	50
Sappers and Miners	4	80
	—	—
Total, 2 guns	12	330

These deductions left Gough only 4 mountain guns and fourteen hundred and thirty-five officers and men for the advance to Lattaband, where he was to take up Hudson's detachment, and where he hoped to hear that Roberts was prepared to afford him the assistance promised in his original message. He had supplies—another convoy had just

come in—but the transport was so bad—plain camels and the ponies with defective pack-saddles from Southern India—that in order to carry four days' food for his own force and just what was absolutely needful for Hudson's troops, he had to cut down camp equipage and kits to the lowest scale compatible with the health of the men.

The arrangements for the forward movement were being completed when Gough received the following message, transmitted by Colonel Acton commanding at Pezwan, to whom it had been addressed by Colonel H. M. Wemyss, Bright's Chief of the Staff :—

“General Bright hears that large numbers of Ghilzais are collected in Gough's front ; tell him he is on no account to risk his communication with Gandamak, or a repulse, which might have the worst effect on the whole line. He has been informed he is not to risk an advance on Kabul unless he receives most stringent orders from Roberts ; but, under the circumstances now come to light, such (advance) is impossible.”

A couple of hours later, Gough received a similar message direct from Wemyss, and in the evening came another, couched in still more decided terms :—

“You are not,” so it ran, “to advance beyond Jagdallak till you get reinforcements and orders from General Bright ;” whilst almost at the same moment a messenger arrived from Kabul bringing letters from Roberts urging him to advance “at all hazards.”

Between these two contradictory orders Gough's choice was soon made. He had taken, as he hoped, satisfactory precautions against an interruption of his communications, and he decided to march, with a handful of ill-equipped men, for Lattaband, where Roberts had promised to reinforce him, meanwhile trusting to his own generalship and to the courage and discipline of his troops to avert disaster. Probably no officer, aware of Hudson's perilous position and believing that Roberts was in need of immediate assistance, would have come to a different decision ; nevertheless, Bright's

heliograms were justified by the circumstances in which he found himself placed. Not without reluctance had he obeyed Roberts's order of the 7th of December to send up the Guides to Kabul—it was no easy matter to find troops to replace them in the advanced posts in the heart of the Ghilzai country—and when, on the 11th, he received directions to reinforce the garrison of Gandamak with a view to the possibility of Gough's Brigade being needed at Sherpur, he applied for help to Major-General J. Ross, who had succeeded to the command at Peshawar, *vice* General C. C. Ross invalided; and, but for the cutting of his telegraph line, would have referred Roberts's order to the Commander-in-Chief. Fortunately by the 14th, when Roberts called upon him to despatch Gough's and Arbuthnot's Brigades, the telegraph had been restored, and he was able to lay before Sir Frederick Haines a statement of the condition to which he would be reduced, if he responded to the call, and to urge him to send up a strong Division of all arms before allowing Arbuthnot's Brigade to leave Jellalabad.

It was not the Commander-in-Chief's fault that when reinforcements were so urgently needed by the General responsible for the line of communications, there were none to give him. As early as October, he had represented to Government the desirability of forming reserves at Rawal Pindi and Peshawar to meet just such a contingency as had now arisen; but the Government, confident that the various columns operating beyond the frontier were strong enough to crush any opposition they were likely to encounter, and aware that the Supply and Transport Department had great difficulty in meeting the demands made upon it by the troops at the front, could not be persuaded to do more than agree to warning for service the corps that might be needed as a reserve, and maintaining at Jhelam—the railhead—sufficient transport for their needs. Sir F. Haines returned to the charge only to be told that, as the Peshawar authorities were unable to furnish supplies, no troops could be moved up beyond

Jhelam ; and so matters remained till the news of the great unrest prevailing in the country around Kabul opened the Government's eyes to the probability that Roberts's column might not prove strong enough to defeat the combination that was being formed against it. Then, at last, the Commander-in-Chief was allowed to order the under-named troops to be ready to move at a moment's notice :—

D-A Royal Horse Artillery	. Peshawar.
I-C Royal Horse Artillery .	Rawal Pindi.
D-4 Royal Artillery .	Rawal Pindi.
4th Bengal Cavalry	. Mian Mir.
11th Bengal Cavalry	. . . . . Nowshera.
300 Sabres 17th Bengal Cavalry	Peshawar.

The notice itself was given on the 14th, as soon as the telegram announcing Baker's defeat and the retirement of the whole of Roberts's force into Sherpur was received ; all the designated corps not already at Peshawar being directed to proceed thither without delay. The same evening, the 8th Hussars at Mattra were ordered to Hassan Abdal, and the 1st Gurkhas at Dharmsala, and all the effective men of the 2nd Gurkhas at Dehra, and those of the 4th Gurkhas at Bukloh, to Peshawar.

A step in the right direction had been taken, but Sir F. Haines, knowing the weakness of Bright's Force—numbering only twelve thousand and sixty-nine men at the beginning, it had now been reduced to nine thousand four hundred and forty-two—was urgent with the Government to go farther and permit him to assemble a Reserve Division at Peshawar to consist of the following troops :—

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

E-A Royal Horse Artillery	. Major A. W. W. Murdock.
8th Hussars	. Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Chaplin, V.C.
5th Bengal Cavalry . . . .	. Major H. A. Shakespear.

1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE.

1-5th Fusiliers	Colonel T. Roland.
1st Gurkhas	Lieutenant-Colonel P. Story.
32nd Pioneers	Major A. C. W. Crookshank.

2ND BRIGADE.

2-14th Foot	Lieutenant-Colonel D. S. Warren.
1-18th Foot	Lieutenant-Colonel M. J. R. Macgregor.
1st Regiment Hyderabad Contingent.	

3RD BRIGADE.

2 Regiments of Madras Infantry.

DIVISIONAL CORPS.

The Deoli Regiment.

The proposal was submitted to the Government on the 16th of December, and on the 21st the Viceroy sanctioned the formation of a Reserve Division, and nominated Major-General J. Ross to its command.

CHAPTER XXII

Raising of the Siege of Sherpur

UP to the 21st of December, the day when Gough began his march, the only variety in the life of the beleaguered garrison was a successful sortie made by Baker with two mountain guns and eight hundred infantry in which he captured and destroyed Killa Mir Akhor, a fortified village lying to the east of Sherpur. Every morning the Afghans swarmed out of Kabul and the surrounding villages to take up positions in the numerous forts and enclosures within range of the walls; all through each day, their bullets fell thick and fast into the heart of the cantonment, compelling men and animals to keep well under shelter of the ramparts; and every evening they withdrew to their sleeping places, apparently content with having inflicted a few casualties and a large amount of worry upon the besieged, who, on their part, kept quiet, never firing a shot unless certain that it would reach its mark.¹ There were constant rumours of projected night attacks, but night after night went by without one, and, for a time, it seemed as if the belligerents were engaged in a waiting game, each hoping to exhaust the resources and wear out the spirit of the other. News pointing to an eventual break-up of the combination which had driven Roberts's troops from the field,

¹ "Our men do not answer the fire, except when certain of their aim, as one rifle discharged from the walls is the signal for twenty answering shots. The bullets go wide of their mark and drop into cantonments, doing some damage." (Hensman, p. 241.)

was brought in by spies ; there were dissensions in the Afghan camp as to the future ruler of the country, the Ghilzai and Wardak tribes desiring the restoration of Yakub Khan, whilst the Kohistanis were in favour of placing Wali Mahomed on the throne of Kabul ; but the two factions were united in their determination to rid themselves, once and for all, of their invaders, and so confident of their ability to do this that terms of capitulation were drawn up by Mahomed Jan and sent to the British General. Roberts's telegrams and despatches are silent as to this incident, but Hensman, who was kept well informed as to all that went on at Head-Quarters, is positive as to its having occurred, and mentions the withdrawal of all British troops from Afghanistan, the restoration of Yakub Khan, and the surrender of two British officers of high rank as hostages for the due fulfilment of the convention, as the conditions on which the force in Sherpur was to be allowed to return to India.¹

The most hopeful feature of the outlook viewed from the British standpoint, was the certainty that the vast concourse of Afghans concentrated around Sherpur must some day break up ; but no one could foretell the exact length of time it would hold together, and, meanwhile, the garrison's own fighting strength was so steadily declining that, unless the expected reinforcements came in quickly, their arrival would do little to alter the original disproportion between besiegers and besieged. It was with this prospect staring him in the face that, on the 19th of December, Roberts took advantage of a passing gleam of sunshine to send Gough, through Hudson, the order to march at once to the relief of Sherpur. Peremptory as was this order, the General, knowing well that its execution must depend upon circumstances over which he could exercise no control, dared not trust to the chance of Gough's reaching Lattaband before Hudson's supply of provisions was exhausted ; yet how to

¹ Hensman, p. 245.

replenish it from his own stores was a matter of great perplexity to him, for a small army would have been needed to fight a convoy through the swarming Afghan hordes, and he had not a man to spare from the defence of the cantonment. The difficulty was solved in an unexpected manner. Some Hazaras, who had been employed in getting the place into a fit state for winter occupation, volunteered for the perilous undertaking ;¹ though not Afghans, they were dwellers in Kabul, knew the surrounding country well, and believed that, by starting at night and making a long *détour*, it would be possible to escape detection. The event only partially justified their confidence. To facilitate the movement, the convoy was broken up into two bodies, one leaving Sherpur on the night of the 19th, the other on the 20th.² The first got safely through to Lattaband ; the second, consisting of 60 pack animals, fell into the enemy's hands, and all the brave men in charge of it were believed to have been killed.³

On the 20th of December, three 18-pounders and an 8-inch howitzer belonging to the siege train presented to Shere Ali by the Indian Government, were mounted on the bastions east and west of the 72nd Highlanders' Gateway, and at 9 o'clock the next morning, they opened fire, with very little result, on Killa Mahomed Sharif, a fort which had been a source of great annoyance to the garrison.⁴ Undeterred by the heavy cannonade, the Afghans assumed so threatening an attitude that in the afternoon all the troops got under

¹ "The Hazaras are very plucky. They go out willingly for a small reward, and we are now using a few of them to carry letters and despatches." (Hensman, p. 243.)

² "Another will be sent out to-night ; but as parties of the enemy have been seen taking the road to Butkhak, it is not unlikely that it will be intercepted." (Ibid. p. 243.)

³ Ibid. p. 249. A fate anticipated by Hensman ; see preceding note.—H. B. H.

⁴ "From this fort, which is only 700 yards from the 72nd Gateway, men fired at the southern wall all day, while others could be seen, with rifles hung

arms, but once again their courage seemed to fail them, and at dusk they withdrew to the city.

The heliogram announcing Charles Gough's departure from Jagdallak and his hope to be at Sherpur on the 24th, arrived that day; and, on receipt of it, Roberts ordered Hudson to move to Butkhak, and at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 22nd, sent out two squadrons of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, under Major J. H. Green, to try to join him there.¹

On the 22nd, the Afghans, moving out of Kabul in larger bodies than had hitherto been the case, occupied all the forts to the east of Sherpur, and there were unmistakeable signs that the final struggle was close at hand. Fortunately for the garrison, Roberts was soon in possession of Mahomed Jan's plans. Spies brought in news that very early next morning, the last day of the Maharram, scaling parties, well supplied with ladders, were to make a demonstration against the cantonments' southern and western faces from Mahomed Sharif's fort and the King's Garden; but the real assault was to be directed against the village of Behmaru and the gap in the eastern wall, and only when that had proved successful was the feigned attack to be converted into a real attempt to scale the rampart near the 72nd Highlanders' Gate. The signal for the attack was to be a beacon fire on the Asmai Hills, lighted by Mushk-i-Alam's own hands.

Before evening, commanding officers had been warned of what was likely to happen; and next day, the 23rd of December, an

across their backs superintending the carrying away of the bhusa stored by the 5th Punjab Cavalry, in a village near for winter consumption." (Hensman, p. 243.)

Mahomed Sharif stood near the site of the old Cantonment, and came prominently to notice in the disastrous winter of 1841. (See, Kaye's *First Afghan War*, Vol. II. p. 269.)—H. B. H.

¹ Extract from Diary for December 21st:—"Telegraphed to Hudson to come to Butkhak to-morrow, and arranged for Green to go out during the night to try and join him." (Macgregor, Vol. II. p. 166.)

hour before dawn, the troops silently fell in under arms and took up the positions assigned to them in their various sections. In strained expectation, confident of ultimate victory, yet conscious that a life-and-death struggle lay before him, every man's eyes were turned towards the east, watching for the predicted signal; yet when it came, so brilliant, so dazzling was the light that burst forth from the Asmai Heights that, for an instant, men's hearts stood still with astonishment and awe. All saw that light and some fragment of the scene revealed by it, but the watchers on the Behmaru ridge saw all that it disclosed, and never did soldiers gaze upon a more glorious, a more terrible spectacle. At their feet—every nook and corner of the vast enclosure, every defensive work, every group of defenders, clearly visible—lay the cantonments, and beyond, across the snow-clad valley, dotted with villages and forts, every seam and rock on the rugged, precipitous Asmai Heights shone out as if traced by a pencil of fire, and on those heights, their figures dark against the snow below and the light above, men—watchers and waiters like those who now beheld them—were just starting into fierce motion, ready to throw away their lives in the endeavour to break through the obstacles that lay between them and their hated foe.

Three minutes at most that light lasted; then it died down as suddenly as it had flashed upwards; but the darkness that followed was of short duration, for out of it, as the scaling parties advanced to the feigned attack, a heavy musketry fire burst forth, and at the same time the British guns on the Behmaru Heights began throwing star shells into the dense masses of the enemy, who, led by Ghazis, were now issuing from their places of concealment and pouring across the plain; each shell, as it flew, lighting up hundreds of fierce, eager faces. Darkness faded into dawn and dawn into sunlight, and the terrible beauty of a night assault gave place to the hideous horrors of a battle by day; but still the vast mob rushed on, wave after wave, filling the air with deafening cries of *Allah-il-Allah*, as

they hurled themselves upon the defences. But the Engineers had done their work too well. Up to the 15th of December, such courage as animated those ill-armed hordes would have carried them into the heart of Sherpur; but, now, with only their naked hands to tear down the obstructions which barred their advance, though their officers rode constantly backwards and forwards encouraging them to fresh efforts, though numbers died to clear a way for those behind them, not one succeeded in getting within the walls. Again and again, those who sought to carry the Behmaru village recoiled before the withering fire from the mountain guns, and the rifles of the Guides and .92nd Highlanders; again and again, those who strove to escalate the eastern wall were swept down by the steadily reserved fire of the 67th Foot; yet still their numbers seemed to grow and their courage gave no signs of waning.

About 9 o'clock, three hours after the beginning of the struggle, the Afghans gained a firm lodgment in a small village lying dangerously near the eastern end of the Heights, and Hugh Gough telegraphed to Head-Quarters for reinforcements. Macgregor could only telegraph back the order "to hold on"; for on all sides the garrison was now hotly engaged, and though the captured Afghan cannon made huge gaps in the yelling crowds pressing forward to the assault, the Afghans, abandoning all mere demonstrations, were making one attempt after another to escalate the southern wall. A little later, however, Baker was able to spare a few troops from the Reserve to the hard-pressed men on the Heights, and Hills, commanding Section IV., sent up a wing of the 3rd Sikhs.

At 10 o'clock there was a slight lull in the hitherto almost continuous fighting, and when at 11 o'clock, the Afghans returned to the charge their assaults were marked by less determination than before; nevertheless, they kept a firm hold on the village they had captured till Roberts, recognizing that it was impossible to dislodge them from it by any fire that could be brought to bear upon them

from the defences, resolved to try a flank attack, and ordered 4 guns G-3 Royal Artillery, commanded by Major W. R. Craster, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry, commanded by Major B. Williams, to move out through the Gorge into the plain lying to the north of the Behmaru Heights. The movement had hardly begun when the Ghazis were seen to be deserting the village, and it was discovered that the Kohistanis, who ought to have protected them against a flank attack, had abandoned their position near the eastern end of the Behmaru Heights and were already far on their way to their own country.

Not a moment was lost in taking advantage of this weakening of the enemy. Issuing from cantonments by the Behmaru Gorge, with every available man and horse, Brigadier-General Massy hurried after Williams, but before he could overtake him the Kohistani contingent, numbering five thousand fighting men, many of them accompanied by wives and sisters come out to witness their triumph, had escaped into the hills. There was nothing to be done in that quarter, so hearing that Baker with the Sappers and Miners, two guns and two companies of the 92nd and the 3rd Sikhs, had followed him through the Gorge and was preparing to attack the Afghans in the villages to the east and south-east of cantonments, Massy made his dispositions to cut off the enemy's retreat. The 14th Bengal Lancers he sent to block the pass leading into Kohistan, the Guides Cavalry to guard the road leading to Butkhak, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry and the 9th Lancers to hold the road leading to the city. Several villages were destroyed by Baker's force; the 67th Foot burned others and cleared the enemy out of Rikabashi Fort close to the south-east bastion; and a party of the 5th Punjab Infantry, led by Subadar Juma, captured Killa Mahomed Sharif, but retired from it by Roberts's order. Out of each village as it was stormed, crowds of Afghans dashed into the open and rushed southwards towards the city to find the men of the 9th Lancers and

the 5th Punjab Cavalry, dismounted, barring their retreat.¹ Many fell under the fire of their carbines, but evening was closing in, and Baker, leaving the completion of his work of destruction to the morrow, was about to withdraw into cantonments, so Massy collected his scattered squadrons and followed the infantry back to camp, where each corps returned to its own section.

That night every man in Sherpur knew that the siege was at an end ; for though, at the south-east corner of the cantonments where, barely two hundred and fifty yards from the ramparts, three standards had been set up, the enemy still held on to gardens and enclosures, from behind whose loopholed walls their fire had covered the retreat of their friends, no second effort to capture the place need be looked for. The tribes had staked their all on one cast and lost, and with the frustration of the hope which had held them together, their combination had ceased to exist. An armed people would still possess the land, biding their time and waiting for a new leader ; but, for the moment, the British troops had won a right to as many square miles of Afghanistan as they could occupy; and her capital must fall back into their hands. Deep as must have been the disappointment that filled the hearts of Ghilzai and Wardaki, Kohistani and Logari, as, spreading far and wide over hill and valley, they withdrew that night to their homes, no sense of shame can have added to its sting. All that men could do to achieve victory, they had done. For seven hours, without a single cannon to cover their advance and batter down the strong defences of the cantonment, they had hurled themselves upon the abattis

¹ "The main body of the enemy had got well away to the city, but all stragglers were hunted down in the nullahs in which they took shelter, and then despatched. Two or three lancers or sowars were told off to each straggler, and the men, dismounting, used their carbines when the unlucky Afghan had been hemmed in." (Hensman, pp. 254, 255.)

Such methods of warfare recall the Mutiny days, when no quarter was given.—
H. B. H.

protecting its walls, and under a murderous fire had tugged and torn at the tough telegraph wires which bound the heavy logs together. Great heaps of dead, marking the points where their attacks had been fiercest and longest, testified to the heroic spirit by which they were inspired. Roberts reckoned that they lost three thousand men in the assault, and the estimate is probably not exaggerated. They failed, not from lack of courage and determination, but because the task they had set themselves was an impossible one for half-armed, in many cases unarmed, men. The defences of Sherpur once completed, the besiegers' only chance of success lay in continuing as they had begun, constantly threatening but never attacking. Such tactics must, slowly but surely, have exhausted the garrison's stock of ammunition and reduced its numbers by undermining its health; but the approach of Gough rendered the continuance of a waiting policy impossible, and the result was the splendid, but useless, attempt to take Sherpur by storm.

The defence was worthy of the attack. British and Native troops vied with each other in coolness and courage; and though, covered by the ramparts or hidden in trenches, the risks they ran were comparatively small, they were still great enough, for wherever a soldier's head showed above the parapet, a skilled marksman was on the watch to make it his target, and whenever a man rose out of a trench, he was saluted by a shower of bullets. Brigadier-General Hugh Gough himself was struck down when, for a moment, he stood up to catch a glimpse of what was going on at the foot of the Heights, and fell backwards into the ditch, apparently dead. Luckily the bullet that knocked him over was half spent and could not penetrate the heavy poshteen that he wore over his uniform, and a little rum administered by his staff-officer, who had been standing beside him when he fell, quickly brought him round. A good many men, too, were killed or wounded by bullets that flew curving over the defences and dropped among the troops sheltering

behind them. The annexed table gives all the casualties that occurred during the siege. It is impossible to say how many of them should be set down to the fighting on the 23rd, but certainly the greater part.

CASUALTIES FROM 15TH TO 23RD DECEMBER INCLUSIVE

Killed.

Captain J. Dundas, V.C.	Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant C. Nugent	„
One man	G-3 Royal Artillery.
One man	No. 2 Mountain Battery.
Five men	12th Bengal Cavalry.
One man	92nd Highlanders.
One man	5th Punjab Infantry.
Seven followers.	

Wounded.

Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, V.C., C.B., Commanding Section III.	
Lieutenant C. A. Montanaro	. Royal Artillery (mortally). ¹
„ J. Burn-Murdock	. Royal Engineers.
„ C. F. Gambier	. 5th Punjab Cavalry.
„ L. Sunderland	. 72nd Highlanders.
One Native Officer	. 5th Punjab Cavalry.
One Native Officer	. Guide Corps.
One man	„ F-A Royal Horse Artillery.
One man	„ No. 1 Mountain Battery.
One man	„ 9th Lancers.
Four men	□ 12th Bengal Cavalry.
Six men (one mortally) .	„ 5th Punjab Cavalry.
Nine men	„ 67th Foot.
One man	„ 72nd Highlanders.
One man	„ 92nd Highlanders.
One man	„ 23rd Pioneers.
One man	„ 28th Punjab Infantry.
Two men	„ Corps of Guides.
Eight men	„ 5th Punjab Infantry
Three men	„ 3rd Sikhs.
Twenty-two followers.	

¹ “Lieutenant C. A. Montanaro, R.A., died on the 20th of a wound received the previous day. This promising young officer’s gallantry in standing to his guns to the last on the 14th December I have before mentioned.” (Roberts’s Despatch.)

TOTAL CASUALTIES.

	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>	<i>Followers.</i>	<i>Horses.</i>
Killed	2	9	7	7
Wounded	7	39	22	30
	—	—	—	—
	9	48	29	37

The Engineer officers, Captain J. Dundas and Lieutenant C. Nugent, lost their lives by the untimely explosion of a mine they were laying; and Lieutenant Burn-Murdock was wounded by a volley from a fort whilst engaged in the same dangerous work, and would have been killed had not his companion, Lieutenant P. T. Buston, rushed forward and, laying a bag of powder against the gate, blown up the place.

The defence was greatly facilitated by the telegraph line erected by Mr. Luke and Mr. Kirke of the Telegraph Department,¹ which ran all round the cantonment, keeping each section in touch with the others, and all in constant communication with Head-Quarters Gate, from which point Roberts directed every movement till, at one o'clock, after despatching Massy with the cavalry to do his utmost against the enemy, he proceeded to the Behmaru Heights to arrange for the occupation of the village just deserted by the Ghazis, and to send out Baker to destroy as many forts and villages as there would be time to capture before nightfall.

OBSERVATION

Had Mahomed Jan commanded the services of a skilful Military Engineer, he would probably have been able to capture Sherpur

¹ "P. S. V. Luke, Esq., C.I.E., and H. A. Kirke, Esq., of the Government Telegraph Department, have worked well and assisted me greatly by rapidly constructing a telegraph line, which placed Head-Quarters in direct communication with the Sectional Commands." (Roberts's Despatch.)

even after the completion of its defences ; for, with the unlimited labour at the disposal of such an Engineer, the place could quickly have been approached by parallels and zigzags, the walls mined and blown up at a number of points ; and the whole length of the ramparts, unprotected as they were by traverses, enfiladed by a flanking fire from earthworks thrown up, under cover of darkness, within musketry range of the cantonment.

CHAPTER XXIII

March of Charles Gough's Brigade

DISTURBANCES ON THE LINE OF COMMUNICATION

EARLY on the morning of the 24th of December, Ressaldar Nakshband Khan reported that the thousands of tribesmen, who the previous evening had still held on to Kabul, the Bala Hissar, and many surrounding villages, had fled during the night. The news brought inexpressible relief to Sir F. Roberts,¹ who, not daring to hope for so sudden and complete a deliverance from his troubles, had been anxiously considering with his Chief of the Staff how best to improve yesterday's successes.² In the hope of inflicting further losses on the enemy he now ordered the cavalry to go in pursuit

¹ "The relief I felt when I had gathered my force inside the walls of Sherpur on the evening of the 14th of December, was small compared to that which I experienced on the morning of the 24th, when I realized that not only had the assault been abandoned, but that the great tribal combination had dissolved, and that not a man of the many thousands who had been opposed to us the previous day, remained in any of the villages, or on the surrounding hills." (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 306.)

² "Had a long talk with the General, and he is going to send Baker out with the 67th, 3rd Sikhs, Guides and Pioneers to cover Gough getting in here. If we can manage to clear them out of the city and Bala Hissar, it will be grand. . . Roberts's idea is to storm the Bala Hissar either to-morrow or next day with C. Gough's troops. I think this is very risky, as the Bala Hissar is very strong indeed to an assault: the walls are too high to escalate, and as the only way in is by the gate, which may be strongly retrenched inside; and if these fellows are determined, they may, being so numerous, beat us off, then we shall be in a worse hat than before. Altogether the look-out is somewhat gloomy." (*Macgregor*, Vol. II., Diary 23rd December, pp. 168, 169.)

—one column under Hugh Gough by the Nanachi Pass into the Chardeh, another under Massy, by the Sang-i-Nawishta Defile, into the Charasiab Valley ; but the fugitives were already out of reach, and a blinding snowstorm, which hid all traces of their flight, so hampered and exhausted the pursuers that night had fallen before they got back to Sherpur, the men leading their horses, which, with the snow balling in their hoofs, could hardly keep their footing on the slippery ground.¹ They had started early, but earlier still, Charles Gough had marched into Sherpur, bringing with him the garrison of Lattaband and the 12th Bengal Cavalry, the regiment which, led by Green, had gone out during the night of the 21st to meet Hudson at Butkhak.

Perhaps no portion of the Force that had accompanied Sir F. Roberts to Kabul had gone through a worse experience than the garrison of Lattaband. It had had little fighting and no losses in the field ; for, on the one occasion when it had driven a gathering of tribesmen from the hills overlooking the camp, there had been no casualties, thanks to the skilful way in which the attacking column had been covered by artillery and rifle fire ; but, for eleven days, it had been completely isolated, and, in that isolation, as ignorant of the possibilities of deliverance reaching it from outside as it was powerless to free itself from its perilous position. Such uncertainty would have been trying enough to troops well supplied with food, in a genial climate, but it must have been doubly so to men on half-rations, conscious that even these must come to an end, encamped amidst snow, on the summit of a pass, with outposts on the still higher hills by which that pass was commanded, and much sickness was the natural result of semi-starvation, exposure, and

¹ “ Massy went out with the 9th Lancers and 5th Punjab Cavalry by the Ben-i-Hissar road, and Gough with the 14th Lancers and Guides. They found no one, and had an awful day of it, cavalry being no use whatever.” (Ibid. Vol. II. p. 169.)

anxiety. The transport animals and their drivers had suffered even more than the troops from cold and hunger ; so greatly, indeed, had their numbers dwindled that, to obey the heliogram ordering him to move to Butkhak independently of Gough, Hudson would have been obliged to abandon the greater part of his baggage and stores. This he was not prepared to do, and in consequence Green's men had a most dangerous and exhausting ride. Slipping out of Sherpur during the night of the 21st and avoiding as far as possible forts and villages, the 12th Bengal Cavalry reached the Logar Bridge without adventure to find it in the enemy's hands and well guarded. Leaving the road, they struck the river lower down, at a point where the channel was fairly shallow, but the banks on either shore steep and high. It took the regiment a couple of hours to cross the ford, and in the operation two men were drowned and ten lost their horses and had to make their way back to Sherpur as best they could.¹ The others were all wet to the skin, for many had slipped back in attempting to climb the slippery bank on the river's further side, and the rear squadron had actually dismounted in the half-frozen water and crawled to the top, dragging their horses after them.² Chilled to the bone, they rode cautiously forward, but the enemy was awake and watchful, and they were fired on from every village that they passed. So long as darkness protected them they had little to fear from random shots ; but day dawned as they approached Butkhak, revealing, not the friends whom they had hoped to find there, but hundreds of Afghans, pouring out of the village to attack them. A hastily dismounted squadron checked their onrush, but the relief was only momentary, and Green seemed to have only the choice between a desperate attempt to break through the enemy or an equally desperate attempt to get back to Sherpur, when one of his Native

¹ "Twelve men were missing, but ten have since reported themselves at Sherpur." (Hensman, p. 250.)

² *Ibid.*

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officers, born and bred in the district, came forward with a proposal to lead the regiment by the Kabul River to Lattaband. Green gladly accepted the offer, and, under Ressaldar Bahawlddeen Khan's guidance, the 12th Bengal Cavalry joined Hudson's force that afternoon, having lost only three men killed and three wounded by the way.

Gough had started from Jagdallak to march to the relief of Sherpur, with the following troops :—

STAFF.

Lieutenant F. H. R. Drummond,	Orderly Officer.
Major A. A. A. Kinlock	Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Major M. G. Gerard	Brigade Major.
Major H. T. Hallowes .	Brigade Transport Officer.
Surgeon-Major T. Walsh	Army Medical Department.

ARTILLERY.

4 Guns Hazara Mountain Battery, Captain A. Broadfoot.

CAVALRY.

	<i>Officers.</i>	<i>Men.</i>
Detachment 10th Bengal Lancers—Captain S. D. Barrow	1	25
2-9th Foot—Lieutenant-Colonel W. Daunt	16	483
Detachment 72nd Highlanders	1	45
2nd and 4th Gurkhas—Major A. Battye	12	776
No. 5 Company Sappers and Miners—Lieut. E. S. Hill	3	73
	33	1,402

Thirty-three officers and fourteen hundred men was a small force with which to face the unknown dangers that lay before him; but, at least, it was efficient, for all the sick and weak had been left behind. Unluckily, there had been no possibility of applying the same weeding process to the transport. A committee of officers appointed to inquire into its condition, had reported that at least 25 per cent. of the Dekkan ponies were unfit for work; and the remaining 75 per cent., small, weak, badly equipped, were ill adapted

to military purposes ; but no other transport was procurable, so every creature that could stand up to receive its load, had to stagger on as far as its strength could carry it. In many cases this could not be far, so Gough issued instructions as to the course to be pursued when the inevitable breakdown occurred. Tents were first to be sacrificed, as food and ammunition must go forward at all costs. That the Afghans might reap no profit from his losses, he further directed that everything that had to be abandoned should be destroyed. Most of the transport animals survived the first day's march ; but between Seh Baba and Lattaband many animals lay down to die, and many ponies lost their loads. The readjustment and destruction of baggage consequent on these losses caused endless delays, and not till eleven at night did the rear-guard get into camp. Subsequently, the Military Department severely criticized the great loss of transport that had marked the four days' march from Jagdallak to Sherpur, and blamed Gough for destroying Government property ; but the Commander-in-Chief, having regard to the condition of Gough's transport, was of opinion that, instead of blame, he deserved high praise for having carried through a difficult operation with such miserable material, and declared that both the circumstances of the case and military precedent justified him in destroying whatever he could not take on with him. A great part of the destruction of tents complained of by the Military Department, took place at Lattaband, and was due to the necessity of transferring to Hudson every camel and pony that Gough could spare.

Early on the morning of the 23rd of December, the Jagdallak column, reinforced by the 12th Bengal Cavalry and the garrison of Lattaband, broke up camp, and began to move slowly down the pass. It was an enemy's country through which it was to advance, so Gough, besides providing small detachments to look after the baggage, detailed a whole regiment to act as rear-guard, thus greatly

reducing his fighting strength in front ; but, neither in front nor in rear, were there any intimations of the presence of the enemy ; only the sound of heavy firing from the direction of Kabul told of conflict and danger, and that sound, cut off by intervening hills, died away as the troops descended the pass. Butkhak was deserted when the Cavalry rode into it, at 11 a.m. ; all the men were away, fighting at Sherpur, and the women and children had fled as soon as the strange horsemen came into sight. From this village Gough heliographed to Roberts :—" Have arrived at Butkhak. Solicit orders." The message was acknowledged, but no orders followed, so, after a while, Gough heliographed again :—" Will advance to Logar Bridge and take your orders there." This heliogram also was acknowledged, and after a short interval came another flash, but the anxiously expected message had got no further than " Colonel Macgregor to General Gough," when clouds blotted out the sun, to the bitter disappointment of Gough, who was standing beside the man in charge of the signalling instrument. The aspect of the sky gave no hope of a renewal of communication with the cantonment, so the relieving force marched on as ignorant of what might be in store for it as when it left Lattaband. Two hours later, the Cavalry approached the Logar Bridge, which proved to be intact and empty of defenders, though barricades and shelter trenches bore testimony to the intention of disputing the British advance. The bridge was only six miles from Sherpur, but between the two rose the Siah Sang Heights, a screen which neither eye nor ear could penetrate. The utter silence, the absence of all life, were terrible to men who divined the tumult and clamour of battle close at hand ; but although Gough sent out Major Gerard to reconnoitre towards Kabul, he returned without having seen anything of friend or foe.

The main body had halted a mile short of the river to allow the baggage animals and rear-guard to close up. These, as usual, were far behind, and when, after sunset, the latter marched in, it

was too late for Gough to take the initiative on his own responsibility. His anxiety as to the fate of the Sherpur garrison, however, was relieved between ten and eleven o'clock at night, when a messenger stole into camp, bringing a letter from the Chief of the Staff. There had been heavy fighting, so Macgregor wrote, and the city, citadel, and many villages were still in the enemy's hands. Gough was therefore to make his way into cantonments as early as possible next morning, by the road running along the eastern side of the Siah Sang Heights. It snowed heavily in the night; it was still snowing when the bugle sounded the reveillé, and all landmarks were blotted out by a dense fog. Feeling their way through the blinding storm round the base of the Siah Sang Heights, Gough's troops moved slowly forward through a silent and deserted world, till, about a mile from Sherpur, they fell in with the scouts of the 9th Lancers, and were met close to the walls by Roberts and a part of Macpherson's Brigade. They had marched from Jagdallak to Kabul without seeing a single hostile tribesman, or hearing the sound of a single hostile shot; yet never had Commander accepted greater risks and deserved more gratitude from those for whom he was willing to run them than Charles Gough; and, certainly, none ever received less. Sir F. Roberts's original Despatch contained no recognition of the great courage displayed by his subordinate in marching to his assistance with a force so small that Jan Mahomed's hosts might easily have annihilated it; and even in a supplementary Despatch, written nine days later, he dismissed the whole difficult and important movement in a few cold words:—"I have much pleasure in tendering to him (Gough) my thanks for the manner in which the operation entrusted to him was carried out." The Commander-in-Chief, an impartial and experienced judge, formed a much fairer estimate of the service rendered by Gough and his men, and took care to impress his views upon the Government. "In submitting these papers" (the Kabul Despatches), so he wrote, "Sir Frederick Haines wishes

to record his high appreciation of the very able and satisfactory manner in which Brigadier-General Gough conducted this extremely difficult operation, and his Excellency feels sure that the Government of India will be satisfied that the conduct of the troops, British and Native, was all that could be desired."

The Ghilzais' failure to harass Gough's march was certainly not due to inertia or love of peace, for hardly had the British Commander begun his advance before Asmatullah Khan summoned his clansmen to his standard. Three thousand answered to the call, and with these, on the 23rd of December, accompanied by Faiz Mahomed, late commanding at Ali Masjid, and Mahomed Hussan Khan, Ex-Governor of Jellalabad, he attacked the British post on the Jagdallak Kotal. One assault succeeded the other from two o'clock in the afternoon till ten at night, in one of which Major E. T. Thackeray, V.C., the officer commanding, was severely wounded; but the place had been so strongly fortified by the Sappers and Miners, who formed the larger part of the garrison, that, in the end, the Ghilzais had to withdraw discomfited. The news of the attack had reached the posts on either side the Kotal, and next morning Colonel Norman arrived from Jagdallak Fort, and when, after reinforcing the garrison, he continued his march, he was met by Lieutenant-Colonel Ball-Acton, hurrying with a small force from Pezwan to Major Thackeray's assistance. After a short halt, each column retraced its steps; Ball-Acton re-entered Pezwan unopposed, but Norman found the enemy blocking his road, and, in brushing them away, had two men killed and three wounded.

On the 29th of December, the Jagdallak posts were again threatened, but Norman, reinforced by Ball-Acton, repulsed his assailants. On this occasion, Lieutenant I. D. Wright, Royal Artillery, and one man were killed, and three men wounded. Sir F. Roberts's recognition of Norman's services was full and ungrudging. "Colonel Norman appears to have thoroughly appreciated the state of affairs

around Jagdallak, and to have exercised his command with great coolness and judgment," so he wrote in his Despatch of the 2nd of February; and the praise was all the more deserved because the effects of Norman's coolness and judgment were felt beyond the immediate scene of his operations, and contributed to calm the unrest that was showing itself among professedly friendly tribes; even the Khugianis, who had kept quiet since their defeat at Futtehabad, having begun to show signs of hostility. It was they and the Shinwarris who were believed to be the authors of a raid on a post near Ali Boghan, in which some jezailchis and camp-followers were killed, and the raiders got clear off with their loot, though pursued for some distance by a small column under Colonel J. Fryer. Subsequently, Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie marched to a group of villages ten miles from Jellalabad, where the perpetrators of the outrage were reported to have found shelter, and, failing to discover them, seized ten of the headmen to be held as hostages for their surrender.

This raid was a small matter, but all the elements out of which a big rising might have sprung, were present in the district; and Bright, keenly alive to the dangers created for his more advanced posts by the departure of Gough's Brigade, pushed forward three companies of the 51st Foot and the 45th Sikhs to strengthen Gandamak, where Brigadier-General Arbuthnot was now in command, replacing them at Jellalabad by the 27th Punjab Infantry, and ordered 11-9 Royal Artillery and the 12th Foot to hold themselves in readiness to march from Lundi Kotal as soon as the expected reinforcement from Peshawar should arrive. This upward movement of troops, combined with Norman's activity, checked any offensive action that the tribes may have been planning, and restored peace for a time to the line of communications.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. There can be no doubt that the raising of the siege of Sherpur was the consequence of the advance of Charles Gough's Force. The first sign of a weakening in the enemy's resolution coincided with its arrival at Butkhak—the flash which conveyed the news to Sherpur warning the Afghans of its approach; the end of the long-protracted assault came at one o'clock, just when its advanced guard sighted the Logar Bridge, and the Kohistanis were in full retreat before Roberts had decided to try the effect of a flank attack on the Ghazis holding the captured village near the eastern end of the Behmaru Heights—an attack which must have failed had the five thousand Kohistanis stuck to a position practically unassailable by cavalry.

OBSERVATION II. The surprise and dissatisfaction openly expressed in Sherpur at the tardy arrival of Charles Gough's column was due to ignorance of its strength and composition. It was believed to be large and well-equipped, and when at last it did appear, and men could see for themselves how meagre were its numbers, how defective its transport, the fact that it had met with no opposition blinded all, but the most thoughtful members of the garrison, to the risks it had really run, and deprived its commander of the grateful appreciation which was his due. How it happened that those risks were never realized can be only a matter of surmise. Probably Mahomed Jan's authority over his undisciplined host was confined to that portion of it which had followed him to Kabul, and his influence may not have been enough to induce a sufficiently large body of tribesmen to make a long march in fog and snow to attack an enemy whose strength rumours would be sure to exaggerate; and though, as an experienced commander, he must have acted against his better judgment in sanctioning the attempt to take Sherpur by

storm before Gough could appear on the scene, it cannot have been evident to him then as, after the event, it is evident to the English military student to-day, that the attempt must fail.

Whatever the reasons for the Afghan General's faulty choice, its immediate and temporary effect was to wreck the tribal combination which Mushk-i-Alam had been at such pains to bring about ; and its more distant and enduring result to hide from the British people the folly of the strategy which had placed two British forces in such a position that only a mistake on the part of the enemy, saved both of them from annihilation.¹

For the initial error in that strategy—the hasty rush on Kabul at a season of the year when the road selected for the British advance was on the point of being closed by snow—the Indian Government must share the responsibility ; the mistakes that followed lie at the door of the Commander to whom a free hand in the conduct of civil and military affairs in the invaded districts had been given. Knowing that his original line of communications was lost, knowing also that Afghanistan is a poor country, and that any attempt to deprive the people of their winter stores must goad them to resistance, Sir F. Roberts's first thought should have been the establishment of a new and safe route to India. On this he should have concentrated all the energy which was worse than wasted on foraging and punitive expeditions ; meanwhile, his demands upon the people should have been restricted to such supplies as they were in the habit of furnishing to their own Government, and he should have abstained from destroying

¹ Had Mahomed Jan blown up the bridge over the then unfordable Kabul River and with half his force made a feint on Sherpur, and with the other half a real attack on the left flank of Gough's column, whilst entangled in the defile between Lattaband and Butkhak, that force must have been destroyed, or, at best, so weakened and driven back that it could have exercised no further influence on the course of events around Kabul, and the Afghans would have been free to continue the investment of the Sherpur cantonment till sickness should have reduced its garrison beyond the point at which a successful defence of its vast works was possible.—H. B. H.

the homes of the villagers, and from manufacturing criminals for his Military Commission to condemn, by the creation of an arbitrary and altogether artificial offence.

No measures, however wise, would have reconciled the Afghans to foreign rule, and the British occupation of Afghanistan would have been brought to an end in time by India's financial difficulties ; but, in the absence of all acts of cruelty and oppression, no feelings of resentment would have been evoked strong enough to lead to a general rising of the tribes in winter ; and by the spring, when their natural turbulence might have driven them into the field, the Khyber line would have been too strongly held, from end to end, for the troops in Kabul to be in any danger from their unrest.

CHAPTER XXIV

After the Siege. Reprisals

WHEN General Hills returned to his duties as Governor of Kabul, he found that the shops in the Hindu Quarter had been gutted, the houses of Afghans suspected of British leanings plundered, and the Kazilbashes and Hazaras maltreated by the followers of Mahomed Jan and Mushk-i-Alam. The Bala Hissar, much injured by the explosion of the 16th of October, and afterwards stripped of all wood-work by the British, had also suffered damage at the hands of the insurgents, and every grain of powder had vanished from the magazines. Wrecked as it was, it was soon occupied by Gough's Brigade, its security being assured by a system of redoubts and blockhouses on the Sher Darwaza Heights.

These works formed part of an extensive scheme of defence, at which gangs of British and Native soldiers and an army of hired labourers toiled for weeks. Every village and wall within a thousand yards of Sherpur were levelled to the ground; roads fit for guns laid out all round cantonments; the ramparts, where defective, completed; a trench and wall, broken here and there by blockhouses, were drawn along the whole length of the Behmaru ridge; and at the south-west end of the Siah Sang Heights, a strong fort, capable of holding a thousand men, was constructed, whilst a smaller fort was placed so as to command the wooden bridge across the Kabul River; and as the one was out of sight of the other, the two were linked together by a blockhouse erected on the northern end of

the range. The redoubts and blockhouses on the Sher Darwaza Heights for the protection of the Bala Hissar, and a large fort on the Asmai Heights dominating the city and connected with the plain by a wide zigzag road, completed works which, owing to the great area they covered, would have made a second defence of Sherpur more difficult than the first ; and a second siege was not as improbable as the complete dispersion of the besieging force might seem to promise. Already Mushk-i-Alam and Jan Mahomed, who had rallied their personal adherents at Ghazni, were proclaiming their intention of returning to Kabul at the end of the Naroz festival, which occurs in March ; and the policy of reprisals on which the British Commander had fallen back, was reviving the passions to which, when the time for action should arrive, the Afghan leaders would appeal.

On the 26th of December, Sir Frederick Roberts issued the following proclamation :—“ At the instigation of some seditious men, the ignorant people, generally not considering the result, raised a rebellion. Now, many of the insurgents have received their reward, and as subjects are a trust from God, the British Government, which is just and merciful, as well as strong, has forgiven their guilt. It is now proclaimed that all who come in without delay will be pardoned, excepting only Mahomed Jan of Wardak, Mir Bacha of Kohistan, Samandar Khan of Logar, Ghulam Hyder of Chardeh, and the murderers of Sirdar Mahomed Hassein Khan. Come and make your submission without fear, of whatsoever tribe you may be. You can then remain in your houses in comfort and safety, and no harm will befall you. The British Government has no enmity towards the people. Anyone who rebels again will, of course, be punished. This condition is necessary. But all who come in without delay need have no fear or suspicion. The British Government speaks only that which is in its heart.”¹

¹ *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. pp. 307, 308.

The people thus exhorted to submission might perhaps have overlooked the insult contained in the assumption that they were rebels, and, as such, had reason to be thankful that their lives and property were to be spared, if only the promises made to them had been kept ; but, even whilst the proclamation was being penned, its author was preparing to plunder and destroy the homes of the men whom he was inviting to trust in the justice and mercy of the British Government ; and the day after its publication, before it could have reached Kohistan, a column, consisting of

4 Guns	Hazara Mountain Battery,
200 Sabres	Guides Cavalry,
500 Rifles	67th Foot,
400 Rifles	Guides Infantry,
400 Rifles	5th Punjab Infantry,
400 Rifles	2nd Gurkhas,
A company and a half Sappers and Miners, who took with them materials for demolishing forts and villages, ¹	

left camp to carry fire and sword into Koh Daman, the richest district of that province, in which were situated Fort Baba Kushkar, Mir Bacha's stronghold, and the numerous villages which owned him as their chief.

Five days' provisions and two hundred rounds of ammunition were carried for each man of this expeditionary force, and, in addition to the mules and ponies required for its own needs, it took with it fifteen per cent. of all the transport in Sherpur to bring back the expected booty, as it was "intended to loot the place thoroughly."² No opposition was offered ; Mir Bacha had fled to Charikar, and his people looked helplessly on whilst General Baker, to whom the work of destruction had been entrusted, levelled their houses to the ground, cut down their vineyards, and set the Gurkhas to work to

¹ Hensman, p. 267.

² Ibid,

ring their fruit trees.¹ On the fifth day the expedition returned to cantonments, carrying with it rich booty and the seeds of much sickness, whilst behind them, shivering in the snow, hundreds of men, women, and children cursed the British name. Overawed by the terrible fate that had befallen Mir Bacha's people, the headmen of many other villages yielded without protest to Baker's demand for supplies, and as the villagers had no surplus stores, it was the grain and fodder laid by to keep them and their cattle alive till the coming harvest that was brought into Sherpur.

On the last day of the year, a second punitive expedition visited the Chardeh Valley and burned Baghwana, the village near which the guns had been lost on the 11th of December, partly, because the troops had been fired upon from its walls, partly, to punish the contumacy of two of its headmen, whom flogging had failed to induce to point out the graves of Lieutenants Hardie and Forbes. A third mallik proved more yielding, and when the bodies of the two young officers were exhumed, they were found not to have suffered mutilation. Nevertheless, four headmen were carried off to Sherpur, tried, sentenced to death, and hanged, together with a leather-cutter of Kabul who had tried to steal a mule.²

The tribunal by which these men were condemned to death was the Military Commission, presided over by Dunham Massy, which had reassembled as soon as British authority had been re-established in Kabul. Among its victims were ten tribesmen taken prisoners by the cavalry during Mahomed Jan's retreat, the charge brought against them being that of carrying arms in contravention of Sir

¹ "General Baker not only looted and levelled to the ground all forts and villages owned by Mir Butcha, but cut down his vineyards, and set the Gurkhas to work to 'ring' all the fruit trees. This will be a heavy loss to the villages, which mainly derive their local influence from the return yielded by their orchards and vineyards." (Hensman, p. 277.)

² *Pioneer Mail* of 22nd January. See, also, Hensman, pp. 277, 282,

F. Roberts's Proclamation.¹ They were hanged near a ruined village, a quarter of a mile from the western gate of cantonments, on a gallows wide enough to admit of five being executed at one time. *The Englishman*, a Calcutta paper, which mentioned this detail in its issue of the 12th of January, added that "so numerous have these hangings been that they excite but little attention; no natives of the country, however, appear as spectators."

The published accounts of this period reveal no moral disapproval of this policy of terrorism to which Sir F. Roberts had so rapidly reverted; but there were men in camp who condemned it on military and political grounds. They saw that though temporarily relieved from serious embarrassment, the British Force at Kabul was in a precarious position, and they desired to avoid giving occasion for a second outburst of revengeful fury. To persons of this way of thinking it seemed folly to punish a whole people as rebels, instead of coming to terms with them as enemies; folly, to hope to earn the gratitude of tribesmen by offering them an amnesty from which their leaders were excepted; folly, to send out expeditions to burn villages and requisition supplies when the most pressing need of the troops was the re-establishment of communication with India, the base from which all their ammunition must be, and the greater part of their food ought to be, drawn. "How all this will end I do not know," wrote Colonel Macgregor in his Diary, on the 31st of December. "There is, no doubt, a very strong feeling of hostility against us, which all this indiscriminate hanging and burning of villages intensifies. In fact we have not got a single friend in the country."²

The end, so far as "this indiscriminate hanging and burning of

¹ "We declared in our own Proclamation of October 28th that all persons concerned in attacks upon British authority would meet with condign punishment, and we have just hanged ten men caught with arms in their hands during Mahomed Jan's retreat." (*The Daily News*, dated February 9th, 1880. See, also, *Pioneer Mail* of January 8th, 1880.)

² *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 171.

villages" was concerned, came directly after these words were written and from an unexpected quarter. From the time when telegrams and letters of newspaper correspondents with the Force at Kabul began to appear in English journals, the British public had given signs of an uneasy conscience; and, on the 1st of December, the growing dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the Military Commission found powerful expression in an article entitled "Martial Law in Kabul" by Mr. Frederic Harrison published in the *Fortnightly Review*, then edited by Mr. John Morley, a copy of which was at once forwarded to Sir. F. Roberts by Mr. E. Stanhope, Under-Secretary of State for War. During the greater part of December, the minds of men at home were too full of anxiety for the safety of the garrison of Sherpur for much criticism of the methods which had precipitated the great tribal rising; but when the glad tidings of the raising of the siege were followed by telegrams announcing the resumption of the sittings of the Military Commission and the destruction of Mir Bacha's villages, influential voices were again raised in protest against the fiction that the abdication of Yakub Khan had transferred the sovereignty of Afghanistan to the Commander of a small British force, occupying a few square miles of a single Afghan province, and that the transfer had converted armed opposition to Sir F. Roberts's authority from a war of national defence, into rebellion punishable by death. On the 29th of December, the Peace Society, presided over by Mr. Henry Pease, M.P., issued an address to the people of the United Kingdom calling upon them "to repudiate a system of terrorism which could only find a parallel in the worst times of Barbarian conquest;" and four days later, Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, warned his countrymen that "he who would not rise to rescue his people from huge crimes into which her present rulers were plunging her, would be a partaker of their sins." Speaking at Wakefield, on the 20th of January, Lord Ripon accused the Government of having reduced Afghanistan to anarchy, and of having

rendered her people hostile “not only from religious and national hatred, but from the recollections of slaughtered fellow-countrymen and their burned and deserted villages.” On the 21st, Mr. Grant Duff, M.P., declared that the words applied by the historian Kaye to the first Afghan War—“that both in principle and act it was unrighteous, and the curse of God was on it”—applied equally to the second; and on the 22nd, Mr. Thomas Chambers, M.P., denounced the war in equally scathing terms. The *Daily News*, in which these protests appeared, drove home their lessons in many powerful articles, and Liberal journals throughout the country were active in rousing public indignation against a war which had brought such discredit upon the nation. The agitation, steadily increasing in volume and weight,¹ culminated in a Memorial to the Prime Minister from a Committee presided over by the Duke of Westminster,² and in a second article in the *Fortnightly Review*, in which Mr. F. Harrison entered into a minute analysis of a number of individual acts, which, in his opinion, contravened the generally accepted law of nations, and British military and political traditions of the conduct due to an enemy in arms in defence of his own country. The Memorial appeared in the *Times* of the 3rd of February, and, on the 6th, the same journal published the following telegram from Lieutenant J. Sherston, orderly officer to General Roberts:—“No one executed unless convicted of attack on Residency. No soldier shot for fighting against us. Fuller explanations submitted to Government, which I am confident will be considered satisfactory;” and a week later,

¹ At a meeting on “Peace and War” the working men’s delegates “denounced these barbarous raids and this lawless butchery.” (*The Fortnightly Review* for December, 1879, p. 784.)

² The Memorial was signed by the Bishops of Oxford and Exeter, Sir A. Hobhouse, Sir F. Fowell Buxton, Sir C. Trevelyan, Mr. S. Morley, the Rev. W. H. Fremantle, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. F. Harrison, Mr. J. A. Froude, Professor E. S. Beesley, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Mr. Ashton Dilke, Mr. J. Morley, and other well-known writers and public men.—H. B. H.

Mr. E. Stanhope read a letter from Sir F. Roberts, dated January the 10th, stating that not a single native had been hanged for merely fighting against us.

Sherston's telegram was Sir F. Roberts's answer to the second agitation provoked by the renewal of Martial Law in Kabul, of which he must have been apprised by telegraph; and the General's own letter of the 10th of January, the answer to Mr. Harrison's first article in the *Fortnightly Review*, which had opened his eyes to the fact that measures of vengeance and reprisals which seemed quite natural and proper to Englishmen at Kabul, wore a very different aspect in the eyes of Englishmen at home. The effect of this discovery was the cessation of military executions—the four headmen of Baghwana and the leather-cutter of Kabul, the last men condemned by the Military Commission, were hanged on the 3rd of January—and the compilation of a detailed statement of the number of men who had suffered death during the British occupation of Kabul and the offences for which they had been condemned.

This document was received at the War Office on the 12th of March; but the dissolution of Parliament, on the 24th, interfered with its immediate discussion, and when, a few weeks later, a new Ministry met a new House of Commons, other matters were occupying the public attention, and it escaped the ordeal of a parliamentary debate.

The first thing to be noted with regard to this Return is that it was forwarded to the Home Government by the Viceroy and his Council without comment; the second, that it is not signed, as is the usual custom in such cases, either by the President of the Commission or by a responsible Staff-Officer; the third, that it contains no dates; the fourth, that it closes on the 26th of December, though the Memorandum which accompanies it was written a month later. Owing to the absence of dates, it is difficult to connect the cases in the Return with persons mentioned in telegrams and letters to English and Indian journals; but Nos. sixty-five to one hundred

and thirteen were evidently persons captured in Baker's raid of the 8th of November. Of these forty-nine prisoners, according to the Return, twenty-five were released; whereas, according to Hensman's circumstantial account already quoted (see Chapter XIV.), forty-nine was the number actually executed—eleven on the 10th of November, twenty-eight on the 11th, ten on the 12th. In this connection, it is significant that Macgregor should mention in his Diary of the 29th of March that "the General had sent for Hensman and showed him Harrison's new article on the hangings,"¹ the facts and figures in which were chiefly taken from that correspondent's letters; yet neither at the time, nor in 1882, when the letters were republished in book-form, did Hensman alter or retract one of his statements, and their accuracy has never been impugned—facts that tell against the trustworthiness of the Return, which, in any case, is defective, as, by its abrupt close on the 26th of December, all record is shut out of the ten men hanged on the 30th for having arms in their hands during Mahomed Jan's retreat, and of the five executed on the 3rd of January.

But if the figures of the Return fail to command confidence, it is still more difficult to accept its statements as to the grounds on which the accused were condemned—statements which sought to establish in every case a connection between the sentence pronounced, and some crime which British public opinion would regard as worthy of death. In the Memorandum which accompanied the Return, Sir F. Roberts asserted the existence of this connection with great directness, for, after defending his right to treat as rebels all Afghans who had opposed his advance, he went on to declare that "in no instance were the soldiers thus brought in executed, unless proved to have taken part in the attack upon the Residency, or to have committed other of the crimes enumerated in the proclamation."

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 184.

Both the Return and the Memorandum are contradicted in this matter by Hensman, who, with the thought just dawning in his mind that to hang men for opposing the enemies of their country required excuse, yet made no secret of the fact that men were actually being executed at Kabul on that charge alone; contradicted also by the entries in Macgregor's Diary, in which he recorded his objection to the killing of men who merely fought against us, and his distrust of the evidence which satisfied the Military Commission; instancing a case in which a prisoner, convicted on the mere assertion of his guilt by Hyat Khan, was condemned for having "been the moving spirit—on night of the 5th of October—to get people to go out and fight us, and for having been "present at the fight (of Charasiab) with a standard." ¹

Sir F. Roberts's explanation that, in offering rewards for the betrayal of such men as this Sultan Aziz, he had in view simply the capture of participants in the attack on the Residency, cannot be reconciled with the wording of the proclamation of the 12th of October, which *first* offered rewards for the apprehension of persons concerned in the tragedy of the 3rd of September, and *then* a like bribe for the surrender of persons who had fought against the British at Charasiab and Kabul; neither does it agree with the proclamation of the 12th of November, which exempted all persons belonging to the latter category, not being leaders, from further prosecution. If there was no intention of putting the clause against Afghan soldiers, as soldiers, into force, why insert it in the first proclamation? and if it was never acted on, why publish the second to allay fears which could not have existed?

The statement of the Memorandum that "the Military Commission tried every case; and without their deliberate verdict and sentence, and without (I trust) calm and dispassionate considera-

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 140.

tion by me, not one sentence of death was awarded, confirmed, or carried into effect," cannot be accepted as correct, since, on the 13th of December, eight Kohistanis—four of them men of position and four servants—were shot, without trial, by Sir F. Roberts's orders. The story was told by Hensman in his letter to the *Pioneer* of the 13th of January, and reappeared, unaltered, in his book.¹

The most glaring mis-statement contained in the Memorandum, however, is to be found in Paragraph 9, in which it is asserted that only one fort near Kabul, one in Kohistan, and one in Maidan had been destroyed by the troops, though Sir F. Roberts's Political Diary showed that on the 24th of November, he had ordered the destruction of "all the Umar Khel Villages"—eleven in number—and that Ben-i-Badam shared the same fate on the 28th, whilst Hensman's letters to the *Pioneer* place the destruction of Baghwana, and the looting and levelling to the ground of Mir Bacha's villages, beyond the possibility of doubt.

It is not surprising that the Viceroy and his Council, with the Kabul Diaries and Hensman's letters in their hands, should have forwarded the Memorandum and the Return to the British Government without comment; but there is reason both for astonishment and regret in their having forwarded them at all, knowing as they did, that they would be laid before Parliament as a satisfactory and sufficient defence of the methods by which British authority had been upheld at Kabul, till the pressure of public opinion at home compelled their abandonment.

¹ The story as narrated by Mr. Howard Hensman is peculiarly painful. The Chief, a young Kohistani, met his fate bravely; another, who was a petty chief, pleaded in fear and trembling for his life, but pleaded in vain; yet a third appealed for mercy to the trooper told off to execute him—"You are (he said) a Mahomedan, and I am one of your holy men. You cannot shoot me!" But orders had to be obeyed, and the whole party, four of whom were servants, were summarily put to death.—H. B. H.

See full account given by Hensman, pp. 228, 229.

CHAPTER XXV

Preparations for a Spring Campaign

SECOND ACTION OF CHARASIAB

ON the 9th of January, Sir F. Roberts held a durbar, which was attended by a number of Kohistani and Ghilzai headmen, and also by a deputation of Hazaras, who had come to Sherpur to solicit British protection against their Afghan neighbours, whose vengeance they had provoked by attacking the villages near Ghazni and in Wardak whilst their fighting men were away with Mahomed Jan at Kabul.

The General began his speech with the usual assurance of the British Government's desire to respect the lives, property, and religion of its new subjects, and then went on to express his satisfaction at the presence in his camp of so many representatives of tribes recently in arms against him, and his hope that all who still held aloof would follow so good an example. He announced the reappointment of Sirdar Shahbaz Khan as Governor of Kohistan, and closed the assembly by presenting dresses of honour and gifts of rupees to certain chiefs who had remained friendly during the late insurrection, and by exacting hostages for future good conduct from the Kohistanis.

In addressing an Afghan audience, Roberts was bound to assume that the lesson taught to the tribes by their failure at Sherpur would have enduring results ; and though, in his heart, he must have known that his position was little less precarious than before the siege, it was mortifying to discover that the Hindu merchants in Kabul—

a very important body of men—doubted his ability to protect them. “You want more men,” they are reported to have said, “if you are to hold Kabul and keep out the enemy. What are ten thousand to fifty thousand? There must be twenty thousand to guard Sherpur and the city;” and as the additional ten thousand were slow in appearing, they withdrew with their families and property to Peshawar.¹

The changes that were being effected at Kabul and on the line of communications might not be sufficiently striking to restore the confidence which the events of the latter half of December had destroyed; yet, notwithstanding the difficulties put in the way of movements of any kind by incessant snowstorms, much was done during the months of January and February to strengthen the British position in Northern Afghanistan. Batches of sick and wounded—always a heavy burden on a small force in an enemy’s country—were sent off, week by week, to India. Colonel C. M. Macgregor accompanied the first, commissioned by Roberts to confer with Bright as to the disposition of troops between Jamrud and Lattaband, which station had been reoccupied by the 3rd Sikhs, under Colonel Noel Money, on the 31st of December. To repair the wear and tear of the campaign, and to relieve the strain on the food stores, the 12th Bengal Cavalry and the 14th Bengal Lancers marched for Peshawar on the 6th of February; ² and a further economy in consumption was obtained by sending away upwards of a thousand transport

¹ “It may be a small matter, after all, that these terror-stricken Hindus turn their faces eastwards; but it should be remembered that, all through the troublous times of the Durani Dynasty, their forefathers, and they themselves, have remained in Kabul, and they are only leaving the city now, because they do not believe in the power of the British to hold it against another army of 50,000 Afghans.” (Hensman, pp. 292, 293.)

² “The 10th, 12th, and 14th Bengal Cavalry are returning to India to repair the wear and tear of the campaign, which has been very severe on the cavalry arm.” (Telegram *Times* Correspondent, of 24th January, 1880.)

animals, some to work in the Khyber, some to be fitted with proper saddles at Peshawar. Meanwhile, the Commissariat Department, spreading its net far and wide, brought up the reserve of food stuff to a fifty days' supply by sweeping three thousand sheep and four thousand five hundred camel-loads of bhusa into camp ; and convoys of ammunition, warm clothing, rum, and dhal had begun to arrive from India. To replace in some degree the cavalry that had been dispensed with, a Mounted Infantry Corps, consisting of three officers and one hundred and twenty men, was formed, and, with some difficulty, furnished with mounts ; and to provide for the defence of his now greatly extended fortifications, Sir F. Roberts asked for a heavy battery, gunners to man the captured Afghan artillery, two additional Native Infantry regiments, and drafts to bring up the strength of each of his original Infantry corps to eight hundred men. He also intimated that, at the first sign of tribal unrest, he should call up the moveable columns at Gandamak and Jellalabad, and warned the military authorities in India to keep sufficient transport ready at Peshawar to enable troops from the Reserve to take the place of corps withdrawn from the line of communications.

Those authorities were quite as anxious as the General at Kabul to increase the strength of the Sherpur garrison and to keep all the troops in the field in a state of efficiency ; but, from the first, they had been unable to equip one force with transport without robbing another, and early they had begun to discover that there was a limit to the number of men at their disposal. "I consider," wrote Lord Lytton to the Secretary of State for India on the 9th of December, "that our greatest danger at the present moment (and it is, I think, a very real and imminent one) is the danger of wearing out our Native army. I do not think we can employ Native troops for lengthened periods beyond the North-West Frontier without serious risk of injury to their spirit. While they are actually fighting, they will keep in fairly good heart, but what tries and disgusts them is picket

and escort duty during the long, dead seasons of trans-frontier service ; and the unpopularity of such duty amongst the Native troops is aggravated by the fact that the burden of it must unavoidably fall on them more heavily than on the Europeans, who are not so well able to stand exposure to the climate.”¹

The logical outcome of this recognition of the necessary unpopularity of the war with the Native troops, an unpopularity which was showing itself in such a dearth of recruits for the regiments in Afghanistan that, a little later, the drafts asked for by Roberts could not be furnished, and the Commander-in-Chief had to recommend that men should be enlisted for service beyond the frontier at a higher rate of pay, with bonus and special privileges in respect of food and clothing—the logical outcome of this recognition of dangers ahead, would have been proposals for limiting the area in British occupation and bringing the war as quickly as possible to a close. Instead of such proposals, however, a comprehensive scheme for further operations in Afghanistan was prepared early in January, under orders from the Governor-General in Council. Replaced in Kandahar by a Bombay Division, Sir Donald Stewart's Force was to start for Kabul at the first signs of approaching spring. At the same time, Roberts was to visit Kohistan, and when he had sufficiently overawed

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 294.

In a telegram dated January 24th, the *Times'* Kabul Correspondent referred as follows to this serious question :—

“In considering the various shapes which our future policy in Afghanistan may take,” so wrote General Vaughan, “it is most necessary to remember the enormous strain which this and the preceding campaign have put upon the small Indian Native army, which no attempt has yet been made to strengthen, or even effectually recruit. Casualties from battle and sickness have greatly weakened the actual strength of the regiments at the front, and though they have borne their hardships with the utmost cheerfulness, there is no doubt that the men are longing to return to India, and would grow dissatisfied if they thought their service here would be indefinitely prolonged. The Native regiments holding the line of communications are also, in military phrase, much used up, the convoy and post duties being very severe.”

that province, to march to Bamian, a valley in the Hindu Kush, on the direct route to Afghan Turkestan, eight thousand four hundred and ninety-four feet above sea-level, and a hundred and seven miles from Kabul, from which city it is separated by three mountain ranges, traversed by difficult and dangerous passes, which at that season of the year would still be deep in snow. What he was intended to do there is not clear, but taking into account the weeks that would have been consumed in getting there, and that he had to be back at Sherpur early enough to support Sir D. Stewart on his arrival at Ghazni towards the end of April, it is certain that beyond frightening the inhabitants of the few poor villages on the way thither and, perhaps, extracting from them some scanty supplies, his expedition could have for its only results the destruction of a large amount of transport and the exhaustion of a considerable proportion of his troops. Meanwhile, as soon as the snow had melted on the Shutargardan, a Force was to march to Kabul from the Kuram; a Column from the Khyber line was to operate against the Ghilzais in the Laghman Valley; and, should the Afridis give trouble, the Reserve Division was to furnish troops to pay that visit to the Barah and Tirah Valleys which Sir Frederick Maude had found impracticable the previous year.

This far-reaching plan received the sanction of the Indian Government only to shrink into meagre proportions at the first contact with the reality of things. Sir F. Roberts, quite ready to undertake the proposed operations in Kohistan and Bamian, had to point out that before doing so he must, owing to the vastly increased area covered by his fortifications, withdraw all his troops from Sherpur and distribute them between the Bala Hissar and an entrenched camp to be created on the Siah Sang Heights. Watson's troops and transport¹ proved on investigation to be so weakened by disease

¹ Nearly a half of his transport was non-effective.—H. B. H.

as to be incapable of furnishing a column strong enough to fight its way over the Shutargardan ; and everywhere, except at Kandahar, deficiency of beasts of burden put a veto on the projected movements—an unpleasant truth, which Sir Michael Kennedy brought home to the authors of the scheme in a very plainly worded Memorandum of the 10th February, 1880 :—

“ It is obviously an easy matter,” so wrote the Inspector-General of Transport, “ to detail on paper a given force, and to project that it shall operate at a given time and in a given direction ; but unless it is also clearly and satisfactorily ascertained and determined whether the transport exists, or can be brought into existence, for moving and supplying such a force, actual results attained may not correspond with those that were intended.” “ I have now to consider,” so he went on, “ how far the transport at disposal will meet the demands entailed by the project of operations. Owing to the existence of some doubt—1st, as to the exact amount of transport needed, the quantity of supplies to be provided for each section of the forces, either to be mobilized or left in garrison, not having been given ; and 2nd, as to the correct allowance to be made for casualties of all sorts and from all causes among the transport itself—all that can be done is to frame an approximate estimate. The net results are as follows :—the Kabul Force, as projected, is deficient in transport to the extent of about 1,000 camels (or 2,000 mules) ; but this deficiency can no doubt be supplied before the time for action arrives.

“ The 2nd and 3rd Divisions in the Khyber and the lines of communication are sufficiently provided for, so long as the Koochi carriage (hired carriage) can be depended on for general transport ; but should the Koochis leave, as they may be expected to do in April, the Khyber line will then be deficient to the extent of 2,500 camels.

“ The Kuram Force, whose wants, since General Roberts

advanced in September last, have always been postponed to those of other forces, is deficient in transport; and if it were necessary to equip fully this column, with which it is proposed General Watson should advance, it would absorb all the transport available, and none would be left for the troops in garrison or holding the line."

This "approximate estimate" put an end to the advance of a Kuram column, and to all further talk of, at present, invading the Laghman Valley, or of lifting the "purdah" from Barah and Tirah; and when it was discovered that, instead of a deficiency of a thousand camels at Kabul, General Roberts would require to be furnished with five thousand two hundred and fifty camels, or their equivalent in ponies and mules, in addition to his transport at Kabul and Peshawar and what he could purchase on the spot, the expeditions to Kohistan and Bamian were also abandoned, leaving nothing remaining of the original scheme except the advance of the Kandahar Force, and the support to be afforded to it by Roberts, which, at Sir D. Stewart's request, was to be rendered, not at Ghazni, but at Sheikabad.¹ Stewart himself was to go on to Kabul and assume the command of all the forces in and around that city, but his Division was to occupy the Logar Valley; and as it was thought probable that it might have to pass the summer at Ali Khel or on the Peiwar Mountain, Watson was instructed to collect in the Kuram six months' supplies for five thousand European and ten thousand Native troops, whilst, with a view to some contingency that might call for different dispositions, Roberts was ordered to store at Kabul a three months' supply of food and a reserve of six hundred rounds of ammunition per man for a like number. The collection of the transport needed

¹ When it was found that Watson's Force was too weak to move, it was decided that Roberts should occupy Kushi and the Shutargardan, with a view to opening up the Kuram route; but this movement had to be countermanded.—
H. B. H.

for the conveyance of these supplies and of the baggage of fresh corps sent up to Kabul, added to that required for the equipment of the Reserve Division, equal to ten thousand camel-power,¹ inflicted serious damage on the agriculturists and traders of India ; and it was clear that so long as the occupation of Afghanistan continued, there could be no end to the calls made upon the waning resources of the country. "Day by day," so wrote Sir Michael Kennedy in his Supply and Transport Report, "it had become more difficult to obtain suitable transport. The Punjab had been swept and re-swept, and very few animals could be obtained elsewhere. It seemed as if the military exigencies would not cease until the country had been entirely denuded ; and animals had to be sought from very distant localities—at Benares and stations in Bengal, and even from Darjiling. Prices, of course, rose in correspondence with fresh demands ; but what was worse, it became absolutely necessary to accept large numbers of pony mares, which would have been better left in the country for breeding purposes, and also many animals, mules, ponies, and camels, that were younger than they ought to have been, to fit them for hard work with troops in the field." ²

A large part of the heavy mortality prevailing among the transport animals was doubtless due to the immaturity regretted by Sir M. Kennedy ; but sore backs and mange, from which so many suffered—out of the eleven thousand two hundred and sixty-four beasts of burden at Roberts's disposal by the end of March, sixteen hundred and twenty-five, or fifteen per cent., were incapacitated principally

¹ "This amount of carriage was completed on the 13th of February, 1880 ; but as neither the political nor military situation then admitted of any relaxation of efforts, and as it was considered necessary to make provision for the equipment of a further reserve—also to have a supply of animals always ready in hand to make good the heavy drain of casualties in constant progress—a further call for 10,000 camel-power was made on the 24th February, 1880." (Sir Michael Kennedy's Report on Supply and Transport, p. 8.)

² Ibid.

from these two causes—were attributable to defective gear, bad loading, and poor or insufficient food.¹

Early in March, the Commander-in-Chief reorganized the troops on the Khyber line and took the control of them out of Roberts's hands; Major-General Bright being appointed Inspector-General of Communications, and instructed to report in future to Army Headquarters, instead of, as in the past, to Kabul. The line over which his authority extended was divided into three sections.

1. From Jamrud to Basawal, inclusive, under Brigadier-General W. A. Gib.

2. From Basawal to Safed Sang, but not inclusive of either, under Brigadier-General J. Doran.

3. From Safed Sang to Butkhak inclusive, under Brigadier-General R. S. Hill.

The moveable columns at Jellalabad and Gandamak were placed under the command of Brigadier-General C. G. Arbuthnot; the troops belonging to the Reserve Division were absorbed into the forces holding the line of communications; and Brigadier-General G. C. Hankin was temporarily appointed to the Peshawar District.

At the same time, by order of the Commander-in-Chief, the Kabul Force was divided into two Divisions; the 1st under Sir F. Roberts's immediate command, the 2nd under Major-General J. Ross, late commanding the Reserve at Peshawar; the supreme control of the whole being vested in the first-named officer. Brigadier-General Hugh Gough was appointed to the command of the Cavalry Brigade, *vice* Dunham Massy recalled, and the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades of the newly formed Division were assigned respectively to Brigadier-

¹ Roberts complained that the transport of incoming regiments arrived far more frequently with sore backs than the cattle on convoy duty. Probably the latter started in better condition, and it was easier to regulate their marches; also, commissariat packages are less difficult to adjust than regimental baggage, consisting of articles of every size, shape, and weight.—H. B. H.

Generals W. Roberts and Charles Gough. The following staff-officers were appointed to Ross's Division :—

Major W. J. Boyes	Assistant Adjutant-General.
Captain the Hon. C. Dutton	Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Colonel C. R. O. Evans	to the command of Royal Artillery.
Lieutenant-Colonel D. Limond	to the command of Royal Engineers.

During the latter half of the month of March the Kabul Force was brought up to a strength of over twelve thousand men by the arrival of the under-named reinforcements :—

24th Punjab Infantry	Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Norman.
45th Sikhs	Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Armstrong.
17th Bengal Cavalry	Lieutenant-Colonel T. J. Watson.
27th Punjab Infantry	Lieutenant-Colonel C. J. Hughes.
No. 6-8 Royal Artillery (screw mountain guns),	Major T. Graham.
3rd Bengal Cavalry	Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie.

These troops were followed on the 5th of April by the heavy battery 10-11 Royal Artillery, escorted by drafts for the British regiments at the front and the men of the Garrison Battery 12-9 Royal Artillery, sent from Attock in response to Roberts's request for gunners to man the captured Afghan guns.¹

All through January and February and well into March, the weather had been very severe, heavy snowstorms following each other in quick succession ; then rain fell, the snow melted, dull, cloudy skies gave place to bright sunshine, hill and vale were suddenly clothed in a profusion of spring flowers, and in the Sherpur cantonment all was once again cheerfulness and activity. The Cavalry, accompanied by the Mounted Infantry, reconnoitred unopposed towards Argandeh and Charasiab ; and on the Siah Sang Heights by Roberts's orders

¹ Part of the road over the Lattaband Pass had to be remade to allow of the passage of the Heavy Battery, the original gradients being too steep.—H. B. H.

Ross assembled the troops that were to march to Sheikabad in support of Stewart's advance from Ghazni, consisting of

4 Guns 6-8 Royal Artillery (screw guns),	Major T. Graham.
6 Guns No. 4 Hazara Mountain Battery,	Captain A. Broadfoot.
1 Squadron 9th Lancers	Captain the Hon. H. Legge.
3rd Bengal Cavalry	Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie.
2 Squadrons 3rd Punjab Cavalry	Major A. Vivian.
9th Foot	Colonel W. Daunt.
23rd Pioneers	Lieutenant-Colonel H. Collett.
24th Punjab Infantry	Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Norman.
4th Gurkhas	Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft.
No. 3 Company Sappers and Miners,	Lieutenant H. Dove.
Total strength—10 Guns, 850 Sabres, and 2,700 Rifles.	

Besides a limited quantity of stores for its own use, the column was to carry with it a ten days' supply of sugar, tea, and rum for General Stewart's troops.

No news had been received from the latter General since shortly after leaving Khelat-i-Ghilzai ; but, as it was known that he expected to be at Ghazni on the 21st of April, Ross started on the 16th, halted the first night at Killa Kazi, the second at Argandeh, and on the 18th entered Maidan, where he encamped for two days, whilst foragers scoured the valley, taking forcible possession of the little grain and fodder that had remained to the inhabitants after Baker's November raid. The whole population showed itself fiercely hostile, and Bahadur Khan, whose villages had been destroyed on the former occasion, gave such signs of his determination to resist these new despoilers that Charles Gough moved out of camp on the 19th, with a strong force, blew up the towers of the recalcitrant villages, and succeeded in bringing in the confiscated supplies without actual bloodshed.

Rumours reaching Ross that large numbers of Logaris were gathering to attack him in flank and rear, he despatched reconnoitring parties to try to discover the truth of the report. Only one of these parties was fired on, the shot wounding a man and his horse, but

all returned without having obtained any trustworthy information. Meanwhile circumstantial accounts of the movement, of which Mahomed Hussan Khan, late Governor of Jellalabad, was the leader, had been carried to Kabul, on receipt of which Sir F. Roberts sent out Colonel Jenkins to occupy Charasiab, with a view to holding in check the hostile gathering, which was threatening Ross's communications. Jenkins's troops consisted of

2 Guns F-A Royal Horse Artillery,	Lieutenant J. H. Wodehouse,
2 Squadrons Guides Cavalry	Lieutenant-Colonel G. Stewart,
266 Rifles 92nd Highlanders	Major G. S. White,
600 Rifles Guides Infantry	Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. P. P. Campbell,

an inadequate force, considering the distance of Charasiab from Sherpur and the uncertainty as to the strength of the enemy.

On the first night Jenkins encamped at Ben-i-Hissar, and on the 21st took up a position about a mile and a half in advance of Charasiab, and about the same distance east of the site occupied by Sir F. Roberts's camp on the 6th of October, 1879, but facing in the opposite direction—south, instead of north.¹ To the right of the camp lay terraced fields, dotted over with small forts, and at the distance of about fifteen hundred yards, a range of high hills swept round its left and front. One of these hills Jenkins occupied the same evening with a strong picket of the Guides; but the next day a reconnoitring party discovered that the highest peak of all, the spurs of which run right down to the road, was in the possession of the enemy. The 23rd and 24th passed without incident; but, at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 25th, a friendly *Mallik* came into camp to warn its commander that the enemy had moved to Safed Sang and were now only six miles off. Jenkins at once took measures to forestall attack. By his orders, whilst the camp was still wrapped in darkness, the Guides

¹ See, Sketch Map, p. 65.

Infantry fell in in front of their tents, ready to support a strong cavalry patrol which had gone out to reconnoitre towards Safed Sang. At the same time a picket of the Guides started off to occupy its usual post of observation on the south-eastern hills; but before it could reach its destination, day broke, disclosing a large body of Afghans scattered along the heights, and it had no choice but to return to camp. A little later, firing was heard to the south, and presently the cavalry patrol was observed steadily retiring, followed by a considerable body of tribesmen.

At the first intimation of the enemy's close proximity, all the troops had been got under arms, and when the tents had been struck and loaded up, the laden baggage animals were withdrawn behind a detached hill, nearly a mile in rear of camp, the summit of which was occupied by a company of the Guides and half a company of Highlanders, commanded by Captain Hon. J. S. Napier of the latter corps; whilst twenty Rifles of the Guides under Lieutenant M. C. Cooke-Collis, posted in a small fort about a thousand yards westward, not only fulfilled their immediate purpose, but provided for an orderly retreat in the event of the whole force having to fall back. To meet a front attack, Jenkins deployed two companies of Highlanders, under Major White, across and to the right of the Logar road; five companies of the Guides, under Captain A. G. Hammond, prolonging the line on the left, with both flanks thrown back, ready to meet any movement from the west or east. A karez, or underground watercourse, gave some cover to the infantry, but as Jenkins had no reserve, and only two companies of Highlanders and one of Guides in support, he had to keep the cavalry for hours under a galling fire, a trying ordeal, which the men bore with exemplary courage and discipline, constantly moving round and round in the small space to which they were confined, in order to disconcert the enemy's aim.

Soon, three thousand Afghans, under a heavy fire from the British guns and rifles, were working their way down the hillsides; some

of the boldest planting their standards within one and two hundred yards of the Highlanders and Sikhs. "At one moment," so wrote an officer who took part in the fight, "they rose up all round with a shout, and threatened to break over us like a great wave. Men felt for their pistols, and instinctively tightened their grip on their swords; but it turned out that even the Ghazis down below were in no hurry to face the bayonets of our slender fighting line; and the human froth above subsided as quickly as it had risen."¹

But meanwhile the Afghans who had driven in the Cavalry, had been joined by many bands of tribesmen, summoned from distant villages, and now began to extend their left with the object of outflanking the British troops and getting in their rear. To check this movement, which, if successful, would have rendered the position untenable, Jenkins hurried off Lieutenant E. D. H. Daly with a troop of Guides Cavalry to seize a ruined fort about 1,200 yards on the right rear of the spot where the British camp had stood; and, as the enemy continued to press on, he despatched a detachment of the Guides Infantry, under Subadar Shere Sing, to Daly's assistance.

By this time the Afghans, whose numbers had grown from three to five thousand, were occupying the segment of a huge circle, extending from a point in the hills east of the British position, directly opposite to the detached hill behind which the baggage had found shelter, right round to the enclosures and gardens of Charasiab. Their front was covered by a cloud of skirmishers, so skilfully hidden as to offer no mark to the British sharpshooters. Their dispositions and tactics forbade all movement on Jenkins's part; for, had he attempted a counter-attack to clear his front, the tribesmen on his flanks would have closed in on his rear, cutting his force in half and severing his communication with Sherpur.

About 8 a.m. the two guns, which so far had been firing over the

¹ *Kuram, Kabul, and Kandahar*, by Lieutenant C. G. Robertson, pp. 180, 181.

heads of the troops from a position within the late camping ground, withdrew some four hundred yards to an embankment which afforded them good cover, and from which they could fire freely, in all directions; and some hours later, when Jenkins saw that his Infantry were equal to holding the enemy in check, he sent back the Cavalry, which had had many casualties—now a man, now a horse falling wounded or dead—to form up in rear of the Artillery. Before that time, he had received the welcome assurance that help was on the way. He had heliographed a description of the state of things in the Logar Valley to the signalling station on the Darwaza Heights the moment the sun rose above the eastern hills; and between 9 and 10 a.m. he sent a second message, reporting that he had had three men killed, seven wounded, and that though he was holding his own well, the enemy was being reinforced. To this second message he received the reply that a relieving force under General Macpherson had already left cantonments.

The news of Jenkins's unpleasant predicament reached Sherpur at an inopportune moment. A few days before, spies had reported that a large body of Kohistanis—some six or eight thousand men—had assembled near the ruins of Fort Baba Kushkar, and from the Governor of Kohistan, Shahbaz Khan, came in a rumour that Mir Bacha was intending to take Sherpur by a *coup de main*. To strengthen the garrison, much weakened by the despatch of expeditionary forces to Sheikabad and Charasiab, Roberts at once drew in a picket of 100 men of the 25th Punjab Infantry, which had been posted in the Pai Minar Pass to watch the road into Koh Daman, replacing it by a troop of cavalry. At the same time he established signalling parties on many commanding points to keep a good look-out in all directions, manned the ten blockhouses on the Behmaru Heights, and strengthened the guards at all the entrances to cantonments. It was a serious matter to weaken a force which seemed on the eve of being itself besieged; but at all risks, Jenkins and his troops must

be rescued from their perilous position, so Macpherson was ordered to get together a column of eighty-four sabres and nine hundred and sixty-two rifles, which was to be supported by a part of the Cavalry Brigade under Hugh Gough.¹ Baker's Brigade had to furnish the troops required to replace those withdrawn from the Reserve in the Behmaru Gorge, from the defence of the eastern end of the Behmaru Heights, the Siah Sang plateau, and the Asmai Heights; and this change of garrison caused considerable delay, but, at nine o'clock, Macpherson marched out of Sherpur with—

4 Guns No. 2 Mountain Battery .	Major G. Swinley,
275 Rifles 92nd Highlanders	Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Parker,
555 Rifles 45th Sikhs	Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Armstrong,

and at the Bala Hissar was joined by—

129 Rifles 2nd Gurkhas	Captain W. Hill,
2 Screw Guns	Lieutenant A. F. Liddell,
85 Sabres 3rd Punjab Cavalry	Lieutenant L. S. H. Baker.

His instructions were to drive off the enemy, and, that accomplished, to return to Kabul, bringing with him Jenkins's force, whilst Hugh Gough who followed in support, with—

4 Guns Royal Horse Artillery,
1 Troop 9th Lancers,
2 Squadrons 17th Bengal Cavalry,
1 Wing 28th Punjab Infantry,

was directed to await orders at Ben-i-Hissar.

¹ "Since the anxious days of December, no such excitement had been felt in Sherpur as that of yesterday morning, when it became known that the Highlanders and Guides were hotly engaged beyond the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, and that General Macpherson was ordered to march to their assistance." (Hensman, p. 380.)

Marching rapidly, Macpherson's troops emerged about noon from the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge, and, leaving two companies of the 45th Sikhs to hold the defile, pressed on towards a low ridge which crossed the valley at right angles to the road, from the summit of which, illumined by the bright spring sunshine, a strangely beautiful view opened out before them. Below, almost within rifle shot, a long, thin line of British and Native soldiers, in front and at either end of which, clouds of Afghan skirmishers swarmed and buzzed; above, the slopes of the hills, crowded with tribesmen, clustering round scores of gaudy standards; little puffs of smoke from rifle and matchlock floating in the air, or clinging to bushes and fruit trees; shells from the artillery guns flying over the heads of friends to burst among hidden foes; behind the guns, a group of tired horsemen, motionless, watchful, alert; and near at hand, behind a sheltering hill, the laden baggage animals and their anxious drivers.

At a glance Macpherson took in all the military features of the scene, and without a pause moved on towards Charasiab, the Gurkhas under Captain Hill searching the enclosures and irrigated ground ahead, and rejoining the column as it issued from a screen of willow trees, about eleven hundred yards from the centre of Jenkins's position. Macpherson's first act, as Commander of the whole force, was to order Jenkins's baggage back to Sherpur; his second, to examine carefully the enemy's position and decide upon attacking the Afghan left and rolling it up, a movement which, if successful, must leave their centre entirely exposed. To Jenkins, who had now joined him, he explained his plan; but, when the former assured him that with a little assistance he could break up the enemy in his front, he modified it so far as to reinforce his subordinate with three companies of the 45th Sikhs, under Colonel Armstrong, cautioning him, at the same time, not to move until the right attack had been fully developed.

The Gurkhas were quickly engaged with the enemy, the 92nd

Highlanders supporting them on the left ; they, in their turn, being covered by the 45th Sikhs ; and the screw and mountain guns, 600 yards in the rear, protecting the whole advance. Among the many standards dotting the terraced fields to the south of Charasiab, one, conspicuous by its central position and gaudy colouring, caught Macpherson's eye, and he sent his orderly officer, Captain A. D. M'Gregor, to tell Hill to make straight for it and take the position with the bayonet. Hill shouted the General's orders to his men, and in a moment the Gurkhas, abandoning cover, rushed forward and flung themselves on the Afghans, who broke and fled, leaving the flag in the victors' hands. Following up their success, the Gurkhas now drove the whole of the enemy's left wing up the hills overlooking the hamlets of Charasiab ; and, whilst the Highlanders cleared the numerous orchards in which his skirmishers had established themselves, Jenkins, seeing that the moment for him to take action had come, fell upon the tribesmen on his left and in his front ; Armstrong, with two companies of the Guides, supported by three companies of the 45th Sikhs, storming the heights to the east of the British position, and the wing of the 92nd Highlanders and the residue of the Guides falling upon the tribesmen holding the plain and hills to the south. At sight of hill and vale swarming with fugitives, the Cavalry and Horse Artillery galloped forward in hot pursuit, following the flying foe for four miles up the Logar Valley, whilst Macpherson cleared them out of the hills in which they had taken refuge, and drove them, disorganized, into the Chardeh Valley ; then, making a *détour*, he returned through Childukhteran to the British camp, where by 4 p.m. the whole of his and Jenkins's troops had reassembled, and where, on arriving from Sherpur a little later, Sir Frederick Roberts congratulated them in person on their good day's work. The order to retire was then given, and by 8 p.m. the united forces marched into Cantonments.

Macpherson estimated that the Afghans had lost two hundred

killed, and that they had probably a much larger number wounded. The British losses are shown in the following table :—

COLONEL JENKINS'S FORCE.

	F-A ROYAL ARTILLERY.	
Wounded		1 man.
„		1 follower.
	GUIDES CAVALRY.	
Killed		2
Wounded		13
	WING 92ND HIGHLANDERS.	
Wounded		3
	GUIDES INFANTRY.	
Killed		1
Wounded		9

GENERAL MACPHERSON'S FORCE.

	NO. 2 MOUNTAIN BATTERY.	
Wounded		1
	WING 92ND HIGHLANDERS.	
Killed		1
Wounded		3
	45TH SIKHS.	
Wounded		3

TOTAL LOSSES.

4 men killed, 34 wounded.
10 horses ¹ killed, 8 wounded.

Meanwhile Ross, to protect whose rear Jenkins had run the risk of being himself overwhelmed, had accomplished the object for which he had been sent out. Leaving Maidan on the 21st, he marched

¹ Including 4 officers' chargers.

five miles to Killa Durain, and the next day nine miles to Sir-i-tup; and on the way thither, whilst the head of the column was halting on some high ground that overlooked a long stretch of valley leading up to the Sher-i-Dahan (Lion's mouth) Pass, a bright light flashing from its summit told that Sir Donald Stewart's Division, of which for many days there had been no news, was safe and near at hand. Captain E. Straton quickly got his own heliographic instrument to work, and when his message had been acknowledged there followed, letter by letter, Stewart's Despatch, telling of his successful march and giving details of the action at Ahmed Khel.¹ This was at once sent off to Kabul, and, thence, telegraphed to Simla and repeated to England. The story told in it was one to fill men's minds, both in India and at home, with pride in their countrymen's courage and endurance; but, arriving in England at a time when the country was in the bustle and turmoil of a general election, it attracted very little attention.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. The second action of Charasiab emphasizes the truth so frequently insisted on in these pages, that it is bad strategy to isolate a small body of troops at a long distance from support. Jenkins's Force was little stronger than a Battalion of British infantry brought up to its war strength; his camp was pitched twelve and a half miles from its base, and divided from it by the dangerous Sang-i-Nawishta defile and the city of Kabul, whose turbulent inhabitants would have tried to cut his line of retreat if the garrison of Sherpur had been occupied in defending itself against the Kohistanis. It was necessary to protect Ross's rear, but this should not have

¹ "The distance heliographed this day was considerable, being upwards of fifty miles, the instrument working on the hill commanding the Sher-i-Dahn Pass, above Ghazni." (Duke, p. 323.)

been done by sending the supporting column to Charasiab, twenty-one miles from Maidan, with a high, rugged range of hills, and the Kabul River between the two camps, but to the Argandeh Pass. Established there, no enemy would have dared to penetrate between two British forces only seven miles apart, and not only would Jenkins's line of retreat have been assured, but he would have been well placed to co-operate with Roberts in the event of the Kohistanis attacking Sherpur. A glance at the strategical map, Chapter XVII.,¹ will show how impossible it would have been for Jenkins to prevent Mahomed Hassan cutting Ross's communications, if the Afghan General had elected to go forward instead of falling back; how great the risk to which he would have exposed his troops, if he had attempted to follow the Logaris into Maidan.

OBSERVATION II. The second action of Charasiab was a brilliant affair, most creditable to the commanders and troops; but the excellent tactics which turned what might have been defeat into success, do not excuse the false strategy, which compelled Jenkins to fight at so great a disadvantage.

¹ Page 174.

CHAPTER XXVI

Sir Donald Stewart's Last Days in Kandahar

FOR two days after receiving the order to stand fast at Kandahar, Sir Donald Stewart was left without any official information as to the events which had brought about so great a change in the plans of the Government of India; but rumours current in the bazaars of a military revolt at Kabul, of which both Cavagnari and the Amir had been the victims, prepared him for the news of the massacre of the British Mission, which reached him on the 7th of September, 1879. The troops on the spot at once returned to cantonments; the regiments on the way to Quetta, hastily recalled, marched in on the 8th, and everything in and about the city soon wore its usual aspect, except that the Afghan Governor, Sher Ali, continued to occupy the citadel, where he had taken up his residence on its evacuation by the British troops.

Foreseeing that he would be called upon to play a part in whatever plans the Indian Government might be devising, Sir Donald went quickly to work to prepare his Division to take the field by laying in stores of grain and bhusa, and looking carefully to the efficiency of his transport. The expected order, sent off by the Commander-in-Chief on his own responsibility, arrived within a week. It bade Stewart prepare a force of such strength as he might deem needful, but including heavy guns, to march to Khelat-i-Ghilzai and from thence threaten Ghazni, thus diverting the Ghilzais' attention from the Shutargardan and lessening the risks, to which Roberts must be exposed in crossing that pass and advancing down the Logar Valley. In sanctioning this movement, the Government directed

that the force to be employed should consist of three battalions of infantry in addition to artillery and cavalry; that it should be provided with four weeks' supplies, and that the demonstration towards Ghazni should be converted into a real movement upon that city, with a view to its capture and occupation. The scheme was a wild one, altogether out of proportion to the strength of the force assigned for its execution, and Stewart cannot have been sorry that lack of the transport required for the carrying of the supplies demanded by it, should have compelled its abandonment.

The Expeditionary Force consisted of

ARTILLERY.

2 Guns G-4 Royal Artillery	Major Sir J. W. Campbell, Bart.
3 Guns (Mountain) 11-11 Royal Artillery,	Major N. H. Harris.
2 Guns (Heavy) 6-11 Royal Artillery	Major J. A. Tillard.

CAVALRY.

2nd Punjab Cavalry	Colonel T. G. Kennedy.
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INFANTRY.

59th Foot	Lieutenant-Colonel J. Lawson.
3rd Gurkhas	Colonel A. Patterson.
29th Bombay Infantry (2nd Baluchis).	Lieutenant-Colonel O. V. Tanner.

Total strength—7 guns, 1,418 men, and 1,286 camp-followers.

The Column, which was commanded by Brigadier-General R. J. Hughes, left Kandahar on the 23rd September and arrived unopposed at Khelat-i-Ghilzai. Here Hughes remained inactive, whilst his agents were trying to get in supplies, till on the 14th of October, two days after Sir F. Roberts's public entry into Kabul, he received orders to reconnoitre a few marches ahead. Leaving Colonel Tanner with two companies 59th Foot, the 2nd Baluchis (less one hundred rifles), one troop 2nd Punjab Cavalry, and the two 40-pounders to hold the place, he marched towards Ghazni with the remainder of the troops. Once again there was no active opposition, but the

temper of the people was hostile and their attitude unsettled. At Tazi, thirty miles from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, where he halted several days, Hughes learned that Sahib Jan, a noted freebooter, son of an influential Ghilzai Chief, at the head of a considerable gathering of tribesmen, was at Ghujan ready to dispute his advance. Judging it inexpedient to fall back before this menace, the British Commander determined to take the offensive. He knew that a portion of Sahib Jan's force was at Shahjui, twelve and a half miles north-east of Tazi, and reckoned that, if he could surprise and surround the village before daybreak, all its occupants would fall into his hands. Accordingly at 1.30 a.m., on the 23rd of October, he sent off Colonel Kennedy with two mountain guns, a hundred and fifty sabres 2nd Punjab Cavalry, eighty rifles 59th Foot, and a hundred Baluchis, with orders to push forward as rapidly as the rugged nature of the country would permit, he himself, with the remaining troops, following in support. The advanced guard had covered about ten miles when the guide, a friendly Ghilzai Mallik, called Kennedy's attention to a light at some distance ahead and warned him that it was the watch-fire of the enemy's outlying picket, posted two miles in advance of Shahjui to give notice of an enemy's approach. This precaution left Kennedy but one chance of surprising the village, and that was to kill or capture the entire picket, and this he determined to attempt. Darkness favoured the enterprise, and Captain J. H. Broome, with a squadron of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry and a detachment of the Baluchis, would have carried it to a successful conclusion if, just at the last, by some mistake, the Infantry had not fired into the outpost. The Cavalry instantly galloped forward and succeeded in cutting down five men ; but the remainder of the picket though pursued for more than a mile, made good its escape to Shahjui. Aroused by the arrival of the fugitives, Sahib Jan's followers, some two hundred horse and seven hundred foot, streamed out of the village, evidently with the intention of attacking Broome, who, on halting, had taken up a position on

a low hill to await the arrival of the infantry and guns. Fortunately these were not far behind, and, at sight of them, the Ghilzais came to a standstill and, on Kennedy's throwing forward the 59th Foot and bringing the guns into action, retreated to the north of the village. The cavalry and guns were let loose in pursuit, the orders to their commander, Major F. Lance, being not to charge unless compelled to do so, but to manœuvre on the enemy's flank in such wise as to break up their formation and give time for the infantry to get within rifle range. In the running fight that followed, the guns occasionally fired a few rounds, and the cavalry, from time to time, dismounted and used their carbines ; but, vigorously as the pursuit was pressed, the Ghilzais at last got so far ahead that they were able to re-form behind a hill, on and around which they took up a very strong position. On the summit, approached over rough and difficult ground and crowned by the ruins of an old fort, some Ghazis, prepared, as Ghazis always are prepared, to die at their post, had planted two standards ; the main body of the footmen held a ruined outwork at the southern base of the hill ; and in its rear the horsemen were drawn up ready to sally forth when their leader should judge that the moment for an attack had arrived. Lance had just time to place one of his two squadrons, under Captain Broome, facing the enemy's position, and to echelon the second squadron to cover the exposed flank of the first, when the Ghilzai cavalry, led by Sahib Jan in person, dashed out from behind the hill and galloped down upon Broome, who, falling back in accordance with his instructions, drew them into the open, and then, facing about charged home, Lance, at the same moment, falling on their flank. A hand-to-hand fight, fierce but short, ensued, and when the Ghilzais took to flight they left their leader and fourteen of their comrades dead on the field. Broome, who had himself cut down two of them, was badly wounded in the hand and had his horse killed under him. Seeing the defeat of their cavalry, the footmen at the base of the hill dispersed, and so rough was the ground that no

pursuit was attempted, and they made good their escape, carrying off with them their wounded, among them Sahib Jan's brother, Sher Jan.

When the guns and infantry came up, Kennedy sent Captain A. Gaselee to find out whether the summit of the hill was still held. Gaselee took with him his Native orderly, and half-way up the slope the quick ears of the latter caught the sound of voices and he motioned to his officer not to go further. Gaselee soon satisfied himself that the man was right, and, on hearing his report, Kennedy ordered Captain E. H. Sartorius to clear the hill with his company of the 59th Foot. Climbing slowly up the zigzag path at the head of some twenty men, the remainder of the company following to keep down the Ghazis' fire, Sartorius had just set foot on the summit of the hill when its seven defenders flung themselves upon him, wounding him severely in both hands and killing the soldier at his side. A moment later, they were overpowered and cut down, dying bravely at their post. For his gallant leadership in this affair, Sartorius received the Victoria Cross.

The Ghilzai losses in the above movement, beginning with the attack on the picket to the south of Shahjui and ending with the capture of the hill to the north of that village, were very heavy, no less than fifty-six bodies being counted on the field. The British losses, which fell almost entirely on the cavalry, were also heavy.

Killed.

1 Private	59th Foot.
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Wounded.

Captain E. H. Sartorius . . .	59th Foot.
Captain J. H. Broome . . .	2nd Punjab Cavalry.
Two Native Officers . . .	” ” ”
Twenty-seven men . . .	” ” ”

HORSES.

4 killed.	12 wounded.
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Total Casualties—4 officers, 28 men, 16 horses.

On this occasion fairly accurate information of the enemy's position and plans had been obtained ; and the result of the action, the success of which was due, in part, to General Hughes and Colonel Kennedy's promptitude and, in part, to the admirable way in which Major Lance and Captain Broome handled their two squadrons of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, was less barren than is usually the case with fighting in Afghanistan, for large bodies of tribesmen on their way to join Sahib Jan, dispersed on hearing of his defeat and death.

On the return march to Shahjui, Kennedy met the main body of the Brigade and returned with it to Tazi. The demonstration had served its purpose, and in obedience to orders from Head-Quarters the troops withdrew to Khelat-i-Ghilzai on the 29th of October, and on the 2nd of November, leaving Tanner to hold the fortress with

2 Guns G-4 Royal Artillery,
 2 Mountain Guns 11-11 Royal Artillery,
 1 Squadron 2nd Punjab Cavalry,
 2 Companies 59th Foot,
 29th Bombay Infantry (2nd Baluchis),

Hughes marched for Kandahar, where he arrived on the 8th.

Life was dull in Kandahar after the excitement of settling down into the old quarters had died away.¹ During the autumn and early winter, the officers could do something to lessen the disappointment of the men, sent back to exile just as they thought they had escaped from it, by taking parties of them down to the river, on the banks of which pleasant hours were spent in fishing and shooting ; but when, towards the end of January, first rain and then snow began to fall, this amusement came to an end ; and, at the same time, much

¹ " Here we are dull to a degree. Everybody is disappointed at not getting away from Afghanistan." (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 291.)

" It is strange how everyone longs to get away. So long as there is any excitement officers and men are happy enough, but they are sick of idleness and want of society. I am as sick as anyone can be of it, but I have fortunately little time to think about such things, and that keeps me going." (*Ibid.* pp. 298, 299.)

useful work which had given employment to many—construction of roads, planting of trees, laying out of gardens, building a wall round the camp to keep off robbers¹—had to be suspended, and, in enforced idleness, the longing for home and a more social life grew stronger from day to day.

The Viceroy and the Military Authorities asked nothing better than to be able to gratify this longing, but plan and work as they might, they found it a harder task to withdraw from Afghanistan than to invade it. They could not march out and leave chaos behind them, and there seemed no stable elements out of which to construct a Native Government strong enough to maintain itself without British support; or, rather, several Native Governments, for the scheme of breaking up Afghanistan, favoured from the first by Lord Lytton, had been finally adopted by the Indian and British Governments. A ruler for Southern Afghanistan was ready to hand in the person of the Governor of Kandahar, Sirdar Sher Ali; but with what authority he should be invested, over what area that authority should extend, and in what relations his new State should stand towards India, remained to be determined. Consulted on these points, Sir Donald Stewart gave it as his opinion that the territory to be allotted to Sher Ali, for whom he suggested the title of Wali, should include the Province of Kandahar proper—excluding the assigned districts of Pishin and Sibi, and possibly that part of Seistan watered only by the Helmand—the district of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, the districts of Pusht-i-Rud and Zemindawar, and the district of Farah, of all of which only a small portion was cultivated or, indeed, cultivable; the whole covering about 70,000 square miles, supporting somewhere between half a million and a million of inhabitants, and yielding a revenue of about £200,000. As regarded the measure of authority

¹ “They are the boldest rascals in the world. Some men got into my garden through a drain a few days ago, and carried off all my Durbar carpets, about 400 rupees’ worth.” (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 293.)

to be conceded to the ruler of the proposed State, Sir D. Stewart recommended that the only limitation to be placed upon it should be in respect to foreign relations, which should be wholly conducted through a Representative of Her Majesty's Government, with the possible exception of those to be established and maintained with any Native State which might be formed at Kabul. He further advised that the Wali's military force should be limited in numbers, and at the disposal of the Government of India for the defence of Kandahar against external enemies ; that for the support of any British force which it might be deemed necessary to keep in his country, he should contribute a fixed subsidy in coin or, preferably, in grain ; that commercial arrangements be the subject of mutual agreement at stated intervals ; and that, for the time being, he should not be expected to contribute to the expense of constructing railways and telegraphs through any part of his territory. Sir Donald further recommended that the British force to be maintained in Southern Afghanistan should be located in a cantonment to be formed near Kandahar ; not in the citadel, or within a stone's throw of its gates, lest the Wali's independence should seem doubtful to himself and his subjects, but at some point not more than twenty and not less than five miles from its walls.

On the question of the political control of the new State, he was very decided :—

“ I think,” so he wrote, “ that the safest plan will be to follow the ordinary precedent by keeping the political and military authority in separate hands, except on those special occasions when important military operations are in actual progress. From certain points of view it would, no doubt, be convenient to entrust both duties to the same individual, and officers are, no doubt, to be found equally competent for both ; but, in practice, it might, I feel sure, be productive of gross evils if our political relations with the country were to fall into the management of any officer who might chance to fall

into the military command. . . The maintenance of satisfactory relations with the ruler of Kandahar and the attitude of the Afghan authorities towards the British officers entrusted with the conduct of affairs in Southern Afghanistan will, in a very great measure, depend on the personal qualifications of the officer who may be appointed by Government to hold chief political authority in that quarter. It is of the last importance that the officer selected for this duty should be thoroughly well qualified to deal with the Afghan authorities, whether as regards his knowledge of the Persian language, his political experience, or his capabilities for obtaining and retaining the friendship, confidence, and respect of those with whom he has to deal.”¹

Had it been intended that the command of the troops to be left in Southern Afghanistan should remain with the writer of these remarks, there would have been no question of separating the political from the military power ; but it had been decided that Stewart and his Division should leave Kandahar as early as possible in the coming year, troops from Bombay taking their place, and all through the autumn and winter strenuous efforts were being made to prepare for the impending change.

In October, the Government of India gave a tardy assent to the construction of a railway from Sukkur on the Indus to Sibi at the foot of the Afghan hills, and the work was immediately put in hand. It presented no great engineering difficulties, but the arrangements for housing, feeding, and watering five thousand labourers and two thousand beasts of burden in a perfectly barren desert, called for the highest administrative ability, and that this was not wanting is proved by the fact that the line was ready for locomotive traffic on the 27th of January, 1880.²

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, pp. 10, 11, 12.

² “The execution of 133½ miles of railway in 101 days, or at an average progress of 1½ miles per day, is a feat worthy of mention, and was only possible

One great work naturally suggests another, so, before a third of the Sukkur-Sibi railway had been completed, Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, went up to Kandahar to discuss with Sir D. Stewart and Colonel J. G. Lindsay, the Superintendent Engineer, the question of extending it to Quetta and, ultimately, to Kandahar. All agreed that the safety and well-being of a British Force permanently established, in Southern Afghanistan called for such an extension, and as Sir Donald Stewart and Colonel Sandeman, the Governor-General's Agent in Baluchistan, were opposed to any attempt to utilize the Bolan for such a scheme, traffic through that pass being subject to frequent interruptions by snow and flood, it was decided to carry the proposed railway through Harnai to Gwal in the Pishin Valley, and, with a view to facilitating the work and hastening the abandonment of the Bolan, to construct a good cart road parallel with its alignment. To forestall any opposition that the tribes along the proposed route might be tempted to offer to the violation of their territories, Sandeman's personal escort at once occupied Thal, in the very centre of the possible area of disturbance; and on the 23rd of December, a Brigade, under Brigadier-General G. R. S. Burrows, consisting of two mountain guns, three companies Sappers and Miners, and three Bombay Native Infantry regiments, was ordered to proceed to the same place for the purpose of making and protecting the new road. This movement formed part of the general scheme, just approved by the Indian Government, for the withdrawal of the Bengal troops from Southern Afghanistan and the location, in the new state, of a Bombay Division, the troops belonging under the most perfect system of organisation in every detail of the operations. Yet, so ably conceived were all the arrangements for the regular and orderly supply, whether of railway material, or of food, water, fuel, and shelter, for the labourers and staff, during the fifty working days occupied in carrying the railway over the ninety-three miles of inhospitable desert, that practically no special inconvenience was experienced, and from first to last the work progressed with the utmost regularity and mechanical precision." (*Ways and Works in India*, by G. W. Macgregor, M.I.C.E., pp. 398, 399.)

to which were to be pushed up as fast as shipping could be provided to transport them to Karachi, whilst, to support this advanced force, a Reserve Division, with Head-Quarters at Bombay, was to be distributed among convenient points—Jacobabad, Sukkur, Hyderabad, Karachi, and Bombay.

The general control of both Divisions was vested in Lieutenant-General J. M. Primrose ; the First, the constitution of which is given below, being under his immediate personal command—the command of its Infantry Brigades falling to G. R. S. Burrows and H. F. Brooke, and that of its Cavalry Brigade to T. Nuttall. The line of communications between Sukkur and Kandahar was placed in charge of Major-General R. Phayre, who, after the departure of Sir D. Stewart, was to command the garrison of Kandahar, pending the arrival of Primrose. The Bombay Government was to supervise the supply and transport arrangements of the troops in Southern Afghanistan ; the Commander-in-Chief of that Presidency was to decide all questions of discipline and to conduct all correspondence connected with clothing, ammunition, and the medical services ; the Commander-in-Chief in India was to issue all orders pertaining to tactical and strategical movements ; and the political authority in the new State was to be exercised by Major St. John, who, as Stewart's political assistant, was the person best qualified to carry on his policy.¹

FIRST DIVISION.

E-B Royal Horse Artillery.

C-D Royal Artillery. Two guns to Khelat-i-Ghilzai to relieve the two guns of G-4 R.A.

5-8 Royal Artillery (Mountain). Ditto 11-11 R.A.

5-11 Royal Artillery (Heavy Battery).

¹ " General Primrose is to succeed me here. He is not to have political authority. St. John remains in independent political charge. The arrangement is a very good one, as General Primrose knows nothing of what has been done here, and he could hardly carry out my policy without understanding it. St. John, on the other hand, has worked with me from the first, and the Government has adopted all my resolutions in bulk," (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 315.)

1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE.

66th Foot. Two Companies to Khelat-i-Ghilzai to relieve 59th Foot.
 1st Bombay Grenadiers.
 19th Bombay Infantry.

2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE.

7th Fusiliers.
 29th Bombay Infantry, garrisoning Khelat-i-Ghilzai.
 30th Bombay Infantry.

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

Poona Horse.
 3rd Sind Horse. One Squadron to Khelat-i-Ghilzai.

RESERVE DIVISION.

	}	1st Sind Horse.
JACOBABAD		2nd Bombay Light Cavalry.
	}	3rd " " "
		2 Companies 9th Bombay Infantry.
SUKKUR	}	23rd Bombay Infantry.
		F-2 Royal Artillery.
HYDERABAD	}	Wing 2-11th Foot.
		24th Bombay Infantry.
	}	D-B Royal Horse Artillery.
KARACHI		2-15th Foot.
	}	3rd Bombay Infantry.
		9th " "
BOMBAY		Head-Quarters and Wing 2-11th Foot.

All these preliminary arrangements had been decided on and put in train by the end of the year, and on the 3rd of January, Stewart was ordered to mobilize his Division and report what carriage and supplies he could procure locally, and to what extent both would have to be supplemented from India in order to secure the mobility of his troops. In his reply Sir D. Stewart pointed out that it would not be easy to submit an estimate of his requirements until he had been furnished with full details regarding the proposed operations, and the time at which reliefs might be expected to reach Kandahar.

So far, owing to the difficulty of providing forage, purchases of transport animals had only been made to replace casualties. He thought that he could obtain a thousand or fifteen hundred camels locally; with the season for snowstorms just beginning, however, the present seemed a bad time for marching to Ghazni.

On this point he was quickly reassured. In its next communication the Government informed him that there was no intention of beginning the projected movement before the spring, and the 21st of March, the date suggested by Sir Donald himself, was the one provisionally adopted.

As regarded reliefs, the Commander-in-Chief was anxious that they should reach Kandahar as early as possible, but the usual paucity of transport—the beasts of burden that ought to have been available had been transferred to the Khyber—and heavy snowfalls at many points, were greatly delaying the upward movement of troops. At Chaman, at the foot of the Khojak Pass, snow lay three feet deep, and in the Bolan, where men and beasts, crowded together, blocked each other's advance, numbers were dying of cold.¹ The severity of the weather abated at the end of the first week of February, but snow again fell heavily on the 13th, 14th, and 16th, and it was not till the 20th that the 19th Punjab Infantry and the 2nd Sikhs arrived at Kandahar from Pishin, where they had been replaced by troops from Bombay.

Whilst the Commander-in-Chief was doing all in his power to concentrate a Bombay Division at Kandahar, Sir Donald Stewart was endeavouring to organize an efficient transport train for the

¹ "We are lucky in being so low, for at Chaman there is three feet of snow and it is still falling;—what it is at Quetta and the Khojak I don't know, but the Bombay troops coming up will know what winter means in this country." (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 307.)

"I warned the Bombay Government against crowding so many animals into the (Bolan) Pass; but they would not take the warning, and they are losing men and cattle by death from sheer cold." (*Ibid.* p. 309.)

long march that lay before him. Disappointed in his hope of adding to his stock of animals by purchase on the spot—a drought in the Kandahar district had driven away most of the camels that had survived the first phase of the war, and though owners were willing to hire out, at exorbitant rates, the few that had not been removed, they could not be induced to sell them—he had to fall back upon his existing transport, the greater part of which had been for some time engaged in bringing up the reliefs. As these came in, he retained at Kandahar all animals belonging to the Government, except those employed in carrying treasure and military stores, and used only hired cattle for the conveyance of regimental baggage and commissariat stores. To facilitate the transport arrangements under this system he divided his line of communications into four sections, each with its appropriate kind of carriage :—

- Section I. Sukkur to Sibi—The new railway.
- Section II. Sibi to Quetta—Brahui camels.
- Section III. Quetta to Abdulla Khan—Carts supplemented by Pishin camels.
- Section IV. Abdulla Khan to Kandahar—Pishin and Kandahar camels, and donkeys.

This plan called for a great deal of extra labour in the transferring and remaking of loads—loads suitable to one kind of carriage being unsuited to another—but no better could have been devised, and on the whole it worked well.

Major-General Phayre arrived at Kandahar, with 5-11 Royal Artillery and the 1st Bombay Infantry, on the 9th of March ; and on the 18th, Sir D. Stewart reported for the information of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief that the preparation of the Ghazni Field Force would be completed on the 25th, by which date a sufficient number of Bombay troops would have reached Kandahar to admit of his beginning the march to Kabul.

In a letter written on the 13th of March to Sher Ali, Lord Lytton

had announced that the Queen-Empress had been pleased to recognize him as independent ruler of the province of Kandahar, the limits of which had yet to be defined ; that for the consolidation of his power and the proper guardianship of the frontiers of her Majesty's Empire, a British Force would remain in a cantonment at, or near, his capital, for the maintenance of which he would be expected to allow a portion of the grain revenue of the country ; and that a special officer of rank would be deputed to reside in the cantonment as a medium of friendly communication, and to conduct the relations of the British Government with the States upon His Highness's frontier.¹

It may be doubted whether Sher Ali would have been selected for the position, to which the British Government had decided to raise him, if they could have found a stronger man willing to accept it at their hands. Sir Donald Stewart had, at first, little confidence in his good faith, and, to the last, though he grew to have a strong personal liking for him, he had reason to doubt his possessing the qualities requisite in the ruler of a turbulent people. When two Kabuli regiments, the one fully equipped, the other without arms, arrived at Kandahar, Sher Ali was greatly alarmed and hastened to banish the former to the Argandab district ; and when his own contingent mutinied, he applied to the British Commander for help in reducing it to obedience, and only dealt with it himself when Sir Donald peremptorily refused to employ British troops in coercing his refractory subjects.² " Seeing that I am resolute on this point," wrote Stewart to his wife, " he does not now trouble me ; but, if I once took part in their internal squabbles, I should lose my prestige

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 13.

² " The Sirdar here has more than once tried to get assistance from me in the shape of troops for the purpose of coercing refractory subjects, but I have uniformly told him that a man who is fit to rule here must trust to himself when his own subjects are concerned." (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 311.)

as a friend of the nation, and be looked on as a mere partisan of the Sirdar's. By taking up this position, and sticking to it under all circumstances, the people are beginning to believe in me. They could not for a long time understand my ways ; and I daresay they thought me a very deep schemer ; but when they find I am consistent, I shall have my reward in their good-will." ¹

His farewell durbar, held on the 15th of March, afforded Stewart gratifying proof of that good-will. In his speech on that occasion, after announcing his approaching departure, he referred sternly to the many outrages committed on his soldiers and camp-followers ; and, at its conclusion, one of the priests present rose to repudiate all responsibility for deeds contrary to the law of Mahomed, and to offer to the retiring British Commander the grateful thanks of the people of Kandahar for the manner in which, from first to last, he had ruled over them. Those thanks were well deserved. Following closely in the footsteps of his great predecessor, Sir William Nott, Sir Donald Stewart had never stooped to acts of cruelty or indiscriminate severity ; and his humanity and good sense had kept a turbulent city quiet and prosperous, and the surrounding country generally peaceful. Only the district under his immediate influence, however—everywhere else in Afghanistan a state of anarchy prevailed. A few days after the durbar, the Zemindawaris attacked a body of Sher Ali's troops, knocking over some of his officers and killing a number of his men ; a little earlier, in the opposite direction, near Khelat-i-Ghilzai, a raiding party had pounced upon a convoy of mules, and but that Colonel Tanner's troops were on the alert, would have captured and carried it off ; and in the background a more serious danger than these local disturbances threatened the State which the British Government was about to call into existence, and the garrison which was to be its defence. Rumours had reached Stewart in December that Ayub

¹ *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 311.

Khan, brother of the deposed Amir and Governor of Herat, was meditating an advance on Kandahar. His force was known to be a large one ; but, as the Herati and Kabuli regiments of which it was composed were said to be bitterly opposed to each other, many persons believed that there was little chance of their being induced to act together. Stewart must have taken a less sanguine view of what the future might have in store for him or his successor, since, in communicating the news to the Commander-in-Chief, he recommended that supplies should be collected along the road to Girishk, and proposed, in the event of a movement towards the Helmand becoming necessary, to call up the 19th Punjab Infantry, the 2nd Sikhs, and 2nd Sind Horse, replacing them in Pishin by Bombay troops employed in improving the road in the Bolan. Sir Frederick Haines approved of an occupation of Girishk, and thought that Stewart's force at Kandahar should be reinforced by a British regiment and a battery of artillery in addition to the troops mentioned by Stewart ; but the Viceroy, though agreeing to the proposed collection of supplies, saw no reason for a movement towards Girishk, nor yet for a strengthening of the Kandahar garrison, and deprecated any premature advance of Bombay troops calculated to interfere with work in the Bolan. As a matter of fact, shortly after the news which led to Stewart's suggestion had been received in Kandahar, Ayub Khan's agents did start for Farah, midway between Girishk and Herat, to collect supplies for his projected march ; and, though nothing came of their preparations at the time, the threatened movement was not abandoned, only delayed.

Sir Donald Stewart had formally bidden farewell to his temporary subjects on the 15th of March ; on the 18th, he had reported that his force would be ready to march on the 25th, yet not till the 28th, the day before his advance began, did he receive any information as to the Government's plans for himself and his troops, and then it came in the shape of a telegram announcing that a column from

Kabul was to meet him at Ghazni. The long telegram which Sir Donald sent in reply, brings out so strongly his knowledge of the conditions under which war is carried on in Afghanistan, and his desire to press as lightly as possible on the scanty resources of her people, that it deserves to be given in full :—

“I am not in possession of the orders of the Government, nor have I received the programme for field operations now being commenced, but I would point out that I am carrying forward from here supplies for two months (for European troops) and that I shall not require to draw more European supplies from India by Kabul or Kuram until the end of May. If it is intended that the Division under my command move forward beyond Ghazni towards Kuram, supplies should be collected at some place in Kuram, where the troops under my command may pass the remainder of the hot weather. By the information which I have received, no opposition is likely to be encountered at Ghazni which may not be easily overcome by the troops with which I am advancing. The movement of a column from Kabul to meet the Division under my command will, in my opinion, increase the strain upon the country which the demands of this Division for Native supplies must entail. The collection of tribesmen under Mahomed Jan and Mushk-i-Alam have already drawn largely upon the supplies which are procurable in the neighbourhood of Ghazni, and the uncertainty which prevails throughout the country has doubtless prevented large areas from being cultivated this spring. It is only with difficulty that sufficient transport has been obtained to allow of the Division under my command being moved with full equipment, and I am calculating on replacing casualties among baggage animals by purchases made at Ghazni. I submit for consideration that it is very desirable that no movement of troops belonging to Kabul or the Kuram command should be made in advance of Kushi. I have this morning received a telegram from Sir F. Roberts that he only proposes to supply for my Division at

Ghazni, tea, sugar, and possibly rum, and that for all other supplies I must depend upon the country. I hope it will be understood that I do not require any supplies to be advanced from Kabul to meet me ; and that, if orders are given for my Division to remain at Ghazni, I would at once establish communication with Kabul or Kuram, as may be desired, sending my own transport to bring forward necessary supplies. I make this statement, not with a view of disturbing any approved plan of operations, but in order that there may be no misconception regarding the difficulty of feeding a large force at Ghazni during the present season."

In a Minute addressed to the Military Secretary, Lord Lytton expressed himself unable to understand " why Sir D. Stewart had not received the programme for field operations now being commenced," but the reason is clear : many of the military details of the programme were still under consideration, and the Commander-in-Chief himself was in the dark as to the Government's political aims and intentions up to the 29th of March, when, by the direction of the Viceroy, the Military Secretary telegraphed them to him with the request that he would convey them to Sir D. Stewart.

" It is essential," so ran the message, " that General Stewart should be at once fully informed of the entire plan of operations, and of the political objects desired by the Government of India. The latter may be thus summed up : The Government is anxious to withdraw as soon as possible the troops from Kabul and from all points beyond those to be occupied under the Treaty of Gandamak, except Kandahar. In order that this may be done, it is desirable to find a ruler for Kabul, which will be separated from Kandahar. Steps are being taken for this purpose. Meanwhile it is essential that we should make such a display of strength in Afghanistan as will show that we are masters of the situation, and will overawe disaffection. But it is not desirable to spread our troops over a large tract of country, or to send small columns to any place where they would encounter

opposition, and increase the hostile feeling against us. All that is necessary from the political point of view is for General Stewart to march to Ghazni, break up any opposition he may find there, or in the neighbourhood, and open up direct communication with General Sir F. Roberts at Kabul. This he can do either by the direct route, or by Kushi, as he may think to be most expedient, under such conditions as may exist when he is at Ghazni. It is not desirable that Sir D. Stewart's troops should remain for long at Ghazni; and it is, therefore, necessary that all military dispositions should be made with a view to enabling him to leave Ghazni as soon as he has put down any open opposition that he may find there. It is very desirable that the conduct of operations in Afghanistan should, as soon as possible, be brought under one head. Sir D. Stewart should, therefore, assume the supreme command as soon as he is in direct communication with Kabul. In the meantime, he should be daily kept informed, both by the Foreign Department and by the Military Department, of all news received from Kabul, or from any part of the Khyber or Kuram lines of communication, so that he may be constantly and fully made aware of the exact state of the situation at all points." ¹

The views expressed in this Minute point to a change which had taken place in the Viceroy's immediate entourage. Sir George Colley, who, as his Private Secretary, had given colour and direction to his Afghan policy, had again left Calcutta, on the 28th of February, this time to take up the post of High Commissioner in South Africa; ² and his successor, Colonel H. Brackenbury, had opened Lord Lytton's eyes to the folly of spreading "troops over a large tract of country," and of sending "small columns to any place where they would encounter opposition and increase the hostile feeling against us," and this awaken-

¹ Viceroy's Minute, dated 30th March, 1880. *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 15.

² Colley, recalled by Lord Lytton after the massacre of the Kabul Mission, had returned to India in November, 1879.—H. B. H.

ing had brought with it the desire to see the conduct of operations in Northern Afghanistan put into wiser hands, than those to which it had hitherto been entrusted.¹

Sir Frederick Haines telegraphed on Lord Lytton's instructions to Kandahar; but Sir D. Stewart had left that city before they were received there, and they cannot have followed him, for, at Tazi, he noted in his Diary, "No official orders from the Commander-in-Chief, so I propose to act on the Viceroy's private letter."² In the letter here alluded to, which had followed the Force to Khelat-i-Ghilzai, Lord Lytton besought Stewart not to linger at Ghazni "for any great length of time, not only on account of your supplies, but also because the sooner you effect a junction with Roberts, the sooner you will be able to exercise over the whole situation, political as well as military, in Northern Afghanistan, that individual personal direction which cannot be too promptly, or too completely, established there."³

¹ The Head-Quarters Staff had also been recently strengthened by the appointment of Major-General G. R. Greaves, an officer of ability, firmness, and sound judgment, to the Adjutant-Generalship of the Army in India.—H. B. H.

² "Tazi, 10th April." (*Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 327.)

³ *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 326.

CHAPTER XXVII

Sir Donald Stewart's March to Kabul

ACTIONS AT AHMED KHEL AND URSU

THE force with which Sir Donald Stewart had arranged to enter on his adventurous march consisted of seven thousand two hundred and forty-nine European and Native troops, seven thousand two hundred and seventy-three camp-followers, and eleven thousand and sixty-nine riding, draught, and transport animals. Its Commander's original intention had been to leave the 19th Punjab Infantry and the Heavy guns at Kandahar ; but in this matter he was overruled by the Commander-in-Chief, who considered the whole Bengal Division none too large for the risks that had to be run. It was to take with it two months' supplies of food, ten days' of firewood, and livestock for the European regiments ;¹ but only seven days' food and no firewood or livestock for the Native troops and followers, and neither fodder nor grain for the horses and cattle of all kinds ; so that, practically, all the animals and the greater part of the men were, from the outset, to subsist on the country, peaceably if possible, but taking what they needed by force if the people refused to surrender the remnant of their winter stores. To spread these exactions over the largest possible area, the Division was divided into two unequal parts, the smaller of which was to march on the left bank of the Turnak, whilst the larger, split up into two Brigades, following each other at the distance

¹ One hundred and twenty sheep were consumed daily, and firewood at the rate of fifty maunds per diem was carried on camels.—H. B. H.

of a day's march, was to move by the direct road on the right bank of that stream. On the 27th of March, in accordance with orders issued by Sir Donald Stewart on the 23rd, Nos. 4 and 10 Companies Sappers and Miners left cantonments to improve the latter road for the passage of the Heavy Battery, and on the same day the troops that were to follow the more circuitous route, under Brigadier-General R. Barter, namely :—

4 Mountain Guns 11-11 Royal Artillery,
1st Punjab Cavalry,
2-60th Rifles,
15th Sikhs,
25th Punjab Infantry,

moved out into camp, and two days later marched for the Hotak villages of Sadu Khan, lying about eight miles to the east of Khelat-i-Ghilzai. The remainder of the troops went into camp on the 29th of March, and on the 30th—

A-B Royal Horse Artillery,
6-11 Royal Artillery (Heavy Guns),
19th Bengal Lancers,
2nd Sikhs,
Engineer Field Park,

commanded by Brigadier-General C. H. Palliser, accompanied by Sir Donald Stewart and the Head-Quarters Staff, with a Cavalry and Infantry escort, marched for Khelat-i-Ghilzai, followed the next day by—

G-4 Royal Artillery,
59th Foot,
3rd Gurkhas,
19th Punjab Infantry,
Ordnance Park,

under Brigadier-General R. J. Hughes. One of the companies of Sappers and Miners engaged in road-making was allotted to Barter's Brigade, the other to Hughes's.

Stewart and Palliser arrived at Khelat-i-Ghilzai on the 8th of April, where they opened communication with Barter, whose Brigade had reached its destination the previous day. On the 7th, all three Brigades remained stationary, awaiting the arrival of the supplies which had been ordered to follow the force, for each European regiment had only carried with it ten days' supply of food, and each Native regiment three days' supply of such necessaries as could not be obtained on the line of march; a reserve of similar amount being carried by the Commissariat. To Stewart's surprise and annoyance the expected supplies failed to appear, and after some hesitation he determined to proceed without them,¹ though those he had with him were only just sufficient for the needs of his European troops up to the 25th of April, and for the Native troops he had never, thenceforward, two days' food in hand.²

The day's halt was taken advantage of to transfer the Heavy guns from Palliser's Brigade to Hughes's, and to weed out every weak or sickly soldier, camp-follower, and transport animal, and send them back to Kandahar. Luckily, there were not many in any one of these three categories, for notwithstanding cold, wind, and dust, both men and beasts had borne the march well. The following table shows the reduction that had taken place, but, as regards the troops, the loss had been greater than appears, for the two companies of the 59th Foot, which had formed part of the garrison of Khelat since its occupation in October, had now joined the Division, whilst, as regards followers and transport animals, the large difference was chiefly due to many of both having been left behind at Kandahar to bring up the missing supplies.

¹ "I am sorry to say that some things are not quite satisfactory. Our supplies have not yet all come up from Kandahar, and I am in doubt whether to go on without them, trusting to get what I want from Kabul, or wait here for a few days. I suppose it will end in my going on, as I cannot bear the idea of halting." (Letter to Lady Stewart, dated Khelat-i-Ghilzai, April 7th, 1880. *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 321.)

² *Ibid.* p. 351.

STRENGTH OF THE GHAZNI FIELD FORCE ON THE 8TH OF APRIL,
1880.

TROOPS.

British Officers	172
European Troops	1,973
Native Troops	5,048
	—
Total of all ranks	7,193
Less by 56 than on leaving Kandahar.	

CAMP-FOLLOWERS.

Public Followers	4,140
Private Followers	692
Dhoolie-Bearers	1,575
	—
Total	6,407
Less by 866.	

ANIMALS.

Elephants	11
Horses	1,853
Camels	3,558
Mules	1,575
Ponies	1,223
Bullocks	499
	—
Total	8,719
Less by 2,350.	

The Ghazni Field Force resumed its march in the same order as before—Palliser's Brigade leading on the right bank of the Turnak, with Hughes's Brigade one march behind, and Barter's Brigade moving abreast of Palliser's on the left bank and gradually drawing nearer to it as both approached the sources of the stream. The distance between them was at no time great, and heliographic communication between the three Brigades was regularly maintained. The weather was on the whole pleasant, frosty at night, but warm and bright by day; the country for the ninety-six miles lying between Khelat and Jamrad,

where the Division was to concentrate, fairly open for a mountainous region, and the road good and firm, though intersected at some points by deep ravines, and at others by irrigation channels, which gave the Heavy guns and Baggage train a great deal of trouble.

At Shahjui, forty miles from Kelat, where Stewart and Palliser arrived on the 11th, the limits of the Province of Kandahar were reached. So far the Force had been accompanied by some of Sher Ali's officials, thanks to whose mediation provisions had been fairly abundant, though they had often to be brought in from long distances. Henceforth the march was to lie through a country whose inhabitants had concealed their stores and deserted their villages.¹ Even in nominally friendly territory, the Force had been shadowed by a large and ever-growing body of tribesmen, moving along the foot of a range of hills parallel to the road that Barter was following; everywhere the British scouts had been met by an enemy's scouts; and political information was unobtainable.² There had been no fighting, but at Chashma-i-Panjak, the fifth march out of Kelat-i-Ghilzai, there had been great excitement in Stewart's camp watching Barter's troops searching for the enemy, who had appeared in their front. The same tactics had been adopted by the Afghans in the first war, only then they had shadowed Sir John Keane's Force on both flanks, all the way from Kandahar to Ghazni. For those who had studied the history of that war, the whole march was full of memories. At Ghojan, Palliser pitched his camp on the very ground where the earlier British army had encamped; but whereas in July 1839 the villagers were "reaping and threshing in their fields,"³ in April

¹ "After leaving Kelat-i-Ghilzai we found the entire country deserted; the villages for a hundred miles had been abandoned, and the people had gone, taking flocks and herds and household goods, but burying their precious things, with grain and flour, in the fields, under the hearths, or even under dung-hills, hiding them in the roofs of their houses, &c." (General Chapman in *Blackwood's Magazine* for February, 1902, p. 260.)

² *Ibid.* p. 261.

³ *A Narrative of the March and Operations of the Army of the Indus*, by Major W. Hough, p. 154.

1880 the villages, seven in number, stood silent and empty, in the midst of their budding orchards and growing crops.

The wholesale flight of the people and the ingenuity with which they had concealed the stores that they could not remove, added enormously to the difficulty of foraging; but "from the centre of newly ploughed fields, from freshly dug graves, from superincumbent dung-heaps, from the bottom of underground canals, from every conceivable and inconceivable place, large stores of grain and flour were dragged into light;"¹ stores not large enough, however, to allow of full rations for the camp-followers, who, for a time, had to subsist on whole grain boiled and sweetened with a little sugar.² Everywhere it was the same. At Mukur, where the Turnak has its source in a spring swarming with fish, many villages, protected by mud forts, were scattered about well-cultivated lands, whose inhabitants were reported to possess large herds of cows and flocks of sheep and pigs; but men and beasts alike had disappeared, and Palliser, who camped there on the 14th of April, had to turn his horses and cattle out to graze on the green corn. The next day, at a place called Karez-i-Oba, Barter's column joined Head-Quarters, and on the 16th, after traversing a plain intersected by deep irrigation channels and gay with many varieties of wild flowers—brightest among them a splendid scarlet tulip³—Palliser's and Barter's Brigades reached Jamrad and halted for thirty-six hours to allow Hughes's troops to come up. Here, for the first time, the Afghans who had continued to hang on the British right, showed signs of an intention to attack the camp; but on General Barter's Brigade moving out against them, they declined battle and retired in good order.

The day's rest enjoyed by two-thirds of the Ghazni Field Force at Jamrad was needed by all, from the highest to the lowest; officers and

¹ "Sir Donald Stewart's March from Kandahar to Kabul." *Macmillan's Magazine* for May, 1881, p. 55.

² Report of Deputy-Surgeon-General A. Smith.

³ *Ibid.*

men were beginning to feel the effects of the great exertions imposed on them by the necessity of literally hunting for their food,¹ and Sir Donald Stewart, suffering from exposure to the sun, could neither eat nor sleep.² His condition was not improved by his insisting on faring just the same as his soldiers and refusing the little comforts to which his age and his position entitled him ;³ and it is questionable whether a man on whose life and health so much depended, was justified in risking both, in order to set an example of hardihood and self-denial to his subordinates.

Crowds of Hazaras from the Highlands lying to the north-west of the Kandahar-Kabul road,⁴ flocked into the British camp at Jamrad, eager to be recognized as "friends," and the next day's march revealed their conception of the use to which British protection could be put. Every house in the numerous villages dotting the well-cultivated valley lying between Jamrad and Mushaki (9 miles), had been gutted and set on fire ;⁵ even the graves of the dead had been

¹ "In consequence of this abandonment of the country, the Division was absolutely dependent for its daily supplies of grain, flour, wood, and forage, upon an organized system of foraging. This was carried on under the most stringent discipline. . . Neither troops nor followers were on any account allowed to enter a village except when detailed to form part of an organized foraging party, and breaches of discipline in this matter were punished summarily by the provost-marshal." (Chapman in *Blackwood's Magazine*, p. 261.)

² "We halted to-day, a great boon to everybody. To myself it has been very grateful, for I have been very seedy for some days. . . I think the sun is telling on me, as I feel perfectly well in most ways, yet I cannot eat or sleep. Sitting out in the sun for hours till the tents come up is very trying." (Letter to Lady Stewart, dated April 17th, 1880, p. 329 of *Sir D. Stewart's Life*.)

³ "We have given up our dooly, as an example to the rest of the force and as we are cutting down our baggage to the lowest figure. It is necessary to be particular in such matters. It is certainly not nice having to sit out for three or four hours without a particle of shelter ; but as the men have to do it, we do it too." (Ibid. p. 323.)

⁴ "Hazaras—a tribe who inhabit the mountain country between Kabul and Herat. There are few nations in the world whose dwellings are at a higher elevation." (Sir Charles Macgregor.)

⁵ "Our friends the Hazaras are taking advantage of our presence to burn down all the Afghan Forts and villages, and I daresay we shall get the credit of it." (*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 329.)

deseccrated and their headstones smashed in pieces by these self-constituted British allies ; and though Sir Donald Stewart was very angry and denounced the Hazaras in his letters as “ Barbarian cut-throats,” whose co-operation, if offered, he should decline,¹ he made no attempt to punish the offenders, as Wellington or Nott would have done in his place ; an impolitic omission, for an act of justice, executed upon his “ friends ” in the interest of his enemies, would have done much to disarm the hostility which, passive so far, was about to assume an active form.²

That day a body of the enemy—some 9,000 strong, was discovered by the British scouts to be moving parallel to the line of march of the now united Division, at a distance of from eight to ten miles, and at night they occupied a group of villages lying about four miles south-east of the British camp ; but, when the morning dawned, not a man was to be seen.

Considerable modifications in the distribution of the troops among the different commanders had been made since Barter’s Brigade joined the rest of the Division, and it was in the following order that Stewart’s force resumed its march at daybreak on the 19th of April :—

LEADING TROOPS
UNDER COMMAND OF BRIGADIER-GENERAL C. H. PALLISER.

BRIGADE STAFF.

Major G. C. Bird, Brigade-Major.
Lieutenant W. E. G. Forbes, Orderly Officer.
Lieutenant A. C. Batten, Orderly Officer.
Lieutenant C. Hoskyns, Orderly Officer.

¹ *Sir Donald Stewart’s Life*, p. 330.

² The author of an article on Sir Donald Stewart’s march, published in *Macmillan’s Magazine* for May, 1881, wrote that “ The presence of these men was to all concerned not only an immense and unmitigated nuisance, but a positive obstruction to our movements ; while their conduct in looting and burning Afghan villages, and in slaying every Afghan, man, woman, and child, whom they met with on the road—as long as our presence secured them against retaliation—brought upon us the odium and responsibility of acts which we exerted ourselves to the utmost to prevent.” (P. 55.)

STEWART'S MARCH TO KABUL

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A-B Royal Horse Artillery, six 9-pr. guns, Major H. de G. Warter.
19th Bengal Lancers, 300 Sabres, Colonel P. S. Yorke.
19th Punjab Infantry, 470 Rifles, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Copeland.
No. 4 Company Sappers and Miners, Lieutenant P. Haslett.
No. 10 Company Sappers and Miners, Captain L. F. Brown.

GENERAL COMMANDING.

Lieutenant-General Sir Donald Stewart.
Captain N. R. Stewart, Aide-de-Camp.

DIVISIONAL STAFF.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. F. Chapman, Chief of the Staff.
Major A. Handcock, Assistant Adjutant-General.
Captain A. Gaselee, Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Captain L. T. Bishop, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Colonel A. C. Johnson, Commanding Royal Artillery.
Captain E. M. Larminie, Commanding Royal Engineer.
Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith, Principal Medical Officer.
Major C. Cowie, Commissary of Ordnance.
Captain W. V. Ellis, Provost Marshal.
Captain W. A. Lawrence, General Transport Officer.
Lieutenant J. E. Dickie, Superintendent Army Signalling.
Lieutenant B. L. P. Reilly, Acting Principal Commissariat Officer.¹
Captain R. F. C. A. Tytler, Deputy Judge Advocate.
Major C. B. Euan Smith, Chief Political Officer.
Major R. C. Clifford, Assistant Political Officer.
Rev. T. J. L. Warneford, Chaplain.
Rev. Father J. Allen, Chaplain.

THE GENERAL'S ESCORT COMMANDED BY LIEUTENANT A. DAVIDSON.

A troop 19th Bengal Lancers, 50 Sabres.
A Company 2-60th Rifles, 63 Rifles.
A Company 25th Punjab Infantry, 85 Rifles.

SECOND BRIGADE

COMMANDED BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL R. J. HUGHES.

BRIGADE STAFF.

Major M. H. Nicholson, Brigade-Major.
Captain E. B. Bishop, Orderly Officer.
Lieutenant F. Stevenson, Orderly Officer.

¹ *Vice* Captain C. F. Hughes incapacitated by an accident.

G-4 Royal Artillery, six 9-pr. guns, Major Sir J. W. Campbell, Bart.
 6-11 Royal Artillery, four Heavy guns, Major J. A. Tillard.
 2nd Punjab Cavalry, 349 Sabres, Colonel T. G. Kennedy.
 59th Foot, 436 Rifles, Colonel R. Lacy.
 3rd Gurkhas, 289 Rifles, Colonel H. H. Lyster, V.C.
 2nd Sikhs, 367 Rifles, Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Boswell.

Field Hospital.

Ordnance and Engineer Field Parks.

Treasure.

Commissariat Train.

Baggage Train.

FIRST BRIGADE

COMMANDED BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL R. BARTER.

BRIGADE STAFF.

Captain R. Chalmer, Brigade-Major.

Lieutenant R. E. W. Copeland-Crawford, Orderly Officer.

Lieutenant C. Hope, Orderly Officer.

Lieutenant R. E. Golightly, Orderly Officer.

11-11 Royal Artillery, six 7-pr. Mountain guns, Major N. H. Harris.

1st Punjab Cavalry, 316 Sabres, Lieutenant-Colonel C. S. Maclean.

2-60th Rifles, 443 Rifles, Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Collins.

15th Sikhs, 570 Rifles, Lieutenant-Colonel G. R. Hennessy.

25th Punjab Infantry, 380 Rifles, Colonel J. W. Hoggan.

At first the advance lay over a fairly open, level tract of country ; but, about six miles from camp, it approached the base of a big spur, which, jutting out from the western range of mountains and sweeping round to eastward, crossed the Ghazni road about three miles further on. Close to the threshold of this hilly zone, Stewart and his escort, Hughes and his Brigade, had halted for breakfast when a Staff-officer—Major Bird—galloped in with the news that the Afghans were in great strength on the British left and front. For a moment the General was inclined to believe that Hazaras had been mistaken for Afghans,¹ but a glance through his field-glasses undeceived him ;

¹ " Our absolute ignorance of the country was our greatest difficulty ; the systematic desertion carried out by the enemy having made it impossible to gain the smallest information." (Chapman in *Blackwood's Magazine* for February, 1902, p. 261.)

those crowds of horsemen and footmen holding the hills and barring his advance, were not friends but foes—and foes in a very formidable position—and no time must be lost in preparing to meet them. Hughes's Brigade at once formed up on the left of A-B Royal Horse Artillery, the leading battery of the three which were halting on the road in column of route; and a troop of the 19th Bengal Lancers, strengthened later by a squadron of the regiment, was detached to scout along the hills lying to the left of the road; the remainder of the cavalry under Palliser took up a position on the right of the artillery, on ground which sloped gradually down to the river Ghazni three miles away; whilst the 19th Punjab Infantry, the two companies of Sappers and Miners, and the General's escort were held in reserve. At 7.45, orders were sent to Barter to despatch with all speed two squadrons of the 1st Punjab Cavalry to join Palliser's Brigade and to follow himself with half of his infantry. As Barter was six miles away, in rear of the long, straggling baggage train, only his cavalry could by any possibility reach the main body under two hours;¹ yet, at 8 o'clock, Sir Donald Stewart resumed the advance. Fourteen hundred yards from the enemy's main position, he directed Hughes to form for attack,² and the troops immediately began to deploy to the west of the Ghazni road, with the Horse and Field Batteries, respectively, on either side of it, and the Heavy Battery a mile in rear, occupying a low hill lying to the right of the road, at the foot of which the equipment of the Sapper Companies and the entrenching tools of the infantry were placed for shelter. The artillery came quickly into action, but the infantry were

¹ "On the 18th of April a considerable body threatened us, and the order of march for the following day was in consequence altered, the very considerable baggage column which accompanied us being placed between the leading Brigade and a complete Brigade which constituted the rear-guard." (Ibid. p. 261.)

² "When we were within about 1,400 yards of the hill, I rode forward to General Hughes, who commanded the infantry, requesting him to form for attack, the intention being that we should be the assailants." (Ibid.)

still in the act of deploying when, in an incredibly short space of time, along a front of nearly two miles, an enormous mass of men formed up on the hills facing the British troops,¹ and a few moments later the front and both flanks of Stewart's small Force were being furiously assailed. On the left, crowds of horsemen and footmen, pouring down two ravines, struck the Bengal Lancers, who had been observing the hills, and drove them right down first upon the 3rd Gurkhas, who, caught in the act of deploying, swiftly formed squares, then upon the 19th Punjab Infantry. For a moment, the suddenness and force of the onslaught threw even this fine regiment into confusion ; but the men, quickly recovering themselves, formed squares and joined their Gurkha comrades in pouring a succession of deadly volleys into the rear of the struggling mass of friends and foes, who, interspersed with ammunition mules, swept over the medical officers at their dressing stations,² and nearly up to the low hill where, in view of the fighting line and close to the reserve, Sir D. Stewart and his staff had taken up a position from which all parts of the field of battle were visible. Here, rallied by the General himself, the Lancers turned upon their pursuers, who, shattered by the infantry's destructive fire, galloped off to the right rear, leaving some of their dead within a few yards of the spot where Sir Donald had been standing.

Simultaneously with the attack on the British left, three thousand white-robed footmen burst in successive waves from the enemy's central mass, and stretching out to right and left as they ran, threatened to envelope the entire British position, whilst two thousand horsemen, emerging at a gallop from behind a hill on the enemy's true left, dashed across the plain lying between the troops and the river, with the intention of getting into Hughes's rear.³

Although, against breech-loading rifles and artillery firing case shot at short ranges, the weapons of the devoted Afghan swordsmen were

¹ Stewart's Despatch.

² Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith's Report.

³ Ibid.

miserable in the extreme, their courage and numbers made them formidable foes.¹ Their fierce onrush pressed back the 59th Foot;² the guns, having exhausted their ammunition, saw themselves obliged to withdraw to positions two hundred yards in rear,³ and with the front shaken and both flanks turned, the situation was for a time highly critical—all the more critical because the troops were for the most part fighting against an invisible foe, so vast and dense were the clouds of dust, which, flying before a fierce wind, enveloped the entire field of battle. Lyster's Gurkhas and the 3rd Sikhs, under Colonel Boswell, continued to hold the key of the position with resolute firmness, and a brilliant charge of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, led by Colonel Kennedy, into the mass of horsemen sweeping across the plain towards the exposed flank of the batteries, relieved the pressure

¹ "Most of them were big men, with long white robes flowing in the wind, right arms with swords or other weapons extended, and trying to guard their bodies (against Martini-Henry bullets!) with shields. Anyone with the semblance of a heart under his khaki jacket could not help feeling something like pity to see them thus advancing with their miserable weapons in the face of our guns and rifles, but their courage and numbers made them formidable." (Captain Elias in *Journal of Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. XXIV. No. CVII. pp. 669, 670.)

² "The scene was one which baffles description. Such an enormous body of Ghazi swordsmen had not been brought together since the battle of Meeanee. Their bravery was magnificent, and the fury of their onset tried the nerves of our troops for a few minutes, for nothing stopped them short of death." (Chapman, p. 262.)

³ "They had hardly finished deploying, many of them had omitted to fix bayonets, and there was for a few seconds a tendency among some of them to waver and form into small groups. This, however, passed away as instantaneously as it arose, and during the rest of the action the men's steadiness left nothing to be desired." ("Sir Donald Stewart's March from Kandahar to Kabul," *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1881, p. 58.)

³ "The disregard for life which the Ghazis exhibited may be judged of by the fact that they charged up to within thirty yards of Major de Grey Warter's guns, then firing case and reversed shrapnell, and thus compelled him to retire his guns 100 or 150 yards." (Ibid.)

Stewart in his Despatch says 200 yards.—H. B. H.

on the British right. Nevertheless, the danger was not averted till Stewart had thrown all his reserves, including his own escort, into the fighting line.¹ Half a battalion of the 19th Punjab Infantry and the Sappers and Miners were sent to deploy on the Gurkhas' left; the other half-battalion of the 19th, the company of the 60th Rifles, and that of the 25th Punjab Infantry, were pushed into the open space between the guns and the 59th Foot, which had quickly recovered from its temporary discomfiture; whilst the centre of the position, where the fighting was at its fiercest, was strengthened by the addition of four guns of the Field Battery.² The issue still hung in the balance when the two squadrons of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, under Colonel C. S. Maclean, that had been called up from Barter's Brigade arrived on the field, and joining the squadron of the 19th Bengal Lancers on escort duty with the guns, promptly drove the enemy across the river. This cleared Stewart's right and turned the tide of battle in his favour; and when the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, assisted by a few well-directed shells from the Heavy guns, had put to flight some horsemen who were trying to get round the British left to fall upon the baggage, the tribesmen accepted their defeat, and dispersed with such rapidity that fighting was over before Barter's infantry reached the scene of action. Their arrival enabled the whole force to make a forward movement,³ and by 11 a.m., an hour after the cease-fire had been

¹ Stewart's Despatch.

² "Our numbers actually fighting were approximately 1,800 infantry, 700 cavalry (not including the 1st Punjab Cavalry, which joined afterwards), 12 Horse Artillery and Field guns, and the Heavy Battery consisting of two 40-pounders and two 6-3 inch howitzers." (Captain R. Elias in *Journal of R.U.S. Institution*, Vol. XXIV. p. 671.)

³ "The fighting had lasted a little more than an hour; most of the fugitives moved off in the direction of the river and the Shilghur Hills beyond, *i.e.* eastward; but a large body collected on a hill more to the north, nearly a mile from us. As it was not quite certain whether they might not gather again, a general advance was made to some rising ground about 500 yards in front, but they had had enough, and after a few well-directed shells, those on the hills also dispersed." (*Ibid.*)

sounded, not a vestige of the great gathering, variously estimated at from 12,000 to 15,000 men, was to be discovered.

Spread abroad over low ground, the Ghilzais were for a time open to a destructive pursuit; but Stewart, fearing lest in the absence of his cavalry, they might cut in on his right and fall upon "the large parks and baggage train formed in rear," forbore to follow them up.¹ What he could not risk, the Hazaras, who had nothing to lose, were eager to undertake. Some two thousand of these men, who had hovered round the combatants, watching the changing fortunes of the fight, fell upon the scattering Afghans and killed many of the fugitives.

Sir Donald Stewart halted for two hours on the field of battle to bury the Europeans killed in the action, to collect the bodies of the Native dead to be carried on to the next camping ground,² and to give time to the medical officers to attend to the wounded; then, "with its baggage in close formation," the whole Division moved forward over very rough ground to Nani, seventeen miles from the spot where it had spent the previous night.³ After crossing the low pass held by the Ghilzais the country becomes more open, there are fewer water-courses, and the road is better, but still sandy and heavy.⁴

In his Despatch Stewart pronounced the conduct of his troops in this short, but severe engagement, as above all praise, if the character of the attack, led by swarms of men ready to buy victory at the price of their own lives, were taken into account; and he brought three officers—Captain A. Gaselee, Assistant Quartermaster-General, Lieutenant S. Watson, and sub-Lieutenant H. M. Twyman, both of

¹ Stewart's Despatch.

² "The Native soldiery carried their dead into camp, and either burnt or buried them the same evening." (*Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1881, p. 59.)

³ Stewart in his Despatch states that the distance between Mushaki and Nani was 17 miles, which is confirmed by Macgregor; whereas Gaselee in his Itinerary makes it 14½, and Chapman 19 miles.—H. B. H.

⁴ Gaselee.

the 59th Foot—specially to the Commander-in-Chief's notice. The former he himself had seen "encouraging the retiring line at the most critical period of the action," and "the gallant example he set the men by advancing towards the enemy and calmly shooting down some of the most forward of them, had the very best effect on the soldiers;" whilst Watson had been wounded in rallying his regiment, and Twyman had done his best to save the life of one of his men.¹

The engagement of Ahmed Khel, critical for the British, had been disastrous for the Afghans. Twelve hundred bodies were counted on the field; and considering the heavy fire at close quarters to which they were subjected, it is probable that the number of the wounded fell little short of three thousand. That the British casualties, a full list of which is given in the following table, were comparatively few, was owing mainly to the assailants' miserable weapons; had the Ghazis' arms been equal to their courage, the result would have been a very different one.

TABLE OF KILLED AND WOUNDED

IN THE ENGAGEMENT OF AHMED KHEL.

Officers Wounded.

Captain R. Corbett	A-B Royal Horse Artillery.
Captain J. H. Broome .	2nd Punjab Cavalry.
Lieutenant C. J. L. Stuart	„ „ „
Colonel P. S. Yorke	19th Bengal Lancers.
Lieutenant E. A. Young ²	„ „ „
Lieutenant H. S. Massy	„ „ „
Lieutenant S. D. Gordon	„ „ „
Major and Lieutenant-Colonel J. Lawson, 59th Foot.	
Lieutenant and Adjutant S. Watson,	„ „

¹ "A like bold attempt was made by Major Frampton, 59th Regiment, in the case of a wounded soldier, but it was impossible to rescue anyone who was down; the Ghazis immediately swarmed round him, like hounds breaking into a fox." (Captain R. Elias, *Journal of R.U.S. Institution*, Vol. XXIV. p. 672.)

² This officer received eight sword-cuts all of a serious nature, and one bullet wound. A sanguine temperament, a good constitution, and the skilful and unremitting attention of Surgeon W. R. Murphy saved his life.—H. B. H.

Ressaldar Jowahir Sing	19th Bengal Lancers.
Ressaldar Mahomed Shahriar	„ „ „
Jemadar Golab Sing	„ „ „

Non-Commissioned Officers, Men, and Followers Killed.

One man	59th Foot.
Colour-Sergeant J. H. Chessum	2-60th Rifles.
Two men	„ „
One non-commissioned officer	2nd Punjab Cavalry.
Two men	„ „ „
Two non-commissioned officers	19th Bengal Lancers.
Three men	„ „ „
One man	2nd Sikhs.
One man	19th Punjab Infantry.
Two men	25th Punjab Infantry.
One camp-follower	A-B Royal Horse Artillery.

Non-Commissioned Officers, Men, and Followers wounded.

One man	A-B Royal Horse Artillery.
One man	G-4 Royal Artillery.
Sergeant F. Thompson	59th Foot.
Nine men	„ „
Two men	2-60th Rifles.
Sergeant John Jones	No. 4 Company Sappers and Miners.
Three non-commissioned officers	1st Punjab Cavalry.
Sixteen men	„ „ „
Seven non-commissioned officers	2nd Punjab Cavalry.
Thirteen men	„ „ „
Eleven non-commissioned officers	19th Bengal Lancers.
Thirty men	„ „ „
One non-commissioned officer	2nd Sikhs.
Eight men	„ „
One follower	„ „
Four followers	3rd Gurkhas.
One non-commissioned officer	19th Punjab Infantry.
Two men	„ „ „

CASUALTIES AMONG HORSES.

	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>
1st Punjab Cavalry	—	32	5
2nd Punjab Cavalry	5	21	2
19th Bengal Lancers	3	15	6
Total	8	68	13

ABSTRACT.

Officers wounded	12
Non-commissioned officers, men, and followers killed and wounded	129
	<hr/>
Total	141
Casualties among horses, 89.	

On the 20th of April, the Division marched seven miles over a good, level road and camped at Ispandi, a village lying midway between Nani and Ghazni. No enemy was sighted and the wounded bore the journey well. A reconnaissance made in the afternoon by Major Lance and Captain Gaselee showed that there were no armed men in Ghazni, the ruined walls of which city were incapable of offering a successful resistance.¹ Resistance must, however, at one time have been intended, for next day the troops marched for some distance between high garden walls that had evidently been put quite recently into a state of defence. That day, for the first time since leaving Khelat-i-Ghilzai, a number of villages were found to be inhabited, and as Stewart's long column passed round the city to encamp on the ground where Sir John Keane's force had bivouacked on the 21st of July, 1839, the walls were seen to be crowded with spectators of both sexes.²

Notwithstanding these proofs of a more peaceful spirit prevailing among the people of the district, opposition to the British advance was not yet at an end. In the course of the 22nd of April, the day on which Lieutenant Dickie opened heliographic communication with Ross's force, Stewart learned that thirty thousand tribesmen, led by Mushk-i-Alam and Mahomed Jan, had assembled at no great distance

¹ "Notwithstanding the state of the fortifications, however, Ghazni would be still a difficult place to attack were it held by a determined enemy. The town is surrounded on every side by a mass of gardens within high mud walls and covering a considerable extent of country. Were these to be well defended, they could not be taken without a severe loss of life on the attacking side." (*Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1881, p. 60.)

² Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith's Report.

from Ghazni; and a reconnoissance discovered an advanced guard of this great force, some seven thousand strong, posted in the villages of Ursu and Shalez, only six or seven miles from the British camp. Measures for their dislodgment were concerted the same evening, and, at 3.30 next morning, General Palliser moved out to attack them with the following troops:—

A-B Royal Horse Artillery	6 Guns,
11-11 Royal Artillery (Mountain)	6 „
1st Punjab Cavalry	322 Sabres,
2nd Punjab Cavalry	325 „
2-60th Rifles	525 Rifles,
15th Sikhs	578 „
25th Punjab Infantry	458 „
2nd Sikhs	424 „

and a little later the remainder of the Division was drawn up about a mile outside camp, ready to render assistance if called upon to do so.

Palliser's troops pushed on as quickly as the uneven nature of the ground would permit until, from the crest of a low range of hills, they looked down upon the two villages, the occupants of which, evidently unaware of their approach, were thrown into a state of great excitement by their sudden appearance—excitement, not fear, for with both villages protected by thick mud walls and the ground on every side either cultivated or broken and marshy, they had good reason to feel confidence in the strength of their position. Having satisfied himself that with the small force at his disposal he could not capture either Ursu or Shalez without a greater loss of life than he felt justified in incurring,¹ Palliser ordered the guns to shell the villages whilst, with the cavalry and infantry, he made a demonstration against them, in the hope of drawing the enemy into the open; but the Afghans could neither be tempted to leave nor be frightened out of their defences,

¹ “Such a proceeding, although pretty certain of success, must inevitably have cost many lives, a sacrifice which the occasion did not demand, and which our small force could ill afford.” (Captain R. Elias, *Journal of the R.U.S. Institution*, Vol. XXIV. p. 673.)

and he had to heliograph for reinforcements. Stewart immediately despatched two hundred and fifty-three men of the 59th, and a hundred and ninety-one of the 3rd Gurkhas, to his lieutenant's assistance ; but, before they could reach him, many tribesmen from neighbouring hamlets had flocked into the space between Ursu and Shalez, so that the disparity between the two forces was still maintained. Palliser's next step was to withdraw his whole column to a ridge two thousand five hundred yards in rear, in the expectation that this retrograde movement would effect what his demonstration had failed to accomplish ; but the Afghans refused to be deceived, and as they continued to lie snug and safe behind their walls, he asked for definite orders.¹

On receipt of Palliser's second message, Stewart made up his mind to go himself to his assistance, with G-4 Royal Artillery, 19th Bengal Lancers, Half-Battalion 59th-Foot, and a Half-Battalion of the 19th Punjab Infantry. At daybreak he had sent Major Clifford, his Political Officer, escorted by a wing of the 19th Bengal Infantry, to close the gates of the city and keep its inhabitants under observation ; now, he left Major Tillard, with 6-11 Royal Artillery (Heavy guns), half a Battalion 3rd Gurkhas, and two Companies of Sappers and Miners, to guard the camp against a possible attack, either from within or without the city. Tillard set his men to work to dig shelter trenches and construct breastworks of camel-saddles ; but no precautions that he could take would have sufficed to assure the safety of the camp-followers, supplies, and transport animals left to the protection of so inadequate a force, if it had turned out that the enemy had lured away the greater part of Stewart's Division with the intention of falling upon the baggage train and commissariat stores.²

¹ *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1881, p. 61.

² "We had left our camp seven miles behind, not very strongly protected. What if the whole affair had been a ruse to inveigle us out, while a large force came down from the hills in our absence and burned all the tents and stores, etc. ?, but the Afghans are not an enterprising enemy, and there was probably nothing to fear." (Captain R. Elias in *Journal of R.U.S. Institution*, Vol. XXIV. p. 674.)

Luckily for the whole Division, no such plan had occurred to them, and Stewart's task proved easier than he had anticipated. On joining Palliser and assuming command of his troops, Sir Donald quickly decided to make his attack on the village of Shalez, as, in so doing, he would not endanger his communications with Ghazni. In pursuance of this decision, he ordered Barter, with the 2-60th Rifles, the 15th Sikhs, and the 25th Punjab Infantry, supported by A-B Royal Horse Artillery, the 1st Punjab Cavalry, and the 19th Bengal Lancers, to advance by a track that skirted the base of the ridge to which Palliser had retired, turn the enemy's true left and storm the village from behind, whilst Hughes, with the 59th Foot, 2nd Sikhs, and 3rd Gurkhas, covered by the fire of 4 guns G-4 Field Battery and the Mountain guns, was to attack the place in front as soon as Barter's assault was fully developed. The wing of the 19th Punjab Infantry the General held in reserve, and he despatched the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, with the remaining two guns of G-4, to the left to watch the village of Ursu.

The movement, begun at 11.40 a.m., was crowned with rapid success. At sight of the long British line advancing on their front and flank, the Afghans, fearing to be caught in a trap, beat a hasty retreat from both villages, which within an hour were in the hands of the troops. The Cavalry and Horse Artillery pursued the fugitives for some distance ; but no looting was allowed, and when the women rushed out of the villages, trembling for the safety of their houses, Sir Donald bade them go back, assuring them that they would not be molested ; he had not come out to fight against women and children.¹

The British casualties were very small—one man of the 2-60th Rifles and one of the 1st Punjab Cavalry killed, and one non-commissioned officer and one man of the latter regiment and one of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry wounded ; whilst the Afghans were reported to have lost 150 killed and 250 wounded.² The affair in itself was of

¹ Rev. T. J. L. Warneford. (*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 338.)

² Report of Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith.

no great importance, but its results were far-reaching, for the discomfiture of the Afghan advanced guard was followed by the immediate dispersal of the large force—from 20,000 to 30,000—that had assembled near Mushk-i-Alam's fort, with the intention of delivering a second desperate attack on the small British column.¹

During his few days' halt outside the walls of Ghazni, the political situation chiefly occupied Sir Donald Stewart's attention. He felt that it would be impolitic to move on, a mere bird of passage, leaving chaos behind him; yet he was convinced that any Governor of his appointing would have small chance of retaining his position for a day after his departure, and he was determined that, so far as he was concerned, no Afghan should be able to say that British friendship had done him an injury with his own people.² Looking round for some man to take the government of the province fully off his hands, he ascertained that Sirdar Mahomed Alam was willing to undertake the task, provided that he (Sir Donald) would guarantee his position and permit the heir-apparent, Musa Jan, to reside in Ghazni under his charge—conditions which Stewart felt justified in accepting. The appointment gave great satisfaction to the people of Ghazni,³ and Stewart, anxious to leave not only order but peace behind him, advised the Hazaras, who had come to him in alarm, declaring "that they could not live alongside the Afghans again," to see the new Governor, who had expressed himself ready to meet them half-way. "If a truce can be secured for a time," so wrote this true statesman to his wife, "both sides will see that it will be in their own interests to let bygones be bygones."⁴

On the 25th of April, Stewart's Division resumed its march, and

¹ *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1881, p. 61.

² *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, pp. 337, 338.

³ This selection "quieted the people, for they saw that the victorious English General was willing to make over a city and district which were absolutely at his mercy, to be administered by one of their own Sirdars." (Article in *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1881.)

⁴ *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 337.

after crossing the Shah-i-Dahan Pass, the summit of which is 9,100 feet above sea-level, and a wide plateau, watered by numerous Karezes, yet destitute of cultivation—a sign of the unsettled state of the country—descended into the Wardak Valley and halted at Shashgao, thirteen and a half miles north of Ghazni. Major A. A. Kinlock, escorted by a party of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry and accompanied by Major-General J. Hills, arrived in camp the same evening, sent by Ross to open communication with Sir Donald Stewart.

Ross had arrived at Sheikabad, on the 23rd, to find the hills in the vicinity of that village strongly held by the enemy, and though they had retired from them before numerous and active reconnoitring parties, they reoccupied them next morning. The same day it was reported that a large body of tribesmen were approaching from the North, and a thousand men, led by Abdul Ghafur of Lagar, actually surrounded a hundred Sappers and two companies of Gurkhas, engaged in road-making, and had to be driven off by cavalry.¹ On the 25th a large number of Ghilzais were discovered within two miles of the British camp, and Ross sent out Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft with—

2 Screw Guns No. 4 Mountain Battery
1 Troop 3rd Bengal Cavalry
2 Companies 2-9th Foot .
Wing 4th Gurkhas

Lieutenant H. M. Sandback,
Major G. W. Willock,
Captain C. M. Stockley,
Major J. Hay,

supported by Half a Troop 3rd Bengal Cavalry, commanded by a Native Officer, and 3 Companies 24th Punjab Infantry, commanded by Captain P. H. Wallerstein, all under Major B. M. Combe, to turn them out of their position, which was evidently a strong one.

Covered by the well-directed fire of the guns, the infantry quickly dislodged the Ghilzais from their first line of defence. At the second, they made a more determined stand; but Combe turned their flank whilst Rowcroft forced them out of their entrenchments with the

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 196.

bayonet. Meanwhile, another body of the enemy had appeared on Rowcroft's left, to disperse which Charles Gough went out with four companies of the 4th Gurkhas and two screw guns, the fire of which soon compelled the Ghilzais to beat a retreat. Hotly pressed by Rowcroft's troops, they lost a standard and a considerable number of men—forty dead bodies were counted on the field—yet, notwithstanding their defeat, they reappeared the next day on the hills near camp, and Gough had again to go out against them with the screw guns, the 9th Foot, and the 23rd Pioneers. Under the fire of the guns, which were sighted for two thousand yards, two companies of each regiment, led by Colonel Daunt, scaled the hill-side, and when they reached the summit—two thousand three hundred feet above camp, nine thousand two hundred above sea-level—the enemy bolted, leaving a few dead behind them; and after that, Ross's column which, from first to last, had only lost one man 4th Gurkhas killed, and one man 2-9th Foot and three Gurkhas wounded, was left in peace.

Whilst Gough was breaking down the Ghilzais' resistance, Stewart was marching in lovely weather from Shashgao to Haft Asia. On the 27th, he moved on to Hyder Khel by a narrow, rough road running at the foot of the hills, on the edge of a populous and well-cultivated country, and on the 28th, he joined hands with Ross, and took leave "with sorrow" of the Ghazni Field Force, the temporary command of which was taken over by General Hughes. Next day, he joined Ross's column on its way back to Sir-i-Tup; at Argandeh he and Roberts met, and, on the 2nd of May, the two Generals entered Kabul together.

The troops over which Sir D. Stewart now assumed command, known thenceforward as the Northern Afghanistan Field Force, numbered roughly speaking thirty-six thousand, organized into four Divisions, and distributed along two hundred miles of more or less practicable road. The First and Second Divisions, commanded respectively by Sir F. Roberts and Major-General Ross, administrative control of

both being still vested in the former officer, consisted of all the corps that Sir Donald had found in Kabul on his arrival in that city; the Ghazni Field Force, which under Major-General J. Hills was to occupy the Logar Valley as soon as the paths leading into it had been made practicable for artillery, constituted the Third; and to the Fourth, commanded by Major-General Bright, belonged all the troops on the Khyber line that had been withdrawn in February from Roberts's control. It was intended that Major-General J. Watson's column in the Kuram should also come under Stewart's orders, as soon as the road over the Shutargardan had been reopened, but communication with India *viâ* the Kuram Valley was never re-established, and Watson remained in independent command to the end of the war.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. From a strategical point of view the march from Kandahar to Kabul must be condemned. Sir Donald Stewart's Force was a Flying Column without base and without support, and though accompanied by a large transport train, it was virtually dependent for its food and forage, at the most unfavourable season of the year, on a country always poor and which had been already twice invaded—the second invasion extending as far as Shahjui. To depend on local supplies where supplies, at the best of times, are scarce and only to be obtained by a well-organized foraging system, is to incur starvation in case of defeat, and defeat was narrowly escaped at Ahmed Khel. Had there been no other way of retirement open to the Kandahar garrison, necessity would have excused the risk; but there was nothing to prevent their returning to India by the Bolan, and the two objects which Lord Lytton had at heart, *viz.* the placing of affairs in Northern Afghanistan in Sir Donald Stewart's hands, and the giving the Afghans a crowning proof of the British Empire's irresistible power by breaking up the opposition of which Ghazni had been the centre, before relieving them of the presence of a British

army of occupation, could have been attained more quickly and economically by that route. Thanks to the completion of the Sukkur-Sibi railway, Stewart could have been in Peshawar within ten days of leaving Kandahar. Another ten days would have seen him established in Kabul, after enjoying the advantage of inspecting the Khyber Force on his way up ; any reinforcements deemed essential to the success of the final military operations could have been drawn from India, their place being taken by the Bengal Division, as one regiment after another followed in the footsteps of its commander ; and no one can question that the lesson which Lord Lytton was so anxious to impress upon the Afghans, could have been taught with greater expedition and greater thoroughness, at less risk and less cost, by troops acting from a strong base at Sherpur, only ninety miles from Ghazni, than by a force without a base of any kind, marching on that city from Kandahar, three hundred and sixteen miles away. The still simpler and more economical plan of railing the Bombay Division to Peshawar, and leaving the Bengal Division at Kandahar, could not be adopted on account of the great strain it would have put on the loyalty of Native troops that had already been eighteen months absent from their homes.

Responsibility for this faulty movement must be divided between the military and political authorities in India, and Sir Donald Stewart ; for if *they* planned and ordered it, *he* accepted their orders without remonstrance, either failing to see that the plan was vicious, in which case his military judgment was at fault, or else shrinking from the performance of a duty which Napoleon declared to be obligatory upon every Commander when directed to undertake operations which he believed to be dangerous and unwise :—"It is his" (the General's) "duty to represent his reasons and to insist upon a change of plan ; in short, to give in his resignation rather than allow himself to become the instrument of his army's ruin."

The fact that Stewart offered to undertake the march with con-

siderably less than his whole division, looks as if he undervalued the risks to be run ; but it is not safe to put this interpretation upon the proposal, for if, in one direction, those risks would have been increased, in another, they would have been lessened. The problem that presented itself to him may be thus stated :—

The larger the force I take with me, the greater will be the difficulty of feeding it ; the smaller that force, the greater the probability of its being overwhelmed by the enemy—which alternative shall I choose ?

It is evident that he preferred the latter, and the preference was to some extent justified by the fact that in order to procure food and forage for the larger force, insisted on by the Commander-in-Chief, he had to break it up and to expose one of his Brigades to the danger of attack under conditions which must prevent the other from coming to its assistance.

OBSERVATION II. If the strategy of the march to Kabul was bad, the tactics of the action at Ahmed Khel were worse. Their errors may be summarized as follows :—

- (1) Neglecting to keep the Force in close touch on the line of march.
- (2) Rushing on the enemy without waiting for the reinforcements that had been called up.
- (3) Deploying when within the enemy's striking distance.
- (4) Pushing the Horse and Field Artillery in advance of the Infantry, whilst the latter were still in the act of forming line.
- (5) Placing the 19th Bengal Lancers at the extremity of the left flank of the line of battle, on ground quite unsuitable to the movements of cavalry.

(1) Sir Donald Stewart knew that a large body of Ghilzais was in the neighbourhood, yet he suffered Barter's Brigade to be six miles in rear of Hughes's, and separated from it by a long, straggling baggage train. If, after the battle, he was able to move on over very difficult

ground with his "baggage in close formation," he could have advanced in the same formation before the battle ; and he should have ordered his leading troops to regulate their speed by the pace of the transport train, and not have allowed it to rush on in its anxiety to get as quickly as possible to the next camping ground.

(2) There was nothing in the position of affairs when the presence of the enemy was reported to Stewart, to compel him to give battle immediately ; and in deciding to take the offensive with only two-thirds of his troops, he violated the most important of all Napoleon's maxims :—" When you have resolved to fight a battle, collect your whole force. Dispense with nothing. A single battalion sometimes decides the day."

(3) Having made up his mind to fight, Stewart should have taken the steps that must precede an engagement, at a sufficient distance from the enemy's known position to allow of the necessary change of formation being carried out in an orderly manner. His withholding the order to deploy till the leading troops were within fourteen hundred yards of the hills occupied by the Ghilzais, proved that he grossly underestimated their numbers and their courage ; and he narrowly escaped paying for his miscalculation by defeat, with all the terrible consequences which defeat must have entailed upon troops dependent for existence, day by day, upon supplies which they would not have been in a position to collect—supposing them to have escaped immediate annihilation and to have saved their military stores.

(4) Artillery cannot protect itself, and therefore it should not be placed in an exposed position beyond the line of battle. If within musketry range of the enemy, it is in danger of having its horses shot down, and thus being deprived of the power to retreat ; if, retaining its mobility, it is compelled to fall back in haste, it carries confusion into the ranks of the infantry in rear. This rule is of universal application, but the need for its observance is even greater in a mountainous than in a flat country. In a very valuable account of the action of

Ahmed Khel, published in the *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* for July, 1881,¹ Lieutenant M. Martin, R.E., after granting that the first artillery position—1,300 yards—was possibly too near the enemy, contends that, with young infantry, it is more than ever necessary to have one or two batteries of the older and steadier artillery in the firing line. But even with the safeguards furnished by the steadiness and experience of the selected batteries, the dangers inherent in such a position outweigh the advantages attaching to the confidence which its presence may inspire in inexperienced infantry; and the younger the troops, the greater the risk of their losing their heads should that confidence prove to have been without foundation.

(5) The exposed flank of cavalry should always be protected by some obstacle, or by infantry; and when employed to support infantry or artillery, it should be placed in rear of such troops, or echeloned on their flanks.

OBSERVATION III. The enemy's plan of attack was ably conceived and so boldly delivered as to be within an ace of success; yet, the Afghan leader would have done better to resist the temptation offered him by Stewart's delay in deploying. Commanding, as he did, a brave but ill-disciplined and badly armed army, he should have awaited attack; and when the well-armed, well-disciplined British troops had been drawn on to ground, all the advantages of which would have been in his favour, he should have assailed them with his infantry, whilst falling upon the baggage train with his numerous cavalry. Such tactics could hardly have failed of success, and Sir D. Stewart had good reason to congratulate himself on the fact that he was not the only commander on that day to make mistakes.

The following passage from Lieutenant Martin's article may be quoted in support of the criticisms contained in the above observa-

¹ Vol. X. No. 47.

tions :—“ An open plain lay to our right, between the Ghazni road and the Ghazni river, away from the enemy. We had over three hours' notice of his wishing to engage. On this plain it would have been easy to park the baggage in square under charge of, say, the 25th N.I. and one squadron 1st P.C., releasing the 15th Sikhs, 60th Rifles and 1st P.C., with the Mountain battery 11-11 R.A., for active operations. All baggage guards might have joined their corps (the cavalry especially), and though some inconvenience might have resulted, it was better than the risk of attacking with an insufficient force. More, in fact, might have been done to ensure the success of the action before the safety of the baggage. The greater contained the less.”

“ The action of Ahmed Khel on the Kandahar-Ghazni road may be taken as an example of the best form of tribal resistance, as a considerable amount of skill and forethought was shown. According to their own accounts, they selected an occasion when our Division was a hundred miles from any support (from Kabul and Khelat-i-Ghilzai). They assembled a force, said to outnumber ours by ten to one, largely composed of fanatics, and they chose their position. This was on our left flank and parallel to our line of advance on Ghazni. The greater number of the enemy were concealed behind the hills on our left, and only a certain number paraded in three lines on the crest and slope towards us. The bottom or foot of this slope ended in rolling ground and nullas, which afforded plenty of cover from fire and opportunity for formation, and placed our guns and rifles, as well as our cavalry, at a great disadvantage.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

A Great Financial Blunder

ON the 24th of February, 1880, the Indian budget was laid before the Viceroy's Council by the Financial Member, Sir John Strachey. According to the usual custom, his statement dealt with the past, present, and future, finally closing the accounts for the Financial year, 1878-79, revising the estimates for 1880, and presenting a forecast of expenditure for 1880-81: the cost of the whole war, therefore, from its inception in the autumn of 1878 to its expected termination in the autumn of 1880, was determined by its figures, and they proved to be much more favourable than had been anticipated. For the first time for many years, the finances of India had shown, and were still showing, such signs of elasticity that Sir John Strachey was able to announce the abandonment of a proposed tax on official and professional incomes, the fear of which had been troubling Anglo-Indian society. For the year 1878-79, there was a surplus of £2,044,000; the surplus for 1879-80 was, of course, much smaller—only £119,000; but there were good grounds for believing that 1880-81 would yield at least £417,000 in excess of expenditure after all claims connected with the war had been fully met, including £4,000,000 spent on railway construction and extension, which, though arising out of the war, could not fairly be charged against it.

The true war expenses had, so far, been surprisingly small—£676,000 in 1878-79, £3,216,000 in 1879-80—and so accurate were the accounts furnished by the Military Department to the Financial Department,

that Sir John felt sure that he was not erring on the side of under-estimating liabilities when he fixed £2,090,000 as the amount that would be required to meet all war charges in 1880-81 ; so that the whole cost of the operations in Afghanistan, after setting off the gain under railway and telegraph revenue, would not exceed £5,752,000.

At the close of his speech, Sir John Strachey was warmly congratulated by his colleagues ; all the more warmly because of a charge of deliberately falsifying the military accounts to the extent of £6,000,000, in order to conceal the real cost of the war, to which publicity had just been given by no less a person than Mr. W. E. Gladstone, a charge based upon information which had, he declared, been given him with "such an appearance of truth that he thought it right to mention it publicly in order that, if inaccurate, it might be contradicted." Sir J. Strachey's figures gave the contradiction asked for in authoritative form, and in the debate that followed the reading of the budget, Lord Lytton protested indignantly against such anonymous accusations, and declared that "so far from seeking to conceal the true cost of the war, they (the Indian Government) had charged against it all stores and materials, as well as the cost of frontier railways, telegraphs, and postal communication."

The discrepancy between the Viceroy's statement and Sir J. Strachey's with regard to frontier railways would have been of little importance, if the latter had been able to substantiate his claim to have met expenditure of all kinds out of current revenue ; but, unfortunately, the figures on which the Financial Member of Council had founded his calculations turned out to be inaccurate to an almost incredible extent, and the fair fabric of national credit and prosperity which he had built upon them, collapsed when touched by the sharp spear of truth. That destructive touch came from the Comptroller-General, who, early in March, brought the alarming drain from the Punjab treasuries in connection with the war, to the notice of the Financial Member of Council, and the inquiries that were forthwith

set on foot revealed the startling fact that, from October 1878 to the end of March 1880, the net recorded drafts upon the civil treasuries all over India, but chiefly upon those in the Punjab, exceeded the net recorded military expenditure by £4,214,000, of which sum about £2,000,000 was debitable to the first phase of the war, and the balance to the second.

£4,214,000 was a large sum to figure as an undetected deficit ; but still more searching investigations raised the acknowledged cost of the war from £9,966,000 in March to £15,770,000 in October, and to £17,498,000¹ in November, 1880, whilst supplementary estimates submitted by the Government of India in March 1881, finally brought up the total to £19,574,000 ; so that Sir J. Strachey's Budget was wrong not to the extent of £6,000,000, the sum at which the error in the Indian Finances was set down by Mr. Gladstone's informant, but of £13,800,000, probably the largest miscalculation ever made in the accounts of a nation.

The truth once known, Sir E. Johnson, Military Member of the Viceroy's Council, had no difficulty in explaining the causes which had vitiated his calculations.² They were :—

1. Purchase of large numbers of transport animals, partly as a measure of improved organization, partly on account of owners' unwillingness to hire out their beasts.

2. Purchase and transportation to the front and along the lines of communication of six months' supplies, a precautionary measure rendered necessary by uncertainty as to the duration of the war.

3. Enormous increase in the price of grain and other supplies purchased in India, due to increasing demand and growing scarcity.

4. Similar increase in the prices of firewood, forage, and other articles procurable in Afghanistan.

¹ This sum did not include the capitation value of the pensions for the wounded, or for the families of those who had died or been killed.—H. B. H.

² Minute dated 1st May, 1880.

5. Raising the wages of all followers north of the Jhelam and supplying them with half-rations, in consequence of the unpopularity of service in Afghanistan, and the competition in the labour market of the railway authorities, engaged in constructing the line to Rawal Pindi.

6. Fortifying all important positions, and erecting works for the shelter and protection of troops at Kabul and along the lines of communication.

7. Exhaustion of local sources of supply, both of the necessaries of life and of the animals required for their transportation, an exhaustion which compelled the Commissariat and Transport Departments to go ever further and further afield in their efforts to keep the troops beyond the frontier in a state of efficiency.

From a consideration of all these points Sir E. Johnson arrived at the conclusion, that in such operations as those in which the Indian Government was engaged, their cost increased in a progressive ratio, week by week, with their continuance ; and he followed up the enunciation of this principle by the confession that, in preparing the war estimates for 1880-81, he had failed to appreciate the main fact of the progressive rates of expenditure, necessarily increasing through an expansion both of the period and the scope of the operations which had since been developed, and by generously taking upon himself all responsibility for the financial blunders of the budget.

Less frank than the Military Member of Council, Sir J. Strachey defended both his colleague and himself on the ground that they had "been misled by accounts which were, in themselves, so far as they went, perfectly accurate, but which, nevertheless, failed to show the actual expenditure of the war," just as if it were not the special duty of a Finance Minister to see that the accounts submitted to him were not only "accurate so far as they went," but accurate to the last rupee expended. It is impossible to conceive on what lines Sir John

Strachey framed his budget in the absence of the returns of the local treasuries ; called for in the end, they enabled him to discover the deficit, and to disentangle from the mass of disbursements contained in them, the share of expenditure to be debited to military operations, and what he did in the end, he could have done at the beginning.

But, quite apart from the specific errors which falsified the budget of 1880-81, the inadequacy of the sum put down as the past, present, and prospective cost of military operations should have been apparent to the Viceroy and every member of his Council ; for it was not a first Afghan War in which they were engaged, but a second, and the accounts of its predecessor were on record for comparison and guidance. It is true that the first lasted a year longer than the second—three and a half years against two and a half—and cost two millions less ; but, in the former, fewer troops were employed than in the latter ; no lines of communication were held ; the proportion of European to Native troops, and of cavalry and artillery to infantry, was much smaller ; and the equipment of all three arms far less expensive ; so that the factors making for economy in its conduct more than outweighed the cost of its longer duration. But to profit by the experience of others was the last thing to enter into the Viceroy's mind. From the day when three ill-equipped armies entered Afghanistan, without maps and without access to the vast stores of knowledge hidden away in Macgregor's Gazetteer ; or, to go further back still, from the day when Lord Lytton wrote lightly of marching to the Oxus, and set down the expense of a permanent occupation of Afghanistan as a trifle hardly to be taken into account in framing an Afghan policy, ignorance and contempt of facts marked every step taken by the Head of the Indian Government, and most of his subordinates were as ready as he to live in a fool's paradise. The letter to Lord Cranbrook in which Lord Lytton repudiated all responsibility for the gigantic financial blunder which had disgraced his administration, is the best possible evidence of his unfitness for his high office, revealing, as it does, his inability

to grasp the principle, tardily discovered by Sir E. Johnson, of progressive rates of expenditure in war, or the still more vital truth that, war once begun, expenditure must be regulated by military needs, not by the wishes of its author.

“Sir Edwin Johnson,” so the Viceroy told his correspondent, “has written a Minute (published at his request) in which he takes upon himself the whole personal responsibility for what has occurred, and endeavours to explain how it happened. But I can neither understand nor accept his explanations. For not a single additional military charge has been sanctioned by me since his estimates were framed and submitted with confidence to the Financial Department, which adopted them without distrust. Nor have the known conditions and prospects of the campaign in any wise altered since then; and the calculations on which Sir E. Johnson now professes to have framed his estimates, have had no warrant from myself or the Political Department. Ever since the commencement of the first campaign in Afghanistan, I have laboured without ceasing, and under great difficulties, to keep down military expenditure. You know something of my later efforts in this direction. In the course of them I have frequently rejected the costly and ill-considered proposals of my military advisers, and have been taken to task by the Duke of Cambridge and others for so doing.”¹

Lord Lytton's bewilderment at finding military expenditure refusing to fit itself to the estimates sanctioned by him, and prices going up without any warrant from the political department, is touching in its naiveté; and so is his picture of himself as the one true economist, struggling against the extravagance of his military advisers. An earlier letter to Lord Cranbrook throws light on the efforts to stem expenditure of which he boasts. “I do hope,” so he wrote immediately after the relief of Sherpur, “that our military

¹ To Lord Cranbrook, May 11th, 1880. (*Letters of Robert, First Earl of Lytton*, p. 213.)

authorities will not encourage the foolish cry which always re-arises on occasions like this, for big battalions in a country where it is almost impossible to feed small ones. Had I given in to this cry at the outset of the campaign, what would have been the position of General Roberts during the last week? (the week of the siege). Absolutely untenable.”¹

It is impossible not to feel sympathy with a Commander flung with an insignificant, ill-equipped force into the heart of Afghanistan, driven by his necessities, and the loss of his communications, to resort to methods which raised the whole country against him, and when the paucity of his troops had nearly brought about their destruction, expected to be thankful to the wisdom which had limited their numbers. That small battalions had little charm for General Roberts during the ten days, when he and they were shut into an enclosure three times too large for them to defend, is shown by his peremptory orders to Gough to hasten, at all hazards, to his assistance. Reinforcements, in the end, had to be given him, at greater cost than would have been incurred by doubling, in the beginning, the size of his force, and waiting to despatch it till it could be furnished with sufficient supplies to render it practically independent of local resources.

¹ To Lord Cranbrook, Secretary of State for India, December 31st, 1879. (*Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 394, 395.)

CHAPTER XXIX

Beginning of Negotiations with Abdur Rahman

IF the state of the Indian finances, in 1880, called loudly for a cessation of hostilities, the political outlook during the early part of the year was unfavourable to the object—release from responsibility for order in Afghanistan—which had come to be uppermost in the thoughts and wishes of the British and Indian Governments. In Kandahar, a man had, indeed, been found willing to assume the title of an independent ruler; but so little faith had Sher Ali Khan in his ability to maintain himself in the position to which he had been raised, that the curious spectacle presented itself of the British authorities insisting on safeguarding the dignity of their nominee by withdrawing their troops to a distance from his capital, and the nominee pleading for them to be left at its gates, if not within its walls, proposing to send his family to India, and hinting his readiness to follow them thither and accept a pension in lieu of a throne.¹ But if the settlement arrived at in Southern Afghanistan offered no prospect of stability, except that afforded by the presence of a strong British force, elsewhere no advance had been made towards the establishment of a Government

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 31.

“I am bound to confess that I know of no other Sirdar who would have filled the post (thrust on him, as it were) as faithfully towards us as did the Wali. He was an honourable man and did not keep matters from us. I saw a good deal of him and can speak from experience. The mistake we made was in supposing that Afghans would ever submit to a prince supported by foreign bayonets.” (*Comments on the Campaign in Southern Afghanistan, 1880*, by Colonel F. J. S. Adam, Assistant Quartermaster-General.)

of any kind. The British Government, apparently at the suggestion of Lord Lytton,¹ had offered to make over Herat to Persia, "under sufficient guarantees for her good administration of it and for her adequate protection of British and Indian interests at that point, and with a special reservation of our right to occupy the place with British forces in certain eventualities."² But Persia had declined to accept the gift coupled with such terms, and weighted with the necessity of fighting Ayub Khan for its possession. Things were no better at Kabul, though, stimulated to activity by the knowledge of Lord Lytton's anxiety to lighten as quickly as possible the burden which his Afghan policy had imposed upon India, Sir F. Roberts spent much time in scanning the ranks of the Afghan princes in search of "the most competent and least untrustworthy Sirdar" to recommend to the Indian Government as the successor of Yakub Khan. Wali Mahomed, the enemy and rival of the deposed Amir, had, at first, seemed the most likely person to take his place, but the doubts as to the sincerity of his British proclivities which had taken possession of Roberts's mind on the 11th of December, and subsequent proof of Wali Mahomed's lack of the qualities needed in the ruler of a divided and lawless people, led to his name being struck off the list of possible candidates for the post. Other members of the royal family were successively passed in review; but of none of these could it be predicted that he would be strong enough to rule Kabul, and at the same time unambitious enough to be content with the position of "a Native ruler in subordinate alliance with ourselves, supported and controlled by a strong British Cantonment established at some suitable point."³

No one satisfactory to the Indian Government presenting himself and the reasons for retirement growing daily more pressing, it was decided, at last, to leave the selection of their future Head to the Afghans themselves, their freedom of choice being limited in one

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 30.

² *Ibid.* p. 6.

³ *Ibid.* p. 7

direction only, but that the direction in which the majority of Afghans were still inclined to look. The leaders of the tribal combination, which had dissolved, as a military organization, after the raising of the siege of Sherpur, had given proof of their continued political unity by addressing to Sir F. Roberts letters containing a demand for Yakub Khan's restoration—and to Yakub Khan's restoration Lord Lytton was resolved never to consent. In explaining to Lord Cranbrook his reasons for this resolution, he asked, after enumerating all the deposed Amir's imputed misdeeds and shortcomings, whether it was conceivable that a prince, now virtually a State prisoner at Meerut, should, if restored by us to the throne of Kabul, abide one moment longer than he could possibly help by the terms of any agreement with us that was based on the dismemberment of his kingdom, the permanent alienation of two of its fairest provinces (Kandahar and Herat), and the gift of one of them (Herat) by a Foreign Power to such an hereditary and hated rival as Persia? ¹ There was but one possible answer to this question—fidelity to such a treaty could not be looked for from the Meerut prisoner, so the Viceroy had the approval of the Secretary of State in instructing Roberts "to proclaim in Kabul that Yakub Khan's abdication was irrevocable." ²

Just when there seemed least prospect of finding a prince for "the diminished kingdom" came a rumour that Abdur Rahman, the nephew and defeated rival of Amir Shere Ali, emerging from his twelve-year-long exile in Russian Turkestan, had crossed the Amur and occupied Ghorī; that Sultan Murad Khan had joined him, and that troops sent by Ghulam Hyder Khan to oppose his advance had gone over to him. Major St. John, who was at Calcutta with the Viceroy when the news reached India, sent by Stewart to discuss matters connected with the new order of things to be established at Kandahar, at once suggested the desirability of entering into communication with a man

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 399.

² *Ibid.* p. 396.

who had certainly come with the intention of establishing himself on his father's throne, and whose past career had given evidence of the strength of character and ability in which all his relatives seemed to be conspicuously lacking.

Catching eagerly at the suggestion, Lord Lytton, with the somewhat reluctant consent of the Home Government, instructed Mr. Lepel Griffin, who was then on his way to Kabul, "to undertake the whole diplomatic and administrative superintendence of affairs and negotiations, in subordinate consultation with the military commander," to send conciliatory messages to the Sirdar as soon as the truth of the rumours concerning him had been placed beyond a doubt.¹ Mr. Griffin arrived at Kabul on the 19th of March; and on the 1st of April, by which time all uncertainty as to Abdur Rahman's presence in Afghan Turkestan had been set at rest, he despatched a messenger to Kunduz, where the Sirdar had halted to organize the troops that were gathering round him, charged with a brief note of inquiry into the object of the exile's return, and explicit verbal instructions as to the assurances which the British Government was prepared to give him.

The messenger returned to Kabul on the 21st, bringing with him a letter characterized by Lord Lytton as "very friendly and very clever," that contained little but an expression of the writer's hope that, thenceforward, the tribes of Afghanistan might live in peace under the protection of their two powerful neighbours.² From this letter and from the report of an interview to which their messenger had been admitted, Roberts and Griffin came to the conclusion that

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 402, 403.

"Prior to Mr. Lepel Griffin's arrival the responsible management of our Political affairs in Northern Afghanistan had devolved entirely on the Military Commander, General Roberts—but to Mr. Griffin there had been entrusted a certain power of initiative and control in dealing with the affairs of the Political department, which formed a new element requiring a considerable amount of fine tact on the part of all officers concerned." (*Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 345.)

² *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 22.

Abdur Rahman had been sent by Russia, or, at least, was averse to quarrelling with her; but, so far were they from thinking him ineligible on that account, that they now proposed deputing two or three men of position to offer him the Amirship, under certain conditions which the Indian Government regarded as essential.

Meanwhile, however, the Viceroy's conviction that Abdur Rahman was the much needed *Deus ex machina*, who was to smooth the way for the British retirement from Afghanistan, had lost much of its strength. Originating at a time when the Sirdar had practically no following and his recognition might therefore count as an act of grace on the part of the British Government, it faded away as that following grew, and the situation was seen to be changing so quickly in his favour that there seemed a prospect of his appearing "suddenly before Kabul at the head of a united nation, and dictating terms to us, instead of accepting them from us."¹ As a natural consequence of these forebodings, Lord Lytton hesitated to commit himself to any open pronouncement in Abdur Rahman's favour, and that hesitation was reflected in the speech made by Mr. Lepel Griffin at a Durbar held at Kabul on the 12th of April. There were chiefs and malliks of many tribes present on this occasion, amongst them representatives of Mahomed Jan and other leaders in the December uprising, who had been persuaded by the Mustaufi, Sirdar Habibulla, to lay their wishes as to the future of their country before the British authorities. With many of these men Mr. Griffin had already held private interviews, and now he explained to all, publicly and collectively, the intentions of the British Government with regard to the settlement of Afghanistan, and that explanation contained only a veiled allusion to Abdur Rahman.² The demand for the restoration of Yakub Khan was rejected; but, as regarded his successor, Mr. Griffin announced that the Government still had an open mind, and that the wishes of those who desired

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 413.

² *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 18.

the choice to fall on Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan, Sirdar Hashim Khan, Sirdar Musa Jan, Sirdar Ayub Khan, or any other member of the ruling family would "be remembered and considered."¹

This neutral attitude could not, however, be long maintained. Abdur Rahman was drawing nearer, and, as the number of his adherents grew, it became more and more apparent that he must either be opposed or accepted as the future ruler of Kabul. The interests of India forbade the former course, so the latter had to be adopted, and on the 27th of April, Mr. Griffin was authorized to inform Abdur Rahman of the Government's intention to evacuate Kabul and of their "desire to take that opportunity of unconditionally transferring to his authority the whole of the country from which our troops would (will) be withdrawn." Griffin was further instructed to invite the Sirdar to proceed to Kabul, there to settle in conference with General Stewart and himself "such preliminary arrangements as might best promote the undisturbed establishment of his future Government."²

Having decided to sanction and support Abdur Rahman's candidature, Lord Lytton now occupied himself with plans for perpetuating the break-up of the Afghan Kingdom, and for impressing the future ruler of Kabul with a sense of his impotence as opposed to the great British Empire, which would always be strong enough to invade his territories at any moment, hold them at its pleasure, and evacuate them at its convenience. The pursuit of these two objects brought out a divergence of view between the Viceroy and the British authorities at Kabul; the former holding it to be necessary to tell Abdur Rahman distinctly that the British troops would leave Northern Afghanistan not later than October, and that Kandahar was irrevocably separated from Kabul, while Roberts and Griffin deprecated the fixing of a date for the evacuation, or making any mention of Kandahar. They carried their opposition so far as to omit both points from the letter in which

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 19.

² *Ibid.* p. 27.

they conveyed to the Sirdar the Indian Government's acquiescence in his candidature, an omission regretted by Lord Lytton, who was further annoyed by Griffin's allusion to the establishment of a friendly Amir at Kabul. "Our position," so he wrote to Sir D. Stewart, on whom meanwhile had devolved the chief responsibility in connection with the conduct of the negotiations, "is really a very simple and perfectly plain one—it requires no finessing and . . . it distinctly excludes not only all negotiations or bargaining with Abdur Rahman, but also all pretence of establishing a friendly Amir at Kabul. . . . Our position is a strong one so long as we avow it plainly, and act on it firmly. Otherwise it may become a very false one."¹

The near future was to prove that the position on the creating of which Lord Lytton prided himself, was less simple and strong than he believed ; but he was spared the mortification of having to accommodate his policy to the real facts of the case. On the 28th of April, more than a fortnight before the letter just quoted from was written, there had been a change of administration at home, and the Viceroy who had been sent out to reverse the policy of Lord Canning and Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, resigned with the Ministry which had appointed and supported him, though he offered to remain at his post till the end of the hot season, "provided only that during the interval he should not be required to carry out measures to which it would be obviously impossible for him to set his hand."²

¹ *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 418, 419.

² *Ibid.* p. 422.

CHAPTER XXX

Disturbances on the Lines of Communication

DISTRIBUTION AND MOVEMENT OF TROOPS IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

THE news of the enormous deficit in the Indian finances consequent on the unexpected costliness of the war, which awaited Stewart on coming again into touch with telegraphs and posts, made him at once turn his attention towards possible reductions of expenditure. A personal inspection of the fortifications which were still in course of construction around Sherpur, showed him one direction in which money might be saved with distinct gain to his troops, who were in danger of being so tied down to the defence of walls as to lose their capacity for taking the field, and he ordered that work on them should cease ; but there his economies ended, for reductions in the strength of the artillery and cavalry suggested by him were never carried out.¹ Possibly the proposals, excellent in themselves, were not sanctioned by the Indian Government, struggling with the problem of how to keep up the forces in the field in the face of the difficulty of obtaining recruits. As it was the British regiments under orders for home had been directed to stand fast, and the Authorities in England had been called upon to send out four infantry regiments before the hot weather

¹ “*May 6.*—Telegraphed to-day to ask Bright whether he could send back 8th Hussars and a battery of Artillery.” (*Macgregor's Life*, Vol. II. p. 198.)

“*May 11.*—Took Stewart some papers and got through them satisfactorily. Went over list of Staff-officers and determined on extensive reductions of Staff and regiments—two Brigadier-Generals and Staff and two cavalry regiments. We have too much cavalry on the line ; there are 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ regiments above the passes, which is nonsense.” (*Ibid.* p. 201.)

began. But it is more probable that the day never came when the Generals on the lines of communication could have spared a single man of any arm. All along the Khyber line fighting was constantly going on. No sooner was one gathering of tribesmen dispersed than another began to collect; hardly was one outrage avenged than another was perpetrated. Things had been bad in the old year—they were worse in the new, largely owing to the entrance into the field of a fresh enemy.¹ On reoccupying Kabul after the siege of Sherpur, Roberts had seized the wife of Yakub Khan, and the wife and mother of Yahiya Khan, and deported them to India. All three ladies had encouraged and supported the rising, and, the opportunity presenting itself, would have done the same again; but the wife of Yakub Khan was the daughter of the Khan of Lalpura, and the slight gain to the tranquillity of Kabul that might be looked for from her removal, was dearly purchased at the cost of making enemies of the Mohmands. On hearing of her banishment, the aggrieved father called his clansmen to arms. The summons was quickly obeyed, and, on the 12th of January, four hundred of his people crossed the Kabul River and attacked the British post at Ali Boghan. Luckily, it had been reinforced that very morning by a company of the 12th Foot, and the assault was beaten off; but, unencumbered by baggage and light of foot, the Mohmands were safe back across the river before a force sent from Jellalabad could cut off their retreat. On the 14th, five thousand men of the same tribe, with twenty-five standards, assembled in the plain of Kam Dakka, while three thousand occupied the Gara Heights, three miles east of Dakka. The 1st Madras Infantry and four hundred rifles of the 4th Regiment were hastily sent up from Peshawar to strengthen Lundi Kotal, General Doran's Head-Quarters,

¹ A tragic incident occurred, on the 5th of January, when five men of the Carabineers, belonging to a detachment of Cavalry which had been reconnoitring towards the Laghman Valley, in recrossing the Kabul River missed the ford and, getting into a rapid, were swept away and drowned.—H. B. H.

and a combined movement from that post and from Dakka against the two gatherings was arranged. Troops from the latter place under Colonel T. W. R. Boisragon, starting at 11 a.m., were to capture the Gara Heights, whilst troops from Lundi Kotal under General Doran, starting six hours earlier, were to move on Kam Dakka by Tar Sapparai to intercept the retreating enemy. The position on the Gara Heights had been strengthened by sangars, but these Boisragon enfiladed with his guns, and then by a frontal attack drove the enemy out of their position ; but again the force sent to get in the enemy's rear failed to arrive in time, and the Mohmands made good their retreat. The united forces spent the night at Kam Dakka, waiting for the baggage train to come up, and during the halt Boisragon's men crossed the Kabul River on rafts and destroyed the village of Rena. Doran had intended to follow up the enemy ; but, as the country into which they had retired was unknown, and the three days' rations carried for the troops were nearly consumed, this plan had to be abandoned, and on the 18th each force returned to its own station.

Towards the end of January, an expedition for which preparations had been in progress at the time when Gough received his summons to Kabul, was carried out. A force under Lieutenant-Colonel G. E. Walker, accompanied by General Bright, entered the Laghman Valley, where it remained, reconnoitring in all directions, for nearly a month. There was no fighting, for Azmatulla Khan and his followers had withdrawn before the occupation.

On the 10th of March, so large a gathering of Safis in Tagao threatened Seh Baba, that that post had to be reinforced ; and, a little later, Bright found it necessary to strengthen the garrisons of Pezwan and Jagdallak, and in consequence had to call up an infantry regiment from the rear. On the 22nd, two officers of the 51st Light Infantry, Lieutenants B. S. Thurlow and H. A. S. Read, were attacked while riding between Jagdallak Fort and Jagdallak Kotal. Thurlow was mortally wounded, and Read, in trying to carry him off, had a desperate

hand-to-hand struggle with an Afghan, and though he finally blew out his assailant's brains, the approach of a large number of Ghilzais obliged him to abandon his friend's body, which was not recovered till the following day. The next morning a hundred and fifty transport bullocks were carried off between Pezwan and Safed Sang; and, on the 24th, news came to hand that the Mohmands under the personal leadership of the Khan of Lalpura were collecting at Goshta, a village on the left bank of the Kabul River, Sirdar Azim Khan, the newly appointed Governor of the district, being this time the object of their hostility. Doran immediately organized a flying column, but the Mohmands dispersed before the rafts that he had had prepared could set his troops across the river. Next day, twelve hundred Shinwaris and Khugianis delivered so determined an attack on Fort Battye that the weak garrison—only a hundred rifles of Madras Infantry and fifty sabres of the 4th Bengal Cavalry under Major E. B. Blenkinsop—would have been overwhelmed but for the accident that a hundred and fifty men of the 31st Punjab Infantry, under Lieutenant F. C. C. Angelo, who were *en route* to Gandamak, had halted there for the night. One party of the enemy rushed the low southern wall and from its foot poured a heavy fire into the interior of the fort, by which Angelo and three of his men were killed and Subadar Major Sher Sing and several men wounded, showers of stones injuring others, whilst a second party burst into the Transport lines. Both bodies were at last driven off, but darkness and the weakness of the garrison forbade pursuit. To avenge this raid, a fine of 5,000 rupees was imposed upon the Khugianis, and the payment of it enforced by a combined movement of troops from Gandamak and Jellalabad who invaded the Wazir Valley, destroying the crops and blowing up the village defences. Fearing further reprisals the headmen on the following day brought in three thousand five hundred rupees, and on their undertaking to pay the balance of the fine, the troops withdrew.

Meanwhile, in the Khyber Pass, men of the Zakka Khel tribe had

begun raiding, but were driven off by the Jezailchis at Half Chah, assisted by a detachment of the 32nd Pioneers. On the 11th of April, Arbuthnot's moveable column, strengthened specially for the occasion, and accompanied by General Bright, started out to punish the Ghilzais implicated in Thurlow's murder. The troops bivouacked near Mazulla Khan's fort and during the night were much harassed by the enemy, some of whom actually crept into the camp and wounded four artillerymen beside their guns. The chief of this section of the tribe came in on the 13th to treat; but his followers continued on the defensive, and when next day Colonel Ball-Acton, with two Mountain guns, a troop of the Carabineers, and six hundred infantry, pushed on to reconnoitre the Awazangani Gorge, it was found to be very strongly held, and though the infantry succeeded in dislodging the Ghilzais from the western side of the pass, the fire of the artillery failed to clear the eastern, and Arbuthnot, who had accompanied the column, judging that it was too late to renew the attack, ordered Acton to recall his men. In the retreat Captain C. H. Hamilton, Royal Artillery, and Captain J. V. Nugent, 51st Light Infantry, and a dhoolie-bearer were severely, and Lieutenant E. Palmer of the Commissariat Department mortally wounded. On the 16th the Engineers blew up Fort Mazulla Khan and the force withdrew, followed all the way by clouds of tribesmen, who kept up a continuous fire at long ranges, by which four men of the 51st and one Gurkha were wounded.

Such, in brief, had been the history of the line on which the British forces at Kabul depended for all their military stores and a part of their ordinary supplies, from the 1st of January, 1880, up to the date of Sir D. Stewart's arrival in that city. A few days later came the news that raiders from the Laghman Valley had driven off a thousand head of cattle and a hundred and eighty sheep from under the very walls of Jellalabad, and, though pursued, had succeeded in getting away with most of their booty.

Up to the middle of April, a different state of affairs had prevailed in the Kuram, where a severe winter had checked raids; but the cold which kept the people in their homes, filled the British hospitals and killed hundreds of transport animals. Later on, a serious outbreak of rinderpest occurred among the commissariat cattle; foot and mouth disease reduced the camels to a miserable state of weakness; and in an accidental fire which broke out, on the 21st of March, in the lines of the 13th Bengal Lancers, sixteen horses were burnt to death, thirty seriously injured, and all the tents and accoutrements of half the regiment were destroyed.

When the health of the troops began to improve with the advent of warmer weather, the tribes woke to fresh activity. Rumours were soon afloat that Mahomed Jan was preparing to oppose any force that should attempt to return to India by the Shutargardan Pass; and on the very day of Stewart's entry into Kabul, the post at Chapri was surprised by Mangals, who broke into the cattle yard, killed Lieutenant O. B. Wood of the Transport Department, two sepoy, and eight dhoolie-bearers, and wounded a non-commissioned officer, a sepoy, and fourteen followers. On the news of this bold outrage reaching Thal, Brigadier-General H. R. L. Newdigate, who had succeeded Tytler, sent out parties to scour the country, but the robbers had made good their escape into Khost.

If the state of things on Stewart's present and prospective lines of communication was unsatisfactory, the condition of affairs at Kabul also gave him cause for anxiety. With twenty thousand men under his immediate command, he had no reason to fear attack, and was able to look forward with confidence to his retirement when the day for retirement should come; but the accession of strength to which he owed his sense of security, doubled his commissariat difficulties and compelled him to adopt measures which his political instinct condemned. The supplies that came up from India were so scanty and irregular that, in one way or the other, his force had

to live on the country, and as the requisite food and fodder could not be brought into Kabul day by day, the troops must needs go out in search of them. The Third Division had at once been quartered on the Logar Valley, a district rich enough to feed its own garrison and to furnish a surplus for sale in Kabul; but the inhabitants of the intervening strip of country were very hostile, and its roads infested by armed bands, who made it difficult for convoys to get through; so, to relieve the pressure on the Commissariat, and for the purpose of settling the country and opening it up for the free passage of supplies, Brigadier-General Baker, accompanied by Sir F. Roberts, left Kabul on the 8th of May in command of a strong force—ten Mountain guns, six and a half squadrons of Cavalry, five battalions of Infantry, and two Companies of Sappers and Miners—with instructions to move about and maintain his troops on contributions from the villages on his line of march. Proceeding slowly up the Logar Valley, Baker reached Zahidabad on the 15th of May, and from thence sent out a party to destroy a fort belonging to Padshah Khan. On the 17th, he halted on the right bank of the Logar nearly opposite the village of Hissarak, where the Third Division was encamped; and then, crossing the river, moved into Maidan, where he remained till the 6th of June, when, having got all he could out of the district, he returned to Kabul.

Meanwhile the Third Division, the greater part of which had been shifted from Hissarak to Deh-i-Moghalan, was practically in a state of siege. Supplies could hardly be obtained, and pickets were fired into, night after night. To guard against surprise, General Hills had the growing crops in the neighbourhood of camp cut down, and sangars erected on all adjacent heights.

On the 17th of June, Hills received by heliograph the order to leave the Logar Valley and march to Charasiab. The order was promptly obeyed; but, on arriving at Charasiab, the whole country for many miles round Kabul was found to be eaten up, and as supplies

from the Logar Valley ceased to come in the moment the troops that collected them were withdrawn, Hills had no alternative but to lead his Division back to the one district where some amount of food for man and beast could be wrung from the inhabitants. In his absence armed bands of Zurmatís and other hillmen had quartered themselves on the Logar villages, and done their best to persuade the people to rise against their foreign oppressors; but the influence of their headmen, who had promised the Political Officer, Major Euan Smith, not to take part in any combination against the British Government, kept them quiet, and on the return of the Division the hillmen withdrew from the villages; they continued however to hang about, and towards the end of the month collected in such numbers in the upper Logar Valley that Hills determined to disperse them before reinforcements, reported to have been sent by Mahomed Jan, could join them. Acting on this decision, he sent out Brigadier-General Palliser with the whole available strength of the Cavalry Brigade, at 3.30 a.m. on the 1st of July, to locate and attack them.

Palliser made straight for Patkao-i-Shahana, a village near Kushi, separated from the lower Logar Valley by a succession of ridges. On approaching the first of these, a few of the enemy's horse were observed watching the advance of the British Column. The scouts quickly drove in these vedettes; but the main body of the enemy was not descried till the summit of the last range had been gained, when it was seen to be retreating in compact formation in the direction of the Altimur Pass. To lull the Zurmatís into a sense of security, Palliser drew in his scouts and detached a squadron of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, under Captain J. H. Broome, to watch Patkao-i-Shahana, and call upon its headmen to make their submission; but the Zurmatís, wisely distrustful, continued their retreat, and when Palliser at last burst through the screen of hills, they were far enough away to be able to scatter, before the cavalry, greatly impeded in their onrush by the excessively broken nature of the ground, could overtake them;

and, as a consequence, the engagement that ensued resolved itself into a series of hand-to-hand encounters, in which the tribesmen fought with desperate courage. In one of these single combats Captain S. Barrow, Orderly Officer to the General, and his assailant, a stalwart, well-armed Afghan, were both severely wounded. The pursuit, which lasted two hours, extended nearly to the foot of the pass, and when, at 9 a.m., Palliser ordered the recall to be sounded, the enemy's dispersion had been so complete that hardly a man was left in sight. Their loss was said to be two hundred, whilst the British casualties amounted to three men killed, and one officer and twenty-eight men wounded ; also eight horses killed and twenty-five wounded. The wounded men were brought back to camp on litters improvised by tying lances together with the men's turbans.

The success of this brilliant affair was largely due to the courage and energy of Lieutenant-Colonel C. S. Maclean of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, who commanded the leading troops ; Major J. R. B. Atkinson of the same regiment, and Captain L. T. Bishop of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, also distinguished themselves.

Whilst Hills was on his futile march to Charasiab, Charles Gough was leading his Brigade into Kohistan, partly in search of a region which had not yet been entirely drained of supplies, and partly to hinder the agitation consequent on Abdur Rahman's advance coming to a dangerous head. Gough marched first to Killa Ghulam Hyder, the fort in which Baker, hurrying back to Sherpur on the 12th of December, had once thought of leaving his commissariat and spare transport, and from this point threw out strong detachments into Maidan to break up a reported gathering of Ghazis. The enemy retired without awaiting attack, and having secured the safety of his left flank, Gough turned northward into the Paghman Valley, where he was hospitably received by the Khan, formerly an officer in Hodson's Horse. But even with the goodwill of its chief, the district could not long maintain an alien force ; and, on the 25th of June,

the Brigade moved on to Mir Karez, the scene of Macpherson's successful engagement of the 10th of December. The inhabitants of the group of hamlets comprised under that name, proved friendly; but cavalry patrols sent out to reconnoitre towards Istalif were fired on from a village where Mir Bacha, who was said to be in the neighbourhood, had established an outpost. A strong detachment of all arms soon drove out these men, and on their flight the Malliks of many villages came into camp, followed, on the 5th of July, by the Headmen of the town of Istalif. Gough remained at Mir Karez till the 12th of July, when, hearing that Abdur Rahman had crossed the Hindu Kush, he shifted his camp, first to Pai Nao and then, three days later, to Killa Ahmed Khan, with a view to protecting the officers whom Sir Donald Stewart might send out to bring the long protracted negotiations with that prince to a conclusion. To support this northward movement, Macpherson's Brigade ¹ was ordered to Abdul Gafar in the Chardeh Valley, and at the same time the 19th Bengal Cavalry, a squadron of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, and the 15th Sikhs were called up from Hills's Division to strengthen the much reduced garrison of Sherpur.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. Combined movements are seldom successful in a mountainous country, where every by-path is a line of retreat to a people who carry their food and ammunition on their backs, and whose activity of movement and accurate knowledge of the ground make it easy for them to concentrate against either column. To surround an Afghan gathering is as difficult as to close in upon a

¹ Constitution of Brigade :—

Four Guns No. 2 Mountain Battery.

One Squadron 9th Lancers.

92nd Highlanders.

28th Punjab Infantry.

45th Sikhs.

herd of Ibex, and it is therefore wiser to operate against such gatherings with a single strong force than with two, or more, weaker forces, out of touch with each other.

OBSERVATION II. The destruction of forts is unwise. These so-called forts are really walled villages, and to destroy them is to convert every one of their inhabitants into an enemy, and, probably, many of them into raiders. If near camp, they should be occupied ; if at a distance, yet likely to prove troublesome, the right thing is to hold some of the headmen as hostages, and to turn their captivity to account by impressing them with a sense of British humanity and forbearance.

CHAPTER XXXI

Conclusion of Negotiations with Abdur Rahman

A FIRST DESPATCH AND A LAST MINUTE

WITH four divisional commanders under him with whom he did not like to interfere, Sir Donald Stewart's position at Kabul was, as he himself expressed it, that of "a sort of Commander-in-Chief";¹ and he was able to devote himself to the consideration of the political problem, on the solution of which the date and manner of the British evacuation of Northern Afghanistan so largely depended. There had been a moment of uncertainty as regarded his relation to that problem, a telegram from Lord Lytton seeming to imply that the conduct of the negotiations with Abdur Rahman was to remain in the hands of Mr. Lepel Griffin; but a plain intimation from Sir Donald, that any attempt to limit his authority to purely military matters must coincide with his recall, brought him the assurance that he was to be supreme in all matters;² and before the end of May he was relieved of any anxiety that he may have felt as to the action of the new British Cabinet, by a telegram from the India Office directing the Viceroy to give him full political as well as full military powers.³

¹ *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 349.

² "I thought I might have escaped from this place, but it is not so. The Viceroy said the interests of the Empire required me to remain here in command, and, as he finally decided that I am to be supreme in all matters, there is nothing for it but to stay. The extraordinary part of the matter is that when I said I would not remain if Griffin was to be independent, the Viceroy said this was never intended, though his telegram almost said as much." (*Ibid.* pp. 347, 348.)

³ *Ibid.* p. 352.

The news of the result of the General Election which had been held in England whilst he was on his march from Kandahar to Kabul, added, temporarily, to Stewart's perplexities ; for knowing the dislike entertained by the Liberal party to the war and to the policy of which it was the outcome, he could feel no certainty that the lines on which Lord Lytton had instructed him to work for a settlement, would commend themselves to Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues.¹ It was not till the 11th of June that his doubts on this head were set at rest by the receipt of a letter from Lord Ripon, written at sea, on his way out to India, with nearly every word of which he found himself in thorough accord.² Meanwhile there had been no opportunity of taking steps towards the constitution of a Native Government in Northern Afghanistan, for Abdur Rahman's answer to Mr. Lepel Griffin's letter of the 30th of April was not received in Kabul till the 2nd of June, and until his candidature was rejected, no other could be entertained. So far as that answer was concerned, matters remained pretty much as they had been, for it contained nothing but general expressions of friendliness and hope of British support ; but to the members of the Mission charged to convey Griffin's letter to him, Abdur Rahman had propounded four questions, on the answers to which his future movements must depend :—

1. What were to be the boundaries of his kingdom ? was Kandahar, as of old, to be included in it ?
2. Would a European Envoy and a British Force be stationed within its limits ?
3. In what relations would he be expected to stand to Russia ?
4. What benefits was the British Government prepared to confer on him and his countrymen ?

¹ *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 352.

² "Received a very interesting letter from Lord Ripon on our policy in Afghanistan. There is hardly a word in it that I do not thoroughly agree with." (Ibid. p. 355.)

It was natural that Abdur Rahman should desire explicit information on all these points, and he could not be blamed for asking for it; but the messengers' report of his conversation and general attitude impressed Stewart and Griffin with the conviction that he was trying to gain time in which to strengthen himself, and as time was the one thing that they could least afford to grant, they advised sending him an ultimatum. This the British Government declined to do till the new Viceroy should have had the opportunity of forming an independent judgment on the whole tangled situation; but it was with a full knowledge of Stewart's distrust of Abdur Rahman's professions of friendliness that Lord Ripon, who reached Simla on the 8th of June, met his Council to consider with it the best solution of the problem bequeathed to him by his predecessor. As further aids to coming to wise conclusions, Lord Ripon had also before him the first Despatch of the new Secretary of State for India and the last Minute of the late Viceroy.

Both writers recognized the futility of any attempt to settle the future of Herat; both were anxious that the British withdrawal from Afghanistan should appear to its people in the light of a voluntary movement, decided on as a consequence of the cessation of all serious opposition;¹ but there the agreement between them ended, for whilst Lord Lytton desired to see "the retirement on the two commanding positions of Gandamak and the Kuram headlands" begun at once,² Lord Hartington was of opinion that it could not be immediate under any circumstances, and might, probably, upon sanitary grounds alone "require to be postponed until the month of November," and on all other points the divergence between them was complete. Lord Lytton, looking out over a weakened and dismembered Afghanistan, took credit for a war which, in his opinion, had made the Indian Government independent of the goodwill of any Afghan ruler; Lord

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, pp. 29-33.

² *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, Vol. II. pp. 428-434.

Hartington, with the same prospect before him over British public opinion regret in the fact that the only result should be the disintegration of a State strong, friendly, and independent, the welcome liabilities in regard to one of its of anarchy throughout the remainder of Afghanistan weak was the aim of the one ; to the object of the other : so the Minute upon Abdur Rahman that Kandahar was irrevocably Kabul, and the Despatch invited him to inquire into the engagements that had been entered into with Sirdar Sher Ali or any other with a view to seeing whether different arrangements could be substituted for them ; arrangements which might make it possible to offer to any ruler, who should prove acceptable to the majority of the Afghan people, the opportunity of extending his dominions to the limits assigned to them by the treaty of Gandamak. Neither writer was sanguine as to the result of the negotiations with Abdur Rahman ; both saw that, if they came to nothing, the Afghans must be left to choose their own head ; but whilst Lord Hartington was ready to face the probability of their choice falling upon the Ex-Amir, Lord Lytton's last word as Viceroy of India was a passionate protest against reversal of the sentence of perpetual exclusion from the throne of Kabul passed by him upon that prince. ' Reconsider the position of Yakub Khan ; form your own opinion, after careful inquiry into the facts which have been ascertained with regard to his conduct in September 1879, as to whether it is necessary to exclude his claims or those of his son,' were the instructions received by Lord Ripon from the former. ' Take my word for it that Yakub Khan's hands are deeply stained with the innocent blood of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his brave companions ' was the demand made upon him by the latter—a demand backed up by the threat of omitting " no means or opportunities available to me of opposing and publicly condemning

It was natural that Abdur of India if hereafter it should restore formation on all these points, & or otherwise condone his participation for it; but the messengers' sh Embassy."

attitude impressed Stewart & fetter his successor's freedom of judgment was trying to gain time in n offended against official discipline and was the one thing that tñg Yakub Khan as a convicted criminal he sending him an ultimæce and truth; and without excuse, for there to do till the newæ time for the blinding effects of the grief and anger an independence nock of Cavagnari's death, to die down in his mind, as was with & died down in the minds of men once as loud as he in their profesæciations of the Ex-Amir. There is proof in Macgregor's Diary the d in the letters and telegrams of Major-General Vaughan, the of *Limes* Correspondent at Kabul, that British public opinion in that city had undergone a complete change since the days when any evidence was good enough to hang an Afghan, were he prince or peasant. Sated by vengeance and no longer in fear for their own safety, men had recovered their mental balance, and could see that the massacre of the Mission had been a sudden and spontaneous act, neither instigated by, nor connived at, by the Amir; and this change of view had brought with it a willingness to reverse the sentence of perpetual banishment that had been pronounced against that prince. It is not surprising that Macgregor, who had always believed that Yakub Khan was innocent of the graver charges brought against him, should have been ready to replace him on his throne; nor yet that Stewart, who had escaped the wave of passion which had swept over men at Kabul, should have seen in him the only alternative to Abdur Rahman; but that Roberts, who was as little likely as Lord Lytton himself to acquiesce in the restoration of the murderer of his friend, should have agreed with Stewart and Macgregor, "that it would be the best thing now to send for Yakub,"¹ is very significant. Vaughan's

¹ *Sir Charles Macgregor's Life*, Vol. II. p. 219.

testimony to the change that had come over British public opinion in the Afghan capital is of a more general character, but clear and decided. "As a matter of fact, I believe," so he wrote on the 17th of May, "that all are now perfectly well convinced that the massacre was an unpremeditated act of the fanatical soldiery. I do not believe Yakub guilty, and therefore I think it is much to be regretted that the idea of his resignation was ever entertained for a moment, and still more that after a prolonged, and rigorous confinement, he should have been deported to India."¹ On June the 6th, he went still further, telegraphing that "convinced *as we have always been* that Yakub is innocent of the gravest charge against him, I see many advantages in his resuming power."² The *we* in this telegram stands probably for Roberts and the Officers of his Staff, with whom General Vaughan was closely associated, and the whole sentence proves that they had reached the stage of conversion at which original beliefs are forgotten; and this view is supported by a passage in a letter of the 8th of June, in which Vaughan declared, that "the grave suspicion under which he (Yakub) was deported to India has been long dispelled, and though to restore him involves some sacrifice of consistency, this should not be allowed to weigh for a moment."³

As a similar change of feeling had been going on in India, Lord Ripon was as little likely to be influenced by Lord Lytton's assertions as to be frightened by his threats; and if he failed to restore Yakub Khan to the throne of Kabul, this was due to the fact that he found the Government of which he was now the Head, committed to negotiations with Abdur Rahman.

But the time had gone by for Lord Lytton's opinions to carry much weight even with his own party, for events had shown how little confidence could be placed in his judgment. He had led the

¹ *The Times*, June 25th, 1880.

² *Ibid.* June 11th, 1880.

³ *Ibid.* July 16th, 1880.

Beaconsfield Cabinet to believe that Shere Ali's dislike to enter into closer relations with the British Government was simulated—and war, sullenly accepted as an evil from which there was no escape, had proved the reality and intensity of that dislike. He had laughed to scorn Nur Mahomed's reiterated assertion of his Master's inability to protect foreigners in any part of his dominions—a murdered envoy had turned his laughter into mourning. He had prophesied that the hostilities he was provoking would last a few weeks—eighteen months later they were still going on. He had entered on his Viceroyalty despising the teachings of experience,¹ dreaming dreams of “bequeathing to India the supremacy of Central Asia and the revenues of a First-Class power”²—and he left her the bigger by two barren provinces, and the poorer by a debt of £20,000,000 sterling.

An accomplished writer, Lord Lytton's despatches and minutes were models of style and displayed an astonishing facility for reasoning from premises to their logical conclusions; but the premises themselves were assumptions, unsupported, or contradicted by facts. Skilful in bringing about the conditions favourable to his ambitious aims, he was incapable of facing the price that must be paid for their realization and took pride in condemning his subordinates to make bricks without straw; an adept in the art of shutting his eyes to dangers which told against his hopes, he flung a British Mission into an armed city, seething with national and religious excitement; and underneath the bitter hatred with which he pursued Yakub Khan, lurked the consciousness that he himself was responsible for that Mission's tragic fate. It would be unjust to deny that Lord Lytton had India's welfare at heart; but his Afghan policy reacted

¹ “Lord Auckland's unhappy Afghan Expedition has been a lasting misfortune to India, for it has paralysed the common-sense of all his successors, and bequeathed to the Government of India a perfectly unreasoning panic about everything that concerns our relations with Afghanistan.” (*Letters of Robert, First Earl of Lytton*, Vol. II. p. 29.)

² *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 422.

fatally on every branch of her material prosperity, injuring trade and agriculture, and, in the end, taking from the poorest and most numerous section of her people the little security against death by hunger, which Sir John Strachey had provided in the Famine Insurance Fund.

Surrounded in the early days of his Viceroyalty by enthusiastic supporters of his views, the shadow of isolation darkened Lord Lytton's last months in India. The amazing financial blunder, which had brought discredit on his Government, had tended to alienate its members from their Head; and of the men who had done most to foster in him the belief that it would be an easy thing to drive Russia back to the Oxus and rule Afghanistan through a submissive Amir, Cavagnari was dead, Colley had gone to South Africa, there to reap the fruit of the false military principles which he had preached in India, and Roberts had ceased to believe in the value of the Kuram,¹ and, instead of insisting on the retention of the Khyber, was advising the removal of as many troops as possible from Peshawar.² The Press, too, reflecting both in England and in India the weariness of the war which had come over the public mind, had turned against him,³ and

¹ "From a political standpoint this route possesses no marked advantages. It is, as it were, but a by-road to Kabul or Ghazni, and its possession does not place us in a position of vantage with regard to the tribes whose districts it skirts." (Memorandum by Sir Frederick Roberts, dated Kabul, 29th May, 1880, p. 66.)

² "I would go as far as to withdrawing all, or nearly all, the European troops from Peshawar, and reducing the garrison to the lowest possible strength." (Ibid. p. 69.) See, *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1.

³ "The new Viceroy of India has by this time quitted the shores of Europe. . . . His arrival is expected with impatience at Calcutta. There more than any other part of the Queen's dominions, the personal influence of the representative of the Crown can make itself felt; those who have revolted against the policy of Lord Lytton, and those who have been daunted by its ill success, are ready to welcome his successor. Those who have upheld the policy which has been pursued for the past few years are disheartened by recent events, and are willing to admit that there is room, provisionally at least, for a change of attitude and conduct on the part of the Government of India." (*The Times* leader, May 21st, 1880.)

had the Beaconsfield Ministry remained in office another year, he himself would have been called upon to reverse the policy, on which he had staked his reputation as a statesman ; for, however much men in opposition may criticize decisions which seem to savour of weakness, every Government has to submit to the pressure of circumstances and to shape its course by facts, and the state of the Indian Army and the state of the Indian finances forbade that third Afghan War, which must have been faced had the resolution to keep Kandahar and Kabul apart been adhered to ; for it was as inconceivable of Abdur Rahman as of Yakub Khan that " he would abide one moment longer than he could possibly help by the terms of any agreement based on the dismemberment of his kingdom and the alienation of one of its fairest provinces."

Fortunately, Lord Lytton's successor was capable of looking at men and events from more than one standpoint ; a power which lifted him above the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust, seen through which every Afghan's simplest word and action appeared magnified and distorted. It seemed so natural to Lord Ripon that Abdur Rahman should wish to gain as many adherents as possible before crossing the Hindu Kush, so natural that to commend himself to his future subjects he should appeal to their patriotic feelings, that he refused to put a hostile interpretation on the delays which had shaken Stewart's confidence in the Sirdar's sincerity, and decided that, in the absence of all distinct proof of duplicity, it would be wise and fair to give him the benefit of the doubt.¹ In pursuance of this decision, Griffin was instructed by telegraph to inform Abdur Rahman of the British Government's views with respect to the position which an Amir of Kabul must hold in relation to Foreign Powers ; to explain to what extent and under what circumstances he might count upon British support against external attack ; to assure him that, with

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, pp. 43, 44.

the exception of certain territories otherwise disposed of, or whose disposition was still under discussion, he was free to re-establish the authority exercised by former rulers of his family, and that there was no intention of stationing English Residents within his dominions; and, lastly, to invite him to proceed towards Kabul to lay, in person, his propositions for ulterior arrangements before the British authorities in that city.¹ An answer to this communication was to be demanded within four days of its delivery into Abdur Rahman's hands, and on the fifth day, with or without an answer, Stewart's messenger was to begin his return journey.

Mr. Lepel Griffin's letter embodying these instructions was received by Abdur Rahman at Khanadabad, and drew from him an immediate and friendly reply—it had crossed with a letter in which he had announced that he was on the point of starting for Kabul—but it was noticeable that, although he expressed himself satisfied with the position offered him by the British Government, he avoided direct mention of the limits set to his authority, and wrote of his having been granted "the boundaries of Afghanistan which were settled by treaty with my most noble and respected grandfather, Amir Dost Mahomed."²

The suspicions reawakened in the minds of the British negotiators by this ambiguity, were deepened by a message from a presumably trustworthy source, strongly questioning the Sirdar's good faith, and Stewart and Griffin, anxious and perplexed, were again inclined to break off the negotiations and to look elsewhere for a prince to take the Government of Kabul off their hands. The Viceroy and his Council, however, held to the course upon which they had entered, preferring the risk of some disadvantage or embarrassment to incurring, by a sudden, premature change, any possible imputation on their good faith and firmness of purpose;³ and events quickly justified their

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 44.

² *Ibid.* p. 48.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 44, 45.

decision. Even whilst they were deliberating, the position of affairs as regarded the probabilities of a satisfactory settlement with Abdur Rahman had changed for the better. The British agent, Ressaldar Afzul Khan, who had returned to Kabul from Turkestan on the 1st of July, gave, on the whole, a favourable report of the Sirdar; and a week later, Stewart was able to write in his Diary that the news all over the country was tolerably satisfactory, and that he was making calculations for retirement, which would, be hoped, begin by that day month.¹

Abdur Rahman was now drawing daily nearer, and letters from him followed each other in quick succession. On the 24th of June, he wrote defending himself against the charge of double-dealing, by pointing out that for him to command the tribes under arms to disperse to their homes, would destroy the influence that he was beginning to acquire over them.² On the 6th of July, he wrote again, this time from Khinjan, to explain that he could not come to Kabul without first consulting the people of Afghanistan; but that their consent to the settlement proposed by the British Government once obtained, there should be no further delay.³ Before writing his next letter, dated July 16th, he had crossed the Hindu Kush and arrived in Kohistan, the chiefs of which province he had summoned to meet him; and he was able to promise that, when he had fulfilled his pledge to consult them, he would leave for Charikar, and either there, or at Istalif, enter into those personal negotiations desired by the British authorities.

The meeting with the Kohistani leaders took place at Tutandara, where he also received a deputation of persons friendly to British interests. Both interviews so strengthened his position that he no longer hesitated to go forward, and on the 20th, he arrived at Charikar,

¹ *Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 366.

² *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 49.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 49, 50.

where he was met by a large number of chiefs and other influential men. No British officer was awaiting him there—it would have been inexpedient to send one without a strong escort, and a strong escort might have provoked hostility. Stewart and Griffin however had now decided not to wait for the discussion of the details of the anticipated agreement, but at once to acknowledge him as the successor of Yakub Khan. He had fulfilled the conditions attached by the Indian Government to such recognition; it was certain that, unless publicly recognized, he would not be permitted by his followers to enter the capital, or the British camp; and the people of Afghanistan—so weary of anarchy and of the presence of a foreign force as to be willing to accept any head whom the British Government might desire to set over them—were urgently demanding that its choice should be declared: ¹ so, on the 22nd of July, in public durbar, Abdur Rahman was proclaimed Amir of Kabul, just in time to lighten the difficulties in which the military authorities in Northern Afghanistan were to be involved by an unforeseen disaster at Kandahar.

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 51.

CHAPTER XXXII

Ayub Khan's Advance on Kandahar

ELEVEN days after the departure of Sir Donald Stewart from Kandahar, Lieutenant-General J. M. Primrose, C.S.I., arrived in that city and assumed command of all troops in Southern Afghanistan, thus setting General Phayre free to return to Quetta, the point from which he could best keep a vigilant eye on the long line of communications, for the safety of which he was responsible. The force assigned to him for the protection of that line—all the troops included in it, with the exception of the Europeans manning the Heavy guns, belonging to the Bombay Native army—consisted of

- 4 Heavy Guns,
- 4 Mountain Guns,
- 4 Squadrons Cavalry,
- 7 Battalions Infantry,
- 3 Companies of Sappers and Miners,

and was distributed as follows :—

In the Pishin Valley, the entrenched posts Abdulla Khan-ke-Killa, Gulistan, and Kushdil Khan-ke-Killa were strongly occupied; Quetta was garrisoned by a heavy battery, two and a half battalions of Infantry, and a detachment of Cavalry; a regiment of Infantry and a detachment of Cavalry were stationed at Gwal, the point where the Harnai Railway debouched into Pishin, with an outpost of half a battalion at Kach-Amadan; two and a half squadrons of Cavalry, ten and a half companies of Infantry, and the three companies of

Sappers and Miners were detailed to protect the line and help in its construction ; whilst two Mountain guns and six companies of Infantry were assigned to Thal, a strategical point occupied by Sandeman as soon as it had been decided to carry the line from Sukkur to Quetta, *viâ* Sibi and Gwal. Small posts were also maintained at the different encamping grounds in the Bolan to protect the Government stores, which had not been removed when the road through the Pass was closed on account of the heat, the two thousand carts employed on it being parked at Quetta and Mach, and the bullocks belonging to them sent out to graze ; Sibi was held by detachments of Cavalry and Infantry from Jacobabad, and troops from Kandahar garrisoned the three principal posts between that city and the foot of the Khojak Pass—small detachments at Mundi Hissar and Abdul Rahman, and two Mountain guns, three companies of Infantry, and forty sabres at Chaman—the defence of the intermediate posts of Mel Karez, Dabrai, and Gatai being entrusted to local levies.

Distributed over many hundred miles of rugged country, inhabited by a hostile people, General Phayre's Division barely sufficed for the discharge of its legitimate duties, and could not be counted on for effectual aid should the garrison of Kandahar find itself in difficulties ; and from the first there were signs that, at no distant date, difficulties of a serious kind might have to be faced.

In the Arghastan Valley several bodies of tribesmen were dispersed early in April by Sher Ali, now the acknowledged Wali of Kandahar ; but, on the night of the 6th, two or three hundred men led by Ghazis, attacked Dabrai, and the Road Commandant, Major S. J. Waudby, who, with an escort of five men, had put up there for the night, abandoned by the Pathan levies, perished after desperate fighting, in which he is said to have killed a number of the enemy with a hog-spear. One man of his escort escaped to carry the news to the nearest British post, and another, left for dead, recovered to confirm his tale. The victors cut the telegraph wires, and for a few days all

communication was suspended between Kandahar and Quetta. A punitive column from Chaman, consisting of two Mountain guns, sixty sabres, and a hundred and seventy rifles, reinforced by two hundred and fifty Cavalry and a hundred and fifty Infantry of Sher Ali's contingent, destroyed a fort belonging to Abu Sayud, a chief who was known to have been implicated in the outrage. Abu Sayud himself was captured and sent to Kandahar to be dealt with by the Wali, and thenceforward Mel Karez, Dabrai, and Gatai were garrisoned by regular troops.

Throughout April, communication between Kandahar and Khelat-i-Ghilzai was much hampered by gatherings of tribesmen ; and, at the end of the month, one of these bodies strengthened by four hundred Ghazis, completely closed the road, after plundering a Commissariat convoy near Jaldak. To reopen it, Colonel Tanner, with two hundred and fifty men of the 2nd Baluchi regiment, issued from Khelat-i-Ghilzai during the night of the 1st of May, surprised the marauders' villages ; seized two headmen and several of the principal inhabitants as hostages ; recovered some of the stolen camels ; drove off a number of the villagers' sheep and goats ; and, on his way home, defeated a strong body of Ghazis who attempted to stop him, killing their leader and fourteen men and taking eight prisoners.

The same day Sir Robert Sandeman moved out of Quetta, with two guns and seven hundred rifles, to punish the Panizai Pathans for the murder of Captain H. F. Showers, who had been waylaid and killed near the Khojak Pass.¹ The weather was hot and the marching heavy ; but, except that stones were rolled down upon the baggage as it passed through a ravine, the offending tribe offered no resistance, and on making its submission, the column returned to Cantonments, after blowing up the village towers of Dirgai.

¹ Three days after the murder of Showers the same tribe attacked a survey party under Lieutenant C. F. Fuller, wounding an English Sergeant and two men of the escort. (*Life of Sir Robert Sandeman*, p. 144.)

On the 9th of May, three officers—Captain A. J. Garrett, Captain F. W. Leckie, and Lieutenant E. E. M. Lawford—returning with a small escort from Kokeran, were fired on within a short distance of Kandahar. The shots wounded Garrett and a trooper, and all efforts to discover the perpetrators of the outrage proved vain.

Each of these incidents was a small thing in itself, and many such might have continued to occur without sensibly endangering the safety of the British garrison in Southern Afghanistan, if, behind these sporadic outbursts of tribal animosity, had not lain the constant and ever-growing menace of the large and well-equipped army of Ayub Khan, whose movements were beginning to emerge from the cloud of contradictory rumours by which they had been concealed, and to take definite direction and form. On the 24th of May, Sher Ali learned that the Barakzai Prince, having at last succeeded in reconciling the Kabuli and Herati sections of his army and their respective leaders—Luinab Kushdil Khan, son of Shahgassi Sherdil Khan, and Sirdar Abdulla Khan—had fixed the 10th of June for the beginning of his march on Kandahar; that he was in correspondence with the Zemin-dawari chiefs; and that the people of Farah had been ordered by Sirdar Umar Khan to cut their crops, ready for the use of the troops that would soon be passing through the district.

In the hope of counteracting Ayub Khan's influence in the Zemin-dawar district, Sher Ali started for Girishk on the 1st of June; but, so little confidence had he in the fidelity or the efficiency of his contingent, that he begged Colonel St. John, who had been appointed Resident at Kandahar, to give him the support of a British Brigade. The request was referred to Sir Frederick Haines, who declined to grant it, declaring emphatically that the garrison of Kandahar needed augmenting, not diminishing, and strongly recommending that the Bombay Reserve Division should be mobilized as soon as Ayub Khan's intentions had been ascertained.

On the 21st of June came the news that the advance guard of Ayub

Khan's army—fourteen hundred picked horsemen led by Kushdil Khan—had crossed the Hari-rud, and Primrose, yielding to St. John's earnest representations, reported to Head-Quarters that, pending reference and orders, he had arranged to despatch a Brigade of Infantry, a battery of Horse Artillery, and a regiment of Native Cavalry to the Helmand, and to strengthen his own position by moving up a regiment from Quetta and drawing in a wing of the 2nd Baluchis from Khelat-i-Ghilzai. In reply, the Quartermaster-General telegraphed permission to mobilize a Brigade, but forbade any actual advance till the orders of the Commander-in-Chief had been received.

There can be no doubt that if the decision had lain with Sir Frederick Haines, there would have been no expedition to the Helmand; for nothing in the position of affairs in Southern Afghanistan had changed since he had refused Sher Ali's request for British aid. But above the Commander-in-Chief stood the Viceroy and his Council; and the Viceroy and his Council, convinced that it would be inconsistent with the security of the military position at Kandahar to allow Ayub Khan to cross the Helmand, applied to the Secretary of State, on the 27th of June, for permission to direct Primrose to despatch a force strong enough to prevent the passage of that river; and the Secretary of State gave the sanction asked for without inquiring what the strength of such a force should be, nor from what source it could safely be drawn.¹ Strange to say, no one, not even Sir F. Haines, seems ever to have asked the first of these two questions. In a memorandum, dated June 30th, the Commander-in-Chief dwelt on the danger of withdrawing troops from Kandahar, whose garrison only numbered four thousand six hundred and sixty-five men and one hundred and four officers,² and the still greater risk to which Khelat-i-Ghilzai—eighty miles from all support—would be exposed by the recall of a wing of the Baluchi regiment; he showed too the impossibility of taking

¹ Telegrams Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 3.

² These figures include non-effective, sick, etc.

troops from the line of communications without leaving the railway and the new road unprotected till regiments from the Reserve Division could be pushed up to relieve them ; but he failed to call the Government's attention to the absurdity of supposing that any force that Primrose might put into the field could keep Ayub Khan from crossing the Helmand and moving, at his choice, on Ghazni or Kandahar, though he was warned by a staff-officer who had marched with Bid-dulph to Girishk and carefully noted all the features of the country, of the certain consequences of sending two or three thousand men, encumbered by baggage and commissariat trains, to check the advance of an army eight or ten times its own size, at a point where, if defeated or outmanœuvred, its only line of retreat would lie through many miles of waterless desert. It is probable, however, that if Sir Frederick Haines had added this to his other objections to Primrose's scheme, it would have done as little as they to alter the Government's determination to accept it ; for all he gained by his strongly worded representations was leave to order the mobilization of a British Infantry regiment, two Native Infantry regiments, a battery of Artillery, and a regiment of Native Cavalry, belonging to the Reserve Division.

Orders to despatch a Brigade to Girishk were sent to Primrose, on the 1st of July, and in transmitting them the Quartermaster-General again put on record the Commander-in-Chief's disapproval of the movement, and directed that on no account was the Helmand to be crossed,¹ or Kandahar strengthened at Khelat-i-Ghilzai's expense.

The Force which started for the Helmand on the 4th of July, commanded by Brigadier-General G. R. S. Burrows and accompanied by Colonel St. John, consisted of

STAFF.

Captain W. H. McMath, Brigade-Major.

Captain T. Harris, Deputy Assistant-Quartermaster-General.

Captain J. R. Slade, Orderly Officer.

¹ This was in accordance with the orders of Government.—H. B. H.

Lieutenant G. C. Dobbs, Deputy Assistant Commissary-General.
Major E. P. Leach, V.C., Royal Engineers.

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General T. Nuttall, Commanding.
Major G. C. Hogg, Brigade-Major.
E-B Royal Horse Artillery, Major G. F. Blackwood.
3rd Sind Horse, Colonel J. H. P. Malcolmson.
3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, Major A. P. Currie.

INFANTRY BRIGADE.

6 Companies 66th Foot, Colonel J. Galbraith.
1st Grenadiers (Bombay Infantry), Lieutenant-Colonel H. S. Anderson.
Jacob's Rifles (30th Bombay Infantry), Colonel W. G. Mainwaring.
Half-Company No. 2 Bombay Sappers and Miners, Lieutenant T. R. Henn.

Strength—6 guns, 2,453 officers and men, leaving only—

4 Guns C-2 Royal Artillery,
4 Heavy Guns,
2 Mortars,

1 Squadron Poona Horse, with some details of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry and
3rd Sind Horse,
7th Fusiliers—about 550 effectives } 850 Rifles,
1 Wing 19th Bombay Infantry—300 }

to protect the citadel of Kandahar and the big cantonments outside the city walls.

The Commanding Royal Engineer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hills, protested strongly against this dangerous reduction of strength. "We are left," so he wrote to Primrose, "the remnants of the garrison of Kandahar, in a very awkward position—twenty-five here and there—and were an attack made on camp as held at present, serious consequences would result." Primrose admitted that the garrison left was very weak, but the 4th Native Bombay Infantry, followed by the 28th, was moving up the line, and he trusted that the knowledge of their approach and that other troops were on the move, would prevent any disturbance of the ordinary state of affairs in and around the city.¹

¹ *The Bombay Field Force*, 1880, p. 14, by Major-General Sir John Hills, R.E., K.C.B.

A number of unpleasant pieces of intelligence which soon reached Simla, proved how ill-founded was Primrose's trust in the tranquillizing effect on the country generally, of the knowledge that other troops were on the way. Telegraphic communication had been interrupted near Tukht-i-Pul; four hundred of the Khan of Khelat's troops had deserted; the Mari and Pathan tribes were giving a great deal of trouble; Surgeon J. B. Eaton and Lieutenant H. W. Seymour had been attacked on the Harnai road, Seymour receiving two wounds and Eaton having his horse killed under him; and tribesmen under Mahomed Aslam were again assembling in the neighbourhood of Khelat-i-Ghilzai. The breaching of three miles of the Sukkur-Sibi railway by heavy floods was the work of nature, not of man; but the accident, by retarding the movement of reinforcements, unfavourably affected the situation at Kandahar. ०

Preceded by the cavalry and the Sappers, Burrows marched by the route taken the previous year by Biddulph, and on the 11th of July reached the Helmand, where he took up a position opposite Girishk and the Wali's camp on the river's further bank, and was met by the news that Ayub Khan's main body was at Farah and his advanced guard at Washir. Two days later, St. John ascertained that the Kandahar Contingent, consisting of two thousand Infantry, a thousand Cavalry, and a battery of smooth-bore guns, was quite untrustworthy, and after consultation with Sher Ali and Burrows, settled that it should be brought across the river and disarmed by the British troops;¹ but next morning, before this could be done, the Infantry broke out into open mutiny, seized the baggage, guns, and ammunition, plundered the fort where supplies for the British had been collected, drove the Wali and the cavalry that remained faithful to

¹ "Rode across the river and met the Wali, who returned with me to our camp. General Burrows came to my tent, and joined the conversation, and after some time it was agreed on the Wali's proposition that he should bring his troops to our side, where it would be easy to disarm them."—Extract from Colonel St. John's Diary of 13th July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 144.

him, across the Helmand, and started off to join Ayub Khan. So essential was it to disperse the deserters, or, at least, to recover the guns and ammunition, that Burrows felt justified in disobeying the Government's orders to remain on the Kandahar side of the river, and ordered the Horse Artillery and Cavalry, four companies of the 66th Foot, two of Jacob's Rifles, and the Sappers and Miners, in pursuit. Once across the river, the Cavalry outstripped the Artillery, which was delayed by two or three awkward watercourses ;¹ but the ground was too difficult to allow of overtaking the main body of the fugitives, and only a small portion of the abandoned baggage could be secured.² The Afghan guns fired a few ineffective rounds, but the drivers fled after three of their number had been killed, and with great difficulty, owing to the lack of horses and harness, Major Blackwood, commanding the British Battery, got them safely across the stream.³ The whole force was back in camp by 8 p.m., after a hard day's work,⁴ in which it had lost one man of the 66th Foot killed, two wounded, and had killed forty or fifty of the mutineers.

Early that morning the British camp had been moved to a better position, two miles higher up the river ; but, in the course of the day, information had been brought in that Ayub Khan was only three marches from the Helmand, which he was intending to cross to

¹ "The Cavalry advanced quicker than I could, for I had two or three infernal watercourses to negotiate." (Extract from a letter of Major Blackwood's, dated Camp Kushk-i-Nakhud, July 18th, 1880.)

² "The Cavalry pursued, but the ground was not favourable. However, they came up with plenty of abandoned camels and baggage, and if time had only permitted, might have secured ten times more than they did." (Ibid.)

³ "It was 2 p.m. now, and we had to make our way home and also drag six more guns and three wagons. The brutal enemy had cut and stripped their harness and left only two horses, so I had to improvise teams and harness, the infantry having to hold up the shafts of the carriages, whilst four leaders dragged, as I was stumped for wheeled harness." (Ibid.)

⁴ "A long day's work and no food, for I'm shot if we had more than a crust of bread from dawn till dark. Thirst was a caution. The heat was lively, but the excitement of the game made you feel it little." (Ibid.)

the north of Girishk, and though the Brigade had been sent out for the express purpose of disputing the passage of that river, Burrows now decided to withdraw from its banks. Had the Helmand been fordable only at a single point, careful dispositions might have frustrated the enemy's design ; but at the end of July it was fordable all along its course, and the British column, even without the mutiny of the Wali's contingent, was too small to admit of dispersion, and too heavily weighted to hurry from point to point in anticipation of the enemy's movements. Apart, however, from the unfavourable military aspect of the situation, the loss of a large part of the supplies stored at Girishk rendered imperative the abandonment of a district where none were procurable ; so Burrows called together his principal officers to consider with him the direction and extent of the change which must now be made. At this council Colonel Malcolmson and Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson were in favour of marching the force straight back to Kandahar—the Wali had already given the same advice—St. John was eager to move it twelve miles higher up the river in order to forestall Ayub Khan in the command of the fords at Hyderabad ; and, in the end, Burrows decided on the middle course of retiring to Kushk-i-Nakhud, where he counted on being able to feed his troops with supplies drawn from the Garmab and Maiwand Valleys.¹ This decision was submitted to the Commander-in-Chief, who, in sanctioning it, warned both Primrose and Burrows that the latter, being so far from support, must act with caution.

Meanwhile affairs on the line of communication with India were not improving. Another breach in the railway had so disorganized traffic by the new road that troops were being pushed up in carts through the Bolan ; and Sir R. Sandeman reported that Mullahs of

¹ " Rode to Maiwand with Major Leach, R.E., and a squadron of cavalry, found everything quiet and arranged for supply of atta from the mills, of which there are eight."—St. John's Diary of 18th of July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 146.

influence were preaching jehad, and that the movement in Ayub's favour was more extended and determined than was believed in Kandahar. Whatever delusions the British garrison of Kandahar may have entertained on this point, were evidently not shared by its Native population, for families whose heads had reason to fear Ayub Khan's resentment, were leaving it daily. Primrose mounted three forty-pounders on the walls of the citadel and caused the city to be constantly patrolled, yet outrages were of frequent occurrence; and had a capable leader presented himself at this juncture, the armed men with whom the streets were swarming, could have captured the citadel with its wealth of military stores, and those once in their hands, the destruction first of the four hundred Europeans holding the cantonment and then of Burrows's Brigade must have followed in due course.¹ This, at least, was the opinion of the Commanding Engineer, and when it is remembered that, for ten days, eight hundred and fifty bayonets represented the effective strength of the garrison, and that a wing of the Bombay Rifles was the only reinforcement which reached it during another ten days, that opinion cannot be regarded as unduly alarmist.

Burrows arrived at Kushk-i-Nakhud on the 17th of July, and, on the 19th, shifted his camp three miles nearer the Helmand.² The new site lay half-way between the Argandab and the hills which formed the northern boundary of the Kushk-i-Nakhud plain; but, from it, no adequate watch could be kept on the enemy, for though one road from Hyderabad to Maiwand, the important strategic point which was certain to be Ayub Khan's objective, could be observed from a low plateau lying three and a half miles west of the British camp, another, running through the hills, long and rugged, indeed, but practicable for cavalry, was entirely screened from view. Nor

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, 1880, p. 14. .

² "Moved camp to an open position some three miles nearer Girishk." —St. John's Diary of the 19th of July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 146.

was the camp better situated for defence in the event of the enemy's turning aside to attack it; for, on every side, the undulatory conformation of the ground offered hollows in which bodies of men could gather unperceived, and this billowy plain was cut up by Karezes and drainage lines, divided by low walls, and dotted over by deserted houses, all affording excellent cover to an assailant. As the position was useless for the protection of Kandahar, in case Ayub Khan should move straight on that city *viâ* Maiwand, the only possible explanation of Burrows remaining in it is, that St. John, on whom he depended for information, deceived by reports of discontent and dissensions rife among Ayub Khan's troops, had led him to believe that they would not prove formidable foes. There was no doubt, however, as to the Afghans being strong in Artillery, so the four six-pounder smooth-bore guns and the two howitzers recovered from the mutineers, were manned by a detachment of the 66th, under Lieutenant G. de la M. Faunce, which had gone through a course of gun-drill; horses and harness were sent out by forced marches from Kandahar, and the command of the improvised battery, to which Lieutenants T. F. T. Fowle and G. S. Jones were attached, was conferred by Burrows on his Orderly Officer, Captain J. R. Slade, R.H.A.¹ Neither could there be any doubts as to the disturbed state of the country, for a commissariat convoy, commanded by Captain P. C. Heath and escorted by a hundred and thirty men of the 30th Bombay Infantry which arrived at Kushk-i-Nakhud on, or about, the 20th of July, had been so seriously threatened by large bodies of villagers that Burrows, though anxious to rid himself of his sick, and of his superfluous baggage, dared not entrust it to so weak a guard, and had to wait for the coming of a second provision convoy, which was to be escorted by two companies of the 4th Bombay Infantry, and to bring with it carriage for the removal of the former.

¹ Telegram from General Primrose dated 21st July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 17.

On the 21st of July, the Commander-in-Chief, by desire of the Government, asked General Primrose for information as to the suitability of Burrows's position for taking the offensive, "as it was of the utmost importance that Ayub Khan should not be allowed to slip past Kandahar towards Ghazni without being attacked."¹ Sir Frederick also inquired into Primrose's own views and intentions, and desired to know to what extent he could strengthen Burrows as reinforcements arrived at Kandahar. Primrose replied that Burrows was prepared to attack the enemy should he advance on Kushk-i-Nakhud, or on Maiwand by the direct road, and that should he attempt to reach the latter place *viâ* the Malmand Pass, he would intercept him in the Garmab Valley. In the latter case, he would send back his sick and his superfluous baggage to Kandahar, and Primrose promised to do all in his power to lighten the column and add to its mobility. On receipt of this information, the Commander-in-Chief telegraphed authorizing Burrows to attack Ayub Khan, if he considered himself strong enough to do so.²

Whilst these telegrams were being exchanged by the Commander-in-Chief and Primrose, the General with whose movements they were concerned, had been startled into the belief that he was more likely to be the attacked than the attacker. News had been brought to Colonel St. John that, on the 21st, Ayub Khan and half his army had reached the Helmand, where he had been joined by Sher Ali's mutinous infantry, and by a number of mounted tribesmen and Ghazis; that his whole force, numbering four thousand cavalry, four thousand infantry, and eight thousand Ghazis, was moving on Sangbur, an oasis in the desert, twelve miles north-west of Burrows's

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 96.

² Telegram dated Simla, 22nd July, from Commander-in-Chief to General Primrose: "You will understand that you have full liberty to attack Ayub, if you consider you are strong enough to do so. Government consider it of the greatest political importance that his force should be dispersed, and prevented by all possible means from passing on to Ghazni." (*Ibid.* p. 97.)

position ; and that from Sangbur he intended to attack the British camp, in conjunction with two thousand five hundred cavalry, under Kushdil Khan, who were already on their way down the Helmand, with instructions to move up the Argandab Valley.

Alarmed by these rumours, Burrows again called a council of war at which Brigadier-General Nuttall, Colonel Malcolmson, Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, and Major Currie were unanimously in favour of retiring towards Kandahar, whilst St. John and the Staff advocated showing the enemy a bold front. The upshot was that the Force moved a few hundred yards to a point where two walled enclosures offered protection to the baggage and sick.¹ The ground between the enclosures, fenced in by pack-saddles and rope entanglement, was allotted to the transport camels ; to the east of the enclosure the cavalry lines were established ; then came the officers' tents, and, beyond these, the infantry in a semi-circle, with guns at intervals, protected by a breastwork of tents and packs.² There was no shade, and all day long the sun shone like a ball of fire through the clouds of dust that obscured the sky.

On the 22nd, St. John's spies reported that Ayub Khan had crossed the Helmand, that his cavalry, after reconnoitring as far as Sangbur where he had established an infantry outpost, had gone back to the river, and that it was to return on the morrow, followed the next day by the main body of the army. To test the truth of these reports, Burrows, early on the morning of the 23rd, sent out a troop of the 3rd Sind Horse, under Lieutenant A. M. Monteith, to reconnoitre towards Sangbur, and, at the same time, despatched a squadron of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant

¹ " Being apprehensive of a night attack by the enemy's numerous cavalry, General Burrows has shifted his camp to a new position, in which the stores, sick, and baggage animals are in an enclosure." (Telegram 23rd July, from Colonel St. John to Foreign Secretary, Simla. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, pp. 19, 20.)

² St. John's Diary, 21st of July, 1880. *Ibid.* p. 147.

T. P. Geoghegan and accompanied by Major E. P. Leach, to visit the Maiwand Valley and burn all the newly stacked corn. Three miles from camp, Monteith's troop came into touch with five or six hundred Afghan horsemen and had to fall back. Hearing carbine fire, Leach and Geoghegan abandoned their expedition and hurried to the assistance of their comrades,¹ whom they found about a mile from camp watching the enemy moving leisurely, in a long straggling line, in the direction of Maiwand. Soon two squadrons of Cavalry and a division of the Horse Artillery came galloping up, sent off by Burrows as soon as he had been apprised of the state of affairs in his front; but they arrived too late to do more than throw a few shells into the Afghan rear-guard as it disappeared from sight.

Another day passed without bringing any definite news of Ayub's movements. There were reports in abundance, but neither St. John's spies nor Burrows's patrols could be relied on for information: the former might, or might not, be playing their employer false; the latter, mounted on half-starved, overworked beasts, could not penetrate the thick screen of skilfully handled horsemen that masked the Afghan advance.² Still, out of these conflicting reports two facts emerged: the one, that the Afghan army was many times larger than the British Brigade; the other, that by one of two routes, it was moving on Maiwand, the point which commanded the shorter road to Kandahar—thirty miles as against the forty-five, which lay between Kushk-i-Nakhud and that city. To anticipate Ayub Khan in the occupation of Maiwand was of vital importance to a force so greatly outnumbered that its Commander could not leave the possi-

¹ "In consequence of the affair in the morning, the expedition to burn the stacks at Maiwand did not start; but one of the Wali's sowars sent there reported none of the enemy to be seen." (St. John's Diary, 23rd July. Ibid. p. 148.)

² In whatever direction Burrows's patrols were sent out "there they were sure to meet some of those marvellous horsemen, whose ubiquity astounded our reconnoitring parties." (*Personal Records of the Kandahar Campaign*, by Major Ashe, p. 69.)

bility of a retreat out of his calculations ; yet, for three more days, Burrows stood fast, waiting apparently for more exact intelligence.

On the 25th, a detachment of the Sind Horse found Sangbur unoccupied, but was chased on its way back to camp by a body of cavalry who issued suddenly from a ravine, and, though the patrol had a good start, succeeded in overtaking it and cutting down two men. The next day, Lieutenant E. D. N. Smith discovered Afghan Cavalry at Sangbur, but his report as to their numbers—some three hundred as far as he could judge—confirmed Burrows and St. John in the belief, based on information brought in by a spy from Hyderabad,¹ that the whole Afghan army was still on the Helmand. In reality Ayub Khan, after crossing the river and making the demonstration towards Kushk-i-Nakhud which had compelled Burrows to shift his camp, had sent off a large body of cavalry and Ghazis to Maiwand by the difficult, circuitous mountain road, and on the 26th, marched himself, with his powerful artillery and main body, to Sangbur, where he arrived soon after the place had been reconnoitred by Lieutenant Smith. Later in the day, when a party of the Wali's cavalry, sent out to collect supplies, reported the presence of the enemy in the Maiwand Valley, Burrows jumped to the conclusion that the horsemen seen by the foraging party was the enemy's advanced guard, that it had come over the Malmand Pass, and that the whole Afghan force was marching by that route. Even on this theory of Ayub Khan's strategy, the news was so serious that Burrows again called a council of war, at which it was decided that the Brigade should march early the next morning to Maiwand² with a view to securing its own communications with Kandahar, interposing between that city and the enemy, and, at the same time, closing the Khakrez Valley, through which Ayub Khan might be intending to make his way to Ghazni.³

¹ St. John's Diary. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 148.

² St. John, Leach, and Slade wanted Burrows to move that night.—H. B. H.

³ St. John's Diary of 26th of July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 149.

Satisfied that he had read the Afghan leader's plans aright, Burrows made no attempt to ascertain whether any change had occurred at Sangbur—he had even called in the cavalry patrols on the western plateau from which, if haze did not hinder, the advance of the Afghans might have been detected—and the Brigade spent its last night at Kushk-i-Nakhud in ignorance of the fact that Ayub Khan and his army were within twelve miles of its camp, ready to intercept it on the morrow.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. When the question of despatching a force to the Helmand was under discussion, Major F. J. S. Adam, Assistant-Quartermaster-General, pressed upon General Primrose the advisability of abandoning Khelat-i-Ghilzai and withdrawing its garrison to Kandahar. Primrose shared Adam's views, yet allowed himself to be drawn into supporting St. John's proposal for the retention of the place and the recall of a wing of the Baluchi regiment, a compromise which would have dangerously weakened the smaller force without appreciably adding to the strength of the larger.¹ Sir Donald Stewart and General Phayre, consulted on the point, agreed that Khelat should not be permanently retained; but, whereas the former was in favour of holding it till the retirement from Northern Afghanistan had been accomplished, the latter wrote that "from the moment of Sir Donald's victory at Ghazni and onward movement to Kabul, the necessity of holding Khelat as an outpost in that direction ceased in a military point of view, inasmuch as we (the Commanders in Southern Afghanistan) have no fear from that quarter. Whether there are political reasons for holding the place, or not, I cannot say, but strategically

¹ "On military grounds, I was always of opinion that the Khelat garrison should be withdrawn and concentrated at Kandahar, but the Political Resident urged the absolute necessity of retaining the garrison there for political reasons, consenting to the half-battalion of Baluchis being withdrawn." (Extract from Primrose's letter of the 10th of September to the Quartermaster-General.)

there are none, and I think, just as we evacuated Girishk a year ago, when we abandoned all idea of going to Herat, so should we now give up Khelat-i-Ghilzai, and save valuable troops and treasure."

There can be no doubt that Phayre was right, and it is satisfactory to find that there was one British General who shared Napoleon's opinion that "the mania of attempting, in a moment of difficulty, to hold every point, may be productive of great misfortunes"; and who was not afraid to let it be seen that he thought military security should take precedence of political aims.

OBSERVATION II. The veto on passing the Helmand was intended to prevent Burrows taking up a position on the further side of that river, or allowing himself to be drawn to that side, whilst engaged in opposing Ayub Khan's attempt to force a passage; it had no reference to such an emergency as arose when the Wali's contingent mutinied, and Burrows was justified in disregarding it for an object of such vital importance as the dispersal of the mutineers, and the recovery of the cannon they were carrying off.

OBSERVATION III. The defection of the Wali's contingent, and the loss of stores which it entailed, were the immediate causes of the withdrawal from the Helmand. If there had been no mutiny, Burrows must still have abandoned a position that was dangerous to his own force and inoperative so far as regarded any influence it could exercise on the enemy's movements; but as nothing was gained, in either of these respects, by falling back upon Kushk-i-Nakhud, it is clear that he should either have retired direct to Kandahar—a movement in which Primrose could have assisted by occupying Kokeran and establishing a strong observation post at Singiri—or else he should have marched to Maiwand, where, in the midst of fairly good local supplies, he would have been fifteen miles nearer to his base than at Kushk-i-Nakhud. To argue that by taking this latter course he

would have left the river route open to Ayub Khan, would be fallacious, for with the shorter road to Kandahar at his back, he could always have been the first to reach that city. The real objections to halting at Maiwand are to be found—partly in the precarious position of the Kandahar garrison, and partly in the fact that, as Burrows's Force was too weak to arrest Ayub Khan's advance should Ghazni be his objective, and must fall back in haste if the Afghan Commander were aiming at the capture of Kandahar, there was nothing to be gained by its taking up a position from which it could not assume the offensive, and which it might have to abandon at any moment. If Burrows had obeyed Napoleon's precept and "asked himself frequently in the day what should I do if the enemy's army appeared now in my front, or on my right, or on my left?" he would not have lingered at Kushki-Nakhud, for "the difficulty he would have had in answering these questions" would have shown him that he was "ill posted," and compelled him "to seek to remedy it."

CHAPTER XXXIII

Battle of Maiwand

THE march to Maiwand began under bad conditions :—soldiers and followers, after a night spent in “ the weary process of unravelling the closely packed camp,”¹ tired and jaded ; the baggage animals stiff with inaction ; the cavalry horses worn out with incessant patrolling ; and the column, encumbered by stores and baggage, entirely devoid of mobility.²

At dawn a picket of fifty men of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, under Lieutenant T. P. Geoghegan, moved out towards Maiwand, and fifty men of the 3rd Sind Horse, under Lieutenant A. M. Monteith, took up a position on a low ridge about three miles to the north of camp ; but though the rouse sounded at 4 a.m., it was nearly seven o'clock before the main body of the Brigade got into motion. Preceded by Geoghegan's picket as a reconnoitring party, it moved with the usual military precautions in the following order :—

An advanced guard of Cavalry and Artillery, commanded by Brigadier-General Nuttall ; the Infantry in line of columns at deploying distances, under Burrows's personal command ; a rear-guard of artillery, cavalry, and infantry, under Colonel Malcolmson, with the 3,000 baggage animals massed on their right, Monteith's observation

¹ Letter of *Times*' Correspondent, dated Kandahar, September 8. (*The Times*, October 16th, 1880.)

² “ Encumbered by an enormous quantity of ordnance and commissariat stores and baggage.” (Brigadier-General G. R. S. Burrows's Despatch, dated Kandahar, 30th August, 1880.)

post becoming the left flanking party, whilst a detachment of the 3rd Sind Horse, under Lieutenant E. D. N. Smith, guarded the Brigade's right flank. Sher Ali's cavalry were with the rear-guard, but as many of the men had gone back to Kandahar when the Brigade moved to Kushk-i-Nakhud, and others had since slipped away, it is probable that, by the 27th, the Wali had with him only a small personal escort.

The thick haze which enshrouded the country, and made it difficult to distinguish even objects fairly near at hand, increased, rather than diminished, the fierce heat of the sun; the loose soil burned under foot, and rose in suffocating clouds under the churning of the artillery wheels and the tread of thousands of men and beasts.

For the first six miles there were no signs of the presence of an enemy; then Geoghegan reported that shots had been heard in the direction of Maiwand, and that small groups of horsemen were moving diagonally across his front. Orders were at once issued to proceed cautiously; but, dominated by the belief that Maiwand was occupied by a small advanced guard of an army marching by the Malmand Pass, neither Burrows nor Nuttall suspected that the cavalry observed by Geoghegan were Ayub Khan's flankers moving outside the hills behind which his main body was marching.

It was midway between the villages of Mushak and Karez Ak, where the troops halted from 9 to 10 a.m. to water the horses and to allow the straggling baggage animals to lock up, that the real state of things burst upon the British Commander. First, one of St. John's spies came hurrying in with the news that Ayub Khan had arrived the previous day at Sangbur, and was now marching with his whole force on Maiwand;¹ and shortly after Major G. C. Hogg, who had been reconnoitring well ahead of Geoghegan's scouts, rode back to report that

¹ "From 9 to 10 a.m. a halt was made near a large village, at which time a spy came up with the intelligence that Ayub Khan arrived yesterday with his whole force at Sangbur and was now on his way to Maiwand."—St. John's Diary, 27th July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 149.

he had discovered large bodies of cavalry moving in a northerly direction. The haze and the conformation of the ground had prevented his ascertaining whether they were accompanied by guns and infantry ;¹ but Burrows, with the spy's intelligence before him, recognized that he had been outmanœuvred, and that the valley from which he drew his supplies, and, what was even more important, that the direct road to Kandahar, was already in the hands of the enemy. Thenceforward, his only line of retreat was the road that lay behind him, and every mile of advance meant a mile further from Kandahar and the help that might come to him from thence ; and, yet, convinced that it was too late to go back, he decided to go forward and gave the order to continue the march.

At 10.30 the advanced guard arrived at Mahmudabad,² a hamlet surrounded by walled gardens, from which, three miles to the north-east, the small fortified village of Maiwand could be dimly descried through the haze. Three-quarters of a mile away on the right front, embedded in orchards, stood the village of Khig, between which and Mahmudabad lay a well-filled watercourse. To the left, a deep ravine skirted the road, and, beyond this, a plain, four miles broad, stretched away to the hills, through an opening in which, with field glasses, the trees and villages of the Garmab Valley were just discernible.

On arriving at Mahmudabad, General Nuttall and Major Blackwood, who was in command of the artillery attached to the advanced guard, rode forward with two of its four guns to get a better view of Maiwand, whilst Lieutenant H. Maclaine crossed the ravine with the two other guns, and discovering a large body of Afghan horse

¹ The extraordinary deceptive nature of the haze may be gathered from the fact that General Burrows and his Staff believed that the dark lines in front of them were motionless trees, not moving men ; only Leach, who had surveyed the district, at once recognized the truth.—H. B. H.

² Sometimes written Mundabad.—H. B. H.

well to the south of the hills, galloped out to his left front, escorted by Monteith's flanking party, and came into action about 11.30 o'clock against the enemy's exposed flank.

Scarcely had he opened fire than great masses of men began debouching into the plain, whilst hundreds of horsemen and white-robed Ghazis could be seen streaming out of Maiwand. Nuttall and Blackwood, who had returned from their reconnaissance, now followed Maclaine, who was ordered to fall back to the left of the latter's guns, which, with the remainder of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, had taken up a position about a thousand yards in front of the ravine.¹ A messenger hurried off to ask that the Battery division with the rear-guard might be sent to the front, but, meantime, the horsemen observed by Maclaine moved north to join their friends issuing from the hills, and Blackwood, following them up, found himself confronted by "countless numbers,"² and he and every man with him knew that the Brigade was face to face with the whole of Ayub Khan's army and hopelessly outmatched, since, deducting the sick and the men on rear-guard duty,³ Burrows could bring into the fighting line only twelve guns, fifty British officers, sixteen hundred and thirty-six bayonets, and four hundred and sixty-nine cavalry; whilst opposed to him were thirty guns, including an Armstrong Battery of superior range and weight to any on the British side, five thousand nine hundred infantry, and four thousand one hundred cavalry, supplemented by every man capable of marching and fighting from

¹ Major Leach always maintained that Maclaine was right in advancing as he ran no risk. He should, in his opinion, have been supported, not recalled, as he might have prevented the Afghans deploying if allowed to remain. His reasoning is unquestionably sound.—H. B. H.

² Brigadier-General Nuttall's Despatch, dated Kandahar, 3rd August, 1880.

³ Sick, 84; on rear-guard duty 96 Cavalry and 209 Infantry—total 389.—H. B. H.

⁴ A thousand more horsemen, who had probably been on rear-guard, joined Ayub Khan just as the battle was over. (Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 19.)

Zemindawar, Farah, Bakwa, Gurmse, Kakrez, Argandab, and the city of Kandahar, most of them Ghazis, ready to die for religion and country, more formidable therefore than any troops. Burrows estimated the strength of these irregulars at fifteen thousand; Leach, at between twenty-five and thirty thousand; and, later, one of Ayub Khan's pay-clerks told Captain A. Gaselee of the Quarter-master-General's Staff, that there were twenty thousand Ghazis in the field that day. Accepting Burrows's estimate as correct, the disproportion between the two forces was as one to eleven, and all the advantages of position were on the Afghan side.

Whilst the Advanced Guard had been having its first encounter with the enemy, Burrows had massed the main body and rear-guard around Mahmudabad—part of the Commissariat and baggage train under the village walls, the other part on the further side of the ravine with the smooth-bore Battery and all the Infantry deployed into line, the Field Hospital and Baggage being placed for safety under the sloping bank.¹ Lieutenant E. G. Osborne's division of Horse Artillery, in compliance with Nuttall's request, had gone forward to reinforce the Advanced Guard, escorted by Lieutenant Smith's detachment of Sind Horse.

Up to 11.45 a.m. the Afghans continued moving eastward; but when the last man had cleared the hills, the long column led by Ghazis wheeled to the right, formed line of battle, and marched south. On its left, which rested on a branch of the ravine, now lying behind the British force, the Ghazis, supported by a few horsemen; in its centre, seven battalions of regular infantry and three in reserve, the batteries distributed among them at convenient intervals; on its

¹ "When we all moved up to the front at first, the rear-guard and baggage, not having had any orders, went straight on, the mass of camels, etc., still pushing on slowly and gradually, even whilst the fire had become general. General Nuttall seeing this, sent me across to send the baggage back along with the rear-guard." (Report by Mr. C. L. Griesbach of the Geological Survey of India, who was attached to General Nuttall's Staff.)

right, the cavalry, with the exception of a thousand men held back to meet contingencies, ready at the word of command to encircle the British position. Two thousand yards from that position Ayub Khan's artillery came into action, but the thick haze which hid his batteries from British eyes, kept the Afghan gunners from finding the range, and, for a time, the Armstrong shells flew screaming overhead and fell beyond the Horse Artillery's guns, which were posted as follows :

On the right, Lieutenant N. P. Fowell's two guns, their right guarded by a hundred and thirty sabres, 3rd Bombay Cavalry, under Major A. P. Currie and Captain M. Mayne ; on the left, Maclaine's two guns supported by Monteith's troop of the 3rd Sind Horse. In rear, echeloned on the left of the guns, was a troop of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry under Lieutenant J. H. E. Reid, its left thrown back to watch a large body of mounted Afghans, who were threatening the exposed British flank ;¹ and when Lieutenant Osborne's two Horse Artillery guns arrived from the rear—soon after Blackwood, finding his batteries useless at 2,000 yards,² had obtained Nuttall's permission to advance 500 yards nearer the enemy—they formed up between Fowell's and Maclaine's Divisions, whilst their escort went to strengthen the left of the position.

So far Burrows had been inactive ; now, seeing that Ayub Khan's horsemen were beginning to overlap Nuttall's left and rear, he moved up the infantry and smooth-bore battery, when the whole force was disposed in the following order :—

Facing north, to the left of Blackwood's Battery, the guns of which were in échelon of divisions from the left, the Bombay Grenadiers

¹ Nuttall's Despatch, dated 3rd August, 1880.

² St. John's Diary of the 27th July. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 149.

Owing to the mirage Blackwood never got the range of his guns properly. Leach was of opinion that this difficulty had never been taken sufficiently into account.—H. B. H.

commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel H. S. Anderson. Pivoted on the right of Blackwood's guns, but facing nearly due east, thus forming what is known as a dead angle,¹ Jacob's Rifles under Colonel W. G. Mainwaring, with five companies of the 66th Foot commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Galbraith, prolonging the line on their right. The half-company of Sappers under Lieutenant T. R. Henn, acted as an escort to the Horse Artillery guns. Slade's smooth-bores were drawn up behind the Grenadiers, and the Cavalry under Nuttall, who soon drew in all escorts and detachments, were posted on the left rear of that regiment, facing slightly westward, to be ready to meet the masses of Afghan horsemen, threatening to sweep forward and ride them down by sheer weight of numbers. There was no Reserve,² and as each corps was greatly outmatched, none could come to the assistance of the others. These dispositions completed, Burrows ordered the Infantry to lie down.

Meanwhile Ayub Khan had seen with his own eyes how small was the space occupied by the British force—hardly the third of a mile—and had issued orders to "*killaband*," in other words, to surround it, bidding his men be ready, at a given signal, to rush in fearlessly on front, flanks, and rear, since they could not be fired upon from all directions.³ Swiftly and skilfully the Afghan horsemen obeyed their leader's command. In scattered order, manœuvring in circles, they drew closer and closer, spreading out until they enveloped the British left and threatened the baggage, already in danger from the Ghazis, who were working their way down the ravine towards Mahmudabad, with the intention of getting behind the British position. The good dispositions of Major J. T. Ready, the Commander of the

¹ A space at its apex not covered by the defender's fire.—H. B. H.

² In the early phase of the battle a wing of Jacob's Rifles was in reserve in rear of the centre; but, when once the Infantry were brought into alignment with Blackwood's Battery, there was neither support nor reserve. (Burrows's Despatch.)

³ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, 1880, p. 22.

Rear-Guard infantry, averted this danger. Keeping his men well together, he placed Lieutenant R. E. T. Bray, with a detachment of the 66th Foot, at a well-chosen point, from which he was able to frustrate the Afghans' attempts to issue from the ravine.

About one o'clock, when Ayub Khan's enveloping tactics were sufficiently advanced, he moved forward his main body to within a thousand, and shortly after to within eight hundred yards of the British position, on which he concentrated the fire of his thirty guns. A perfect storm of round-shot and shell now burst upon the troops; but, as many of the latter failed to explode, casualties were few, except among the horses, and Burrows, noting with satisfaction that his batteries were making excellent practice, that his cavalry was holding the Afghan horsemen in check, and that the Ghazis were kept to the ravine by the steady fire of Jacob's Rifles and the 66th Foot, felt confident of victory.¹

A little later more Ghazis were seen approaching from Maiwand, and as, at the same time, the enemy's cavalry was reinforced, two smooth-bore guns under Lieutenant G. S. Jones were sent to strengthen the right flank of the 66th Foot, which had thrown back two companies to meet the expected attack, and two companies of Jacob's Rifles under Lieutenant T. F. T. Fowle, with two 12-pounder howitzers, were despatched to the help of the Grenadiers, the Rifles deploying on the left of that regiment, with their own left thrown back to repulse a flank attack, and the guns coming into action on their left. The two smooth-bores remaining with Slade were formed up on the right of the Horse Artillery, in the interval left by the withdrawal of the two infantry companies.²

About an hour after Burrows had made these changes in the disposition of his force, two Afghan horsemen rode boldly up to within three or four hundred yards of the British position, and, having

¹ Burrows's Despatch.

² St. John, and the *Times* Correspondent.

reconnoitred it, rode away unharmed, though the Grenadier sharpshooters fired several shots at them.¹ The object of their reconnaissance was soon apparent, for Ayub Khan now advanced his right wing four hundred yards, but disconcerted by the Grenadiers' fire it quickly broke into groups and melted away, swallowed up by the haze out of which it had emerged. But, meantime, the Afghan Artillery had begun to use grape-shot, its fire crossing in several directions; and, what was worse, two guns, supported by a large body of infantry, appeared suddenly not more than four hundred yards away from the Grenadiers' right front and began searching the line with a raking fire.² Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. Griffith, who commanded a wing of that regiment, threw back his right company to bring a direct fire on the Afghan guns and their escort, but, well sheltered by a depression in the ground, they continued to hold the position they had gained and to inflict heavy losses on the British troops.³

In the hope of keeping down the fire of Yakub's Artillery, Burrows brought back the whole of Slade's Battery, but twelve guns, however steadily served—and the conduct of their gunners was beyond all

¹ St. John's Diary. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 150.

² "Two of the enemy's guns now appeared not more than three or four hundred yards distant on our right front, from which they enfiladed our line at an angle of 45°." (Ibid.)

"How they got there I cannot say, but it may be safely conjectured that a fold in the ground, similar to that in which the 66th were lying, enabled the commander to bring his battery with its infantry escort, which was entirely invisible, so close to our line without being perceived." (*The Times* Correspondent.)

"With these guns were a regiment of regular infantry and numberless Ghazis." (Colonel Griffith's Narrative.)

³ Major Leach's Narrative.

"The Afghans certainly fought their guns most gallantly, but I do not think they could have stuck to them as they did without reliefs, and I am inclined to believe that they had a whole battery in the dip behind, from which fresh men came up to man the two guns in action." (*Times* Correspondent.)

praise—could do little against thirty,¹ and the position became desperate when Slade's battery fell short of ammunition. Lieutenant Fowle had to hurry with it to the rear to replenish whilst Slade took over the command of the Horse Artillery from Blackwood, who, badly wounded, had been obliged to leave the guns he had fought so gallantly. Having obtained a small supply of ammunition, Fowle attempted to return with three of the guns to his former position, but was stopped half-way by the enemy, who, during his absence, had got into the British rear.²

By 2.30 p.m., the concentrated and enfilading fire of the enemy had told severely on the whole Brigade. On Burrows's Staff, Captain Heath had been killed, and Captain Harris wounded; there had been many casualties among the men and horses of the Artillery and Cavalry; ³ many, too, among the Grenadiers; and, if the 66th and Jacob's Rifles, partially protected by the conformation of the ground, had suffered less, the two companies of the latter regiment that had been detached to meet the attack of the Ghazis had lost their only British officer, Lieutenant D. Cole, killed early in the action, and, as their two senior Native officers had been wounded, the command and, with it, the responsibility for the defence of the most important flank of the line, had devolved upon a Jemadar just when the men's confidence had been shaken by the withdrawal of the howitzers which

¹ "Their artillery was extremely well served. Their guns took ours in flank as well as directly, and their fire was concentrated. We were completely out-matched, and although we continued to fire steadily, our guns seemed quite unable to silence theirs. Their six Armstrong guns threw heavier shell than ours, and their smooth-bore guns had great range and accuracy and caused great damage, especially among our horses and limbers, which were totally without cover." (Lieutenant Fowle's Narrative.)

² Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, 1880, p. 26.

³ "Nothing could have been steadier or finer than the conduct of all ranks of the cavalry during the very severe and trying cannonade to which they were exposed for about three hours; playing a passive part as escorts to the guns and protecting the flanks from the enemy's cavalry, which literally swarmed round our left flank." (Brigadier-General Nuttall's Despatch.)

had covered their left, and of a portion of the cavalry, ordered off to disperse some Ghazis who were pressing into the rear of the 66th.¹

Such was the state of affairs when Ayub Khan gave the preconcerted signal for a general attack. Instantly, the Afghan artillery ceased firing, and out of the folds of the ground in which they had been lying hid, rose swarms of Ghazis,² who, carrying with them the whole Afghan line, flung themselves with fierce cries on the Horse Artillery Battery³ which, unprotected by the fire of the Infantry, was at once in imminent danger. Slade had just time to fire a round of case-shot, limber up and gallop to the rear with four of his guns⁴ to occupy another position 150 yards further back, but the two in front were rushed by the enemy.⁴ Their commander, Maclaine, escaped, but Lieutenant Osborne was killed, helping the men of his own division to limber up.⁵ Slade, as he dashed off, shouted to Lieutenant Henn, commanding the half-company of Sappers and Miners, that had been supporting him, that the

¹ Major-General Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, pp. 22, 24.

"At first our dhoolie-bearers managed to take away some of the wounded men, but soon lots of these poor wretches themselves were knocked over, and the wounded, dead, and dying were left lying in the ranks. Our bheesties worked bravely, at first, bringing up water to our fighting men and wounded, but, after a time, they also did not return from the shelter of the deep nullah in rear. It was then that men, Sepoys as well as Europeans, mad with thirst fell out stragglng to the rear for bheesties." (Mr. C. L. Griesbach's Report.)

² St. John's Diary. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 150.

³ "I saw the guns going back at a gallop, and the infantry in full retreat, with the Ghazis after them." (Proceedings of the General Court-Martial on Major Currie: Captain Mayne's examination.)

⁴ "The two guns, Horse Artillery, in advance of the centre, were captured by the Ghazis, who rushed through an angle unswept by the fire of our troops, and the others only got away in time." (Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 24.)

⁵ "Many people think that Maclaine's guns were taken through his own fault in advancing so far to the front; but, on the contrary, he had been recalled and had rejoined the rest of the battery long before; and if the battery had been ever so little in rear, instead of slightly in advance, and in the centre of the line of infantry, I believe the line would never have been broken." (Extracts from notes of his experiences with the Artillery at Maiwand, furnished for the information of his Regiment by Captain N. P. Fowell, Royal Artillery.)

fight was over, and, looking back, he saw the little band rise up, fire three volleys into the Ghazis, and then begin steadily to retire on Mahmudabad, unmoved by the confusion which now reigned over the whole battle-field ;¹ for, just as Maclaine's guns on the British right fell into the enemy's hands, the two companies of Jacob's Rifles on the extreme left were rolled up by the onrush of dense masses of men, and driven helpless and panic-stricken into the Grenadiers. In a moment the latter regiment went to pieces. Its officers did their utmost to restore order, but Colonel Anderson soon fell severely wounded, and when the Adjutant, Lieutenant C. W. Hinde, gave the order to fix bayonets and form regimental square, the companies got jammed together in an arrow-shaped mass, and the tightly packed men could neither use their bayonets nor fire a shot in their own defence.² An appalling scene followed as the Ghazis rushing into the surging crowd, where each man was struggling to free himself from his neighbour, dragged one after another into the open and hacked him to pieces with their swords.³

Meanwhile, great bodies of Afghans, penetrating into the gap left by the withdrawal of the guns, had fallen on the main body of Jacob's Rifles and hurled them, together with part of the Grenadiers, back upon the 66th, the men of which regiment, dazed with heat and mad with thirst, were fighting desperately against crowds of Ghazis, who, led by standard-bearers, were swarming up from the ravine, falling by scores under the fire of the breechloaders, but still pressing upward,

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 26.

² Sir John Hills at page 24 of his narrative writes :—" Had he (Hinde) ordered company squares, a partial check might have been effected."

Colonel Lyster by this formation saved the position at Ahmed Khel.—H. B. H.

³ This regiment had lost from 100 to 150 men killed and wounded in the fighting line before they gave way. Leach in his Report says that " up to the last the Grenadiers had certainly behaved well, and the Afghans themselves admit that the Heratis on their right centre twice fell back," under their steady fire.—H. B. H.

undaunted and unchecked. Struck by the Rifles in rear, its centre forced forward by the shock, the line, hitherto steady, broke, and in an instant Englishmen and Natives were mixed up together, a tangled mass, which, without formation or definite object, pressed blindly forward, still firing on the Ghazis in front and the Afghan horsemen behind as it moved along.¹

At this juncture Burrows, who was busy trying to rally the Grenadiers, sent Leach to Nuttall to ask whether, by a cavalry charge, he could not win a breathing space in which the infantry might reform. Nuttall, ably seconded by his officers, strove hard to get his men together, but demoralized by their own losses—fourteen per cent of their number and a hundred and forty-nine horses out of four hundred and sixty²—by the panic among the infantry and by the sight of the multitudes sweeping towards them, only a portion of each regiment could be got to face the enemy and follow their leaders, and these, instead of charging home, bore away to the right and, after dispersing the Ghazis who were attacking the Grenadiers,³ wheeled about and retired. Burrows coming up at this moment asked Nuttall to make another charge, to which Nuttall replied that he had failed to get the men to the front and that they were heading for the guns, but he would rally them there if possible.⁴ Burrows, accompanied by St. John, now made a strenuous effort to turn the 66th and Jacob's Rifles towards the rest of the Force, from which they were rapidly diverging,

¹ "Thrice I fell exhausted after our line was broken, when we retreated in a panic. My captain was killed. I hobbled on between two sepoys at first. . . . The first volley of the 66th stopped the Ghazis, but our Natives broke, and then a panic ensued. I thought our retreat was cut off." (Letter from Lieutenant Lonergan, 66th Foot, published in the *Times* of the 10th September, 1880.)

² "It will be observed that the necessities of the situation precluded my forming any reserve of cavalry which could be kept out of range of the artillery; the whole available force amounting to 460 sabres." (Nuttall's Despatch.)

³ Major Hogg was of opinion that this charge saved the Grenadiers; but Nuttall speaks of it as having had little effect.—H. B. H

⁴ Proceedings of the General Court-Martial on Major C. P. Currie. Cross-examination of Brigadier-General Nuttall.

but with only partial success. A portion of the Rifles and a few men of the Berkshire Regiment heard and obeyed the order to follow their General towards Mahmudabad ; but the bulk of the 66th, with some Grenadiers and Rifles entangled in their ranks, continued to work round to their right, with every step widening the distance between them and the main body of the Brigade. Broken into small groups, the Regiment still retained sufficient cohesion to keep the Ghazis at bay, and though on reaching the bank of the nullah, which it had crossed lower down some hours before, the men, hard pressed by their pursuers, literally flung themselves into the ravine ;¹ yet those who succeeded in scrambling up the opposite bank, were again brought into some kind of order by their officers. But beyond the nullah lay the watercourse which connects Khig with Mahmudabad, and, on the further side of this obstacle, Colonel Galbraith, Captains W. H. McMath, E. S. Garratt, F. J. Cullen, Second Lieutenant H. J. O. Barr, and fifty-nine non-commissioned officers and men fell together, Galbraith, colours in hand, rallying his men to the last. The survivors, about a hundred in all, pushed their way through Khig into a walled garden at its southern extremity, and here they fought on—Lieutenant M. E. Rayner, Second Lieutenant W. R. Olivey, Second Lieutenant A. Honeywood, and Sergeant-Major A. Cuppage, each, in turn, holding up the regimental colours—till out of that hundred only eight men and two officers, Lieutenants R. T. Chute and C. W. Hinde, were left alive. Charging out of the enclosure, these ten, standing back to back, kept the Ghazis at bay till the last man was shot down.²

¹ “The confusion was great from the commencement (of the retreat), but when the retreating line reached the deep nullah, a considerable obstacle at the best of times, it became a regular chaos. Into it they all tumbled pell-mell, and such was the rush that McMath’s Colour-Sergeant fell upon his own sword and was killed.”—Lieutenant O’Donnell, 66th Regiment. See, *The 66th (Berkshire Regiment)*, 1878–1881, by J. Percy Groves, p. 109.

² All that is known of the 66th’s last fight comes from an Afghan Colonel of Artillery who was an eye-witness of it. (See Lieutenant-General Primrose’s Despatch, dated Kandahar, October 1st, 1880.)—H. B. H.

For a time the only stable element in the defeated Brigade was the handful of Sappers and Miners, which, in retiring, never ceased to show a bold front to the enemy, even after it had lost more than half its numbers, including its gallant leader, Lieutenant Henn, and his two British Sergeants, killed together just outside Mahmudabad; ¹ then the Cavalry rallied and began falling back in good order, ² covering the rear of the Grenadiers, who, forgetting heat, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, their only thought how to escape the hideous fate which had overtaken their comrades, were flying towards the ravine in front of Mahmudabad, on the further side of which Slade had again brought his guns into action. Behind the guns, crowds of camp-followers, eye-witnesses of the dreadful Ghazi rush, were hurrying towards the desert—dhoolie-bearers, carrying the sick and wounded, dropping their litters; drivers casting off their camels' loads, climbing on their backs and making off with all the speed they could get out of their hungry beasts, leaving the ground strewn with camp-equipage, boxes of ammunition and treasure, commissariat, ordnance, and mess stores. ³

The fire of the guns checked the advance of the Afghan horsemen and gave General Nuttall and Colonel Griffith the opportunity to collect a part of the Grenadiers; but many men were so demoralized as to be deaf to all orders, and Lieutenant J. Monteith, who had been sent to bring the stragglers into some sort of formation, could make nothing of them and had to leave them to their fate. ⁴ By the time he got back •

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 29.

² "In fact they (the Cavalry) remained on the field after the line had dissolved, and should receive some credit for their conduct in unquestionably checking the pursuit at first." (Ibid. p. 27.)

³ Surgeon-Major A. F. Preston's Narrative.

⁴ Several eye-witnesses report having seen soldiers and followers burst open the treasure boxes, and mess and commissariat stores, and help themselves freely to the coin in the one, and the wine and rum in the other. That the soldiers who took the former were not all thieves, is proved by the fact that the Grenadiers brought in and handed over to the treasury Rs. 13,000 in solid silver. The men who got at the wine and rum fell down drunk on the road

to the ravine, the Afghan artillery had found the range and were playing on the British guns, and as a large body of Afghan cavalry were working round to their rear, Nuttall gave Slade the order to retire.¹

Meanwhile General Burrows with Jacob's Rifles and the few men of the 66th that he had induced to follow him, had made his way to Mahmudabad, but not without heavy loss—seventy men at one spot, forty at another. Retreating across the ravine, and through gardens on the outskirts of the village, he occupied a small enclosure behind the walls of which he and the hundred and fifty officers and men left to him were comparatively safe. Soon, however, the enemy began outflanking the position, and Burrows, seeing that his line of retreat was in danger, gave the order to leave the enclosure.

The men scattered on issuing from the garden, and, with a wide plain before them, it seemed unlikely that they would ever come together again or catch up the guns which, by that time, were three miles south of Mahmudabad.^{2 3} Luckily the far-off glitter of helmets caught Leach's eye, and, sending off a warning to Nuttall, he rode out alone to try to turn the fugitives into the right direction. Having succeeded in doing this, he was returning to the guns bringing with him a wounded soldier of the 66th, whom he had picked up, when he came across Lieutenant E. V. P. Monteith,⁴ who, on hearing that there were wounded behind, hurried off with his troop to their assistance and rescued several officers and men; others being recovered by Geoghegan, who had been sent out by Nuttall on the same errand. Burrows, who,

and had to be left there to die. In judging these unhappy men, it must be remembered that, as Slade expressed it, "they were suffering the agonies of the damned from thirst."—H. B. H.

¹ Nuttall's Despatch.

² Burrows's Despatch.

³ "As the men came out of the enclosure, they were at one point pressed rather closely by some of the cavalry, but a few of the 66th rushed at the horsemen with bayonet and drove them off."—*The 66th (Berkshire Regiment), 1878-1881*, p. 111.

⁴ There were three Lieutenants of this name at Maiwand: A. M. Monteith (wounded), E. V. P. Monteith, and J. Monteith.

having given up his horse to a wounded officer, Lieutenant H. Lynch, had as poor a chance of escape as any of his men, was brought on by one of Monteith's Native officers, and reached the guns about half-past three in the afternoon.

A great misfortune more than balanced this unexpected piece of good luck. At the point where the range of hills running down from the Maiwand Pass comes abruptly to an end near the village of Pirzada, the camp-followers struck the broad, well-beaten, direct caravan road to Kandahar, and into this, followed by the infantry, they turned, ignorant of the fact that the wells along it had dried up. Burrows, St. John, and Leach, better informed and horrified at the prospect of suffering and death that lay before the fugitives, did all in their power to divert them into the more circuitous road—the curve, of which the caravan track is the chord—that runs at a short distance from the river Argandab; but when these efforts proved vain, they had to accept their false lead. It was essential, however, that as many horses as possible should be watered, so the cavalry, accompanied by Burrows and St. John, trotted off to Karez-i-Atta, a camping ground on the longer road, a movement which did something to protect the line of retreat from the inhabitants of the villages on its right flank. The pursuit, fortunately, had not been pressed, and though later there were reports of Afghan Cavalry being seen as far as Singiri, distant ten miles from Kandahar, St. John stated positively that he saw none after the first five miles.¹

Whilst the sun was high above the horizon, men longed for night to hide them from the enemy; but when night came it brought with it no respite from misery, as, surrounded on every side by imaginary foes, huddled together in shapeless masses, yet deriving no sense of security from each other's nearness, the bulk of the defeated Brigade and its hapless dependents struggled on, one portion keeping to the

¹ St. John's Diary. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 151.

direct track across the desert, another bearing away to the right towards a belt of cultivated land. Behind this "mass of moaning, agonised humanity,"¹ escorted by Monteith's troop of Sind Horse, crawled the guns, their limbers and wagons crowded with wounded officers and men; and behind the guns, unseen in the darkness, stretched a long irregular line of belated stragglers, straining forward to overtake their comrades. The sufferings of the horses and baggage animals, many of them wounded or lame, were no less dreadful.

A bitter disappointment was in store for the fugitives who, led by Leach, had made for the gardens and orchards in front of the Argandab, for on arriving at Hauz-i-Madat, they found the canal which fertilizes the district, broken and empty. Fortunately, Major Leach knew the place,² and he and Slade succeeded in discovering a tank at a little distance from the road. The word was passed that water was at hand, and at once men and animals were fighting with each other to be the first to reach it. It was impossible to exercise control over the frenzied crowd, and, from moment to moment, the crush and struggle grew fiercer and fiercer. Numbers never reached the tank, and of those who did, many were pushed aside on its very bank, by men stronger than they; and when the guns came up, the cries of the wounded, shrieking for the water which they were powerless to obtain for themselves, gave to the awful scene the final touch of hopeless despair.

Soon after midnight the Cavalry rode in, men and horses somewhat refreshed by a two hours' rest at Karez-i-Atta. It had been Burrows's intention to make a second and longer halt at Hauz-i-Madat, but a report that the enemy were firing into his rear made him decide to push on. The mounted troops had behaved with admirable steadiness since Nuttall had rallied them at Mahmudabad, but for four-and-twenty

¹ Major Ashe, p. 95.

² In May, Leach had been sent to Maiwand with a strong escort to complete the survey of the Kushk-i-Nakhud and the Kakrez valleys, and to ascertain the capabilities of the Maiwand District to support a Brigade.—H. B. H.

hours they had been subjected to an enormous strain, and it was unsafe to prolong it. Besides, much of the Infantry and many camp-followers had already streamed away towards Kandahar, and the Cavalry were needed to protect them ; yet how could he abandon the helpless crowd still gathered round the tank, and the still more helpless weaklings, who had not yet succeeded in reaching it ?

The answer to this cruel question was given by Major Leach, who, with a few men of the cavalry, volunteered to remain behind to collect and bring in the laggards. Leaving Lieutenant Geoghegan's troop of horse to support this gallant band, Burrows resumed his retreat, Nuttall leading with the cavalry whilst he himself remained in rear with the artillery, whose difficulties grew from hour to hour. First, the store limber wagon and spare gun carriage were abandoned, that the bullocks drawing them might be yoked to the guns ; then, one after another of the smooth-bore battery shared the same fate ; but the Artillery guns and the limbers with their human freight were taken on, though, even with the bullocks to help them, the exhausted horses could hardly be brought to pull. So slow was their progress that Leach and his party, with the fugitives they had got together, were able to overtake them ; but in the darkness many men had been overlooked, and among the missing was Lieutenant Maclaine, who had gone in search of water and was never seen again.¹ It transpired afterwards that he had been set upon by Afghans, made prisoner, and carried into Ayub Khan's camp. Both Sandeman and St. John were authorized to offer money for his protection or release ;² and the latter informed the Government, on the 25th of August, that continued efforts had been made to obtain his liberation, but without success.³

¹ General Burrows. Another account says he was captured at Singiri when in search of water for the wounded.—H. B. H.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 52.

³ *Ibid.* p. 72 ; and, on the 27th of August, he reported to Sir Frederick Roberts that he was still making efforts, but was not very hopeful of success. (*Ibid.* pp. 75, 76.)

Burrows had given orders that the cavalry should remain near the guns, but the men, notwithstanding Nuttall's efforts to check them, pushed on without halting to Ashukan. The commanding officers of both the regiments of which it was composed, were afterwards tried by court-martial and acquitted, the court apparently holding that the limit up to which discipline could be upheld had been passed, and that no one could fairly be blamed for the men's disobedience.¹

At Ashukan, which General Burrows reached at daybreak, the two howitzers were abandoned, and some of the cavalry were dismounted and their horses harnessed to the limbers that were crowded with wounded. On resuming the retreat the inhabitants fired on the retiring force, killing Lieutenant C. G. Whitby.

Sad as was the spectacle when morning broke, it had one good feature—the long line of fugitives was less thin than might have been expected; but as the sun rose higher and higher, and suffering from heat was added to the pangs of hunger and the agony of thirst, many who had toiled on through the darkness, gave up hope, and dropped down on the parched ground to die forsaken; for men whose nerves were so shattered that they magnified shots fired from a village into the roar of cannon, and saw an Afghan horseman in every bush, had no thought to spare for another's need.

At Singiri, which was reached at 7 a.m., a canal ran close to the road, and here many men tasted the first water that had passed their lips for nearly twenty-four hours. Refreshed by that draught, fifty or sixty men of the infantry were rallied, and when, two hours later, the head

¹ The President said :—" Colonel John Porter Malcolmson, the Court find you Not Guilty of all the charges, and they also desire to acquit you honourably, and will state this separately."

The Court found—" that Major Albert Purcell Currie of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry is Not Guilty of the charges preferred against him, and that he is hereby released." (Proceedings of the General Courts-Martial held at Bombay in March and April, 1881.)

Neither of these officers should have been tried.—H. B. H.

of the straggling column arrived on the right bank of the Argandab, this little band crossed the stream and took up a position on an embankment facing Kokeran, which appeared to be occupied by Afghans. This last anxiety was dispelled when, half an hour later, a detachment of the Poona Horse, commanded by Captain J. W. Anderson, rode in with the news that the village was held not by enemies, but by friends from Kandahar, who, warned of the disaster which had befallen Burrows's Brigade, had come out to render assistance to what remained of it.

For several nights, great beacon fires on all the hills had warned the troops in the cantonment that some unusual movement was on foot. On the morning of the 27th, a gathering of armed men was seen near Old Kandahar; but when a company of the 7th Fusiliers and one of the 4th Bombay Infantry were sent out to scout the country west and south-west of the city, no signs of an enemy could be discovered. That evening, whilst General Primrose and his Staff were dining in the garden of the Head-Quarters house, a messenger from the Wali arrived with the news that Burrows had marched to intercept Ayub Khan, who was said to be in great strength. Shortly after, the party was attracted to the roof of the house by sounds of musketry proceeding from the neighbouring villages, and it was late when at last it separated. About 2 a.m. next day the Assistant Quartermaster-General, Major Adam, was called up to interview a Jemadar of the 3rd Sind Horse, who, accompanied by twenty-five men, had just arrived with the news of Burrows's defeat. That defeat, according to the account which he now gave to Adam, had been of the most overwhelming character—Burrows and Nuttall killed, and the whole force cut up. Questioned as to how he and his detachment had escaped, he explained that they had been in rear on baggage-guard duty when a badly wounded Major of Artillery,¹ seeing the Ghazis' rush and

¹ This Major of Artillery must have been Blackwood, who never returned to his Battery; for, had he done so, Slade would have brought him out of action.

the break-up of the British line, had bidden them ride hard to Kandahar and warn Primrose of the disaster, and had given him a pair of binoculars to produce as a proof of the genuineness of his story.

There could be no doubt as to the fact of defeat, but there was room to hope that it had been less complete than the Jemadar believed, and the arrival of the Wali, with a small escort, a couple of hours later, showed that not all who had marched to Maiwand had perished in the engagement; so Primrose, to whom Adam carried the bad news, after consulting with Brigadier-General Brooke, decided that the latter should proceed at daybreak, with two guns, forty sabres, and a hundred and seventy rifles, to be at hand at Kokeran to assist the fugitives who might reach the Argandab; whilst he himself telegraphed the news of the disaster to Simla, evacuated cantonments, and, at the cost of abandoning his communications with India, drew in the garrison of Mundi Hissar and ordered the troops holding Abdul Rahman, Mel Karez, Dabrai, and Gatai to fall back upon Chaman.

The narrow, tortuous streets of Abassabad, a village close to cantonments, were full of armed men when Brooke's little force¹ started out at 5.30 a.m.; but they fell back before his skirmishers, and he got his guns safely through. In the open country he encountered little resistance, but the Afghans hung about and he had to keep clearing his flanks. As the troops advanced signs of the misfortune

on a limber. After getting his wound dressed he joined the 66th Berkshire Regiment, and assisted the men in sighting their rifles. He must have again been severely wounded and carried to the rear, because his body was found close to the ravine.—H. B. H.

¹ STAFF.

Captain F. W. Leckie
 Captain F. C. Keyser
 Surgeon J. McNamara
 Two Guns C-2 Royal Artillery
 40 Sabres Poona Horse
 3 officers and 70 men 7th Royal Fusiliers
 100 men 28th Bombay Infantry

Brigade-Major.
 Orderly Officer.
 Medical Officer in charge.
 Captain W. Lane.
 Captain J. W. Anderson.
 Lieutenant R. P. B. Rodick.
 Major F. C. Singleton.

which had overtaken Burrows's Brigade grew more and more frequent : dead men, butchered by the villagers within a few miles of safety ; living men, dragging themselves along, "dazed, footsore, dying of thirst with a look of bewildered agony on their swollen faces and bloodshot eyes." ¹

As the relieving force approached Kokeran, that village and a fortified post near it were hurriedly abandoned by a large body of armed men, who had already fired on many small bodies of fugitives as they came up from the river, and were lying in wait to overwhelm the main body. Their dispersal made it possible to put the sick men of the Brigade into dhoolies, wait for the loiterers to close up, and get the column into something like order, Anderson watching the ford till the last man in sight had crossed the river, and then returning to Kokeran, where Burrows and Brooke had already met—a pathetic meeting, for the defeated General, worn out with anxiety, suffering, and fatigue, and voiceless with the strain of trying to keep his troops together, was, for the moment, a broken man.² Brooke's heart was wrung with pity at sight of his friend's distress, and of the shrunken numbers and miserable plight of the Force which, well equipped and full of life, had marched from Kandahar twenty-four days before.

But no time could be given to condolence or regrets ; the one thing needful was to bring these crushed and spiritless troops and their miserable companions into safety, so the homeward march was begun the moment Anderson rode in. The progress was slow, for Burrows's men could scarcely crawl, and there was no question now of leaving the weak behind ; all, in one way or another, must be brought on ; also, Abassabad and its walled enclosures were found to be

¹ Letter from an officer of Brooke's Force published in the *Times* of the 17th September, 1880.

² "Poor General Burrows broke down utterly when he met Brooke, and so did the others when I spoke to them. The poor General was utterly crushed and broken, his sword tied up in a knot and his voice gone." (Ibid.)

again strongly occupied, and the place had to be shelled and its streets cleared by Brooke's infantry before Burrows's shattered force could be passed through—this work being facilitated by a company of the 7th Fusiliers, under Captain E. W. Adderley, whom Primrose had ordered to keep the outskirts of the village free from the enemy and to search for stragglers.

At half-past two in the afternoon of the 28th of July, the remnants of General Burrows's Brigade entered the citadel of Kandahar. Out of the two thousand seven hundred and thirty-four officers and men who had gone into action the previous day, eleven hundred and thirty-nine failed to answer when the roll was called; and of these, more than half, and nearly all the seven hundred and eighty-six missing camp-followers, had perished in the retreat. Two hundred and one horses had also been killed, and sixty-eight wounded. The loss in transport was heavier still—two thousand four hundred and twenty-four animals out of the three thousand that had accompanied the Brigade; and the destruction of the transport had entailed the loss of all that depended upon it—60,000 rupees of treasure, commissariat and ordnance stores, including a thousand rifles, more than a quarter of a million of small-arms ammunition, and four hundred and forty-eight nine-pounder shell and case, besides accoutrements, swords, bayonets, tent-equipage, and regimental and private property.¹

Only one of the guns recovered from Sher Ali's mutinous troops had been saved,—but the Horse Artillery Battery returned with four of its guns, and no men ever better deserved the praise which their General bestowed upon them than did the gunners, who fought them whilst fighting was possible, and then brought them back safely to Kandahar. "Their behaviour was admirable," so wrote Burrows in the Despatch which told the tale of his defeat; "exposed to a heavy

¹ "It is a great disaster—colours, band instruments, and all our baggage and ammunition falling into the hands of the enemy." (Lieutenant Lonergan to the *Times*, 10th September, 1880.)

fire they served their guns coolly and steadily as on parade, and when the guns were rushed they fought the Ghazis with hand-spikes and sponge-rods ;” whilst their commander, Slade, to quote from the same Despatch, “ was not only conspicuous for his gallantry during the day, but, throughout the long and trying retreat of forty miles,¹ worked with unflagging energy, encouraging his men and tending the wounded who crowded his guns.” It fell to others to put on record what the General himself had been to his troops during that terrible day and night. “ He behaved splendidly, and personally saved the lives of three of his officers,” wrote an officer of General Brooke’s force in the *Times* of the 17th of September ; and that journal’s Own Correspondent, in bearing witness to one of these acts of devotion, declared that “ he had heard it remarked more than once that if Burrows had had the good luck to be a subaltern instead of a General, he would have well deserved the Victoria Cross.” There may have been many others of whom the same might have been said ²—great emergencies are the parents of great deeds—but, in the published and unpublished accounts of the battle and retreat two names stand out pre-eminently—those of Major E. P. Leach, V.C., and the Roman Catholic Chaplain, Father T. Jackson. No man in the Force knew the district, in which the battle of Maiwand was fought and through which the retreat to Kandahar was conducted, as well as Leach, and no man could have turned that knowledge to better account. From the moment when he succeeded Slade as Burrows’s Orderly Officer, he was that General’s right hand ; and when the course of events separated the two, on his own initiative, he carried help and guidance wherever help and guidance were most needed, and vied with Slade in succouring the wounded and encouraging the down-hearted. As for Jackson, when the dhoolie-bearers fled and

¹ He should have said forty-nine miles.—H. B. H.

² “ Quarry, Geoghegan, (the) Monteiths, Fowle, and Griesbach should all have had some mention, I think.” (Major Leach.)

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

the bheesties refused to do their office, it was he who carried water to the wounded, consoled the dying under the heaviest fire; and, though sinking with fatigue, never for a moment deserted his post.

The following return shows the number of officers, non-commissioned officers and men who were killed, wounded, and missing in the Battle of Maiwand.

	EUROPEANS.						NATIVES.								
	Killed.			Wounded.			Missing.			Killed.			Wounded.		
	Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.
Staff	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
E-B Royal Horse Artillery	2	12	14	1	12	13	1	6	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. 2 Company Bombay Sappers and Miners	1	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	15	1	6	7
3rd Sind Horse	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	14	14	—	5	5
3rd Bombay Cavalry	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	26	26	—	18	18
66th Foot (The Berkshire Regiment)	10	2761	286	2	30	32	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1st Grenadiers, Bombay Infantry	2	—	2	2	—	2	—	—	—	8	356	364	4	55	59
Jacob's Rifles, 30th Bombay Infantry	3	—	3	1	—	1	—	—	—	3	232	235	4	25	29
Total	20	290	310	8	42	50	1	6	7	11	643	654	9	109	118

SUMMARY.

	<i>Killed and Missing.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>
British Officers	21	8
„ Troops	296	42
Native Officers	11	9
„ Troops	643	109
Total	971	168
Camp-followers	331	7
Transport Followers	455 ²	—
Total	786	7

¹ Including a corporal, 59th Foot.

² Possibly some of these men were Kandaharis and escaped to their homes.—

BATTLE OF MAIWAND

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	<i>Killed and Missing.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>
Horses .	201	68
Grand Total of Casualties .	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> { <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>Officers, men, and followers, 1925.</p> <p>Horses, 269.</p> <p>Transport animals, 2,424.</p> </div> </div>	

NOMINAL ROLL OF BRITISH OFFICERS KILLED.

- Captain P. C. Heath, Brigade-Major.
- Major G. F. Blackwood, Commanding E-B Royal Horse Artillery.
- Lieutenant E. G. Osborne, Royal Horse Artillery.
- „ T. R. Henn, Royal Engineers.
- „ W. C. Owen, 3rd Bombay Cavalry.
- Lieutenant-Colonel J. Galbraith, Commanding 66th Foot.
- Captain E. S. Garratt, 66th Foot.
- „ W. H. McMath, 66th Foot.
- „ F. J. Cullen, 66th Foot.
- „ W. Roberts, 66th Foot.
- Lieutenant M. E. Rayner, 66th Foot.
- „ R. T. Chute, 66th Foot.
- 2nd Lieutenant A. Honeywood, 66th Foot.
- „ W. R. Olivey, 66th Foot.
- „ H. J. O. Barr, 66th Foot.
- Lieutenant C. W. Hinde, 1st Bombay Grenadiers.
- „ C. G. Whitby, 1st Bombay Grenadiers.
- Captain H. F. Smith, Jacob's Rifles (30th Bombay Infantry).
- Lieutenant W. N. Justice, Jacob's Rifles (30th Bombay Infantry).
- „ D. Cole, Jacob's Rifles (30th Bombay Infantry).

NOMINAL ROLL OF BRITISH OFFICERS WOUNDED AND MISSING.

- Captain T. Harris, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
- Lieutenant H. Maclaine, Royal Horse Artillery.¹
- „ N. P. Fowell, Royal Horse Artillery.
- „ A. M. Monteith, 3rd Sind Horse.
- „ H. Lynch, 66th Foot.
- Surgeon-Major A. F. Preston, 66th Foot.
- Lieutenant-Colonel H. S. Anderson, Commanding 1st Grenadiers.
- Captain J. Grant, 1st Grenadiers.
- Major J. S. Iredell, Jacob's Rifles (30th Bombay Infantry).

Besides eleven Native Officers killed, and nine wounded.

¹ Taken prisoner and afterwards murdered.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. When Burrows learned on the line of march that Ayub's advanced guard was at Maiwand and his main body on the way thither from Sangbur, he had only two courses open to him—to retreat, or to fight, for the limited time at his disposal and his inferiority in cannon,¹ forbade entrenching. Retreat would have been difficult, but not impossible, *if undertaken the moment the truth as to Ayub Khan's movements became known to the British commander.* St. John gave him the news soon after 9 a.m. ; it was 11.30 when the Afghan army got clear of the hills ; by a careful disposition of his advanced guard which then would have become his rear-guard, Burrows could have hidden his change of direction for some time longer ; with a start of two to three hours the Brigade should have been out of reach of the Afghan infantry before Ayub Khan could determine upon his course of action ; and though he might have sent his cavalry in pursuit, and a portion of the British baggage might have had to be abandoned, their attacks, unsupported by infantry, would not have had such fatal results as when delivered after the long bombardment, which thinned the ranks of the regiments and shook the nerves of the men, whilst lying idle in the indefensible position into which Burrows had allowed them to drift. In weighing the chances of a successful retreat, it must not be forgotten that the Afghans had marched thirty miles within the foregoing twenty-four hours, and were, therefore, no more fresh than the men they would have followed up ; and also that as at this time Ayub Khan's objective seems to have been Ghazni, he would probably have been glad to avoid weakening his force by fighting a general action.

¹ Apropos of taking up a position when threatened by a strong Mahratta force, the Duke of Wellington, then Major-General Hon. A. Wellesley, wrote to his gifted subordinate, Colonel Stevenson :—"Your inferiority in cannon would tell against you more than it would in the case of your attacking the enemy."

To fight without communications, at a distance of nearly fifty miles from a base, without supports or reserves, with a desert in rear, was a risk which any commander might well shrink from taking ; but since this was what Burrows elected to do—he cannot have expected to get away without fighting—the question arises whether there were no tactics by which the battle of Maiwand might have ended in a British victory instead of a British defeat ; and there is a letter of the Duke of Wellington's, then Major-General the Hon. A. Wellesley, dated 12th October, 1803, which indicates such a way. The letter was written to Colonel Stevenson, when the Brigade under that officer was many marches distant from the main British force and threatened by a Mahratta army superior to it in numbers and artillery. *Wellesley let it be seen that he considered Stevenson's wiser course would be to retire towards him ;* but, assuming that he might determine “ to have a brush with the enemy,” he first warned him against attacking them in their position, or remaining in his own, and then went on as follows :—“ When you shall hear that they are on the march to attack you, secure your baggage and move out of your camp. You will find them in the common disorder of march ; they will not have the time to form, which, being but half-disciplined troops, is necessary for them. At all events, you will have the advantage of making the attack on ground which they will not have chosen for the battle ; a part of their troops only will be engaged ; and it is possible that you will gain an easy victory.”

Supposing Burrows to have been acquainted with this letter and to have determined to act upon the advice contained in it, what should he have done ? He had no camp to move out of, but he could have secured his baggage against any attacks that were likely to be made upon it whilst the engagement lasted, at Mushak which was six miles from Maiwand. Meanwhile he should have reinforced his advanced guard with half a battalion of infantry, replaced the Horse Artillery with half the guns of the smooth-bore battery, and ordered

Nuttall, without committing himself to an action, to make a good show of his force towards Maiwand with a view to deceiving the Ghazis. The safety of his baggage and right flank thus provided for, he should have pushed boldly across the plain to his left with the whole of the Horse Artillery, the half-battery of smooth-bores, and all that remained to him of cavalry and infantry, and have struck Ayub Khan's army "in the common disorder of march" as it came out from behind the screen of hills on the Sangbur road. It would have been a dangerous movement, but less hopeless than standing for hours doing nothing, whilst the Afghan Commander developed his plans and chose his own time for crushing the British Brigade; and if the attack had been delivered with vigour and determination, the half-disciplined Afghan troops, unable to form, might have suffered the defeat which Wellington predicted for the Mahrattas.¹

Taking into account all the difficulties with which Burrows was confronted, it would be idle to maintain that he could have retreated without considerable loss, or have attacked with the certainty of success; but either course was preferable to marching forward without any plan at all, till pulled up at a point where retreat and successful attack were alike impossible.

OBSERVATION II. The British dispositions at Maiwand were altogether unsound, for the troops at right angles to Blackwood's Battery could do nothing to repulse an attack upon the guns, and they themselves, aligned parallel to the ravine, lay open to an enfilading fire; but, by the time Burrows arrived on the field of battle, he had practically no choice but to accept the position imposed upon his force by the nature of the ground, and the dispositions of the enemy.

OBSERVATION III. Burrows was responsible for the tactics, or

¹ See Map

lack of tactics, which resulted in the defeat at Maiwand ; but responsibility for the strategy which led up to that defeat, rests with his official superiors. He cannot even be blamed for lingering at Kushki-Nakhud, since the mistake was acquiesced in by Primrose and the Commander-in-Chief, both of whom had ample time between the 17th and the 26th of July, in which to order him to return to Kandahar or move on to Maiwand.

Responsibility for the expedition to the Helmand as a whole, lies entirely at the door of the Government of India, which insisted on despatching it against the protests of its Commander-in-Chief ; but Sir F. Haines must share with the Government the responsibility for the pressure put upon the General in the field to attempt the dangerous task of intercepting Ayub Khan's army ; for if he disapproved of the telegrams of the 21st and 22nd of July, he ought to have refused to forward them, and have resigned rather than let them go to Primrose with the sanction of his name—a sanction which, with a man distrustful of his own judgment, was certain to outweigh any misgivings as to the wisdom of the course pressed upon him by the Government. Nine officers out of ten in General Primrose's place would have done what he did—passed on the telegrams to Burrows ; but if, as seems to have been the case, he forwarded the second message without the qualifying words “if you are strong enough to do so,” thus turning the expression of the Government's desire into a command, he accepted, as far as his subordinate was concerned, full responsibility for all that might result from obedience to it.

OBSERVATION IV. How far a General should go in obeying instructions of which he disapproves, is a question which can only be answered by a careful consideration of the circumstances in each particular case. An illustration of the circumstances under which obedience to an order should be refused, is to be found in the Duke of

Wellington's early career, when he declined to proceed at once against the French in the Red Sea, on the ground that the force assigned to him was not properly equipped. "You propose," so he wrote to the Governor of Ceylon, on the 18th February, 1801, "that I should proceed without the articles which I have requested the Governor of Bombay to prepare, and you have no doubt that he, or the Governor of Fort St. George, will send them after me. Articles of provision are not to be trifled with, or left to chance; and there is nothing more clear than that the subsistence of the troops must be certain upon the proposed service, or the service must be relinquished."

CHAPTER XXXIV

Siege of Kandahar

SORTIE OF THE 16TH OF AUGUST, 1880

THE evacuation of the cantonment outside of Kandahar, begun at dawn on the 28th of July, proved a work of unnecessary difficulty. In the excitement and alarm which followed on the first exaggerated accounts of the Maiwand disaster, General Primrose virtually delegated his powers to Brooke who, before starting out to the assistance of Burrows, had issued orders to shut and barricade all the gates of the city except the Eedgah Gate, on its Northern front, with the result that when the long lines of laden animals, carts, and dhoolies, carefully organized by Major Adam, Assistant Quartermaster-General, and by Deputy Surgeon-General J. O’Nial, arrived at the gates, through which they had been directed to enter the town, all but one came to a sudden standstill. On discovering the cause of this unexpected check to a well-planned movement, Adam hurried to the citadel, where Primrose was busy preparing for the reception of the troops that were to reinforce its garrison, and implored him to have the gates reopened. He pleaded in vain—Primrose could not be induced to reverse Brooke’s orders, and the disappointed Staff-officer had to go back to cope, as best he could, with the confusion, which one General had created and the other declined to lighten. Already several trains of baggage animals, turned away from other entrances to the city, were converging on the Eedgah Gate, and

the crush became terrific when, about 9 a.m., the sutlers and shopkeepers who had had shops and stalls in the cantonment bazaar came rushing along, followed by their goods on camels, which, with the connivance of the transport drivers, they had obtained from the Commissariat Cattle Lines. A little later, the mass of men and beasts, struggling to force its way through a single narrow passage, was swelled by the arrival of mounted fugitives from Maiwand, and a little later still by the advent of a wing of the 28th Bombay Infantry, marching up from Quetta with its baggage, stores, and ammunition. To make the situation worse, bodies of armed men, who since early morning had been pouring through the Baba Wali and Murcha passes, began firing off their jezails¹ at long ranges. A few well-aimed shells, thrown into their midst by C-2 Field Battery, commanded by Major P. H. Greig, kept them from rushing the cantonment; but their fire so terrified the Kandahari drivers that many bolted, leaving their strings of camels without an attendant, and a few, taking advantage of the general confusion, even succeeded in carrying off their laden beasts.²

Having established some degree of order among the miscellaneous crowds swarming round the Eedgah Gate, Adam returned to cantonments to find that, acting on instructions received from General Brooke, the 4th and 28th Bombay Infantry had marched out and deployed across the road leading to Abassabad, and that villagers, taking advantage of their absence, had rushed the enclosure in which the men's kits had been left and the Sappers' Quarters. The marauders were subsequently expelled, but not till they had looted or burned all the regimental equipment and engineering stores. The loss of the latter proved a severe blow to the force, for it greatly retarded the necessary

¹ A long matchlock.

² Major Adam, Assistant Quartermaster-General, says in his comments on the campaign in Southern Afghanistan, 1880:—"When replacing the transport handed over to General Stewart's column, it had been necessary to replace the attendants by men of the country."

work of demolishing walls and buildings in the vicinity of the town, which thenceforward had to be carried out without the help of explosives.

The next incident was the arrival of the main body of Burrows's Brigade, many of the men in so exhausted a state that they sank to the ground as soon as they felt themselves safe, and had to be carried into the citadel, where, by the foresight of Surgeon-Major J. Arnott, shelter and beds were awaiting them.¹ Soon after, General Brooke returned to cantonments with his troops, and at once set every one to work, excusing none and superintending all personally, to get as much property as possible into the Fort. As the sun declined, Primrose sent message after message bidding him abandon his task and retire into the city; but Brooke worked away, putting off his departure from one half-hour to another, till at 6.15 he reluctantly abandoned the hope of saving any more of the loose stores with which the place was littered, and withdrew the troops in perfect order.² Scarcely had his men turned their backs on the cantonment than, like a pack of wolves, the Afghans rushed in, and after laying hands on everything they could find, set fire to the bazaar and blew up a stock of gunpowder and kerosene belonging to one of the Kandahar merchants.

The day ended as it had begun, in sadness. About midnight distant shots were heard, and it was afterwards ascertained that some men belonging to Jacob's Rifles and the Bombay Grenadiers,

¹ "Anticipating the necessity of providing for the wounded, I had, a week or two before, spoken to the Colonel who commanded in the Citadel, and we had selected and decided on the quadrangles in the Citadel, where tents could be pitched. The order to do this was given to the Quartermaster, Lieutenant Phillips, and when the wounded arrived we were quite ready for them. I also went to Colonel Shewell and Major Walcott of the Commissariat Department and advised them to lay hold of all the charpoys and chattis possible, and this they promptly did, and both the European and Native wounded, therefore, had beds to lie on." (Extract from Surgeon-Major Arnott's Diary.)

² Brigadier-General Brooke's Diary.

who had been trying to make their way into the Citadel by the pass near Old Kandahar, had been discovered by villagers and killed.

From the moment the troops employed in clearing the cantonment entered Kandahar, the city was virtually in a state of siege, and the first business of General Primrose and his Staff was to make such arrangements as would ensure its safety without putting too great a strain on the small force which must hold it till, from one quarter or the other, it should be relieved. The garrison, including the remnant of Burrows's Brigade, and the newly arrived wing of the 28th Bombay Infantry, numbered ninety-seven officers and four thousand five hundred and thirty-three non-commissioned officers and men ; and when Cavalry and Artillery men and four hundred and thirty-eight sick and wounded had been deducted from this total, there remained only three thousand two hundred and forty-three British and Native Infantry soldiers to guard the Citadel and man six thousand one hundred and sixty-five yards of wall, divided as follows :—

South Front	.	1,300 yards.
West Front		1,987 „
North Front		1,178 „
East Front		1,700 „

To the South Front, commanded by Brigadier-General Brooke, with Major R. J. Le P. Trench in charge of the Shikarpore Gate, four hundred men were allotted ; and five hundred to the West Front, commanded by Brigadier-General Burrows, with Colonel S. de B. Edwards in charge of the Herat, and Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. Griffith in charge of the Tope Khana Gate. The defence of the North Front was committed to four hundred men under Primrose's personal command, with Lieutenant-Colonel T. R. Nimmo in charge of the Eedgah Gate, till the pressure of other duties compelled the General to transfer this responsibility to Burrows, Colonel Edwards succeeding the latter General in his original command. Lastly five hundred men were

absorbed by the East Front, commanded by Brigadier-General Nuttall, with Colonel W. Bannerman in charge of the Kabul, and Colonel W. G. Mainwaring in charge of the Durani Gate.

The final distribution of artillery was as follows :—

Ordnance.	Position.	Officer in Charge.	Officer Com- manding Force.
9-pdr. M.L.R. gun, C/2nd .	N.-E. Bastion	Lieut. H. L. Gardiner, R.A.	} Major P. H. Greig.
9-pdr. M.L.R. gun, C/2nd, R.A.	Durani Gate .		
9-pdr. ditto, ditto	Kabul Gate .	Lieut. W. A. Plant, R.A. .	} Captain G. M. B. Hornsby.
40-pdr. B.L.R. gun, 5/11th .	S.-E. Bastion		
6-pdr. S.B. gun .	Shikarpore Gate	Lieut. A. Bell-Irving, R.A. .	} Captain G. M. B. Hornsby.
40-pdr. B.L.R. gun, 5/11th .	S.-W. Bastion		
9-pdr. M.L.R. gun, E/R, R.H.A.	S.-W. Bastion	Lieut. G. S. Jones, R.A. .	} Capt. J. R. Slade.
9-pdr. ditto, E/B, R.H.A. .	Herat Gate .		
† 9-pdr. ditto, C/2nd, R.A.	Tope Khana Gate .	Lieut. G. B. Smith, R.A. .	} Capt. J. R. Slade.
40-pdr. B.L.R. gun, 5/11th .	N.-W. Bastion		
9-pdr. M.L.R. gun, E/B, R.H.A.	N.-W. Bastion	Lieut. T. F. T. Fowle, R.A. .	} Capt. J. R. Slade.
9-pdr. ditto, ditto	Pedgah Gate.		
40-pdr. B.L.R. gun, 5/11th, R.A.	S.-W. Bastion of Citadel.		

In reserve two eight-inch mortars.

To complete the defences of the walls, a number of marksmen, commanded by Major F. G. F. Moore, were told off to the bastions and other points suitable for long-range shooting ;¹ two hundred men, under the command of the Officer of the Day, were stationed in the Char-Su, the covered arcade in the centre of the city, to be at hand to go to the assistance of any one of the fronts that might require strengthening, and in the Tope Khana Square—where Colonel C. T. Heathcote was in command—another hundred were always held in readiness to replace men drawn from this first reserve. The remaining troops occupied the Citadel, where all the stores and sick were collected, and into which, in case of need, the whole force could have retired.

The medical arrangements were under Deputy Surgeon-Major J. O’Nial, who distributed his Staff along the different fronts. Signalling stations, superintended by Captain F. C. Keyser, were established at the four angles of the city walls, on the gates, and on the

¹ Primrose’s Despatch states that these men did excellent service during the siege.

roof of the Char-Su, connected with one another and with the General's Head-Quarters in the Citadel. Free communication was provided along the entire length of the walls, both on the ramparts above and in the roadway below ; gun platforms, with ramps leading up to them, were constructed in important positions, traverses erected, and all the gates covered with sheet-iron—a necessary precaution since, in 1842, the Afghans nearly succeeded in forcing their way into the city by setting fire to the Herat Gate.¹

The arrangements for the defence of Kandahar against external foes once well advanced, the time had come to act on Sher Ali's advice to rid the city of dangerous internal elements. The Resident, Colonel St. John, was opposed to the step, believing that there would be little risk in allowing the people to remain in their homes ; but Brooke shared the Wali's opinion as to its necessity, and his arguments prevailed with Primrose. The first ejection decree was issued and put in force on the 29th of July, the last, disobedience to which was to be visited with the death penalty, on the 3rd of August. Altogether about 15,000 persons seem to have been expelled from the city. The season of the year mitigated to some extent the hardships attendant on turning so large a number of persons of all ages and both sexes out of their homes, and, as had been the case when Sir William Nott carried out a similar measure forty-two years before, " every exertion was made to render it as little oppressive as possible " ; but, now as then, it " could not be altogether free from cruelty and injustice," and only the weakness of the British garrison justified its adoption.²

¹ " On the eve of the 10th of March, 1842, the Ghazis swarmed close up to the walls of Kandahar, and at 8 o'clock heaped faggots at the Herat Gate and fired the pile. Saturated with oil, the brushwood blazed up with sudden fury and the gate itself ignited as readily as tinder." (Kaye's *History of the First Afghan War*, Vol. III. p. 152.)

² " 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." (Ibid. p. 150.)

For the troops there were ample food stuffs in stock,¹ but only a thirteen days' supply of grain and bhusa for cattle of all sorts;² so, first, the transport animals and, later, the horses and gun bullocks were put on reduced rations. There had been some talk of sending away the greater part of the camels to relieve the pressure on the reservoirs in the Citadel,³ but, luckily, Major Adam soon discovered other sources of supply—most houses have their wells—and the only beasts dispensed with were some two hundred and fifty broken-down camels which were turned out to shift for themselves.

It was fortunate for Primrose and his troops that Ayub Khan could not follow up his victory at Maiwand by an immediate advance on Kandahar. It took him some days to attend to the wounded and bury the dead—he admitted a loss of fifteen hundred troops, and the Ghazis described their losses as “ beshumar ” (countless)⁴—and he was further delayed by the discord reigning in his camp; Regulars and Irregulars, Heratis and Kabulis quarrelling over the spoil. This respite enabled the garrison to clear away a number of houses lying close up to the gates of Kandahar, to open out vistas for the cannon by cutting down trees, to lay down wire entanglement all round the walls, to strengthen weak places with abattis, and to take the range of prominent objects on all sides of the city, and post up range tables in the bastions and gateways.

¹ In addition to the troops there must have been at least 4,000 camp-followers in the city.—H. B. H.

² 1,244 horses, 373 artillery bullocks, and 1,826 transport animals, of which more than half were camels.—H. B. H.

³ “ My anxiety was the fearful cry of water ! water ! rising up everywhere. The canal supply had been cut off for two days past ; the Karez Hill aqueduct was practically in the possession of the enemy, and for the moment our only available supply was in two reservoirs in the Citadel, containing a few thousand gallons of green stuff.” (Major Adam, Assistant Quartermaster-General.)

⁴ “ The losses inflicted upon the Ghazis were summed up by themselves as ‘ beshumar ’ (countless)—3,000 to 4,000—and they added that it took them seven days to bury their dead.” (Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 29.)

The business of destroying buildings that could afford cover to the enemy was carried on from the first under harassing conditions.¹ Armed tribesmen, hidden in watercourses, walled gardens, and loop-holed houses, kept up a galling fire on the working and covering parties, so that more than once they had to be recalled ; and though the villagers were poor marksmen and their weapons of very inferior quality, yet, during the siege, those parties had twelve men killed, and one officer, Lieutenant G. A. C. de Trafford, and forty men wounded.² The work of construction inside and of destruction outside the city was under the supervision of the Commanding Engineer, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Hills ; and he and his four assistants, Major E. P. Leach, Captain G. M. Cruikshank, Lieutenant G. T. Jones, and Lieutenant E. A. Waller, the only available Engineer officers in the place, had their hands full all day and every day.

On the 31st of July, the tribesmen occupied Khairabad and a Ziarat (shrine) lying to the north of that village, close up to the Citadel's north-eastern bastion. Of the former they retained possession, but they were driven out of the latter by three companies of the 28th

¹ " This work should unquestionably have been done during the previous year when General Stewart held Kandahar, as it is surely the duty of any General occupying a foreign country to put the defensive places in thorough order, in order to meet all contingencies. General Primrose, a weak officer, followed this example, and in spite of the representations of General Brooke and the Commanding Royal Engineer, nothing was allowed to be done." (Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 35.)

" This little affair of the patrol (which was fired into close to cantonments) is another excellent instance of how little Sir D. Stewart did to make the position here as good in a military sense as it could be, as, had he done so, he would not have left a wall or enclosure standing within 1,000 yards of our camp anywhere." (Extract from General Brooke's Diary, 19th July.)

² " In no siege in history has it been necessary for the defenders to sally out by daylight each day and remove walls, fill up ditches and demolish cover outside the defences of an invested town, and in doing so be exposed to the fire of the besiegers. The converse has been always the case, and it says much for the troops that they proceeded cheerfully to carry out their work, often forced to turn their backs to the fire of the enemy while working or pushing the high walls down." (Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, pp. 36, 37.)

Bombay Infantry and a detachment of the Poona Horse. In the days that followed this affair, in which the enemy lost fifty men, and the Bombay regiment only one man killed and three wounded, reconnaissances were pushed out to Abassabad and the Baba Wali Pass, from which latter point large bodies of footmen and horsemen could be seen moving up from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, Kushab, and Mundi Hissar, while Chihilzina, and the Karez and Picket Hills were alive with Ghazis.

Crowds of these formidable fighters accompanied Ayub Khan's vanguard when, on the 5th of August, it arrived before Kandahar and occupied the abandoned cantonment and the villages on the eastern and southern fronts of the city. The Afghan camp was pitched, in the first instance, behind Picket Hill, but a reconnaissance, followed by a well-directed fire from the British guns, led to its being shifted to a position near Old Kandahar; and here, two days later, Ayub Khan concentrated his entire force.

In the interval between the appearance of the Afghan army's advanced guard and the arrival of its main body, Colonel St. John managed to get a message through to Chaman, reporting that the enemy had crossed the Argandab and occupied Kokeran. This message reached General Phayre on the 9th of August, and the following day he received from Major Adam a letter dated the 5th, which gave an encouraging report of the morale and prospects of the besieged garrison.

Early on the morning of the 8th of August, the Afghan artillery opened fire on the Citadel from Picket Hill, and shortly afterwards on the city from Deh Kwaja and Deh Khati. The bombardment continued for many days, but it made no impression on the substantial walls, and did little harm to the troops and animals sheltered by them; still, day by day, as the besiegers occupied fresh villages and turned canal banks and all available accidents of the ground into something approaching to regular parallels, in which, here and there, they mounted guns,¹ the work of clearing open spaces round the

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 37.

city grew more and more difficult and dangerous. On the 12th, whilst working parties under Lieutenant Waller were busy opening up enclosures close to the south-east angle of the walls, a galling fire was brought to bear upon them from a garden near at hand. To put a stop to this annoyance, Captain E. W. Adderley, with twenty men of the 7th Fusiliers and detachments of the 19th and 30th Bombay Infantry, burst through a gap in the garden wall and fell upon the enemy, who fled, leaving eighty dead behind, among them their leader, Afzul Khan, brother to the Commander of Ayub Khan's cavalry, killed by Waller in single combat, whilst the assailants lost one man killed and eight wounded. Later in the day, Lieutenants Waller and Jones, and a corporal of the 7th Fusiliers sallied out of the Eedgah Gate, under a heavy fire, to rescue a wounded soldier, who had been overlooked when the working party re-entered the town. The non-commissioned officer was shot dead, but the two officers brought in his body, and the man in helping to save whom he had lost his life.¹

The next morning, Afghan troops occupied Deh Kwaja, Khairabad, and the Ziarat near the latter village from which the tribesmen had been driven on the 31st of July; and the same day Primrose received information that Ayub Khan had prepared scaling ladders, and was intending to make an assault on the city at a point opposite Deh Kwaja, where the walls were only fourteen or fifteen feet high, and in a dilapidated state, and where a couple of Ziarats, too strong and big to be pulled down, and many walled enclosures would afford shelter to his skirmishers and covering parties.²

The occupation of Khairabad was a serious matter, for guns planted on its walls would sweep with an enfilading fire the entire

¹ "Captain Adderley received a well-earned Brevet-Majority, but Lieutenants Waller and Jones were passed over, though they were both recommended for the Victoria Cross." (*Hills's Bombay Field Force*, p. 37.)

² Adam's *Comments on the Campaign in Southern Afghanistan*, 1880.

northern front of the city, which cavalry patrols had hitherto kept clear of the enemy. It was of the utmost importance that the garrison should retain the freedom of egress and ingress which it had so far enjoyed; for, without that freedom, not only would access to the water supply on which the cavalry horses and transport animals depended, and to the trenches in which the refuse of the town was daily buried, be cut off, but there would be no further possibility of meeting an attack on any one of the city fronts by a flank counter-attack,¹ or of operating against the enemy in any way which the course of events might suggest. Yet, the report that Ayub Khan was preparing an assault so alarmed Primrose that the Commanding Engineer had difficulty in dissuading him from shutting and barricading the Eedgah Gate.

On the 14th of August, the Signalling Officer, Captain Keyser, reported that a body of five hundred Afghan regular troops had reinforced Deh Kwaja, and Hills laid before the General a plan for forestalling Ayub Khan's designs by a sortie directed against his positions to the east of Kandahar. According to this plan, a strong cavalry force was to slip out of the Eedgah Gate before dawn of the selected day and, keeping well to the east of Khairabad and Deh Kwaja, take up a position south of the latter village, ready to intercept any reinforcement that might be sent to its assistance. There was to be no preliminary bombardment, but the guns on the eastern rampart were to be trained ready to support the cavalry, and two field guns were to accompany the three infantry regiments—the 7th Fusiliers, and the 4th and 19th Bombay Infantry—that at day-break were to rush Khairabad, and then to swing round and seize a high house at the north-east corner of Deh Kwaja, the roof of which

¹ "I told Primrose, when he asked me what should be done if the Afghans attempted an assault on any of the gates, that the only practical thing was self-evident—namely, to send out a regiment or two from the Eedgah Gate and take the attack in flank." (Letter of Hills to the Assistant Quartermaster-General.)

dominated all the neighbouring buildings. As soon as this house which, being the furthest from Kandahar, was pretty certain to lie open and undefended, had been captured, the field guns were to take up a position on a low hill between the two villages and to bring an enfilading fire to bear along Deh Kwaja's west front, whilst the infantry—the three regiments keeping well together—were to march right through the village and, passing out through the western entrance, make straight for the Kabul Gate, which was to be opened to admit them, capturing on their way any guns they might come across, and destroying all loopholed walls facing towards the city.¹

So long as the author of this scheme was there to explain and support it, it seems to have commanded Primrose's approval; but no sooner had Hills left him than he sent for Brooke, who declared that he saw no good reason for any sortie, but, if there was to be one, it must be on entirely different lines from those proposed by the Commanding Engineer.

The idea of a sortie having once taken root in Primrose's mind, he was not prepared to put it aside; but he was quite willing to leave the responsibility for it to his Second-in-Command; and to avoid the necessity of having to decide between Brooke's plan and Hills's in the presence of other men, he actually omitted to invite the latter to Head-Quarters House when he summoned his other chief officers to hear Brooke propound his scheme, and to be instructed in such details as fell within each man's province.

Officially present at the meeting were—

General Primrose,
 Brigadier-General Brooke,
 „ „ Burrows,
 „ „ Nuttall,
 Colonel W. French, Commanding the Artillery,
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Shewell, Deputy Commissary-General,
 Deputy Surgeon-General J. O'Nial,

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 38.

but Major C. J. Burnett, Assistant Adjutant-General, and Major Adam, Assistant Quartermaster-General, were in the room and heard all that passed.

After Primrose had opened the proceedings by announcing that there was to be a sortie, that Brigadier-General Brooke would be in command, and that all arrangements were to be made by him, Brooke unfolded his scheme, which reversed every disposition recommended by Hills except the part that he had assigned to the Cavalry. Instead of a large force, a small one was to be employed ; the Infantry was to move out of the Kabul, not the Eedgah Gate, and cross a space half a mile broad exposed to the fire of the Afghans holding Deh Kwaja, instead of moving over an open front ; the operation, instead of embracing both Khairabad and Deh Kwaja, was to be confined to the latter village, which was to be attacked at two widely separated points, instead of at one point only. Instead of the force being kept well together, and marching as a compact body right through the village from the corner furthest from Kandahar to the exit nearest to that city, losing nothing of its strength by holding positions on its road—one of the columns was to traverse the village from west to east, the other, from south to north ; and as each was to come out by the gate by which it had gone in, detachments were to be left at every cross-street to cover the retirement. Finally, instead of the sortie being conducted with the utmost secrecy and despatch, an hour's preliminary bombardment was to give the widest possible notice of the impending movement, and ensure to the enemy the time to assemble in force to resist it.

The officers to whom Brooke explained his plan, seem to have seen nothing in it to object to ; but the two who had not been asked to consider it, had listened in growing uneasiness and amazement, and when it came to the mention of a bombardment, Adam could contain himself no longer. "For heaven's sake," he exclaimed, "don't let there be any preliminary bombardment. If there is to

be a sortie, let it be a surprise with the bayonet, and having captured the enemy's guns, retire quickly to the city." For a moment Brooke stared at the audacious speaker, and then, turning to Primrose, said deliberately :—" Sir, I wish the guns to open before the attack is made," and Primrose answered, " Certainly ; see to this, Colonel French."

The sortie was fixed for the next morning and the following troops were to take part in it :—

100 men	3rd Bombay Cavalry,
100 „	Poona Horse,
100 „	3rd Sind Horse,
4 companies (about 300 men)	7th Bengal Fusiliers,
4 „ „ „	19th Bombay Infantry,
4 „ „ „	28th „ „

in all, three hundred cavalry and nine hundred infantry. The latter Brooke divided into three columns. The first column, commanded by Colonel A. G. Daubeny, consisted of two companies of the 7th Fusiliers and two of the 19th Bombay Infantry ; the second, under Lieutenant-Colonel T. R. Nimmo, of one company 7th Fusiliers and three of the 28th Bombay Infantry ; the third, commanded by Colonel C. T. Heathcote, of one company of the 7th Fusiliers, two of the 19th and one of the 28th Bombay Infantry. To the last-named column was attached the squadron of the 3rd Sind Horse, and each of the three was accompanied by an Engineer Officer, a few Sappers and Miners, and a Medical Officer, with a proper complement of dhoolie-bearers and water-carriers.

Before dawn on the 16th of August, the artillery on the eastern face of Kandahar—one forty-pounder, three nine-pounders, and two eight-inch mortars, under Major P. H. Greig's command—were trained ready to bombard Deh Kwaja, and the squadron of the 3rd Sind Horse and the infantry to be employed in the sortie drawn up in the streets

adjoining the Kabul Gate.¹ The other two squadrons assigned to Brooke had already passed out of the Eedgah Gate, and, making a wide détour to avoid Khairabad and Deh Kwaja, were well on their way to their appointed position at the south-east corner of the latter village, when Greig received the order to open fire, an order which he obeyed, but not without pointing out its folly. His remonstrance was quickly justified, for the booming of the cannon awoke the country-side, and soon, from the south, swarms of Ghazis were hastening towards the threatened village. A spirited charge of a troop of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry led by Lieutenant Geoghegan compelled them to seek safety in broken ground, but if the pressure of the Cavalry kept the Ghazis out of Deh Kwaja, it kept the inhabitants of that village in. At the first discharge numbers had rushed to the gates furthest from the city, but, seeing that the way of escape was barred, turned back to fight with all the fierce courage which comes to men caught in a trap ; and it was under a heavy fire from the village walls that the first and second columns issued from the Kabul Gate and, taking advantage of the cover afforded by enclosures and watercourses, advanced to the attack. The space to be traversed measured a little under a thousand yards, and for two-thirds of the distance the whole force kept together, then Nimmo's troops diverged to the left, and at 5.30 both columns penetrated into the village, the first pushing into it from the south and slowly fighting its way northward, whilst the second entered on the western side and worked its way eastward.² Along both lines of advance the resistance offered was fierce and stubborn. Every door was blocked, every wall loopholed, and behind every loophole was a rifle. As the columns advanced they began to lose

¹ "During the half-hour's cannonade, the columns had to wait in the street adjoining the Kabul Gate, and were in very good fettle, looking cheerful and animated. I remember particularly noticing young Wood of the 7th Fusiliers, evidently full of enthusiasm." (Diary of Surgeon-Major J. Arnott.)

² Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 40.

cohesion and to dwindle away, as more and more men had to be detached to guard their flanks and rear.

Whilst the first and second columns of Brooke's force were struggling against overwhelming odds in the narrow streets of Deh Kwaja, the two companies of the 19th Bombay Infantry belonging to the third column had gone forward to support the Cavalry, arriving just in time to assist Nuttall in repulsing a second and more formidable attempt on the part of the Ghazis to force their way into the village. Their numbers swelled by many fresh contingents, they were pressing boldly forward, when three well-aimed volleys from the British breech-loaders threw them into disorder, and Nuttall, charging with all his force, drove them back with heavy loss into the broken ground from which they had emerged. By this time, the remainder of the Reserve column, which had been standing idle, apparently without any orders, at the Kabul Gate, was in motion, and it continued to advance till it came within three hundred yards of the village's western wall.¹ Here it halted under such cover as it could find, but the enemy's fire was very heavy and many of the troops were hit—amongst others Colonel Malcolmson and Lieutenant-Colonel Shewell; the latter was not with the column, but had rushed out of the Citadel to the rescue of a wounded private of the 7th Fusiliers.

Meanwhile affairs inside the village were going from bad to worse. Daubeny's troops, who had been joined by some of Nimmo's men, had, indeed, fought their way through to the lofty house at its north-east corner, a building which was to have played an important part in Hills's plan, but which in Brooke's only served as a grave for the non-commissioned officer and fifteen men of the 28th Bombay Infantry told off to defend it. Retirement was now the object to be aimed at—but by what road? In front, crowds of Ghazis, issuing from Khairabad, were ready to dispute any attempt to re-enter Kandahar by the

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 40.

Eedgah Gate ; and, in rear, all the inhabitants of Deh Kwaja were waiting to fall upon the diminished column if, encumbered by wounded, it should venture to retrace its steps. Either course was fraught with danger ; both seemed almost hopeless unless the troops' stock of ammunition, which had been nearly exhausted in the advance, could be renewed ; so Brooke despatched his Brigade-Major, Captain F. W. V. Leckie, to Primrose to ask for a fresh supply and to report that the position was untenable. Leckie got through with the message, but it had been better undelivered ; for Primrose, overwhelmed by the discovery that the sortie had failed, lost his head, and, instead of taking steps to extricate the troops in Deh Kwaja from their difficulties, gave orders that the retreat should at once be sounded from the battlements,¹ thus leaving Brooke no time to mature his preparations for retirement, and announcing to the Afghans the end of the enterprise as, by the bombardment, he had warned them of its beginning. In vain Hills entreated to be allowed to take out a few men to support the retreat, Primrose declared that not a man should go—the loss had been heavy enough already, and “ It is all your doing,” he cried. “ I am damned if it is,” retorted the indignant Engineer. “ You have done everything I told you decidedly and strongly was not to be done—bombardment, small force, separate attacks, and wrong end of the village, and you never informed me of all these changes. I told you, moreover, that it was no child's play, this sortie, and that if you did take it up, it must be carried out thoroughly and with every available man.”

The retort was true ; but it only embittered Hills's relations with the General, and did nothing to shake the latter's determination to leave the troops in Deh Kwaja to get out of their difficulties as best they could. The bugles sounded the fatal call, and Brooke, understanding the message of abandonment which it conveyed, sent word

¹ “ On receiving this request General Primrose, losing heart, ordered the retreat to be sounded.” (Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 40.)

to Nimmo to withdraw through the centre of the village on the Kabul Gate; despatched a note to Nuttall asking him to cover with his cavalry the retirement of the two companies of 19th Bombay Infantry which had come to his support; directed Daubeny to fight his way to the Eedgah Gate; and then turned back with a handful of men to collect the detachments dropped in the advance, and either bring them into safety or perish with them. Unfortunately, by his instructions to Nuttall, he had made the latter the more likely alternative; for, the moment the cavalry began moving towards the town, the Afghans, whom they had so long held in check, poured into Deh Kwaja, so that the little British force, amounting in the end to nearly two hundred men, had to face many fresh foes. Near the southern exit Brooke was met by a large body of the enemy, but charging through them with the bayonet, he got his men clear of the village and into a dry ditch about a hundred and twenty yards from its walls, where he halted them to wait till Captain Cruikshank, who had been severely wounded, could be brought up. The delay was short, but it gave the Afghans, who had been scattered by the impetuosity of the British charge, time to draw together, and when the troops rose from the ditch to make a dash for the next cover, a heavy fire laid many low, amongst them Brooke himself.¹ An ugly rush of the Ghazis followed, but the men were well in hand and their steady volleys again drove off their assailants; yet, with fresh swarms gathering on every side and failing ammunition, it was impossible to stop to take up the dead or even to seek for the wounded, and they could only fall back slowly till, terribly reduced in numbers, they reached the Kabul Gate, through which the Reserve and the Cavalry had already entered the city.

Colonel Heathcote, in command of the former body, had ignored the signal to retreat, though his ammunition was running short, and held

¹ "General Brooke, who throughout acted in a most gallant manner, and who eventually lost his life in trying to save that of a brother officer and other wounded men, was killed." (*Hills's Bombay Field Force*, p. 41.)

on to his position in front of Deh Kwaja till Lieutenant E. O. F. Hamilton, Primrose's Aide-de-Camp, brought him positive orders to withdraw.¹ As his troops retired, two riderless horses rushing madly by—one of them Brooke's white charger—told a tale of disaster, and soon after Brooke's orderly officer, Lieutenant H. St. L. Wood—a ghastly figure, all covered with blood—staggered into their midst, gasping out that the General was in deadly peril and imploring aid for him and his men.² So far as Brooke was concerned assistance would have come too late, and Primrose's imperative orders made it impossible to give organized help to his hard-pressed troops, but individual officers—Burnett, Leach, Adam, Caldecott,³ and others⁴—sallied out through the Kabul Gate and were active in bringing in the wounded and maintaining order, whilst Surgeon-Major J. Arnott and Surgeon E. W. Kellsall went out some two or three hundred yards with a dhoolie in the hope of discovering Brooke and Cruikshank, but neither the General nor any other wounded man was in sight. Meanwhile the Cavalry, and the two companies of the 19th Bombay Infantry covered by it, had made good their retreat; not, however, without many casualties owing to the cramped nature of the ground, which compelled them to retire in close formation;⁵ Daubeny's troops, bursting through the northern boundary of Deh Kwaja into the open ground lying between that village and Khairabad, had charged through the Ghazis who attempted to cut them off from the Eedgah Gate and got safely back into the Citadel; and Nimmo had brought his column out of the village through the entrance by which it had gone in, and was retreating over the ground recently occupied

¹ Diary of Surgeon-Major J. Arnott.

² *Ibid.*

³ Major F. J. Caldecott, R.A., Commissary of Ordnance.

⁴ Amongst the first to go out under the hottest fire were two young subalterns—Lieutenants W. Adie and M. B. Salmon—who brought in a wounded man. The latter went out a second time, descending from the ramparts by a rope ladder. Both these young officers deserved the Victoria Cross.—H. B. H.

⁵ Primrose's Despatch.

by the Reserve. The Artillery on the ramparts did much to facilitate the retirement on both sides of the city ; and it rendered a still greater service to the garrison by silencing the fire of the Afghan guns on Picket Hill and in the General's garden, under cover of which Ayub Khan was trying to form up his infantry near the old cantonment.

By 7.30 a.m., the Cavalry and all the three columns had returned to the shelter of the walls ; but, of the twelve hundred men who had gone out three hours before, a hundred and six had been killed and a hundred and eighteen wounded ; eight British officers being amongst the former and seven amongst the latter. The following table shows the distribution of these losses amongst the different corps.

TABLE.

	EUROPEANS.						NATIVES.					
	Killed.			Wounded.			Killed.			Wounded.		
	Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.	Total.
Staff	3	—	3	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poona Horse	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	4	4
3rd Sind Horse	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	6	6	—	2	2
3rd Light Cavalry	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	4	3	9	12
No. 2 Company Sappers and Miners	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	6	1	6	7
2-7th Royal Fusiliers	2	22	24	2	28	30	—	—	—	—	—	—
59th Regiment, attached to 2-7th Regiment	—	2	2	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
19th Regiment Bombay Infantry	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	20	20	1	24	25
28th Regiment Bombay Infantry	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	30	30	—	22	22
Total	8	24	32	7	30	37	1	66	67	5	67	72

RECAPITULATION.

<i>Killed.</i>	{	8 European Officers	}	106	} 224	
		1 Native Officer				
		90 Non-commissioned Officers and men				
<i>Wounded.</i>	{	7 Followers	}	118		
		7 European Officers				
		5 Native Officers				
		97 Non-commissioned Officers and men				
		9 Followers				
		37 horses killed and 35 wounded.				

NAMES OF OFFICERS KILLED.

Brigadier-General H. F. Brooke, in Command of Sortie.
 Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Newport, 28th Bombay Infantry.
 Major R. J. Le P. Trench, 19th Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant F. C. Stayner, 19th Bombay Infantry.
 2nd Lieutenant F. P. F. Wood, 2-7th Fusiliers.
 2nd Lieutenant E. S. Marsh, 2-7th Fusiliers.
 Captain G. M. Cruikshank, Royal Engineers.
 The Rev. G. M. Gordon, Chaplain, Church Missionary Society.

OFFICERS WOUNDED.

Colonel T. R. Nimmo, 28th Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Shewell, Staff (subsequently died).
 Colonel J. H. P. Malcolmson, 3rd Sind Horse.
 Major T. B. Vandeleur, 2-7th Fusiliers (subsequently died).
 Captain W. Conolly, 2-7th Fusiliers.
 Lieutenant H. St. L. Wood, Staff.
 Surgeon A. K. Stewart, Poona Horse.

The failure of the sortie brought no discredit on the troops engaged in it. In the despatch that described the operation, General Primrose declared that no words of his could express his appreciation of the cool and gallant behaviour of all ranks, and he singled out for special commendation Brooke, who lost his life in trying to save Cruikshank; Second Lieutenant E. S. Marsh, killed in helping to bring in Lieutenant F. P. F. Wood; the Rev. G. M. Gordon of the Church Missionary Society, mortally wounded, whilst ministering to the men under a heavy fire; the Rev. Father Jackson, who, on this occasion as

on many others, was in the forefront of the fight attending to the wounded, both European and Native ; Surgeon-Major B. T. Geraud, whose devotion to the wounded on the field had frequently elicited his (the General's) admiration ; and Lieutenant W. St. L. Chase and Private Ashford, 7th Fusiliers, who under a heavy fire had carried a wounded man from the front to a place of safety. The two latter he recommended for the Victoria Cross, which they subsequently received.

The courage and gallantry lauded by Primrose had a marked effect on the subsequent course of events. The Ghazis, who had not doubted their ability to wipe out of existence the six hundred men so rashly thrown into Deh Kwaja, were bitterly disappointed at their comparatively small measure of success ; and, deeply impressed by the steadiness of the Cavalry outside, and the fighting qualities of the Fusiliers and the Bombay regiments inside the village, they lost much of the boldness which had marked their movements since their victory at Maiwand. A sense of insecurity which took possession of all minds, found expression in the abandonment of Khairabad ; in the return to their homes of many Zemindawaris and other tribesmen, who had flocked from a distance to Ayub Khan's standard ; in the demand of the regular troops holding Deh Kwaja to be withdrawn from a village in the defence of which they had not—so they complained—been properly supported ; and in the fact that, for two days and nights after the sortie, the whole Afghan army remained under arms, expecting to be attacked. So rude, indeed, was the shock to the army's morale that, though siege operations were carried on for a few days longer on the southern and western fronts of Kandahar, and some shots were fired from the batteries on Picket Hill and in the General's garden, no further attempt was made to invest the city ;¹ and Ayub Khan, recognizing that he could neither

¹ Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 42.

capture it by a *coup de main* nor reduce it by famine—he himself was in great straits for food—would have abandoned the siege and retired to Girishk,¹ but for the opposition of his Kabul troops and the vehement protests of the inhabitants of the villages implicated in the murder of the stragglers from Maiwand, who expected vengeance to fall upon them the moment his protection was withdrawn.² Strong in numbers and having the granting or withholding of supplies largely in their hands, these men kept him in the position he had taken up on the 7th of August till the 23rd, when rumours of the approach of a relieving force marching from Kabul, led to his abandoning the villages to the east and south of the town ; and on the 24th, on receipt of certain information that General Roberts had arrived at Tirandaz, he removed his camp from the ruins of Old Kandahar to a position behind the Baba Wali Pass, close to the left bank of the Argandab, and sent to Herat for a fresh supply of ammunition.

The next day, General Primrose reconnoitred the whole of the enemy's late position from Picket Hill and the Cantonment right round to Deh Kwaja, and found that all villages had been deserted and all cannon removed. A working party was immediately detailed to bury the bodies of the officers and men left on the ground when the troops retreated into Kandahar after the sortie. Between forty and fifty corpses were interred, and General Brooke, Colonel Newport, and Captain Cruikshank were identified. The same day Major Vandeleur, one of the officers wounded on the 16th of August, died in hospital, but Colonel Shewell lingered till the 2nd of September.

Satisfactory news up to the 12th of August had been received from Colonel Tanner, who reported the country round Khelat-i-Ghilzai free from hostile gatherings ; but no communication from the Indian Government had reached Primrose since the 28th of July, and only one letter, dated August 6th, had got through from Phayre's Division.

¹ St. John's telegram dated Kandahar, August 26th. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 73.

² Hills's *Bombay Field Force*, p. 42.

No one in Kandahar doubted that the Government and the Military Authorities were straining every nerve to put an end to their isolation, but the uncertainty as to when help would reach them was very trying to men oppressed with heavy duties performed in excessive heat, living under insanitary conditions, and unable to obtain fresh vegetable food ; and, in consequence, the wounded made slow progress towards recovery, and the general health of the troops declined till there came to be 696 cases in hospital, made up as follows :—

	<i>Sick.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>
European troops	187	86
Native troops	340	83
	—	—
Total	527	169

Great therefore was the joy of all members of the garrison when, soon after mid-day of the 27th of August, the flash of a heliograph announced the approach of friends, and Primrose's question, "Who are you ?" was answered by the words, "The Advanced Guard of General Roberts's force—General Gough with two regiments of Cavalry."¹

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. Hills's plan for the sortie of the 16th of August shows a thorough understanding of the nature of the intended operation—Brooke's, a complete misunderstanding of its character. All the proposals of the one made for secrecy, speed, and unity of action ; all the arrangements of the other for publicity, delay, and division, with its natural consequence—loss of power. Every word, every act of Brooke, from the insisting on a preliminary bombardment to the message announcing that his position in Deh Kwaja was untenable, proves that he failed to see that an operation directed to the attainment

¹ "Old Memories." by Sir Hugh Gough. *Pall Mall Magazine*, April, 1899, p. 540.

of some specific object—the capture of certain guns, the destruction of certain works, the dispersion of a certain force, success to be followed by immediate retirement—must be conducted on different lines from an operation which aims at the permanent occupation of the whole, or a part, of an enemy's position.

The annals of most sieges offer examples of successful sorties; but Brooke need not have gone further back than the former Afghan War to learn the principles on which they should be founded. When, on the 11th of March, 1842, the Afghans opened fire on Jellalabad from a sangar, which they had thrown up during the night, and at the same time a report was brought in that they had begun to undermine the walls, a strong party of infantry and cavalry and two hundred Sappers and Miners, under Colonel Dennis, issued, without any preliminary bombardment, from the Peshawar Gate. Protected by the fire of all the guns on the ramparts, this force seized and destroyed the sangar, and having ascertained that there was no truth in the story of a mine, regained the city without the loss of a man. Three weeks later, when a second sortie was made—this time for the purpose of procuring food—and five hundred sheep and goats were swept away from the enemy's covering parties, there was again no preliminary bombardment, and success was once more due to the unexpectedness, suddenness, and unity of the operation.

A third sortie, with no less an aim than the dispersion of the enemy and the putting an end to the siege, conformed to the rules, which experience has imposed on this kind of operation, inasmuch as it was not preceded by a bombardment and was kept, after one quickly rectified deviation from Havelock's plan, strictly to a single line of advance, along which the attacking force, in case of need, would have fallen back upon the fortress, not in weak fragments, but as a formidable whole.

OBSERVATION II. There can be no doubt that General Primrose

was unequal to the important position which he held at Kandahar in the summer of 1880; but the responsibility for his failure does not rest with him. The hardships and anxieties of the previous year, when he had been in command of Sir Donald Stewart's communications, had told upon his health, and when called upon to be that officer's successor, a painful disease was undermining his mental and bodily powers. He made no secret of his reluctance to undertake fresh and more onerous responsibilities—few officers would have had the courage to refuse an appointment in the Field—and the Government of India was not ignorant of his failing health, which had been brought to their notice by an officer on the Head-Quarters Staff; but the Military Authorities in England demanded that, to remove the slight put upon the British Army by the appointment of three officers belonging to the Indian Army to the principal commands in the first phase of the war, the command in Southern Afghanistan should now go to Primrose, and to Primrose, accordingly, it was given; and this, notwithstanding that there was an alternative choice, for General Maude and General Bright, both belonging to the Home Army, were ready to their hand in India. To neutralize any bad effects that might be expected to flow from putting a weak man in a position which called for an exceptionally strong one, the new commander was given an excellent Staff—no General could have desired a better Assistant Adjutant-General than Major Burnett, a better Assistant Quartermaster-General than Major Adam, a better Commanding Royal Engineer than Lieutenant-Colonel Hills—but, as the Duke of Wellington once pointed out, when a similar mistake was being perpetrated by the Indian Government of his day, the best of Staffs cannot make amends to an army for the incapacity of its Head.¹

¹ “The Governor-General appoints a Commander-in-Chief to the expedition and does so without fear of failure, although he knows his incapacity, as he says he sends with him a good Adjutant-General and a good Quartermaster-General and a good army. But he is mistaken if he supposes that a good high-

So long as there were only routine duties to perform, things went smoothly enough ; but the moment there came to be pressing dangers to guard against, and decisions calling for a clear head and strong will to take and act upon, Primrose, unable to form an independent judgment and surrounded by men of opposing views, sided first with one and then with another, and, in the end, tried to escape responsibility by leaving everything to Brooke, a man of courage and energy, but of little experience or wisdom.

The moral of the whole unpleasant story is the old one—that in the making of appointments, public interests should always override private and sectional susceptibilities ; and that when care has been taken to put the best men in important positions, they should be left free to act on their own views of what a complicated and ever changing situation may demand of them. With a Nott in command in Southern Afghanistan, there would have been no expedition to the Helmand, or, if an expedition to the Helmand, then no Maiwand disaster and no siege of Kandahar.

spirited army can be kept in order by other means than by the abilities and firmness of the Commander-in-Chief.'” (Maxwell's *Life of Wellington*, p. 21, sixth edition.)

CHAPTER XXXV

Measures for the Relief of Kandahar

MARCH OF SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS

UNTRoubLED by fears as to the safety of the Force which he knew to be keeping a watch on Ayub Khan's movements, Sir Donald Stewart spent the latter half of the month of July in perfecting the arrangements for the withdrawal of his troops from Kabul. A large number of sick and wounded soldiers and camp-followers had already been passed on by the staging system to Peshawar, and two batteries of artillery, many stores, and much baggage and ammunition were on their way to India. There was no opposition to the retrograde movement, except between Jellalabad and Dakka, where the rafts, which had again been brought into use on the Kabul River, were fired on, and this annoyance was put an end to by the occupation of Fort Girdah, on the left bank of that stream.

In continuance of the process of freeing the force at Kabul of all elements of weakness, a sick convoy of three hundred and fifty-one Europeans, in charge of Surgeon-Major J. Fleming, left Kabul on the 27th of July, followed, the next day, by a second, consisting of four hundred and ninety-three Native troops and followers under Surgeon-Major G. Farrell. So satisfactorily were these preparatory measures being carried out that, on the 27th, Stewart noted in his Diary that all arrangements for making a start about the 10th of August were being completed, adding, with that curious tendency to distrust good fortune which is so marked a feature of human nature,

“I can hardly believe that we are to get out of this country without trouble, and yet everything looks bright and promising at this moment.” Next day, the news of Burrows’s defeat at Maiwand was telegraphed from Simla to Kabul, where it was received with deep anxiety and concern.¹ “This is the worst misfortune that can happen to us here,” wrote Sir Donald to his wife. “It is impossible to say how Abdur Rahman will take it!”²

So far as Abdur Rahman was concerned, Stewart’s anxiety was soon relieved. That politic Prince had no desire to put obstacles in the way of the British retirement from his kingdom, nor yet to play into the hands of his most formidable rival, Ayub Khan; so he continued to keep the peace in the territories over which he had control, and in an interview with Mr. Lepel Griffin showed himself animated by a sincere desire to be on cordial terms with the Indian Government.

The British Political Officer and the Amir met on the morning of the 31st of July, at Zimma, about sixteen miles north of Kabul. Griffin, who, with Stewart, had spent the night in Charles Gough’s camp at Killa Haji, had for his escort a squadron of the 9th Lancers, of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, and of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry; but Gough, fearing a sudden outbreak of fanaticism on the part of some of Abdur Rahman’s wild followers, placed two companies of the 4th Gurkhas in a retired spot about a mile from the appointed place of meeting, and held his whole force, which had been strengthened by the Guide Corps and a Field Battery, in readiness to go to the

¹ Telegram dated 28th July, 1880.

From Lieutenant A. M. Muir, Kandahar.

To Foreign Secretary, Simla.

“Total defeat and dispersion of General Burrows’s Force. Heavy loss in both officers and men. General Primrose has vacated cantonments and brought all his troops into Citadel. Officers and men returning in small parties. Wali has arrived. Colonel St. John safe.”

Repeated to Sir Donald Stewart.

² *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 372.

rescue should anything untoward occur. Abdur Rahman, on his side, appeared accompanied by two or three hundred horsemen and several thousand footmen ; but the latter halted half a mile from the durbar tent, which had been pitched on a hill, and stood out a conspicuous object, carefully watched by distrustful British and Afghan eyes.

Mr. Lepel Griffin was very favourably impressed by the new Amir, whom he described as having " an exceedingly intelligent face, brown eyes, a pleasant smile, and a frank, courteous manner ; by far the most prepossessing of all the Barakzai Sirdars whom I have met." His conversation, too, was marked by " good sense and sound political judgment," and though " his expectations were larger than the Indian Government was prepared to satisfy, he did not press them with discourteous insistence."¹ It was Griffin's wish that the Amir should visit Sir Donald Stewart in Gough's camp, and at the conclusion of the interview he left Mr. J. Christie behind to see if the matter could be arranged.² There was no difficulty on the Amir's side ; but, on consulting his followers, only the Kohistanis were ready to give their consent to the proposal. The Ghilzais and others, remembering the seizure, imprisonment, and deportation of Yahiya Khan and other Sirdars after Roberts's first durbar, were vehemently opposed to their ruler trusting himself within a British camp, and swore to leave him to his fate if he persisted in his design. Uninfluenced by their fears, the Amir tried to overcome their opposition by assuring them that the meeting with Stewart would take place on their side of the pass which separated the two forces, though, at the same time,

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 52.

² " The most prominent members of my Staff at this critical time were Sir F. Cunningham, my Chief-Assistant, and Mr. James Christie, Head of the Secret Intelligence Department, to whose brilliant services and accurate knowledge of Afghan character, the accession of Amir Abdur Rahman and the peaceful withdrawal of our armies from Afghanistan were largely due." (" Afghanistan and the Indian Frontier." Article by Sir Lepel Griffin in the *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1901.)

he was writing privately to Griffin that he was ready to come into Gough's camp, irrespective of the wishes of the people.¹ No doubt he would have been as good as his word, had not Stewart declined a visit that could only be paid "by deceiving those who were opposed to it,"² and returned to Kabul, where a double task awaited him, for the Government of India had fallen in with his strongly held opinion that, in view of the physical and climatic difficulties presented by the Bolan route, the beleaguered garrison of Kandahar could be best relieved from Kabul, and had sanctioned the despatch of the Force which he had begun to organize within a few hours of receiving the news of Burrows's defeat.³

Sir Donald could himself have taken the command of that Force, but with singular self-abnegation and generosity he chose as his own the inglorious and harassing duty of carrying out the evacuation of Northern Afghanistan, and gave the opportunity of winning honour and popularity to the old friend whom he had unwillingly superseded. Thanks to tact on the one side and loyalty on the other, that supersession had in no way disturbed the good relations long existing between Stewart and Roberts, and the two men were now able to work together in perfect harmony.⁴

¹ "If you really wish me to come to you irrespective of the opinion of the people, I am quite ready to do so. Please let me know your wishes."—*Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 52.

² *Life of Sir Donald Stewart*, p. 376.

³ "Making preparations for sending a force to Kandahar *via* Ghazni. . . Everything must give way to the military necessities of the case." (Ibid. p. 376, Diary of 29th of July.)

⁴ "General Stewart might have taken the command himself, but he considered that he would be doing a service to General Roberts to give him the command, which he accordingly did. General Stewart came to my hut that day and told me what he had done." (Extract from a Note by the Rev. T. J. L. Warneford. See *Sir D. Stewart's Life*, p. 389.)

Stewart's conduct on this occasion recalls Outram's great act of self-abnegation,—the waiving of his right to command the Lucknow Relief Column in favour of Havelock.—H. B. H.

Generous in the choice of a commander for the Kandahar Column, Stewart was equally generous in all that concerned its constitution and equipment. It was to consist of ten thousand men, and Stewart bade Roberts choose his own corps and take all the best of the transport for their use.¹

Two conflicting considerations governed Sir Frederick Roberts in his choice of troops—the wish to do honour to men who had been with him from the beginning, and a sense of the wisdom of eliminating, as far as possible, the Pathan element from a force which would have to operate against the Pathan army of Ayub Khan.² In the end, all the regiments still at Kabul which had formed part of his original Division, with the exception of

F-A Royal Horse Artillery,
G-3 Royal Artillery,
No. 1 Mountain Battery,
67th Foot,
Guide Corps,
5th Punjab Infantry,
28th Punjab Infantry,
7th Company Sappers and Miners,

were included in the relieving column, which was brought up to its allotted strength by selections from Gough's and Hills's Brigades, that marched into Sherpur, the one on the 4th, the other on the 5th of August.

The Horse Artillery and Field Artillery were left behind in accordance with the decision that wheeled carriage should not accompany the column. Mountain guns might seem feeble weapons to oppose to Ayub Khan's heavy cannon—Sir F. Haines had doubts of the wisdom of trusting entirely to them—but Stewart knew that

¹ He "placed unreservedly at Sir F. Roberts's disposal the entire resources of the North Afghanistan Field Force, in transport and equipment." (Lieutenant-Colonel Chapman in *Royal United Service Magazine*, 1881, Vol. XXV. No. CX. p. 284.)

² *Ibid.* p. 287.

mobility and striking power were the qualities most essential to the relieving column ; expected that, once in touch with Kandahar, it would have the co-operation of Primrose's artillery ; and was convinced that no fighting of importance need be looked for on the march, as the Ghilzais had not yet recovered from their defeat at Ahmed Khel, and Abdur Rahman had undertaken to send with Roberts an energetic and trustworthy Sirdar to arrange for the collection of supplies, and to nominate a Governor for Ghazni in place of Alam Khan, who, distrustful of his new sovereign, had quitted his post and withdrawn to Kabul.¹

The Force as finally organized was constituted as follows :—

PERSONAL STAFF.

Major G. T. Pretyman, Aide-de-Camp.
 Lieutenant J. Sherston, Aide-de-Camp.
 Captain R. Pole-Carew, Orderly Officer.
 Captain the Hon. W. C. Rowley, Orderly Officer.
 Surgeon J. F. Williamson.

DIVISIONAL STAFF.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. F. Chapman, Chief of the Staff.
 Deputy Surgeon-General J. Hanbury, Principal Medical Officer.
 Major A. R. Badcock, Principal Commissariat Officer.
 Captain A. T. S. A. Rind, Commissariat Department.
 Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Low, Chief Director of Transport.
 Captain W. A. Wynter, Transport Department.
 Major C. A. Gorham, Deputy Judge-Advocate-General.
 Major C. Cowie, Commissary of Ordnance.
 Lieutenant W. G. Small, in charge of Field Treasure Chest.
 Reverend J. W. Adams, Chaplain Church of England.
 Reverend G. W. Manson, Presbyterian Chaplain.
 Very Reverend Father G. Browne, Roman Catholic Chaplain.

POLITICAL STAFF.

Major E. G. B. Hastings, Chief Political Officer.
 Captain J. W. Ridgeway, Assistant Political Officer.
 Major C. B. Euan Smith, Assistant Political Officer.
 Major M. Protheroe, Assistant Political Officer.

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 53.

ROYAL ENGINEERS.

Colonel Æ. Perkins, Commanding.
Lieutenant T. P. Cather, Adjutant.

ROYAL ARTILLERY.

Colonel A. C. Johnson, Commanding.
Lieutenant R. A. Bannatine, Orderly Officer.
Captain H. Pipon, Adjutant Royal Artillery.

BATTERIES.

6-8 Royal Artillery (Mountain Battery), Major T. Graham.
11-9 Royal Artillery (Mountain Battery), Major J. M. Douglas.
No. 2 Mountain Battery, Major G. Swinley.

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, Commanding.
Captain H. Burnley, Orderly Officer.
Lieutenant M. O. Little, Orderly Officer.
Captain J. P. Brabazon, Brigade-Major.
Major B. A. Combe, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Captain C. F. Call, Field Engineer.
Surgeon-Major R. Lewer.

Regiments.

9th Lancers, Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Bushman.
3rd Bengal Cavalry, Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie.
3rd Punjab Cavalry, Major A. Vivian.
Central India Horse, Lieutenant-Colonel C. Martin.

DIVISIONAL STAFF OF INFANTRY DIVISION.

Major-General J. Ross, Commanding.
Captain J. D. Mansel, Aide-de-Camp.
Lieutenant A. Davidson, Orderly Officer.
Lieutenant the Hon. M. G. Talbot, Orderly Officer.
Lieutenant F. B. Longe, Orderly Officer.
Major G. de C. Morton, Assistant Adjutant-General.
Major R. G. Kennedy, Assistant Quartermaster-General.
Deputy Surgeon-General J. Ekin.

1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson, Commanding.
 Lieutenant E. S. E. Childers, Orderly Officer.
 Captain R. E. C. Jarvis, Brigade-Major.
 Captain A. D. M'Gregor, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
 Captain R. P. Tickell, Field Engineer.
 Surgeon-Major S. B. Roe.
 Surgeon-Major W. Finden.

Regiments.

92nd Highlanders, Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Parker.
 23rd Pioneers, Lieutenant-Colonel H. Collett.
 24th Punjab Infantry, Colonel F. B. Norman.
 2nd Gurkhas, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Battye.

2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General T. D. Baker, Commanding.
 Captain M. N. G. Kane, Orderly Officer.
 Captain W. C. Farwell, Brigade-Major.
 Lieutenant F. T. N. Spratt, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
 Captain W. G. Nicholson, Field Engineer.
 Surgeon-Major G. W. M'Nalty.
 Surgeon-Major C. A. Atkins.

Regiments.

72nd Highlanders, Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow.
 2nd Sikhs, Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Boswell.
 3rd Sikhs, Lieutenant-Colonel G. Noel Money.
 5th Gurkhas, Lieutenant-Colonel A. FitzHugh.

3RD INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General C. M. Macgregor, Commanding.
 Captain H. M'L. Hutchinson, Orderly Officer.
 Captain R. Chalmer, Brigade-Major.
 Captain A. Gaselee, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.
 Captain M. C. Brackenbury, Field Engineer.
 Surgeon-Major G. C. Chesneye.
 Surgeon-Major E. C. Markey.

Regiments.

2-60th Rifles, Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Collins.
 15th Sikhs, Lieutenant-Colonel G. R. Hennessy.

4th Gurkhas, Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft.
25th Punjab Infantry, Colonel J. W. Hoggan.

Total strength: 274 British officers, 2,562 British non-commissioned officers and men, 7,151 Native officers, non-commissioned officers, and men,¹ 7,820 camp-followers,² and 18 guns.

A searching medical examination weeded out from the above corps every man who did not come up to a high standard of health and strength, and the scale of baggage and tents was reduced to a minimum.³ The transport, chosen with equal care, inclusive of carriage for footsore soldiers and followers, consisted of eight thousand two hundred and fifty-five ponies, mules, and donkeys; the only camels being six assigned to the service of the hospital.⁴ The crops having been just harvested, and the presence of the Amir's deputy ensuring that there would be comparatively little difficulty

¹ Total of all ranks, 9,987. These figures were subsequently slightly increased by the discharge of sick men from hospital. (Chapman.)

Sir Donald Stewart in his march from Kandahar to Kabul in the spring of the same year had only 7,249 of all ranks. See, Chapter XXVI.—H. B. H.

² 6,576 public and 1,244 private followers.

³ British soldiers were each allowed for kit and camp equipage, including greatcoat and waterproof

	30 lbs.
Native soldiers	20 „
Public and private followers	10 „
Each European officer	1 mule.
Every eight officers for mess	1 „
Each Native officer	30 lbs.
Each Staff-officer for office purposes	80 „

⁴ Afghan ponies, 1,589; Indian ponies, 1,244; mules, 4,510; and donkeys, 912.

“To enable General Roberts's Division to move on Kandahar with pony and mule transport only, the regiments were supplied with the mules of General Hills's Division, which received camels in their place. The Kabul General Transport also contributed pack animals, thoroughly equipped, with the best saddles leaving me with the refuse, that is ponies and yaboes, which had been recently for the most part received from the infirmary, and had not had time to recover condition.” (Report by Major Charles Hayter, Director Kabul Transport, dated 2nd September, 1880.)

in getting the people to part with a portion of their store, the only supplies carried were—

FOR BRITISH TROOPS.

Bread Stuff for 5 days	.	} In hands of victualling Agent.
Preserved Vegetables for 15 days	.	
Tea, sugar, salt for 30 days	.	
Rum for 30 days	.	

FOR NATIVE TROOPS AND FOLLOWERS.

Flour for 5 days	.	} In regimental charge.
Dhal and salt for 30 days	.	
Eight issues of rum for spirit-drinking men.	.	

In addition, the Force took with it a ten days' supply of sheep for British, and four issues for Native troops, with twenty per cent. to spare. A small quantity of lime juice, pea soup, and tinned meat was in charge of the Commissariat officer accompanying each Brigade.¹ But if the amount of food stuffs deemed essential was small, the quantity of ammunition taken was, under the circumstances, large, namely, two hundred rounds of small ammunition for every Infantry soldier—seventy rounds carried by each man, thirty in reserve, and a hundred in the Field Park—and for each Mountain Battery, five hundred and forty rounds, made up as follows :—

Common shell	.	264
Double shell	.	60
Shrapnel shell	.	144
Star shell	.	24
Case shell	.	48

and thirty rounds per gun in the Field Park.²

¹ Report by Major A. R. Badcock, Principal Commissariat Officer, Kabul-Kandahar Field Force. Some 5,000 sheep were purchased on the march. (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 341.)

At any other season of the year a much larger amount of supplies, baggage, and tent equipage must have been carried; and, probably, double the number of transport animals would have been required.—H. B. H.

² *Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 344.

Thanks to Roberts's and Chapman's energy and knowledge, every detail of the equipment of the Kandahar Relief Column was completed in little more than a week ; and on Sunday, the 8th of August, the troops composing it turned their backs on the city and cantonment where many of them had spent the most eventful months of their lives, and entered on the march which was to make their Commander's reputation. The Logar Valley route had been selected in preference to the shorter road running through the less fertile Maidan Valley, and the Cavalry Brigade pushed on to Charasiab ; the First and Third Brigades, with which were Sir Frederick Roberts and his Staff, halting at Ben-i-Hissar ; and the Second at Indaki. In the afternoon, Sir Donald Stewart rode out to Roberts's camp to bid him farewell and to take his last look at the troops, whose appearance must have filled him with the satisfaction of knowing that, so far as circumstances would permit, it was a thoroughly well-organized force that he was sending out to carry deliverance to the hard-pressed garrison of Kandahar, and few but his own immediate Staff knew what sacrifices he had made to ensure its efficiency.¹

With those sacrifices Stewart's responsibility for this portion of the army which had been under his command since the beginning of May came to an end, for both he and the Viceroy had given Roberts a free hand. On one point only was the power of the Commander of the Kabul-Kandahar Force restricted. Fully determined that there should be no repetition of the executions and destruction of villages which had brought disgrace on the British occupation of Kabul, Lord Ripon withheld from Roberts and his political officers all jurisdiction over the Wali's mutinous soldiers and rebellious subjects,

¹ "I am giving Bobs nine regiments of Infantry, while I had only seven ; and he will have three European regiments of Infantry to my two, and the 9th Lancers in addition. He will also have two Gurkha and two Sikh regiments ; so his force in fighting power will be nearly twice as strong as my Division, good though it was. Still, it is only fair to give him the best of everything, and risk as little as possible." (*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 375.)

and gave the former distinctly to understand that he must confine himself to the dispersal of those actually in arms against the British Government.

Sir D. Stewart's expectation that the memory of their defeat at Ahmed Khel would keep the Ghilzais quiet, proved well-founded,¹ and thanks to the exertions of the Amir's official, Sirdar Mahomed Azir Khan, who accompanied the force to Ghazni, Roberts, up to that point, had none of the ordinary supply difficulties to contend with; yet, notwithstanding these advantages, the arduous nature of the undertaking on which he and his troops embarked soon became apparent. The days were very hot, the nights bitterly cold;² the marches long, with the exception of the first, as will be seen from the following table:—

1ST STAGE.			
March 1.	August 8th.	Sherpur to Ben-i-Hissar	5 miles.
,, 2.	,, 9th.	Ben-i-Hissar to Zaidabad	16 ,,
,, 3.	,, 10th.	Zaidabad to Zargan Shahr	13 ,,
,, 4.	,, 11th.	Zargan Shahr to Padkao Rozan	16½ ,,
,, 5.	,, 12th.	Padkao Rozan to Amir Killa	10½ ,,
,, 6.	,, 13th.	Amir Killa to Takia	12 ,,
,, 7.	,, 14th.	Takia to Shashgao	17 ,,
,, 8.	,, 15th.	Shashgao to Ghazni	12½ ,,
Total Distance			102½
Daily Average 12¾ miles.			

Water was often scarce, and, though there was no lack of food, the camp-followers, frequently on foot by 2.30 a.m., were too tired out in the evening to cook their rations, and just kept themselves alive

¹ "This fact made the march of Sir Frederick Roberts's force—unmolested *en route*—a certainty." (General Chapman. See, *Life of Sir D. Stewart*, p. 336.)

² "The nights, even in August, were at this elevation bitterly cold, and the cavalry, who marched about 5 a.m., were cloaked up to the first three or four hours." (*Leaves from the Diary of a Soldier*, by Lieutenant-General Sir M. G. Gerard, K.C.B., p. 298.)

on raw flour or Indian corn,¹ whilst the desertion of the Afghan drivers imposed unexpected work upon the troops, many of whom, after months of inaction, were in poor condition for hard marching.² Heat, thirst, improper food, irregular meals, and ill-fitting boots, soon produced their natural results—dyspepsia, bilious vomiting, diarrhoea, sore feet—and, as men and followers fell out, the strain on the dhoolie-bearers, always a weak part of an Indian Army's equipment, grew ever greater.³

The order of march was much the same from day to day. The réveillé sounded long before daylight and the troops were in motion before 4.30 a.m., sometimes earlier.⁴ Two Cavalry regiments, five or six miles in advance of the main body, led the way, stretching across whatever valley they might be passing through, and carefully searching every inch of ground for a possible hidden foe. Then followed two Infantry Brigades with the Artillery; behind these came the baggage, flanked by the two remaining Cavalry regiments—the Central Indian Horse sent up from the line of communications joined the Division at Zaidabad—and the Third Infantry Brigade, with a squadron of cavalry attached, brought up the rear. Each afternoon a party, commanded by an officer, went out from the new encamping ground to reconnoitre four or five miles ahead.

¹ "These remarks equally apply to the Gurkhas, who also cook their own food. To this deprivation may be ascribed a large amount of the inefficiency resulting from dyspepsia and bowel affections." (Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury's Diary, Appendix No. V., *Army Medical Report for 1879*, Vol. XXI.)

² Ibid.

³ "One of the weakest points of a force operating in India is at all times the sick carriage composed of dhoolie-bearers, and on the occasion of the Kabul-Kandahar march this was a special source of anxiety, owing to the strain to which the dhoolie-bearers had been subjected." (Special Report by Surgeon-General T. Crawford. See Appendix No. III., *Army Medical Report for 1880*, Vol. XXII.)

⁴ "Up at 3. Off at 4. This is a mistake. The animals get loaded in the dark and are loaded badly, and practically at 4 you cannot see an inch, so you do not really get off till 4.30." (*Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 240.)

The Zamburak Pass, which was crossed on the sixth day, was the only serious physical obstacle met with between Kabul and Ghazni. The mountain over which it runs rises some fifteen hundred—some authorities say eighteen hundred—feet above the valley on its northern side, and is very steep, the gradient in many places one in four. To cross it under the most favourable circumstances would be no light matter for an army, but coming at the end of a ten-mile march under a scorching sun it broke down many of the transport animals¹ and their drivers, most of whom had to wait for hours at its foot for their turn to enter upon the ascent,²—the path was so narrow that the cavalry had to cross in single file, officers and men alike leading their horses—and the whole operation was so slow that the Second Brigade, which was on rear-guard duty, had to bivouack on scanty rations, as its tents and baggage could not be got over till the next morning.

The seventh march offered ample compensation for the fatigues of the sixth, for the Chinaz Valley, on the southern side of the Zamburak Pass, was found to be rich in vegetables and fruit—grapes and melons—and what was of even greater value to thirsty men and beasts, it possessed an abundant supply of good water.³ That evening at Shashgao, for the first time, the whole Division encamped close together on the extensive plain that lies at the foot of the Sher-i-Dahan Pass, the path across which, always easy, had been greatly improved by Stewart's engineers.⁴ Next day, the 15th of August, the troops

¹ "It must be remembered what a transport animal has to go through. It is laden up in the dark, when it cannot possibly be taken out of camp and watered; it possibly does not reach camp till late in the afternoon, having had its load on its back from 10 to 15 hours, and these hours comprising all the heat of the day." (Report by Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Low, Chief Director of Transport, dated Kandahar, 6th September, 1880.)

² Duke's *Recollections*, p. 342.

³ Hanbury's Diary.

⁴ "The Sher-i-Dahan might, from its name (the lion's mouth), be expected to be very formidable, whereas it is one of the easiest in Afghanistan. The rise from the Shashgao plain to the Kotal is only four hundred feet, and is so gradual that it is scarcely noticeable." (Hensman, p. 478.)

descended into a land of plenty. Far as the eye could reach fields were green with thick crops of Indian corn and lucerne; ancient orchards surrounded the villages with belts of foliage, and in the numerous vineyards the vines were heavy with grapes of wonderful size and flavour.¹ The passage of the mountain had begun at 4 a.m., and at 9.30 the leading Brigade arrived before Ghazni. The people showed no signs of hostility, and when Roberts appeared, the Governor came out and tendered him the keys of the gates; but the British Commander prudently posted guards inside and outside the city walls to prevent any collision between the troops and the inhabitants, and to ensure the prompt execution of his demand for supplies, in the collection of which he had, for the last time, the assistance of the Afghan official, for, beyond Ghazni, Abdur Rahman's authority did not as yet extend.

No news either from Khelat-i-Ghilzai or Kandahar awaited Roberts at Ghazni, and in his ignorance of the fate of the two garrisons, he did not feel justified in granting his Force so much as a day's rest at the end of the first stage of its long march; but he did his best to mitigate the sufferings of the many sick and footsore followers by authorizing Colonel Low to purchase for their use all the donkeys he could lay hands on.

The second stage of the advance from Ghazni to Khelat-i-Ghilzai was again divided into eight marches, though the distance traversed was longer by thirty-two miles.

TABLE OF 2ND STAGE.

March 9.	August 16th.	Ghazni to Yarghalta .	20 miles.
„ 10.	„ 17th.	Yarghalta to Chardeh .	12 „
„ 11.	„ 18th.	Chardeh to Karez-i-Oba .	16½ „
„ 12.	„ 19th.	Karez-i-Oba to Mukur .	14 „

¹ “A donkey load, made up of two large baskets, each weighing 40 or 50 lbs., cost us only three rupees (5 shillings) . . . though prices rose enormously as the day wore on.” (Hensman, pp. 478, 479.)

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March 13.	August	20th.	Mukur to Chasma-i-Panjak	21	miles
,,	14.	,,	21st. Chasma-i-Panjak to Gajai .	18	,,
,,	15.	,,	22nd. Gajai to Baba Kazai .	16½	,,
,,	16.	,,	23rd. Baba Kazai to Khelat-i-Ghilzai .	16½	,,
				—	
Total Distance				134½	,,
Daily Average 16¾ miles.					

A few miles outside Ghazni all signs of cultivation and human habitation ceased, and the troops entered on a waste, covered with camel-thorn scrub and intersected by deep ravines.¹ The hot, loose sand burned and slipped under foot, and though the men marched, for the most part, without accoutrements, and all, who could, walked and rode by turns, one animal doing duty for three men, many fell out.² Towards evening a blinding dust-storm sprang up, which so delayed the Brigade on rear-guard duty that it did not reach its encamping ground till 9 p.m., by which time the men had been seventeen hours under arms.³ This trying march broke down many men and animals—at its close more donkeys had to be purchased—and it added to the heavy duties of the medical officers attached to the field hospitals, whose business it was to examine every morning all who reported themselves sick, decide who could, and who could not, be left to trudge along afoot, and see that suitable transport was provided for every non-effective—all this in darkness and bitter cold. The work of the cavalry also grew heavier from Ghazni onwards, for as the Sirdar Mahomed Aziz Khan, the Amir's agent, was no longer

¹ Hensman, p. 488.

² "Every baggage animal that could be so utilized was employed in aiding the weary and footsore and in bringing them into camp, but the apathy of despair led many a worn-out man of the Native following to refuse all exertion, and the duty of the rear-guard in pressing forward the stragglers was often arduous and painful." (Chapman, p. 296.)

"Of late the troops of cavalry forming the rear-guard have quartered the country like beaters at a tiger hunt, and the sleeping *kahars* have been rudely awakened and brought along." (Hensman, p. 485.)

³ Hanbury's Diary.

with the Force, and Roberts would not permit any trenching on his reserve of supplies,¹ the flanking regiments had to go far and wide, penetrating into side valleys, ransacking deserted villages in search of the people's carefully hidden stores of grain, and, when unearthed, lading them on the three or four hundred animals by which they were accompanied.²

On the 17th of August, the Division crossed the battle-field of Ahmed Khel, where a shrine, raised to the memory of eleven hundred "martyrs," proved that Sir D. Stewart had not over-estimated the Ghilzai losses in that hard-fought action; and the same day, his forebodings as to the retribution which would overtake the Hazaras as soon as he and his force had passed out of sight, received full confirmation,³ for near Chardeh, the second march out of Ghazni, the cavalry came upon a fortified Hazara village, the walls and roofs of which were crowded with men, women, and children. Some of the men came into camp and reported that the place had been besieged by the Afghans ever since General Stewart's departure from Ghazni, and that they were expecting to be starved out and put to the sword. From this fate they were now saved, for, under the temporary protection afforded them by Roberts's Force, the whole population fled that evening, and the inhabitants of Chardeh promptly burned down their abandoned houses. Whether the fugitives found permanent safety

¹ "Our plan from the first was, if possible, never to trench on the reserve of atta and sheep, and to buy ghee, grain, and forage for the day's consumption.

. On one or two occasions we had to use a portion of our reserve, but at other places we made up for it again and on no occasion throughout the march was a reduced issue of either atta or meat made." (Report dated Kandahar, 18th September, 1880, by Major A. R. Badcock, Principal Commissariat Officer.)

² *Leaves from the Diary of a Soldier and Sportsman*, by Sir Montagu Gerard, p. 299.

³ "Active hostilities had been proceeding for some months betwixt the two parties; the Shiah (Hazaras) being accused amongst other things of burning alive all the wounded Afghans left on the field after the fight at Ahmed Khel." (Ibid.)

among the hills to which they had retired may be doubted, for there was abundant evidence next day that Afghan vengeance could follow them up. "Being on flanking duty," writes Sir Montagu Gerard, in his *Leaves from the Diary of a Soldier*, "on the day we marched from Ahmed Khel, and the spurs of the mountains being open and undulating, we were able to penetrate some miles into Karabagh (Hazara territory). Never did I see such a scene of desolation, and the devastation was apparently of very recent date. There was the mark of fire and sword everywhere, not a roof-tree left to a homestead, not the trace of a living creature, and even the fruit trees were barked or cut down."¹

The flight of the Hazara villagers had unpleasant consequences for the Force, for many of its drivers belonged to that tribe, and these men, unable to resist so favourable an opportunity for deserting, joined their kinsfolk and disappeared with them. The same day, the urgent need of additional transport nearly led to a fight with a party of Powindahs, the great Afghan trading tribe.² These men had with them a hundred and fifty camels, which the transport department insisted on purchasing and, in the end, took by force, the owners having turned the creatures loose and hidden their saddles.³ Along the line of advance from Ghazni to Mukur there was hardly any water or forage, and the variations of temperature were very great;⁴ but at the latter place the Force struck the source of the Turnak, and from thence, for several marches, the extremes of heat and cold were less marked, and the road, which followed the river,

¹ Page 300.

² "They sell to the luxurious Mahomedans at Delhi the dried fruits of Bokhara, and buy at Calcutta English calico and muslin for the soft harems of Herat and the savage tribes of Turkestan." (Sir Charles Macgregor.)

³ Hensman, p. 489.

⁴ "The variations of temperature (at times as much as eighty degrees between day and night) was most trying to the troops, who had to carry the same clothes whether the thermometer was at freezing point at dawn or at 110° Fahr. at mid-day." (*Forty-One Years in India*, Vol. II. p. 349),

ran through fields of standing Indian corn, the heads of which were an excellent substitute for flour, and the stalks for hay.¹ Fuel was scarce everywhere, and at many places houses had to be pulled down for firewood ; and even this source of supply failed at times, as near some of the encamping grounds there were no villages to dismantle.²

Between Karez-i-Oba and Chasma-i-Panjak the three Infantry Brigades moved abreast, their flanks protected by the Cavalry. Marching was comparatively easy in this open country, and though the number of ineffectives continued to increase—the daily average on the sick-list from Ghazni onwards was five hundred and fifty fighting men and from a hundred and fifty to two hundred followers³—the ailments were mostly trivial—sore and blistered feet,⁴ diarrhœa, and sun fever, or fatigue, pure and simple.

At Chasma-i-Panjak Sir Frederick Roberts received his first news from Southern Afghanistan, and the news, so far as it went, was good. Colonel Tanner wrote that the country round Khelat-i-Ghilzai was quiet and he and his troops safe and well, but he gave no information as to the state of things in Kandahar. Next day, however, at Shahjui, where heliographic communication with Khelat was established, he

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Low's and Major Badcock's Reports.

² "A fair price was invariably paid for the wood, and it was found that the inhabitants were, for the most part, willing to sell their houses." (Chapman, p. 293.)

As a rule few of the owners were present to be consulted, and people with winter at hand do not willingly submit to their houses being stripped of their roofs, especially where material for re-roofing is scarce.—H. B. H.

³ Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury's Report.

⁴ "Probably a worse-shod army never took the field. The ammunition boot, made of raw material, and of very indifferent workmanship, loses shape and turns over at the heel on one side or the other, after a few days' hard marching, and simply impedes progress. The Native shoe, with its wide-open mouth and narrow-pointed toes, seems ingeniously contrived to cripple and blister. I am of opinion, taken all round, the wide-soled ammunition boot is best adapted for both European and Native troops, but the material and workmanship must be improved, and decided attention to fitting is demanded." (Ibid.)

reported that Primrose had made a sortie in which many officers and men had been killed, but that the garrison was in good health and spirits, in no straits for food for men and followers, and had sufficient forage in hand for all animals to hold out till the arrival of a relieving force¹ should reopen the country to its foragers.

The letter containing this information written by Major Adam on the 17th of August, Colonel Tanner placed in Roberts's hands on the day of the latter's arrival at Khelat. It gave a full and unvarnished account of the sortie; but the writer followed up his admission of its failure by a passage which satisfied the General that the garrison was in no immediate danger, and decided him to give his troops a well-earned day's rest. "The enemy," so Adam wrote, "must, however, have seen that we have more fighting power in us, and we heard that the regular regiments under Ayub would not turn out to reinforce the village, so that an effect has been produced and the morale of our troops here is still good. The enemy here, I fancy, begin to think the game is up, and if they mean to assault they must do so within a day or two. We are very secure; the buildings round the walls have been mostly cleared away; abattis of trees, wire entanglement, chevaux-de-frise, traverses, flank defences, blue lights, shells, small mines in drains—all have been got ready; and if they do attack, it will be at a great loss of life to them."

Sir F. Roberts had been given no instructions as to the abandonment or retention of Khelat, and, being free to use his own judgment in the matter, he decided to withdraw the garrison, which he found to be equipped with all needful transport; and as the Governor, Sherindil Khan, declined to remain after the departure of the British troops, he handed back the fortress to Mahomed Sadik Khan, a Ghilzai Chief, who was its Governor when occupied by Sir D. Stewart in January, 1879.

¹ Sir F. Roberts's Despatch.

Thanks to the strong position and substantial defences of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, it would probably have been able to stand against any attack which might be made upon it ; but Colonel Tanner's troops were far too few to admit of his taking the offensive should Ayub Khan attempt to slip past him by the Argandab route, lying some miles to the north of Khelat,¹ and as any military value which the place might have been supposed to possess as an outpost towards Ghazni and Kabul, had now disappeared, no reason remained for depriving Kandahar of the services of its garrison.

On the 25th of August, Roberts resumed his march, and, in the absence of all news as to Ayub Khan's dispositions and intentions, pushed on with the same rapidity as before to Robat, where, as was mentioned in the foregoing chapter, his vanguard entered into heliographic communication with Primrose ; but before dealing with the third stage of the advance of the Northern Relief Force, the difficulties and movements of the troops which, all the time, had been struggling up to Kandahar from the south, must be described.

¹ Only cavalry and infantry could have moved by this route. Chapman says positively that "no doubt existed regarding the impossibility of moving wheeled artillery by the Argandab Valley." (See, *March from Kabul to Kandahar*. p. 299.)

CHAPTER XXXVI

March of General Phayre

WHEN the news of the Maiwand disaster reached Quetta, Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan, and General Phayre, commanding the troops on Primrose's line of communications, took counsel together as to the quickest and surest way of bringing relief to the garrison of Kandahar. Both were strong men, capable of subordinating a lesser interest to a greater, and they were of one mind as to the necessity of withdrawing from the Sibi-Thal-Chotiali-Gwal route to the Pishin Valley, though such withdrawal meant the abandonment and probable destruction of the railway; for only by the concentration of every available man could they hope to collect a sufficient force to overcome the resistance which they knew they must expect to encounter. It was a sore trial to Sandeman to abandon a work in which he took so deep an interest, and to withdraw from territory over which he had just succeeded in establishing British influence; but he saw the sacrifice must be made, and he made it without a moment's hesitation.¹ Nor was there any uncertainty on the part of the Indian Government, whose sanction to the resolution arrived at by Phayre and Sandeman was given in the following telegram to the latter officer:—

“Viceroy entirely approves of the measure proposed by yourself and General Phayre, and decides that the forces employed for protection of railway line must be at once withdrawn as proposed. We

¹ *Life of Sir Robert Sandeman*, by Dr. Thornton, C.S.I., p. 152.

are sending reinforcements from Bengal and will reoccupy railway line when possible, but present exigencies necessitate pushing forward all available forces towards Kandahar. Viceroy relies on you to use all exertions to co-operate with Phayre in relieving posts and pushing forward reinforcements.”¹

When all the posts along the railway line and the road connecting it with Quetta had been evacuated, there would be in Pishin seven Bombay infantry battalions and nine squadrons of cavalry, and as the 2nd Battalion of the 11th Foot and a Field Battery were on their way up, Phayre only asked, in addition, for one British regiment and one battery of artillery; but the Commander-in-Chief, with the sanction of Government, ordered up from Bengal one British and two Native infantry battalions, a field battery, and two regiments of cavalry, one British, the other Native, all which corps, fully equipped for field service, were to be railed *viâ* Sukkur to Sibi. A Madras infantry battalion and a cavalry regiment of the Hyderabad Contingent were to strengthen the communications; and, later, the 78th Highlanders, a European mountain battery, and a Native infantry regiment were sent up from Bombay.

General Phayre reported, on the 29th of July, that it would take him at least fifteen days to organize his force and equip it with transport; but over three weeks elapsed before he could begin his advance, for, clear-eyed as he was to the truth of the situation in which he found himself, he had not made sufficient allowance for the hindrances which hedged him in on every side. The heat in the desert and the Bolan Pass was appalling; floods had swept away miles of the Sukkur-Sibi railway, yet in Baluchistan and Kakar-land, where hardly any rain had fallen since the end of 1878, there was no forage for the

¹ *Life of Sir Robert Sandeman*, p. 152.

“Our trust is mainly in you and Phayre, who are both experienced and courageous frontier officers. I may say that Lord Ripon very highly appreciates your attitude and your energetic proceedings.” (Letter from Foreign Secretary. *Ibid.*)

cavalry horses and transport animals ; and the whole country, wakened into fierce life by the news of Ayub Khan's victory, was in arms—even the Marris, who, after sixteen years of fidelity to their engagements,¹ goaded into hostility by the occupation of their territories, had risen, and in conjunction with the Kakars were actively engaged in destroying the railway and its rolling stock, wrecking storehouses, engine sheds, and the bungalows of the superintending engineers, and attacking the working parties and coolies employed on the line.

On the 3rd of August, a large body of tribesmen fell on a convoy of carts near Dina Karez, killing three men of the escort and wounding three. On the 8th the Marris set upon a retiring party consisting of a hundred and eighty men, of whom a great number were sick, under Lieutenant F. T. Tobin, in charge of a thousand coolies, a large convoy of carts, and a lakh and a half (£15,000) of treasure. The scene of the attack—the Kudiali Pass, a long and, in parts, very narrow defile—was well chosen ; and though the troops fought bravely, a hundred and eighty carts and all baggage and treasure had to be abandoned, and four European officials, twelve men of the guard, and twenty coolies were killed, and Lieutenant Tobin and four sepoy wounded.²

North of Pishin matters were no better ; no post, no detachment of troops was safe, and communication with Chaman was, for a time, cut off by the Achakzais, who seized the Khojak Pass ; and though driven from it on the 2nd of August when its crest was occupied by two mountain guns, three hundred rifles, and twenty-five sappers, they continued hanging about in large numbers, and much brisk skirmishing went on in the defile and on the adjacent heights.

In the midst of this turmoil and trouble Phayre received the letter from Major Adam mentioned in a previous chapter. If its cheerful tone allayed his anxiety for the immediate safety of Kandahar, it stimulated his desire to bring speedy deliverance to that city's

¹ *Life of Sir Robert Sandeman*, p. 154.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, pp. 42, 48.

gallant garrison; and he had nearly succeeded in completing his preparations for the advance of a Force strong enough to cope with Ayub Khan's large army and powerful artillery, when news reached him that two thousand Kakars and Zhubites had made a fierce attack on Kach-Amadan, an important post twenty-eight miles to the north-east of Quetta. The garrison, consisting of a wing of the 16th Bombay Infantry, some sappers and details of other corps, commanded by Colonel T. W. W. Pierce, beat off its assailants and pursued them for ten miles, killing eighty of their number, but not without itself suffering serious loss—two men and twenty-five followers killed, and one officer, eight men, and six followers wounded. Undaunted by the severe punishment inflicted on them, the tribesmen, returning in great numbers, seized the heights above the entrenchments and compelled Phayre, who knew that Kach-Amadan was full of non-effectives, to send off a flying column to its relief.¹ Alarmed by the approach of this force, which consisted of two mountain guns, three troops of cavalry, and an infantry regiment, the tribal gathering broke up, and the sick were brought into Quetta on the 21st of August. Phayre was deeply sensible of the disadvantage of holding a number of small posts, which, from their situation, could contribute nothing to the attainment of his immediate object. "These isolated posts, far from the line of communication, are most objectionable in a military point of view," so he complained on the 20th of August, "as they alienate men and animals that cannot be spared;" and a day or two earlier, he had telegraphed to Army Head-Quarters that, in consequence of the attitude of the Marris, he had already alienated more troops for Sibi and Bolan than had ever been the case before, thus crippling his advance force; yet, Sir Robert Sandeman was asking for more troops, which he could not possibly give without stopping the advance on Kandahar.²

¹ Besides his own wounded, Pierce had in his charge all the sick brought in from Chappar, Thal, Chotiali, and other abandoned posts.—H. B. H.

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, pp. 53, 55.

It is impossible not to sympathize with the suppressed irritation perceptible in this telegram ; but Sandeman also was in a labyrinth of difficulties, and might well be of the opinion that the preservation intact of the line of communication with Quetta was essential to the advance which Phayre was burning to begin. All the railway stations on the Sukkur-Sibi line were menaced by bodies of marauders, and every post from Sibi to Quetta, at one time or another, was in jeopardy. Many coolies and railway employés had been massacred on their way to the plains, and those that escaped death had been pursued up to the very pickets round the Sibi Dépôt. The authorities in India were doing their utmost to send up reinforcements and supplies, but the result of their efforts was to make confusion worse confounded. At Sibi there was no order, no organization. Day by day, trains shot out hundreds of men and tons upon tons of military stores and food stuffs, to be carried on by raw ponies and bullocks, which, for the most part, had never before had a load upon their backs.¹ Sick and giddy with hours, often days, of travelling in crowded railway carriages, the men had, at all costs, to be hurried forward into the Bolan, for delay in the desert in August meant death ; but between Sibi and Dadur at the mouth of the pass lay eighteen miles of hot, heavy sand, and though attempts were made to lighten the European soldiers' sufferings by providing them with carts, the wretched bullocks drawing them crawled so slowly that to reach their camping ground before the sun was dangerously high, the men had to get down and stagger along on foot. In

¹ " Amidst the general hurry and confusion prevailing, the Sibi depôt was . . . a chaos of military stores, commissariat supplies, transport animals, etc., and the unfortunate officers and men had to hunt for all their requirements in an atmosphere in which, under any other circumstances, a European would have thought he was risking his life by merely exposing himself to the sun, and more than one succumbed in consequence before he had even commenced his march." ("The March to Quetta in August, 1880," by Mr. C. E. Biddulph, Assistant Political Officer. See, *United Service Magazine*, July, 1894.)

the Bolan there was less exposure to the direct rays of the sun, but the atmosphere, oppressive throughout, was in some of the narrower portions almost insupportable;¹ and behind the troops as they advanced, the road was strewn with baggage and stores of which unruly animals had divested themselves, or under the weight of which exhausted animals had sunk down to die. "Indeed," to use the words of Mr. C. E. Biddulph, "after the completion of the first three or four marches it may be said that the *impedimenta* of the troops consisted of barely more than the clothes they had on and the cartridges in their pouches." Many died on the march of fatigue, many at the end of it in consequence of the sudden change from heat to cold, aggravated by insufficient food; for Quetta, poorly provisioned, was unable to meet the demands of the new-comers, and troops and followers alike had to be put on half-rations.²

As weeks passed without bringing news of the relief of Kandahar, the attitude of the local population grew more openly hostile, and it was not without cause that old Alla Deena, the Chief of the Brahuis, who "by placing their camels at our disposal had thrown in their lot with us," began to doubt what the end might be. "Pray God, Sahib, that Kandahar may soon be relieved, or it will be a bad day for me as well as for you," were words frequently on his lips when he came to Biddulph's camp for news, only to hear that there was none to give him.³

As an old frontier officer, versed in all tribal ways, General Phayre knew quite as well as Alla Deena that the conduct of the people in his rear depended on the success or failure of the efforts to raise the siege of Kandahar, and this knowledge and the news of the unsuccessful

¹ Biddulph. See, *United Service Magazine*, July, 1894.

² Biddulph mentions that when he passed through the Bolan at the end of August, he "found eight unnamed European graves at Kirta, and about as many more in a rubbish heap at Mach. Of the ones which I did not note or the bodies which may have found no burial, who can tell? for no record was kept of the mortality upon this occasion." (Ibid.)

³ Ibid.

sortie added to his desire to reach that city at the earliest possible date. He himself started for the front immediately after the sick had been brought in to Quetta from Kach-Amadan, and on the 25th of August, after a three days' halt at Killa Abdulla, he crossed the Khojak Pass and arrived at Chaman, having, on the way thither, made the unpleasant discovery that the country was almost bare of forage and grain, and that most of the springs had run dry.¹ In front of him, difficulties of the same kind would have to be met, for the Afghans had cut the water-channel at Gatai, and supplies for men and animals must be collected before another step in advance could be taken. To achieve this object, he despatched, on the 26th, two small columns of all arms, commanded respectively by Lieutenant-Colonel T. Bell and Lieutenant-Colonel F. S. Iredell—the left column accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel J. G. Lindsay, Commanding Royal Engineer, the Road Commandant, Major Westmacott, and a staff of Engineer Officers, to open up the Gatai water-supply and to reconnoitre thirty miles towards Kandahar; the right column to forage in the Kalani Valley.²

Whilst waiting for these preliminaries to be completed, General Phayre received the disquieting news that a part of the Khelat Contingent, which was a thousand strong, had mutinied;³ and as there was the likelihood of their stirring up the Shorawak Pathans to attack Gulistan and Killa Abdulla, both of which posts had been for some time threatened by tribal gatherings, he had to strengthen their garrisons with detachments of the 2-15th Foot, and at the same time to order a wing of the 78th Highlanders, on their way up from Sibi, to turn aside at Darwaza in the Bolan Pass and proceed to Khelat, where it was to remain till all fear of disturbance in that State should have passed away⁴—a necessary precaution, but most unwelcome

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 66.

² *Ibid.* p. 64.

³ Phayre reported that the whole of the contingent had mutinied—Sandeman only a portion of it.—H. B. H.

⁴ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 66.

to the officer commanding at Quetta, who, at this very moment, was telegraphing that he was urgently in need of troops.¹

In the midst of all these difficulties and anxieties, General Phayre received his first news of the Northern Relief Force. It was contained in the following letter from Colonel Tanner to Sandeman, by whose directions it was opened by the officer commanding at Chaman and its contents wired to Quetta.

“KILLAT-I-GHILZAI, 20th August.

“MY DEAR SANDEMAN,

“Just a line to say I have heard from General Roberts to-day; he is four marches off and will be here on the 24th. I received your letter dated 10th and replied to it the same day. We are all well and collecting supplies for Roberts and on the road towards Kandahar. We are well off for supplies here. Roberts expects to be near Kandahar on the 29th.”²

There was no possibility of Phayre's force being anywhere near Kandahar on the 29th of August, as it was not until the 30th that he began to cross the Khojak, and, though he had written to Roberts that he hoped to arrive before that city on the 2nd of September, it was the 5th before all the corps shown in the Table at the end of this chapter had safely crossed the pass, by which time Roberts had defeated Ayub Khan and stood in no further need of his co-operation.

As early as the 30th of August, Phayre had foreseen that this would be the case, and recognizing that he should only enhance the difficulties of the situation at Kandahar by adding several thousand men and many animals to the number to be fed in and around that city, he had sent the following telegram to the Quartermaster-General:—“I submit to his Excellency's consideration that the intelligence received from General Roberts yesterday and that given by Primrose

¹ *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 64.

² *Ibid.* p. 67.

to-day, that Ayub Khan had withdrawn his force to the Argandab, four or five miles north-west of Kandahar, and that the whole country from this to Kandahar and around that city for a radius of fifteen or twenty miles has been denuded of all supplies, renders it matter for immediate and serious consideration whether, under the circumstances, I should advance more of my troops from Chaman to Kandahar, than will be sufficient to re-establish and stock with provisions the posts *en route*, re-establish the telegraph, and clear Tukht-i-Pul of the tribal gatherings which still appear to be hovering about it. One Brigade of Infantry with some Native Cavalry, Mountain guns, and the Field Batteries will, I think, be sufficient for this. . In this way I can stock the road, economise men and food, and do the utmost possible to assist the large force at Kandahar."

Phayre was a keen soldier, anxious for distinction, conscious that his officers and men would feel it hard to be stopped short of the goal towards which they had so painfully and laboriously struggled, not blind to the risk of the work actually performed by them being lost sight of in the admiration evoked by Sir Frederick Roberts's successes; yet he put aside the promptings of personal ambition, and resisted the strong pressure brought to bear upon him by members of his own Force, when he saw that they ran counter to the best interests of the British Forces in Southern Afghanistan taken as a whole. Nothing in his military career did him greater credit than the sending of a telegram, the suggestions contained in which were so little in accordance with his natural inclinations, and it is painful to have to record that any doubts that he may have felt as to the treatment in store for his troops were fully justified by the sequel. The bronze star given to Roberts's Force and to the garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, was refused to men whose labours and risks had been greater than theirs, and the modest despatch in which their General showed how well they deserved to share in the distinction, was not published in the *London Gazette*, though the fact that Phayre had been in

independent command from the day when communication with Kandahar was cut off, entitled it to that honour.

TABLE OF MAJOR-GENERAL PHAYRE'S FORCE.

ARTILLERY.

D-B Royal Horse Artillery, Major F. W. Ward.
 F-2 Royal Artillery, Major J. R. J. Dewar.
 14-9 Royal Artillery (Heavy Guns),¹ Major G. A. Crawford.
 2 25-pounders and 2 9-pounders,¹ Captain E. Buckle.
 No. 2 Mountain Battery, Major R. Wace.

CAVALRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General H. C. Wilkinson, Commanding.
 15th Hussars, Lieutenant-Colonel G. Luck.
 2 Squadrons 2nd Bombay Cavalry, Major W. H. J. Stopford.
 1 Squadron Poona Horse, Major C. M. Erskine.
 2nd Sind Horse, Major M. M. Carpendale.
 1 Squadron 2nd Madras Cavalry, Captain W. B. Warner.

1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General H. H. James, Commanding.
 2-11th Foot, Lieutenant-Colonel W. T. Corrie.
 8th Bombay Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel S. Fellows.
 10th Bombay Infantry, Major C. E. Blowers.
 16th Bombay Infantry (detachment), Lieutenant-Colonel F. S. Iredell.

2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General T. S. Brown, Commanding.
 2-15th Foot (head-quarters and wing), Major R. L. Dashwood.
 63rd Foot (detachment), Captain H. R. Cook.
 5th Bombay Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. C. Hunt.
 27th Bombay Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel T. Bell.

[BOMBAY SAPPERS AND MINERS.

No. 3 Company, Lieutenant G. H. W. O'Sullivan.
 No. 4 Company, Lieutenant J. Neville.
 No. 5 Company, Lieutenant E. C. Spilsbury.

¹ On the 17th August, Phayre telegraphed that having regard to the strong position taken up by Ayub Khan's army and its heavy artillery he had determined to take with him the garrison battery 14-9 Royal Artillery, and battery made up of 25-pounders and 9-pounders which he had discovered in the Quetta Arsenal. *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, p. 54.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Sir Frederick Roberts's Arrival at Kandahar

ON the 25th of August, having completed his arrangements for the withdrawal of the garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzai—2 guns I-C Royal Artillery, a squadron of the 3rd Sind Horse, and two companies 66th Foot—Sir Frederick Roberts entered on the last stage of his long march. The distance that still lay between him and his goal—eighty-six and a quarter miles—he divided into six marches, with one day's halt at Robot.

March 17.	August 25th.	Khelat-i-Ghilzai to Jaldak	15 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.
„ 18.	„ 26th.	Jaldak to Tirandaz .	16 „
„ 19.	„ 27th.	Tirandaz to Pomazai ¹	15 „
„ 20.	„ 28th.	Pomazai to Robot	19 „
	„ 29th.	Halt.	
„ 21.	„ 30th.	Robot to Mohmand .	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ 22.	„ 31st.	Mohmand to Kandahar	13 „
Total Distance			86 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
Daily Average 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles.			

The road for the first few miles out of Khelat was narrow and frequently intersected by dry watercourses; but, later, it widened out and presented fewer difficulties, and the Division arrived in good time at Jaldak, where it pitched its camp close to the river, on ground much broken by nullahs and ditches, all filled with the skeletons of the camels that had perished in Sir Donald Stewart's first advance

¹ This place in some accounts of the march is wrongly called Akund Khel—that village lying half-way between Pomazai and Robot.—H. B. H.

to Khelat.¹ At Tirandaz, at the end of the second day's march, General Roberts learned that Ayub Khan had raised the siege of Kandahar, withdrawn to the left bank of the Argandab, and taken up a position between the villages of Paimal and Mazra. The news was a day or two old, and as Roberts's movements depended on the enemy's, he ordered Brigadier-General Hugh Gough to make, with the 3rd Bengal Cavalry and the 3rd Punjab Cavalry, a forced march of thirty-four miles to Robat, where he was to put himself into communication with General Primrose and ascertain the actual state of affairs in and around Kandahar. He would have gone with the party himself, but, prostrated with fever, he had to send Colonel Chapman, the Chief of the Staff, in his place. Riding rapidly, Gough reached Robat soon after mid-day of the 28th of August, flashed the news of his presence to Kandahar, and received in return the welcome intelligence that the Afghans were still in the position they had taken up on the 25th—intelligence which Chapman quickly sent back to Roberts, who meanwhile had advanced to Pomazai, and was busying himself in making preparations for intercepting Ayub Khan, if it should turn out that he had begun moving on Ghazni.² Seven thousand men of all arms, with the lightest possible equipment, were to hold themselves in readiness to move in two marches to a point on the Argandab distant thirty-four miles from Tirandaz, and about forty above Kandahar; Gough's two regiments of Cavalry, threading their way through a tangle of hills by an unknown track, were to strike the river some miles nearer to Kandahar than the Force whose flank they were to cover; and the hospitals, non-effectives, and baggage, escorted by the two Field guns, a regiment

¹ Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury's Diary.

² "The information obtained regarding his (Ayub Khan's) movements amounted to little or nothing; it was, however, clear that the Afghan Army held a strong defensive position and evinced no intention of abandoning it without a struggle." (Chapman, p. 300.)

of Cavalry, and two thousand five hundred Infantry, were to march slowly forward and concentrate at, or near, Robat, where they were to occupy an entrenched position.¹

Chapman's message cancelled these dangerous arrangements, and the next day the main body of the Division marched to Robat, the many sick and footsore protected by Tanner's Baluchis, halting at Khel-i-Ahmud.² Partly on account of the General's state of health, and partly to give the rear-guard time to come up, the 29th was spent in reconnoitring and foraging, one party capturing three thousand sheep.³ Whilst Hugh Gough was awaiting Roberts's arrival at Robat, he was joined by Colonel St. John, and Majors Adam and Leach, who rode into his camp on the evening of the 28th. They remained for the 'night and gave a full account of all their adventures and mishaps during the siege and previous operations.

The question of leaving the main road and marching across the hills which separate the valley of the Turnak from the valley of the Argandab, came up again for discussion at Robat, and Major Adam was consulted as to the roads running through this district. His blunt answer that there were no roads, that the proposed plan was impracticable, and that the right way to deal with Ayub Khan's army was to attack it from the south-west, thus cutting it off from its line of retreat on Herat, finally killed the plan; and Major Leach was instructed to prepare a map, on a large scale, of the country around Kandahar, including the ground lying beyond Karez Hill and the

¹ Chapman, p. 300.

² "After Khelat-i-Ghilzai every one suffered much from diarrhœa. This, added to poor food, reduced the men so that I do not think the Force could have reached much further than it did." (Letter from an officer who marched from Kabul to Kandahar, quoted by Dr. Duke at page 265 of his *Recollections*.)

³ "I shall not readily forget the baaing and bleating that nearly maddened us, or the hullabaloo of the owners who followed the sheep! We paid the just price and regaled ourselves on mutton and melons." (Sir Hugh Gough's "Old Memories," *Pall Mall Magazine*, April, 1899, p. 540.)

village of Pir Paimal, where it was now clear that the coming battle would be fought. General Roberts was naturally desirous that before his Force, with its enormous number of transport animals, arrived at Kandahar, the garrison of that city should have recovered possession of the sources from which the British cantonments had drawn their water—sources which lay beyond Karez Hill and were therefore in the hands of the Afghans; but Primrose, conscious of the weakness of that garrison and of the position which it was its first duty to defend, declined to risk an engagement with a strongly posted enemy, in an attempt to reoccupy the cantonments, whilst Roberts's troops were still twenty miles off.

On the 29th of August, a letter arrived from Ayub Khan, in which, after declaring that battle had been forced upon him at Maiwand¹ and that he was still anxious to be on good terms with the British Government, he asked the British Commander "to tell him in a friendly way" what he thought the best course for him—Ayub Khan—to pursue in order that "affairs might be settled in an amicable manner," to which letter Roberts sent the following curt reply:—

"In answer to your letter asking my advice, I can only recommend you to send in the prisoners in your power to Kandahar, and submit yourself unconditionally to the British Government."²

On the 30th of August, the reunited Force made a short march to Mohmand, where Phayre's letter, detailing the difficulties with which he was struggling, put an end to all hope of his co-operation

¹ "After that I was informed that the English had halted at Kushk-i-Nakhud. On receipt of this news I thought it well that my troops should not take the road to Kushk-i-Nakhud, but should proceed by that of Maiwand, and I hoped that the English might show me friendship. Early in the morning, when my troops were marching to Maiwand, the English army came and began to fight. What was preordained came to pass. I have given you the particulars and this is the real truth." (Extract from Ayub Khan's Letter.)

² *Afghanistan* (1880), No. 3, pp. 90, 91.

in the military operations now close at hand ; for the next march brought the Kabul Relief Force to Kandahar and, almost immediately, into collision with the enemy.

On the 31st of August the Division left Mohmand at 2.30 a.m., and at 8.30 a.m. arrived before the Shikapur Gate, where Primrose had undertaken to provide breakfast for the troops, and grain and water for the transport animals. The men got some food, but in the midst of " a scene of the most indescribable confusion, as all the baggage had cut in and surrounded the troops,"¹ and this confusion was soon increased by the arrival of the sick, both European and Native, who were to be admitted to the already overcrowded hospitals in the Citadel. Major Adam gives a vivid picture of their condition and of the chaos which the arrival of Roberts's Force temporarily created in Kandahar. " These (the sick) were slowly driven in (I can use no other word) by the Baluchi Regiment, closing the march of the Bengal Division. They certainly numbered five hundred² wretched creatures and cripples, mounted on refuse transport, or in dandies and doolies, for whom it was difficult to find room. At the same time our commissariat agreed to send out supplies to the Kabul Force, including everything from pipe-clay to pots of jam. Carriage for this was sent in, and nobody will wonder when I say that, owing to the streams of men and animals from the east and from the west, the streets in Kandahar leading to the Citadel became almost impassable."

It was through these streets that Sir Frederick Roberts rode to the Resident's quarters to snatch a few hours' rest before entering on the arduous work that lay before him ; and it was on the confusion then observed, for which his own troops were mainly responsible, that he formed the unfavourable opinion of the order and discipline

¹ *Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 256.

² Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury put the number at a thousand. See his Diary of the 31st of August.

of the garrison of Kandahar which, many years later, found expression in his Autobiography.

At 10 a.m. the First and Second Brigades seized, unopposed, Picket and Karez Hills, and the north-eastern spur of the range overlooking Old Kandahar, thus gaining a position covering the city, which gave the Force the command of an ample supply of good water and placed it within striking distance of the enemy. From Picket Hill the Afghans occupying the Baba Wali Pass could be observed with pickets thrown forward on a low ridge overlooking the cantonments and the city; but beyond this nothing could be seen of Ayub Khan's army, which lay hidden behind the hills that rise abruptly between Kandahar and the Argandab.¹

To obtain the information necessary for the maturing of the General's plans, a reconnoitring party, consisting of two Mountain guns 11-9 Royal Artillery, the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, and the 15th Sikhs, commanded by Hugh Gough and accompanied by the Chief of the Staff, Colonel Chapman, went out about 1 p.m. to force the enemy to disclose his dispositions. Gough made straight for the high ground above the village of Gundigan, where he halted the guns and infantry. Pushing forward with the cavalry another mile or mile and a half, and avoiding as far as possible all enclosures, he emerged at last on an open space of turf about a mile from the village of Pir Paimal, where the Afghans seemed to be strongly entrenched. The appearance of Gough's cavalry at once drew the fire of the enemy's artillery, and in a very short time the dry watercourses, which formed a natural entrenchment along the entire front of Ayub Khan's position, filled with men who opened a brisk fire on the intruders. The 3rd Bengal Cavalry, "admirably handled by their commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie,"² now fell back on the Infantry, and the Mountain guns opened fire, partly to test the range

¹ Chapman, p. 301.

² Roberts's Despatch.

and partly to check the Afghans, who were pouring into the gardens near Gundigan ; but, satisfied with what he had seen, Gough soon sent back the guns and directed the Infantry to cover the retirement of the Cavalry. At the first sign of withdrawal, the enemy pressed forward in great strength, and with such persistency that all the troops were ordered to fall in under arms, and the Heavy Battery was requisitioned from the Citadel. This was at once sent out by the Herat Gate, its passage through the city increasing the confusion that reigned there, by driving the crowds of wretched followers, still slowly making their way towards the hospitals, into the side streets.¹ Not till after sunset, by which time two Brigades had deployed and firing had been taken up all along the line, did the Afghans desist from following up the Sikhs, and, but for the steadiness of that fine regiment under its able Commander, Colonel G. R. Hennessy, and the enemy's indifferent shooting, there would have been heavy losses to deplore ;² as it was, the reconnaissance proved that the enemy was full of spirit, and justified Primrose's refusal to reoccupy cantonments whilst the Relieving Force was beyond supporting distance.

It was supposed that the position taken up by Roberts's troops lay outside the limit of range from the Baba Wali Pass, but more than one shell from the enemy's rifled cannon fell into the camp ; and as it was clear that Ayub Khan's troops were too near neighbours to be left for many hours undisturbed, the General, on his return from the city, determined to give battle without delay,³ and ordered the officers commanding Divisions and Brigades, each with his Staff, and all officers next senior in rank to the Brigadiers, to be at Headquarters at six o'clock the next morning that he might, in person, explain to them his plan of attack, to understand which a knowledge of the position and strength of the two forces is essential.

¹ Comments on the Campaign by the Assistant Quartermaster-General of the Kandahar Force.

² Roberts's Despatch.

³ Chapman, p. 302.

On retiring from before Kandahar, Ayub Khan had fallen back behind the Paimal Mountain, a curiously shaped range of hills, running from north-east to south-west, nearly parallel to the course of the Argandab, at a distance varying from a mile to a mile and a half from that river's left bank. This range is pierced by two passes, the Baba Wali, about two miles and a half from Kandahar, easy and practicable for all arms; and the Murcha, three miles north-east of the Baba Wali Pass, impracticable for guns, but accessible to cavalry. Ayub Khan's main camp lay close to the village of Mazra, between the two passes, the former of which he had had strongly fortified; but his position extended for fully two miles along the slopes of the Pir Paimal Mountain. All the villages in this district are embedded in orchards and walled gardens, and the ground is much cut up by canals and irrigation channels, whilst emplacements for the Afghan guns had been thrown up at all favourable points along the entire length of the position, to defend which Ayub had with him:—

32 Guns.

800 Regular Cavalry.

3,000 Irregular Cavalry.

4,000 Regular Infantry.

5,000 Ghazis.

Total strength—32 guns, 3,800 horsemen, 9,000 footmen.

The British force was encamped behind Karez and Picket Hills, with outposts on the summits of each, and stretched southwards to the Herat road near the village of Surpuza. It consisted of

32 Guns,

2,103 Sabres,

8,837 Rifles,

exclusive of the guns and troops left to guard Kandahar; and though numerically weaker than the enemy's army—10,940 as against 12,800—it was greatly superior to it in discipline, efficiency, and equipment.

From Picket Hill it was possible to look into the Baba Wali Pass, and from observations which revealed that rifled cannon were in position on its south-eastern slopes, that its Kotal was crowded with Ghazis, and that a strong body of regular cavalry were holding the comparatively open ground over which it must be approached,¹ it was clear that, through it, the Afghans were expecting the British advance to be made, and that they would be unprepared for an attack from any other direction. General Roberts therefore determined merely to threaten the pass and to fall upon Ayub Khan's right flank, force back the troops at the south-western extremity of his position upon his main camp, and in so doing cut him off from his direct line of retreat on Herat—the plan suggested by Major Adam at Robot, and which Hugh Gough's reconnoissance had shown to be practicable.

The task of carrying the enemy's position was assigned to the Bengal Division, commanded by Major-General Ross. It consisted of three Infantry Brigades, the First and Second of which were to make the attack, whilst the Third was to form up on its own camping ground, awaiting orders to advance in support; and of a Cavalry Brigade, which was to be posted behind the hamlet of Surpuza to threaten Ayub Khan's rear, and to be ready to interpose at the right moment between his troops and the Argandab, to the left bank of which river Roberts intended its movements to be confined.

TABLE

SHOWING COMPOSITION AND DISPOSITION OF THE BENGAL DIVISION ON THE
1ST SEPTEMBER, 1880

1st Infantry Brigade,

drawn up behind Karez Hill, Brigadier-General Macpherson commanding.

92nd Highlanders.

2nd Gurkhas.

23rd Pioneers.

¹ Chapman, p. 303.

24th Punjab Infantry.

6-8 Royal Artillery (screw guns) Mountain Battery.

Strength : 6 guns, 1,815 Rifles.

2nd Infantry Brigade,

echeloned in rear of 1st Brigade, Brigadier-General Baker commanding.

72nd Highlanders.

2nd Sikh Infantry.

3rd Sikh Infantry.

5th Gurkhas.

2nd Baluchis (29th Bombay Infantry).

No. 2 Mountain Battery.

Strength : 6 guns, 2,506 Rifles.

3rd Infantry Brigade,

formed up on its own camping ground, Brigadier-General Macgregor commanding.

2nd Battalion 60th Rifles.

4th Gurkhas.

15th Sikhs.

25th Punjab Infantry.

11-9 Royal Artillery Mountain Battery.

Strength : 6 guns, 1,894 Rifles.

Cavalry Brigade,

Brigadier-General Hugh Gough commanding.

E-B Royal Horse Artillery.

9th Lancers.

3rd Bengal Cavalry.

3rd Punjab Cavalry.

Central India Horse.

Strength : 4 guns, 1,378 Sabres and Lances.

Total strength of Bengal Division : 22 guns, 1,378 Sabres and Lances, 6,215 Rifles.

To the two Infantry Brigades of the Bombay Division, commanded by Lieutenant-General Primrose, was to fall the double duty of threatening the Baba Wali Pass and holding the ground vacated by

the Bengal Division, from Picket Hill, through Karez Hill, to Chihilzina ; its Cavalry Brigade, posted about a mile north of the Eedgah Gate, was to watch the Murcha Pass, and in the event of an irruption from that quarter to protect the right flank of the British position ; and four Forty-Pounders were to be placed in a well-selected spot about a hundred yards to the right of Picket Hill, from which they could be brought to bear on the Baba Wali Pass.

TABLE

SHOWING STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION OF BOMBAY DIVISION ON THE
1ST SEPTEMBER, 1880.

Lieutenant-General Primrose Commanding.

1st Infantry Brigade,

Brigadier-General Burrows commanding.

66th Foot.

1st Grenadiers (1st Bombay Infantry).

Jacob's Rifles (30th Bombay Infantry).

Strength: 997 Rifles.

2nd Infantry Brigade,

Brigadier-General Daubeny commanding.¹

2nd Battalion 7th Royal Fusiliers.

4th Bombay Infantry.

19th Bombay Infantry.

28th Bombay Infantry.

Strength: 1,587 Rifles.

Cavalry Brigade,

Brigadier-General Nuttall commanding.

3rd Bombay Cavalry.

Poona Horse.

3rd Sind Horse.

Strength: 725 Sabres.

¹ Promoted *vice* Brooke killed in the sortie of the 16th of August. This excellent officer died some months later of cholera at Kandahar.—H. B. H.

Artillery.

C-2 Royal Artillery.

5-11 Royal Artillery (four 40-pounders).

No. 2 Company Bombay Sappers and Miners.

Strength : 10 guns, 38 Rifles.

Total strength of Division : 10 guns, 725 Sabres, 2,622 Rifles.¹

Roberts's plan was both simple and sound ; but Ayub Khan had either seen through it, drawing the right conclusion from Gough's reconnaissance, or he had conceived a plan of attack on the British left, the exact counterpart of Roberts's proposed attack on his right ; for, during the night, he strongly occupied the villages of Gundi Mulla Sahibdad and Gundigan, lying close up to the British position on the direct line of the contemplated advance.

¹ There must subsequently have been an interchange of troops between the two Infantry Brigades, for Daubeny held the ground from which the Bengal Division had advanced, with four companies of the 66th Foot and two of the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, both originally belonging to Burrows's command, in addition to two companies of the 28th Bombay Infantry belonging to his own.—
H. B. H.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Battle of Kandahar

AN hour before daylight on the morning of the 1st of September, all the troops in and around Kandahar fell in under arms ; at 6 a.m. they were dismissed for breakfast ; and at 8 o'clock the two Divisions, provided with cooked rations, took up the positions assigned to them, Ross's men having previously struck their camp and placed their tents and baggage in a walled enclosure. As soon as the necessary dispositions had been completed, Sir Frederick Roberts—still very unwell—established his Head-Quarters on Karez Hill, from the summit of which he could keep an eye on the Baba Wali Pass, and at the same time follow the movements of his own troops till they passed from sight behind the Pir Paimal Mountain. Round the shoulder of that range, large bodies of Afghan troops, covered by clouds of skirmishers, could be seen issuing from the gardens and orchards. In front of Macpherson's and Baker's Brigades the Ghazis had already opened a desultory fire, but the action only began about 9 a.m. when the 40-pounders on the right of Picket Hill replied for the first time to the Afghan guns on the Baba Wali Kotal. Simultaneously, C-2 Field Battery, from a position a little in front of Picket Hill, and 6-8 Mountain Battery, from a point a little in front of Karez Hill, began shelling Gundi Mulla Sahibdad to prepare the way for Macpherson's advance, whilst the four guns Royal Horse Artillery opened fire on Gundigan from a spot south of the Herat Road, near Chihilzina, with the object of covering the advance of Baker's Brigade, and the subsequent movements of Gough's Cavalry.

As soon as the fire of the Artillery had had time to tell upon the enemy, Ross ordered Macpherson to attack Gundi Mulla Sahibdad and to follow up its capture by clearing the enclosures between that village and the Paimal Mountain ; at the same time directing Baker, whilst keeping in touch with Macpherson's left, to drive the enemy first out of the gardens and orchards in his immediate front and then out of Gundigan.

Led by Colonel Battye, the 2nd Gurkhas burst into Gundi Mulla Sahibdad, but the Afghans, numerous and determined, drove them back—a momentary check, quickly repaired, for joining hands with the 92nd Highlanders, under Colonel Parker, and supported by the 23rd Pioneers and the 24th Punjab Infantry, the brave little men returned to the attack, and the two regiments carried the village with splendid dash. The Ghazis, on their part, fought with fierce courage, facing a bayonet charge and finally defending a house to which they had retired, with such tenacity that a gun had to be brought up to dislodge them.¹ Meanwhile Baker's Column had encountered no less stubborn resistance in crossing a plain cut up by watercourses and thickly set with willow trees, and in threading its way through walled and loopholed enclosures, and the narrow lanes of Gundigan. The brunt of the fighting in this part of the field was borne by the 2nd Sikhs under Colonel Boswell, and the 72nd Highlanders under Colonel Brownlow, both regiments having frequently to fix bayonets to carry positions, or to check the bold rushes of the Afghans. Their courage and determination were crowned with complete success, but the Highlanders lost their gallant

¹ “ Here a strange incident occurred. Lieutenant Menzies of the Highlanders being wounded, was carried into a hut to await the arrival of the surgeon. While lying there, attended by one or two of his men, a Ghazi jumped up from a dark corner of the hut and, before he could be despatched, inflicted two more wounds upon Menzies, fortunately, neither of them very severe.” (The *Times* Correspondent.)

commander,¹ also Captain St. J. T. Frome and Lance-Sergeant Cameron, described by Roberts as "a grand specimen of a Highland soldier"; and both they and the Sikhs had many men killed and wounded.

The Afghans, expelled from Gundi Mulla Sahibdad and Gundigan, fell back in good order on the village of Paimal, and both Brigades, followed by the two Mountain Batteries, which had continued in action till their fire was masked by the advance of the Infantry, rounded the shoulder of the Pir Paimal Mountain and pressed rapidly up the Argandab Valley, clearing out the enemy, as they advanced, from the orchards and gardens which abound in the fertile strip of land lying between the river and the base of the hills. Macpherson's Brigade which, moving on an inner curve, had soon outstripped Baker's, encountered a heavy fire as it wheeled into the valley, but, pushing on, still led by the Highlanders and Gurkhas, it captured the village by turning its right and attacking it in front in a series of rushes.²

The Afghans now fell back about a mile and a quarter, to an entrenched camp which covered both the north-western mouth of the Baba Wali Pass and Ayub Khan's main camp, a position the importance of which he evidently recognized, for reinforcements from the Reserve were seen hurrying towards it, and the guns on the Kotal had been wheeled round to enfilade its approaches.³

The capture of Paimal had put an end to all likelihood of an Afghan attack on the British camp; so Roberts, who had been kept informed of the progress of the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades, on learning the nature of the obstacle by which the former was now confronted, ordered Macgregor to advance to its support. He himself

¹ "He (Brownlow) had on many occasions highly distinguished himself as a leader—at the Peiwar Kotal, during the operations round Kabul at the latter end of 1879, and notably on the 14th of December, when he won the admiration of the whole force by his brilliant conduct in the attack and capture of the Asmai Heights." (Roberts's Despatch.)

² Hensman, p. 517.

³ Roberts's Despatch.

accompanied the column, intending to join Ross at Paimal; but that General, confident in the courage and endurance of his men, had not waited for reinforcements to follow up the enemy, and Macpherson's troops, hugging the mountain on their right, came suddenly on the Afghan position. The enemy's guns were posted in rear of a watercourse, backed by a high bank, protected by which the artillerymen fired rapidly and well. Their right rested on a small building, and on their left, lying on the hillside, three or four hundred riflemen poured a heavy fire into the leading British troops, upon whom the guns on the Baba Wali Kotal had also been brought to bear. Major White, commanding the foremost companies of the 92nd, recognizing the danger of delay, instantly called upon his men for just one more effort "to close the business,"¹ and the Highlanders, and two companies of Gurkhas under Major S. E. Beecher, responded unhesitatingly to the call. Dashing forward with fixed bayonets, they drove the Afghans headlong from their entrenchments, losing themselves upwards of forty men in the charge. Ever foremost in action, the gallant White was the first man to reach the enemy's guns, but Private Inderbir Lama of the 2nd Gurkhas, scarcely a step behind, laid his cap on one of them as a proof that it had been captured by his regiment.²

Whilst this was going on in the centre of the enemy's position, on its extreme left a half-battalion of the 3rd Sikhs led by Money had charged a large body of Afghan Irregulars, who fled in haste, abandoning the three guns they had with them. This success completed the rout of Ayub Khan's forces, for his Regular troops, leaving the Artillery and the Ghazis to shift for themselves,³ had taken to flight when Ross turned the Pir Paimal range, and, concealed by

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² Hensman, p. 518.

³ "It is said that Maiwand was won by Ghazis, or by a mob of rudely armed ryots (peasants) led by those fanatics, and one certainly saw much to confirm the idea that the strength of an Afghan army lies in its Irregulars." (Hensman, p. 522.)

the numerous vineyards and orchards, had crossed the Argandab unobserved; and there being no cavalry on the further bank to intercept them, they all got away—the Heratis retiring in good order towards Herat, through the Zemindawar, and the Kabulis towards Ghazni, by the Khakrez Valley. Owing to the intricate nature of the ground, Ross had no idea of the completeness of his victory, and expecting the enemy to take up a fresh position and offer further resistance, he halted his men to replenish their ammunition pouches, and sent off Captain Straton, the Superintendent of Army Signalling, to the Baba Wali Kotal to heliograph the news of his success to Roberts. Straton never sent the message, for half-way up the Pass a Ghazi leapt from a ravine and shot him through the heart.¹

Shortly after the two Brigades had resumed their advance—Baker, on the left, now leading—they crossed the road to the Baba Wali Pass, the state of which, blocked as it was with abandoned guns, camp equipage, ammunition, grain, and forage, revealed the magnitude of the Afghan defeat. About a mile from the entrenchment taken by the 92nd Highlanders and 2nd Gurkhas, they came upon Ayub Khan's camp, with its tents all standing just as the troops had left them when, early in the morning, they marched out to meet the British attack; and outside one of them lay the body of Lieutenant Hector Maclaine, who, taken prisoner during the retreat from Maiwand, had been murdered at the very moment when deliverance was at hand. Sir Frederick Roberts, in his Despatch, attributed the act to the guard set over the prisoner; but as the men composing it were Regulars, and had probably fled with their comrades an hour before, it seems more likely that the murderer was a Ghazi, for the medical evidence went to prove that the one wound—a sharp cut

¹ “In Captain Straton Her Majesty's Service has lost a most accomplished, intelligent officer, under whose management army signalling, as applied to field service, reached a pitch of perfection probably never before attained.” (Roberts's Despatch.)

in the throat which had nearly severed the head from the body—had only just been inflicted.¹

The state of the camp showed clearly that the Afghans had counted on victory, for not a tent had been struck, nor a saddle-bag carried away. “All the rude equipage of a half-barbarous army,” to quote the words of an eye-witness, “was left at our mercy—the meat in the cooking-pots, the bread half-kneaded in the earthen vessels, the bazaar with its ghee-pots, dried fruits, flour and corn—just as it had been deserted when the noise of battle rolled up from Pir Paimal.”² Food of all kinds was welcome spoil, but of far greater importance were the Afghan guns, every one of which fell into the hands of the victorious troops. Pursuit was out of the question, for the Infantry were worn out, and by the time the Bombay Cavalry had made their way through the deserted Baba Wali Pass and descended into the Argandab Valley, the Afghans, except for a few stragglers who were overtaken and killed,³ had crossed the river, and were fast finding shelter among the hills. Ross therefore halted his men just beyond Mazra till Roberts, coming up with Macgregor’s column, ordered the 2nd and 3rd Brigades back to Kandahar, where they arrived before dark.

Meantime, the Bengal Cavalry Brigade was trying, but too late, to overtake and break up Ayub Khan’s retreating troops. The four regiments composing Gough’s force had remained in an enclosure, part of the walls of which had been levelled to give them free exit, till the heights above Gundigan had been seized by the 72nd Highlanders; then, about 11 a.m., they issued from this shelter and

¹ “I dismounted and examined the body. He had a clean, incised wound on the neck, which all but severed the head from the body. His death could not have taken place more than half an hour before I saw him.” (Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury’s Diary.)

² Hensman, p. 521.

³ “General Nuttall pursued during the afternoon, up the Argandab Valley to the east of the river, killing 100 stragglers.” (Ibid. p. 528.)

rode along the Herat road at a gallop. Beyond Gundigan they wheeled to the right to interpose between the Afghans and the river, and had just traversed an open stretch of ground when their Commander received orders to make for the ford at Kokeran, about three miles in his rear, cross the river, and do his best to overtake the enemy. The order was carried out as quickly as possible, but nullahs and watercourses caused much delay,¹ and when the Brigade, issuing from the river, had come out on to the wide, open plain on its western bank, the enemy whom they had hoped to overtake were beyond their reach. Far away, in the direction of the caravan route to Girishk, a large body of horsemen, probably Ayub Khan's escort, were vanishing in a cloud of dust; and the main body of fugitives that, an hour before, had crossed the river by a ford four or five miles higher up its stream, had already gained the hills, which form the southern boundary of the Khakrez Valley. Gough made every effort to cut off the tail end of the retreating Afghans, but the great heat and the exhausted state of the horses, many of which had been out eighteen hours the previous day, held him back, and only a few scattered bands were overtaken and destroyed.

At the foot of the mountains, some of the fugitives seized a village, and occupied a line of sangars on a rocky spur behind it. Major Gerard, commanding a squadron of the Central India Horse, dismounted his men to dislodge them with carbine fire; but Gough, fearing that he might be drawn into too big a business, peremptorily recalled him.² By this time, not only had Ayub Khan's Regulars

¹ "A deep dyke across our line, which it was impossible to jump, now caused much delay. The regiments had to find their way in single file by two or more narrow tracks, up and down its steep banks." (Duke, p. 373.)

"Hampered as the cavalry were by narrow lanes and unbridged water-channels, our progress to the Argandab river was but slow, and a lot of precious time was needlessly wasted, especially in crossing the canals." (Gerard's Diary, p. 306.)

² Ibid. p. 307.

got safely away, but his Irregular forces had so completely dispersed as to make further pursuit useless ;¹ so, as the sun sank, the Brigade recrossed the river by the upper ford, passed Macpherson's camp, where it heard of the Infantry's complete success, and rode slowly back to Kandahar through the darkness of the Baba Wali Pass.²

The Afghan losses in the battle of Kandahar were much heavier than the British. Roberts estimated the killed alone at twelve hundred men ; his troops buried six hundred bodies between Kandahar and the village of Pir Paimal, and there must have been many wounded.

The British losses, as will be seen from the following Table, were not heavy when the strength of the Afghan position, and the courage with which it was defended, are taken into account :—

¹ " Just as it is difficult to understand the rapidity with which large numbers are assembled in Afghanistan for fighting purposes, so the dispersing of an Afghan army and its attendant masses of tribal levies in flight is almost beyond comprehension." (Chapman, p. 305.)

² At page 374 of his *Recollections*, Dr. Duke gives the following graphic account of the ride of Gough's Brigade :—

" Riding with my brother doctor of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, in rear of the two leading regiments, we saw how the heat was telling on the horses. Every three or four hundred yards a charger was down and panting, his rider trying to coax him onwards. In spite of our efforts, the enemy gained the full advantage of their start for life. On the right of the plain, Captain Egerton's squadron of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry charged a number of Afghans just breaking across the plain, and killed upwards of a hundred. Three of his men were wounded severely, and Lieutenant Baker and three others slightly ; but even here many of the enemy escaped, the horses being too exhausted to follow. One horse of this squadron dropped dead as he afterwards arrived at the edge of the water. Indeed, ten horses of the 3rd Bengal and three of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry died from the effects of the day's heat. Other small parties of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry killed detached portions of the enemy, in which Lieutenant Beresford's and several chargers were wounded. A squadron of the Central India Horse, under Major Gerard, swept along the hills on the left of the plain, and delivered a charge home with telling effect into a number of the enemy who had all but reached the cover of the hills, and whose comrades opened fire on our troopers."

NUMERICAL RETURN OF CASUALTIES.

	Killed.				Wounded.					Total in each corps.
	British Officers.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers.	Rank and File.	British Officers.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers.	Rank and File.	Followers.	
Staff	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
E-B Royal Horse Artillery	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
C-2 Royal Artillery	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	2
6-8 Royal Artillery . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	6
3rd Bengal Cavalry	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	2
3rd Punjab Cavalry	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	4	—	7
Central India Horse	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	4	—	6
3rd Bombay Cavalry . . .	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
3rd Sind Horse	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
60th Rifles	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
72nd Highlanders	2	—	—	7	2	—	1	19	2	33
92nd Highlanders	—	—	1	10	2	—	7	62	2	84
15th Sikhs	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	3	—	6
23rd Pioneers	—	—	—	2	1	—	1	11	2	17
24th Punjab Infantry.	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	10	1	13
25th Punjab Infantry.	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	2
2nd Gurkhas	—	—	—	8	1	1	—	21	2	33
4th Gurkhas	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	4	—	7
5th Gurkhas	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	2	5
2nd Sikhs	—	—	—	3	1	—	1	22	2	29
3rd Sikhs	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	—	6
2nd Baluchis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2
Commissariat Department .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
	3	1	1	35	11	4	16	179	18	
Total	40				228					
Grand Total	268									

16 horses and 7 mules killed ; 17 horses and 5 mules wounded.

The three British officers killed were

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| Captain E. Straton | Divisional Staff. |
| Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow | 72nd Highlanders. |
| Captain St. J. T. Frome | ” ” |

and the eleven wounded,

Captain R. H. Murray	72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant S. C. H. Monro.	” ”
Lieutenant S. A. Menzies	92nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant D. W. Stewart .	” ”
Captain G. W. Willock	3rd Bengal Cavalry.
Lieutenant L. S. H. Baker .	3rd Punjab Cavalry.
Lieutenant N. F. F. Chamberlain	Central India Horse.
Lieutenant D. Chesney	23rd Pioneers.
Lieutenant-Colonel A. Battye	2nd Gurkhas.
Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft	4th Gurkhas.
Major J. B. Slater	2nd Sikhs.

In the First Brigade, the under-mentioned officers and men specially distinguished themselves in the attack on Gundi Mulla Sahibdad ¹ :—

Major G. S. White	92nd Highlanders.
Private John Dennis	” ”
Drummer James Boddick	” ”
Lieutenant H. S. Wheatley	2nd Gurkhas.
Sepoy Mangal Jaisi	” ”
” Wazir Sing Nargarkoti	” ”
” Makkareah Rana	” ”
” Bisram Thapa	” ”
” Maniram Lohar	” ”

and

Major G. S. White	92nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant C. W. H. Douglas	” ”
Corporal William McGillvray	” ”
Private Peter Grieve	” ”
” John McIntosh	” ”
” D. Grey	” ”
Major S. E. Beecher	2nd Gurkhas.
Havildar Gopal Borah	” ”
Sepoy Inderbir Lama	” ”
” Tikaram Kwas	” ”

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

showed great gallantry and forwardness in the attack on the Afghan entrenchment near the foot of the Baba Wali Pass.¹

In the Second Brigade the following British officers, Native officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers were mentioned for conspicuous conduct during the attack on Gundigan and the clearing of the surrounding enclosures² :—

Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Boswell	2nd Sikhs.
Major H. M. Pratt	” ”
Major J. B. Slater	” ”
Major F. E. Hastings	” ”
Subadar-Major Gurbaj Sing	” ”
Jemadar Alla Sing	” ”
Naick Dir Sing .	” ”
Sepoy Hakim	” ”
” Jai Sing .	” ”
” Pertab Sing	” ”
” Bir Sing	” ”
Colour-Sergeant G. Jacobs	72nd Highlanders.
Colour-Sergeant R. Lauder	” ”
Lance-Corporal J. Gordon	” ”

OBSERVATION

So far as the Infantry was concerned, the battle of Kandahar was the battle of a good tactician, every big and little unit in the Force supporting all the rest ; but the part assigned to the Cavalry in the original plan made the work of the Infantry harder than it need have been, and lost to the victors the full fruits of their victory. In his account of the engagement, the *Times* Correspondent, General Vaughan,³ gave it as his opinion that better results would have been obtained if the Cavalry had been attached by regiments to the different Brigades ; but a careful consideration of the ground on which the battle was fought and of the relative positions of the opposing forces,

¹ Roberts's Despatch.

² *Ibid.*

³ *My Service in the Indian Army*, by Sir Luther Vaughan, K.C.B., Appendix VI. p. 291 ; also *Times*, October 15th, 1880.

points to the conclusion that the fault lay, not in the massing of the cavalry regiments, but in the original intention to confine their action to the left bank of the Argandab, an error corrected in the end, but corrected too late. If, on the evening of the 31st of August, the Cavalry, the Horse Artillery, and a regiment of Infantry had been posted at Kokeran, ready to cross the river next day as soon as Baker had captured Gundigan; and if, favoured by the open ground on its right bank, they had pushed rapidly upstream towards the higher ford, the discovery that their line of retreat was in danger would have weakened the Afghan defence, and their whole position would have fallen into Ross's hands with comparatively little loss to him and at a heavy cost to the enemy, whose regular troops, instead of retiring in good order, would have been utterly routed and dispersed.

The capture of all Ayub Khan's guns might seem to give finality to his defeat; but he soon rallied his followers, with the result that the Indian Government had to keep a much larger force at Kandahar throughout the winter than was necessary for the protection of the city against local hostility, and that after the departure of the British garrison, a second battle of Kandahar had to be fought before Abdur Rahman could establish his sovereignty over Southern Afghanistan.¹

¹ The mistake which had such serious consequences could not be excused on the plea of ignorance of the locality, for both sides of the Argandab were known to officers of the garrison, and to Colonel Chapman and other officers of the Bengal Division; and they cannot have failed to point out to Roberts that the ground on the right bank of the river was as favourable, as that on the left bank was unfavourable, to Cavalry operations.—H. B. H.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Evacuation of Northern Afghanistan

ABLY seconded by his Chief of the Staff, Colonel W. S. A. Lockhart, and by his Assistant Adjutant-General, Major W. J. Boyes, Sir Donald Stewart, whilst assisting Roberts in the organization of the Kandahar Field Force, had been energetically continuing the preparations for his own retirement from Kabul, and on the 5th of August had sent the following telegram to the Viceroy :—" All our objects have been attained, and nothing remains to be done but to hand over Kabul to the Amir, who is naturally anxious to establish himself in his capital and bring his government into working order. Politically, withdrawal now will be well timed, and it happens we shall leave Kabul on the day fixed for the purpose two months ago. The state of affairs at Kandahar, moreover, renders it highly necessary that we should avail ourselves of present opportunity, whilst country here is quiet and free from complications." ¹

This message Lord Ripon repeated to the Secretary of State, with the following endorsement of its views. " We are of opinion that Stewart's proposal to evacuate Kabul must be approved. I entirely agree with him as to political importance of seizing present opportunity ; if we let this slip the situation may change, and we may be unable to withdraw without serious embarrassment." " I entirely approve evacuation of Kabul," was Lord Hartington's reply, ² and the withdrawal, sanctioned by both Governments, began only a day later than the day originally fixed for it.

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 53.

² *Ibid.*

Meantime a divergence of view on a point of cardinal importance had suddenly declared itself between Stewart and his Political Officer. Sir Donald, distrustful of Abdur Rahman, both as a ruler and an ally, was unwilling to give him arms, or to leave him in possession of the fortifications erected by Roberts.¹ Lepel Griffin, convinced that the new Amir was an able man, and sincere in his wish to live on good terms with the Indian Government, desired, within reasonable limits, to strengthen his hands. The order to blow up all the works around Kabul, had been given without Griffin's knowledge, and when he heard of it accidentally from the Commanding Engineer, he went straight to Stewart to express his surprise that so important a decision should not have been communicated to him. Stewart defended his silence on the ground that the retention or destruction of fortifications was a matter entirely for the military authorities, and declared that, as a soldier, he could not consent to leave behind him forts and walls which, at some future day, might be used against British troops; but Griffin refused to admit that a question which involved grave political issues, could be regarded as a purely military concern; and pointed out that the settlement just concluded aimed at the reconstitution of a strong Afghanistan, standing in friendly relations to the Indian Government; and that if, with one hand, Sir Donald led Abdur Rahman into Kabul and, with the other, blew up the works that might enable the Amir to hold his own in that city, he would discredit him with his subjects, and abandon him defenceless to the attacks of his enemies, who, however divided among themselves, would be certain to combine for his overthrow. Even from the military standpoint the Political Officer condemned the General's refusal to accord the Amir material aid, arguing that, though a lavish

¹ "Griffin is much taken with Abdur Rahman's intelligence and nice manners. Unfortunately, like all Afghans, he wants everything from us, and all he has to give in exchange is the chance of his friendship. The fact is, we have made a mess of the business, I fear, and have been wasting our time on a man who has no real strength of his own." (*Sir Donald Stewart's Life*, p. 374.)

gift of guns and rifles might be dangerous, a moderate number, sufficient to enable him to arm his own special friends, would act as a check on the tribes that might be tempted to harass the retiring British force, whilst the possession of vast fortifications, requiring large numbers of troops to hold, would be a security against treacherous pursuit, should treachery enter into the Amir's plans.

Finding that he could make no impression on Stewart by spoken arguments, Griffin withdrew to embody them in a memorandum; and, when this also failed to alter the General's views, he appealed to the Government of India, who twice refused to interfere. Fortunately for Afghanistan, and fortunately for India, Mr. Lepel Griffin was not a man to be daunted; and when, in protesting for the third time against what he saw to be a fatal error, he requested that his protest should be placed on official record, the Government gave way, and telegraphed to Stewart directing him to come to an understanding with his Political Officer. It would seem that, on reflection, Sir Donald had arrived at the conclusion that the position he had taken up was less vital than he had at first declared it to be; for he now told Griffin that, if he were convinced that Abdur Rahman really set great store by the fortifications, he would cancel the order for their destruction. The proof asked for was quickly forthcoming. The same evening a swift messenger carried to Abdur Rahman Griffin's instructions for a letter to be written to himself, in which the Amir was to set forth the dangers that would threaten his position at Kabul if the fortifications were destroyed; and when, the next morning, an explicit and strongly worded request that they might be left intact, arrived and was laid before Stewart, the General yielded "gracefully and cordially" to the Political Officer; and "if he thought the Amir's letter a strangely timely one, he never showed any surprise."¹

¹ "The situation was thus happily saved; but I was certain then, and am certain now, that if the fortifications had been blown up, and this insulting display of distrust had been shown to our chosen nominee in the sight of all Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman would never have established himself at Kabul,

Reassured on this vital point and apprised of the approaching departure of the British troops, Abdur Rahman had been drawing nearer to Kabul; and, on the morning of the 11th of August, he and Sir Donald Stewart met, for the first and last time, outside the western gate of the Sherpur cantonment. It was the Afghan Prince who had asked for the interview, yet, once inside the tent in which it was to be held, he seemed to have nothing to say; and as neither Stewart, nor the two Generals, Hills and Gough, who had accompanied him, could speak Persian, there was an awkward silence after Lepel Griffin had finished making a few complimentary remarks, so that Sir Donald lost patience and was in the act of rising, when the Amir's tongue was suddenly loosened. With warmth and earnestness Abdur Rahman now thanked Stewart and Griffin for the honour and consideration they had shown him throughout the negotiations, and expressed his deep gratitude to the British Government for having placed him on the throne of his ancestors. His interests and the interests of that Government were one, so he declared, and his friendship for it would be undying. All present were struck by the sincerity of the Amir's tone and manner, and it was with feelings of genuine compassion that the three Generals parted from a man who would, they believed, soon fall a victim to the rivalries by which he was surrounded. The Political Officer, who had had many opportunities of judging of Abdur Rahman's character and abilities, took a more hopeful view of his prospects, believing that if the British Government only extended to him its full and ungrudging support, he would overcome successfully his many difficulties.¹

and Afghanistan would have fallen back into the chaos and anarchy from which the late Amir saved it." (Article entitled "Afghanistan and the Indian Frontier," by Sir L. Griffin, K.C.S.I., in the *Fortnightly Review* of November, 1901, written a few weeks after the death of Abdur Rahman.)

¹ "Very few persons believed that Abdur Rahman could maintain himself on the throne, and even the Foreign Secretary, Sir Alfred Lyall, the ablest of the Simla officials, who possessed an intimate knowledge of Afghan affairs, prophesied that the Amir would have to leave the country with the British army." (Ibid.)

At the end of the interview, the Amir rode back to his camp to prepare for the morrow's public entry into Kabul, and the British officers returned to Sherpur to make over the cantonment, the Bala Hissar, and the forts on the various heights around the city, to the Afghan officials appointed to receive them. When the last of them had changed hands, all the troops in and around Kabul, organized into one Division, commanded by Major-General Hills, and every regiment and detachment scattered along the hundred and eighty miles which separate Kabul from Peshawar, set their faces eastward and marched for home. The whole movement was carried out in accordance with a programme drawn up by Major Boyes and issued to every Commanding Officer, Staff-Officer, and Head of Department; and to prevent any clashing of troops, the exact position of each corps was telegraphed daily to Sir Donald Stewart's Head-Quarters.

The force now set in motion amounted to twenty-three thousand men, of whom, as shown by the accompanying Table, about seven thousand started from Kabul :—

TABLE.

Major-General J. Hills Commanding.	
Royal Artillery	{ 11-11 Garrison Battery.
	{ G-4 Field Battery.
Cavalry	{ 1st Punjab Cavalry.
	{ 2nd Punjab Cavalry.
1st Infantry Brigade—Brigadier-General C. Gough commanding.	
	2-9th Foot.
	28th Punjab Infantry.
	45th Sikhs.
2nd Infantry Brigade—Brigadier-General R. J. Hughes commanding.	
	59th Foot.
	3rd Ghurkhas.
	19th Punjab Infantry. ¹

¹ Part sent on with convoys.

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

3rd Infantry Brigade—Brigadier-General W. Daunt commanding.

67th Foot.

27th Punjab Infantry.¹

5th Punjab Infantry.

Divisional Corps—3 companies Bengal Sappers and Miners.

The Corps of Guides.

The strength of the force which marched out of Kabul towards Peshawar was as follows :—

(FROM A RETURN DATED 17TH AUGUST, INCLUDING THE GARRISONS AS FAR AS JAGDALLAK)

British Officers.	European troops.	Native troops.	Total European and Native troops.	Followers. ²	Horses.	Cannels.	Fonies.	Mules.	Draught bullocks.
139	1,961	5,331	7,431	3,411	1,372	2,089	1,694	754	282

The under-mentioned troops had left Kabul previously on their return journey to India, and are not included in the above return :—

A-B Royal Horse Artillery

G-3 Royal Artillery, Field Battery

6-11 „ „ Elephant Battery

12-9 „ „ „ „

19th Bengal Lancers

5 companies Bengal Sappers

} About 2,000 men.

In addition to the foregoing there were, on the Line of Communications between Butkhak and Lundi Kotal, under Major-General R. O.

¹ Part sent on with convoys.

² Regimental followers only.

Bright (whose head-quarters were at Safed Sang), some 14,000 troops, disposed as follows, viz :—

3rd Section.—From Butkhak to Safed Sang, under Brigadier-General R. Sale-Hill.

- 2 Guns No. 4 Hazara Mountain Battery (from Kabul).
- 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers).
- 17th Bengal Cavalry.
- 25th Foot.
- 22nd Punjab Infantry.
- 30th ,, ,,

2nd Section.—From Rozabad to Dakka, under Brigadier-General J. Doran.

- C-3 Royal Artillery.
- Part of 5th Bengal Cavalry.
- 8th Bengal Infantry.
- 9th ,, ,, (part of).
- 1st Madras Infantry (part of).
- 15th ,, ,,

(The first Section, from Lundi Kotal to Peshawar, is not included in this statement.)

The following “Moveable Columns” were also held available in the vicinity of the main road :—

No. 1 Moveable Column.—From Safed Sang at Mardandan, overlooking the Hissarak Valley :—

- 4th Bengal Cavalry (part of).
- 51st Foot.
- 31st Punjab Infantry.
- 1st Ghurkhas.

No. 2 Moveable Column.—Near Jellalabad :—

- 2 Guns No. 1 Mountain Battery.
- 4th Bengal Cavalry (Head-quarters).
- 2-5th Fusiliers.
- 9th Bengal Infantry (Head-quarters).
- 1st Madras Infantry (part of).

At Pesk Bolak :—

- L-5 Royal Artillery.
- 5th Bengal Cavalry (Head-quarters).
- 2-14th Foot.
- 32nd Pioneers.
- 1 company Madras Sappers and Miners.

To move twenty-three thousand disciplined troops over rough roads, running through sweltering valleys, with high passes or narrow defiles at either end ; to encamp them, night after night, on cramped spaces, with limited water-supply, picketing every height and searching every lateral valley, lest some sudden attack should break their rest, was, in itself, no easy task ; but its difficulties were trebled by the necessity of supplying the needs and assuring the safety of forty thousand camp-followers, to say nothing of many Hindus and some Afghan Sirdars, who had elected to go into exile rather than remain within reach of Abdur Rahman's strong hand. Large droves of cattle accompanied the fugitives, and the transport for the vast host consisted of every description of carriage—carts, hackeries, ekkas, elephants, camels, mules, ponies, donkeys, and pack bullocks¹—many of them without drivers, for the Hazaras engaged at Kabul had deserted, though their expenses for the return journey had been guaranteed to them.

The whole Kabul Division encamped the first night at Butkhak ; but the second night, owing to the limited space available at Lattaband, Gough's Brigade, which acted as rear-guard throughout the march, halted three miles short of the Kotal. The third evening, the rear-guard did not get into Seh Baba till 9 p.m., and many of the baggage animals, laden since 4 a.m., never got in at all, but lay down and died on the road. There was heavy work to be done and hardships to be borne by every man in the retiring force, but the brunt of the suffering fell on the transport, and the worst of the fatigue and worry on the troops that had it in charge. "It is impossible to describe

¹ "The Return March to India under Sir Donald Stewart in 1880," by Lieutenant-Colonel Walter J. Boyes. *Journal of Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. XXXVII. 1893, No. 180.

"The carriage of the sick down from the front was a great strain to my transport, as the greater portion were conveyed in carts below Safed Sang to Jellalabad, where they embarked on rafts, which, for invalids, were peculiarly advantageous, reducing, as they did, the journey by some four days." (Report of Lieutenant-Colonel H. St. G. Tucker, Chief Director of Transport.)

in adequate terms the difficulties and perplexities which devolve upon the rear-guard of an army marching by confined, waterless roads in a mountainous region under a broiling sun. Loads get displaced and must be readjusted ; a pony or a camel casts its load, which must be replaced or transferred to another animal, or a wheel comes off in the narrowest and most difficult part of the road. Each and every such incident causes a check along the whole line and a huddling together of animals ensues ; ponies and mules begin to fight and kick ; weak and jaded followers declare they cannot march, but they must be got on somehow. Such, in a few words, are some of the ever-recurring dilemmas which, from morn till night, tax the patience and endurance of a baggage or rear-guard. The embarrassments above referred to are considerably enhanced when, as in this instance, the transport is of a very mixed kind. Movement must then be regulated by the pace of the slowest animal.”¹

So wrote Boyes in his narrative of the march, and the picture is not exaggerated. There are no statistics to show the percentage of sickness among the troops subjected to these harassing and exhausting conditions, nor how many of the “jaded followers” died on the road, but the report of Major C. Hayter, Director of Kabul Transport, shows that of the nine thousand four hundred and thirty-three animals starting from that city, thirteen hundred and eighty perished ; one convoy alone losing a hundred and eighty-five camels out of four hundred and seven, in crossing the Lattaband Pass.

Beyond Seh Baba, owing to the confined nature of the country, it became necessary to move the force by brigades ; and after Gandamak, where it concentrated for the last time, it had to be broken up into half-brigades, the scanty supply of water and the narrow camping grounds in the Khyber forbidding the passage of any larger body. In consequence of this rearrangement, the rear-guard remained at Safed Sang from the 18th to the 23rd of August,

¹ “The Return March to India under Sir D. Stewart,” by Colonel Boyes.

and when it resumed its march, it took with it a large accumulation of heavy camp equipage and twenty thousand maunds (over seven hundred tons) of ordnance stores, carriage for which was provided by utilizing every sick camel that was pronounced capable of carrying a light load.¹ Even with this aid some Government property, food stuffs, and grain had to be left behind² at this and other posts, and the Khujianis and men of Hissarak fought fiercely for the possession of some twenty or thirty cartloads of miscellaneous stores abandoned at Basawal, the latter carrying off the lion's share.³ At Dakka, Gough's Brigade halted again to cover the troops still defiling through the Khyber, and on the 1st of September moved on to Lundi Kotal, where its Commander was instructed to remain till further orders.

Practically, the British retirement from Northern Afghanistan had been unopposed. There were a few attempts to plunder, and the Khujianis assembled in large numbers, but, warned by Gough, did nothing to impede his march; and, so far from suffering from hunger, the troops enjoyed almost a superfluity of good things, thanks to the Chief Director of Transport, Colonel Tucker, who, foreseeing that the exodus from Kabul might come at any moment, on his own responsibility, had sent back the transport animals, which had brought to Peshawar the heavy baggage and surplus ordnance stores, laden with food stuffs and forage, for distribution all along the line of communications.⁴

Day by day, as the troops moved forward, the Force under Sir D. Stewart's command grew less and less, for each corps, as it emerged from the Khyber, came under the jurisdiction of Major-General G. C. Hankin, commanding the Peshawar District. Hankin's instructions were to avoid a large assemblage of men at the Harri-

¹ Report by Lt.-Colonel H. St. G. Tucker, Chief Director of Transport.

² Major C. Hayter, Director of Kabul Transport.

³ "There seems to have been some misunderstanding regarding the carriage for this particular station." (Lieutenant-Colonel H. St. G. Tucker's Report.)

⁴ *Ibid.*

Sing-ke-Burj encampment, midway between Jamrad and Peshawar, and to prevent any delay at Peshawar itself, or on the banks of the Indus. Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. Wolseley, who had had considerable experience in the moving of troops both on the Kandahar and Kuram lines, was sent to Hankin as Chief of the Staff, to assist in the laborious work of planning and supervising the orderly march of nine batteries of Artillery, nine regiments of Cavalry, twenty-one regiments of Infantry, and eight companies of Sappers and Miners. The difficult task of setting thousands of men across the swollen river at Attock and Khushalgarh—the Commander-in-Chief had agreed to Hankin's request that he might be allowed to use both the Grand Trunk and Kohat roads—fell to Captain C. A. Carthew; and, as in the previous year, great assistance was rendered to the military authorities by Mr. H. B. Beckett, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, who collected the five hundred boatmen needed for the operation, and warded off a threatened strike among them by his firmness and tact.¹

Thanks to the rapidity with which the dispersion of the troops was effected, to the healthiness of the summer of 1880, and to the unremitting attention devoted to the sanitary arrangements by Deputy Surgeon-General P. T. Fraser, and his two principal medical officers, Surgeon-Major J. Good and Surgeon-Major J. Browne,² only the 9th Foot, the last regiment to leave Afghan territory, was attacked by cholera before reaching the Indus. A second outbreak occurred after crossing that river, at the Hussan-Abdal encamping ground, but both were of a mild type and occasioned very slight delay.

Though the Head-Quarters Staff was not broken up till the 31st of August, Sir Donald Stewart left Jellalabad on the 23rd for Lundi

¹ See Chapter I. of this Volume—"The March of Death."

² Upwards of 50 sick officers, 1,400 British soldiers, 3,000 Native soldiers, and 3,800 camp-followers from the front had passed through the hands of these three medical officers during the previous six months.

Kotal, where he arrived the next day. All his arrangements had worked and were working well, and his presence and advice were more needed at Simla, where many military problems were awaiting solution, than with the troops whose safety was now fully assured. As questions connected with the occupation of the Khyber were among those that would have to be decided, he halted on his way down and made a careful inspection of Lundi Kotal and Ali Masjid. "The worst site possible for a cantonment or advanced post; every possible objection could be made to it,"¹ was his verdict on the former position, and the latter, though "exceedingly strong," he condemned as too much scattered, too extensive to be "held, if seriously attacked."²

At Peshawar, where he arrived on the 30th of August, Sir Donald had a long conversation on frontier affairs with the Commissioner of the District, Colonel W. G. Waterfield. The two men were of one mind as to the "general principle of withdrawing all troops from the frontier," but differed as to the status to be accorded to the border tribes; Waterfield desiring to make them independent both of Afghanistan and India, which in Stewart's opinion would be a mistake.

On the 31st of August, Stewart handed over command of all the troops still in Northern Afghanistan to General Bright, and travelled up to Simla, where Lord Ripon met him with a hearty welcome and the offer of a seat on his Council, made vacant by the resignation of Sir Edwin Johnson; and where, a few days later, he received the gratifying intelligence that the Queen had conferred upon him

¹ *Sir D. Stewart's Life*, p. 382.

Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith, in consultation with the Principal Medical Officer of the Khyber Force, also carefully inspected the site, and recorded the opinion that "from something inherent in the position and climate of Lundi Kotal, it is a most unhealthy station for European troops," and "strongly recommended, on sanitary grounds, that it be abandoned."—H. B. H.

² *Ibid.* p. 383.

the Grand Cross of the Bath, in recognition of his great services, both military and political, in Afghanistan. His own verdict on the period which covered those services is recorded in his Diary dated Jamrad, August 29th—"Got out of Afghanistan to-day with some pleasure. The last two years have been eventful ones in my life, and I am thankful that I have come through them without any discredit in any particular;"¹ and this modest judgment must, on the whole, be endorsed by the historian. During the two years in which Sir Donald had exercised absolute power over the lives and fortunes of a conquered people, he had never been guilty of an act of injustice or cruelty; he had done his best to soften the hardships which the military occupation of a very poor country must entail upon its people; and he had succeeded in preserving the peace of the territories under his rule and in winning the respect, if not the affection, of the inhabitants of Kandahar. But if as an administrator he takes rank with his great predecessor, Sir William Nott, as a soldier he takes rank below him. It is impossible to picture to oneself Nott throwing away his transport in a purposeless march to Khelat-i-Ghilzai, or committing the tactical blunders which so nearly ended in disaster at Ahmed Khel; and yet, though remembering those two incidents, Stewart had reason to be thankful that he had escaped discredit—he may well have felt in later life that his greatest achievement, the admirably conceived and executed evacuation of Northern Afghanistan, overshadowed by the brilliancy and success of Roberts's march on Kandahar, was not appreciated at its true value. The claims of that achievement to the admiration of every serious student of military history, were well summed up by Colonel Boyes in the article entitled "The Return March to India under Sir Donald Stewart," already quoted from:—"Taking into consideration (so he wrote) the size of the Army, 23,000 men; the number of camp-followers, some 40,000 at least; the large quantity of stores,

¹ *Sir D. Stewart's Life*, p. 387.

ammunition, and supplies; the mixed description of transport; the difficult nature of the country; the lawless, freebooting character of the tribes along the route; and the season of the year when the march was made, it is not too much to say that the return of the Afghan Field Force to India in 1880, under General Sir Donald Stewart, is one of the most striking examples on record of how a highly-disciplined, well-organized force in the hands of a skilful General can successfully overcome the greatest difficulties."

The withdrawal from Kabul accomplished, the Government turned its attention to the evacuation of the Kuram. This valley, once so ardently coveted by Lord Lytton, had been steadily sinking in value under the test of actual possession. No one now dreamed of dominating Kabul from the Shutargardan Pass, and the road to that city which was to supersede the Khyber route, had come to be regarded by Roberts himself as a mere "by-road." The Commander-in-Chief had never nourished any delusions as to the military importance of the Kuram. In October, 1878, he had recommended that Roberts's Division should be transferred to Peshawar; in August, 1879, he had anticipated what actually occurred a few weeks later in the advance on Kabul,¹ and it was therefore no wonder that when

¹ "The Shutargardan must ever be considered a bad line of military communications. From Habib Killa, upwards, the road passes through a difficult country over the Peiwar Kotal (8,500 feet) onward to the narrow defile of Hazar Darakht, attaining on the crest of the Shutargardan an elevation of 11,200 feet. The descent to Dobundi and Kushi is extremely difficult and steep; for wheeled carriages it is impracticable, and it would take a vast expenditure of money to make it passable. The variation of altitude in the short distance which separates Habib Killa from Kushi is surely in itself prohibitory of all thought of a railway beyond Kuram. The above features indicate enormous difficulties for those who may have to provide such continued transport of munitions of war and food supply, as the advance of an army by this route would imply. Unless a transport train far more extensive and more efficiently organized than any we have seen in the last campaign, were available for him, a commander who would advance to Kabul by this line would find enormous difficulties in his way, for, having expended the limited number of days' supply he could hope to carry with him, he must, of necessity, become dependent on the means of some other

the question of holding, or retiring from, the Kuram came up for settlement, he should have been found declaring that, "as a line of military communications, experience has condemned it, and I abandon it as such without the slightest regret."¹ Watson, the General on the spot, who had had long and trying experience of the unhealthiness of the Kuram, and the restless hostility of the hill-tribes on its borders, was quite as ready to let it go. "I know of no reason for keeping troops any longer in the Kuram," so he telegraphed to the Foreign Secretary on the 2nd of October. "I understand that we have no political interests in the valley, and with regard to our obligations to the Turis, as Government declines to give them a Governor, and they cannot elect one themselves, I will divide the country into districts under leading Malliks, giving each set one of our forts for their protection. Districts will administer their own affairs locally, but will all unite to resist a common enemy. I will now issue the Proclamation forwarded under your telegram of the 28th of August. Can you send me some printed copies? Turis attach great importance to this, and, if widely circulated, the Kabul Government will know that we are in earnest. These arrangements can be made in a few days."²

On receipt of this telegram, the Foreign Secretary informed the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab that the evacuation would begin on the 15th of October, and instructed him to arrange with Watson for the rectification of boundaries made necessary by the separation of the Kuram from Afghanistan and the restitution of the Harriab and Khost valleys to the Amir.

The proclamation embodying these political changes was now issued, and at the same time Watson advanced five thousand rupees

column, operating either by the Ghazni or by the Jellalabad road. This would have been General Roberts's condition had he been called upon to advance in March or April last." (Extract from Sir Frederick Haines's Minute of 25th of August, 1879.)

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, p. 86.

² *Ibid.* p. 94.

to the Turi and Bangash headmen to meet the expense of raising levies for the defence of the posts and forts, of which they were to be the heirs, and presented them with some rifles, matchlocks, and ammunition captured from the Afghans. These preliminaries accomplished, all troops and stores were withdrawn from the encampment on the Peiwar Kotal—the Shutargardan and Ali Khel had been abandoned by Gordon months before; the Kuram Forts were handed over to the Turis on the morning of the 16th of October; and the troops moved by easy stages down the valley up which Roberts had marched just two years before, and, with the recrossing of the Kuram River, the war in Northern Afghanistan came to an end.

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION I. Sir Donald Stewart has been criticized for the despatch of Roberts's column to Kandahar, and for his own rapid and complete withdrawal from Afghanistan; but the considerations by which he was influenced justified his action in both cases. Technically, the march on Kandahar ran counter to sound military rules, but the circumstances under which it was conducted and the object for which it was undertaken, took it out of the category of enterprises which those rules condemn. Stewart knew, as none of his critics could know, the strength and efficiency of Roberts's isolated and baseless force, and the unlikelihood of its meeting with serious opposition, or suffering from lack of food and forage; and though that knowledge would not have justified him in sending it out on a three-hundred-mile march for an object of small importance, or one that could have been better attained in some other way, it did justify him in doing this when the lives of a large body of Anglo-Indian troops were at stake, and he had good grounds for believing that no other help could have reached them in time to avert fresh disaster.

OBSERVATION II. The time and manner of the evacuation of Northern Afghanistan were determined chiefly by political reasons. Stewart recognized that Abdur Rahman would be Amir in name only till he had entered into possession of his capital, and that his entrance into Kabul must be preceded by the removal of the foreign Force, whose presence was incompatible with the full exercise of his authority ; and, withdrawal once begun, it seemed to him safer, easier, and more economical to carry his troops straight through to India than to halt them at any point between Kabul and Peshawar. He was not ignorant of the misfortune which had befallen the regiments retiring through the Khyber the previous year ; but he knew that the present summer was an exceptionally healthy one in India, and that all precautions would be taken to minimize the risks to which his troops would be exposed, and, against those risks, he set the exhaustion of local supplies, the foul state of the camping grounds, and the bad effect on the health of the men which must be looked for if, under harassing and depressing conditions, they were kept much longer away from their homes.

CHAPTER XL

Retirement from Southern Afghanistan

ON the morrow of his victory over Ayub Khan, Sir Frederick Roberts had to face the problem, ever recurrent in Afghanistan, of how to feed his troops, for the supplies remaining in Kandahar were barely sufficient to meet the immediate needs of its garrison, and the resources of the surrounding country were well-nigh exhausted. To make it easier to get at what food might be available in the district, he stopped Phayre's advanced troops at Karez-i-Zarak, twelve miles south of Kandahar; despatched Macgregor's Brigade, accompanied by the Central India Horse, to Chaman, in anticipation of orders to proceed to India; and scattered the troops of the other two Bengal Brigades as widely as prudence would permit. An expedition to Maiwand, for the purpose of ascertaining what treatment the Afghans had accorded to Burrows's dead¹ and discovering whether there were any survivors of the fight, incidentally opened up other sources of supply, by convincing the people that if they kept the peace, they would not be punished for their past offences.²

The expeditionary force, consisting of a Field Battery, four hundred and fifty sabres, and two Infantry regiments, all belonging to the Bombay Division, and commanded by Brigadier-General Daubeny, arrived at Maiwand on the 15th of September. On the march, which followed the line of Burrows's retreat, a hundred and

¹ Small detachments of the regiments which took part in the action, accompanied the column for the purpose of identifying the dead.—H. B. H.

² Brigadier-General A. G. Daubeny's Despatch, dated 23rd September, 1880.

forty-four bodies were discovered and interred ; but on the field of battle itself all the dead had been buried, though at different dates, for the earth on the Afghan graves was hard and set, whilst that on the British graves was soft and loose. The bodies of eight British officers were identified, and two Native non-commissioned officers, one transport driver, and four camp-followers, whose lives had been spared, were traced and released. Bringing with him these men and a gun of the smooth-bore Battery found at Hauz-i-Madad, Daubeny returned to Kokeran on the 23rd of September, by which date Sir Frederick Roberts, whose health had been much shaken by the heavy strain, mental and physical, to which he had been subjected during the last twelve months, was no longer in Kandahar. A Medical Board had recommended his early departure for England, but, unwilling to leave the country till all questions connected with its pacification and occupation had been settled, he contented himself, at first, with moving up to Pishin. Failing, however, to recover strength, at the end of a month spent principally with Sandeman at Quetta, he applied to be relieved, and on the 15th of October, handed over the command to Phayre—Primrose had been recalled—and at the invitation of Lord Ripon proceeded to Simla, where he enjoyed the pleasure of receiving from the Viceroy the Queen's autograph letter, conveying her satisfaction with the manner in which the service entrusted to him had been performed. That satisfaction found public expression in the bestowal of a baronetcy, a like honour being accorded to Donald Stewart, and Parliament showed its agreement with the Sovereign by voting to each the sum of £12,500.

The retirement of the Bengal Division, to which the remnants of Burrows's Brigade and the 2nd Baluchi regiment were attached, begun on the 10th of September when the 3rd Brigade left Kandahar for Chaman, was completed by the 23rd of October, on which day the last troops left Sibi for their allotted stations in India. The usual difficulties inherent in the nature of the country had presented

themselves ; but Phayre's expectation, that the relief of Kandahar would be followed by the collapse of the revolt on the line of communications, proved correct, and even the small columns detached to punish the Kakars and Achakzais for their misdeeds met with no opposition. Baker and Macpherson withdrew by the Bolan, whilst Macgregor marched by the Harnai route, re-establishing, as he advanced, the posts along the railway which had been abandoned after the Maiwand disaster. At Sibi, where he arrived on the 8th of October, he reorganized his Force, and marched on the 11th by a circuitous route to Kahan, the principal village of the rebellious Marris, from whom he had been instructed to demand restitution of all treasure and other property plundered from convoys, the payment of a fine of twenty thousand rupees, compensation for private losses, blood money for the slain, and hostages for future good conduct.¹

The road followed by the Force ran over a succession of mountain ranges, almost impracticable for cavalry, and through gorges so narrow that a laden mule could hardly pass between their rocky sides ; but, thanks to the precautions observed, there were no casualties, and when, on the 6th of November, Kahan came into sight, Mehrulla and Karam Khan, the chiefs of the tribe, warned by a message from Macgregor that only prompt submission could save their village from destruction, came out to meet him, and handed over fifty thousand rupees as a proof of repentance for the past and an earnest of good intentions for the future.² Six days later Macgregor's column broke up at Drigri on the British frontier ; the troops belonging to the Punjab Frontier Force marching for Dera Ghazi Khan, and those returning to the Punjab crossing the Indus at Mithankot.

Though the Bengal Division, moving down, had met other Bengal corps, moving up the Bolan, and thought he pass was alive with camels

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Macgregor*, Vol. II. p. 271.

² *Ibid.* p. 288.

laden with the stores that had accumulated at Sibi, which Sandeman's renewed influence had induced the local chiefs to provide,¹ the future of the province for which troops and stores were bound was still in doubt.

Even under Lord Lytton's administration, though the Viceroy himself might consider the question closed, the case for complete withdrawal from Kandahar had been clearly stated by Sir Donald Stewart in India,² and in England by Sir E. Perry,³ a Member of the Secretary of State's Council, whilst the opposite opinion had been stoutly maintained by Sir Frederick Roberts;⁴ but only after Mr. Gladstone had succeeded Lord Beaconsfield as Prime Minister, was an attempt made to arrive at a conclusion by weighing against each other the views of the men most competent to speak for the opposing schools of thought which, for the last five or six years, had been struggling to control the foreign policy of India.

On the Council of the Secretary of State for India, Sir H. Norman, Sir R. Montgomery, and Sir E. Perry advocated, and Sir W. Merewether and Sir H. C. Rawlinson denounced, the proposed retirement from Kandahar.⁵ In the Viceroy's Council, the Hon. E. Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer) stood for withdrawal;⁶ the Hon. W. Stokes,⁷ the Hon. Rivers Thompson,⁸ and Sir Frederick Haines⁹ against it; whilst the Hon. J. Gibbs, seeing "many objections to our holding Kandahar now, and many good reasons why we may retire from it with comparative ease," did not "oppose such a course,"¹⁰ and Sir Donald Stewart, who thought little of Kandahar's strategical value and was not "an advocate for annexation for any purpose," hesitated

¹ *Life of Sandeman*, p. 156.

² *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 2, pp. 27, 28.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 28-33.

⁴ *Ibid.* No. 1, pp. 64-72.

⁵ For all these Memoranda see *Ibid.* No. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.* No. 2, pp. 67-77, and *Ibid.* No. 3, pp. 11-14.

⁷ *Ibid.* No. 4, pp. 3-5.

⁸ *Ibid.* No. 3, pp. 6-10.

⁹ *Ibid.* No. 2, pp. 81-85.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* No. 4, pp. 5, 6,

to support withdrawal, "not on a disapproval of the effect of that action," but on the ground that it would involve the existing Government in a "disregard of obligations which were formally and publicly undertaken by their predecessors in office in the name of Her Majesty the Queen."¹

Of the military experts, unconnected with either Council, consulted by Lord Hartington, Colonel C. J. East, Head of the Intelligence Department of the War Office, Sir A. Alison, Deputy Quartermaster-General,² Sir Garnet Wolseley, Quartermaster-General,³ and Sir R. Sandeman⁴ sided with the supporters of retirement, and the Duke of Cambridge⁵ and Lord Napier of Magdala⁶ with its opponents.

Within each of the two classes into which, broadly speaking, the writers of these Memoranda must be divided, viz :—those who desired, and those who deprecated the retention of British troops in Southern Afghanistan—there were many differences of view. Sir H. Norman, Sir E. Perry, Sir R. Montgomery, and Sir E. Baring pressed for a return to India's natural frontier, the frontier which had been hers since the annexation of the Punjab, and for the restitution

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 4, pp. 7, 8.

² *Ibid.* No. 2, pp. 42-46.

³ Wolseley in his able Memorandum on the subject writes :—" Bearing in mind the tenure upon which we hold possession of India, I would for military reasons deplore our permanent retention of Kandahar. Many of those who now urge us to keep possession of that place know little of the difficulties we had to face in 1857. Having served through the Indian Mutiny, I remember them well, and looking back at them now, it is difficult to understand how others who had the same experience can wish to add to the responsibilities which then nearly crushed us. What should we have done in 1857, 1858, and 1859 if we had had a garrison at Kandahar ? To occupy a point so far removed beyond

our frontier would be a serious financial burden even in times of profound peace, and in time of any great trial its possession would indeed be a white elephant, capable of ruining our Indian Empire by the cost which the necessity of supporting it would entail upon us. Its retention will certainly cripple our military resources, and it would seriously hamper our strategical operations in the event of any great internal disturbance in India." (*Ibid.* p. 80.)

⁴ *Ibid.* No. 5, pp. 16-21.

⁵ *Ibid.* No. 2, pp. 46, 47.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 77-79.

of Quetta to the Khan of Khelat ; but the Hon. J. Gibbs, Colonel East, Sir Garnet Wolseley, and Sir R. Sandeman, all advocated the retention of Pishin and Quetta, and East advised making the extension of the Harnai railway to Kandahar a condition of handing over that city to Abdur Rahman.

On the other side, Sir F. Haines, Lord Napier of Magdala, and Sir W. Merewether were in favour of annexation, pure and simple, the first-named including Khelat-i-Ghilzai and the line of the Helmand in the province which he was eager to add to the British Indian Empire ; whereas Rawlinson strongly deprecated annexation, and, " coupled with the condition of retaining a strong British garrison in the province for military purposes," proposed offering " the sovereignty of Kandahar to Abdur Rahman " ; whilst Stokes was of opinion that the only reasonable alternative course to annexation was to be found in the restoration of Yakub Khan to the Amirship and the making over to him of Kandahar.¹

The calculations as to the annual military cost of annexation varied with the standpoint of the writers—Merewether contending that it would be trifling, Sir E. Baring believing that it would be considerably in excess of £1,000,000, and Sir H. Norman setting it down at £1,400,000 ; but these calculations cannot be tested by results, since Kandahar was not annexed.

The prophecies of the wonderful effects of annexation on the trade of Kandahar and the rapid conversion of its inhabitants into loyal subjects, can no more be put to the test of subsequent experience than the calculations as to its military cost ; but some opinion as

¹ Mr. Stokes, who was the legal member of the Viceroy's Council, seized this opportunity to put on record his firm belief in the Ex-Amir's innocence :— " I am," so he wrote, " one of the few persons, who have read the mass of the so-called evidence against that Amir. I say now, as I have always said, that it does not establish his complicity in the murder of our Envoy, and I therefore think that we should not treat his resignation as irrevocable." He was also legal member when Lord Lytton was Viceroy,—H. B. H.

to their nature can be arrived at by inquiring into the fulfilment, or failure of fulfilment, of former predictions of men of the same school, and to this test they were subjected by Sir E. Baring in the first of his Memoranda :—Comparing the results of Lord Salisbury's policy “with the previous utterances of the rival schools of Indian politicians,” so he wrote, “I find that, on the one side, not one of the advantages, which, according to the advocates of a ‘forward’ policy, were to have been reaped by a departure from the time-honoured traditions of India's greatest statesmen have as yet been attained. On the other hand, I find that the gloomy predictions of the opposite school have been realized to a very remarkable extent. History, I conceive, scarcely furnishes another so striking example of the speedy and complete fulfilment of political prophecy. Nothing would be easier than to quote numerous passages from the abundant literature on this subject in support of these views. I content myself with one example from the writings of each school.

“Shortly after the signing of the treaty of Gandamak, Sir H. Rawlinson commenced an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in the following words :—‘The curtain has fallen on the second Afghan war almost as suddenly as it rose, and the public, in so far as it is represented by the London press and the London world, seems almost ashamed at having been deluded into taking an interest in so small and ephemeral a matter. A reaction of this nature is perhaps the natural consequence of the exaggerated tone which was taken at the outset by the opponents of the war in regard to its character and the risks that it involved. The late Lord Sandhurst, it is well known, affirmed a few years back that it would not be safe to advance to Kandahar with a less force than 30,000 men, and the expense of such an enterprise was popularly estimated at twenty millions of money. We were told, indeed, that our so-called ‘Jingoism in the East’ would inevitably lead either to national disaster or national bankruptcy, and now, because these sinister predictions have not

been realized, but, on the contrary, a short, inexpensive, and not inglorious campaign, skilfully conducted and bravely supported, has been crowned with a peace promising substantial political results, we are taunted with having made a mountain out of a molehill, with having raised a hobgoblin for the mere purpose of laying it—and, in fact, with having betrayed the nation into a needless and unseemly exhibition of alarm.’

“Compare this jubilant statement with the subsequent events. When ‘the curtain had fallen on the second Afghan war,’ no long interlude was allowed to elapse before it rose again on the third,¹ and again, a little later, on an episode which may almost be dignified by the name of a fourth war. For a considerable time we had a force across the frontier largely in excess of the 30,000 men of which Lord Sandhurst spoke. The popular estimate of the cost of the war is, I fear, not far wrong. Two incidents—the murder of the British Envoy and the defeat of General Burrows—have occurred, which came nearly within the category of ‘national disaster.’ We are, I believe, free from any danger of ‘national bankruptcy,’ but Sir Henry Rawlinson’s policy has taken us as far along the road to the bankruptcy of India as it was possible to travel in two years. The most ‘sinister predictions’ of the adverse school have been too truly realized. A war which has lasted for two years can scarcely be called ‘short.’ It has certainly not been ‘inexpensive.’ It has had its inglorious as well as its glorious incidents. It has not always been ‘skilfully conducted.’ The ‘peace’ with which we were ‘crowned’ when Sir Henry Rawlinson wrote, was of the most ephemeral description. Its ‘political results’ were certainly not to be termed ‘substantial.’ The Afghan difficulty bears, I fear, in allegorical language a far greater resemblance to ‘a mountain’ than to ‘a molehill.’ The ‘hobgoblin’ has indeed been raised,

¹ Officially called the 2nd Phase of the 2nd Afghan War, but, as a matter of fact, it was a 3rd War.—H. B. H.

but has not yet been laid. The nation, or at all events a large section of it, so far from exhibiting 'a needless and unseemly alarm,' is, I fear, far too prone to forget the true history of this Afghan business, and still to turn for guidance to those politicians who have in the past led it astray.

"Compare, by the light of our present knowledge, these utterances of Sir Henry Rawlinson with the opinion expressed by the Government of India on January 28th, 1876. After reviewing the probable results of forcing a British Resident on the Amir—results which were all subsequently brought about—the Government of India went on to say, 'a condition of things like this could not exist for any length of time without leading to altered relations, and possibly even in the long run to a rupture with Afghanistan, and thereby defeating the object which Her Majesty's Government have in view.

We are convinced that a patient adherence to the policy adopted towards Afghanistan by Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence, and Lord Mayo, which it has been our earnest endeavour to maintain, presents the greatest promise of the eventual establishment of our relations with the Amir on a satisfactory footing, and we deprecate, as involving serious danger to the peace of Afghanistan, and to the interests of the British Empire in India, the execution, under present circumstances, of the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's Despatch.'

"If I dwell on the previous utterances of the two schools, it is because Indian questions are often—in my opinion too often—decided by an appeal to the authority of experts, and I submit that, if any such appeal is to be made, it is essential to bear in mind, in deciding on the policy of the future, the relative claims to inspire confidence which each of the two schools can adduce by an appeal to the past."¹

There can be no doubt that the Gladstone Ministry did bear those

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 2, pp. 67, 68.

relative claims in mind ; no doubt that the evidence before them to show that not one of the advantages which according to the one school were to be reaped from the "forward" policy had been obtained, whilst the gloomy predictions of the other school had been realized to a remarkable extent, did weigh with them in determining to abandon Kandahar ; but that abandonment was involved in the principles upon which, when in office, the Liberal Party had acted, and for which, when out of office, it had strenuously contended ; and nothing short of positive proof that the evacuation of Southern Afghanistan must endanger British rule in India would have justified them in refusing to take that step. Such proof was altogether lacking, and Sir H. Rawlinson's assertion that, in retiring to Pishin or Sind, "we should abdicate our position as a first-class Asiatic power and must be content, hereafter, to play a very subordinate part in the history of the world," as also his predictions that "withdrawal would predispose many of our large feudatories to listen to intrigues against the stability of our rule," have been fully refuted by subsequent events. As for Sir D. Stewart's argument against retirement based on the contention that, whether the policy of the late Government was good or bad, it ought not to be disturbed without the clearest necessity, it could have little weight with men who knew it was not they, but their predecessors in office, who had broken the continuity of Great Britain's Indian frontier policy, and had the full conviction that, in returning "to the time-honoured traditions of India's greatest statesmen," they would be giving both to that country and to Afghanistan the best assurance that, though the evil influences of panic and lust of conquest might, from time to time, get the upper hand in the councils of the Government and people of Great Britain, common sense and an honest love of peace and justice were the normal foundations of her rule.

The inquiry into the military and political value of Kandahar, which may be said to have begun with Sir D. Stewart's Memorandum

of the 1st of April, 1879, ended with Lord Napier of Magdala's Memorandum of the 12th of October, 1880; for all subsequent Minutes and Memoranda were but protests against, or expressions of agreement with, a decision at which the British Government had arrived, and from which there was no likelihood of their receding.

The Despatch of the 11th of November, 1880,¹ in which Lord Hartington communicated that decision to the Government of India, after briefly summarizing the views which he and his colleagues had rejected, declared in unequivocal terms that recent experience had done nothing to strengthen the arguments of those who desired, as a military measure, to advance the Indian frontier, and much to verify the forebodings of those who were opposed to that policy; that Russia's advances in Central Asia were not of a nature to endanger the safety of India, and that, however unfriendly her ultimate aims might be, the best way to defeat them was to go into the predicted struggle, as the defenders, not as the destroyers of Afghan independence.

Firm as regarded the policy to which the Indian Government was now directed to give effect, the British Government showed itself conciliatory in matters of detail. Lord Ripon was to keep in view the paramount importance of withdrawing on the earliest suitable occasion; but the choice of the occasion itself, and the nature of the arrangements which the retiring troops were to leave behind them, it left with confidence to the decision of His Excellency in Council, with the sole proviso that, whoever the future ruler of the evacuated territory might be, he should clearly understand that he must rely on his own resources and not look to Her Majesty's Forces for assistance.²

In a later Despatch, Lord Hartington expressed the hope that it might be found unnecessary to prolong the occupation of Kandahar

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 1, pp. 89-93.

² *Ibid.* No. 3, pp. 1, 2.

by British forces beyond the winter,¹ and the Government of India decided that the evacuation should begin about the middle of April and notified the Amir that, if he were willing to take over the administration of Southern Afghanistan, he must lose no time in completing his preparations for occupying it.² This intimation was highly unwelcome to Abdur Rahman; not that he was unwilling to add Kandahar to his dominions,³ but because he had not yet consolidated his power at Kabul, and lacked the guns and ammunition without which he could not hope to extend it to a distant province in the teeth of so powerful a rival as Ayub Khan.⁴ His representations on this point so far bore fruit that the Commissioner of Peshawar was instructed on the 27th of February to inform him that the ammunition asked for was ready to be made over to his officials,

¹ Strength of force in Kandahar and on Line of Communications throughout the winter of 1880-81 :—

<i>Garrison of Kandahar.</i>	<i>Line of Communications.</i>
1 Battery Royal Horse Artillery.	1 Battery Mountain Guns.
2 „ Field Artillery.	1 „ Heavy Guns.
1 „ Mountain Guns.	4 Native Cavalry Regiments.
1 „ Heavy Guns.	8 „ Infantry „
1 British Cavalry Regiment.	3 Companies Sappers and Miners.
2 Native „ „	
1 British Infantry „	
6 Native „ „	
1 Company Sappers and Miners.	

² *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 5, p. 30.

³ “The kingdom of Kabul without Kandahar was like a head without a nose, or a fort without any gate.” (*Life of Abdur Rahman*, by Sultan Mahomed Khan, Vol. I. p. 208.)

⁴ “I have neither any good guns nor ammunition, which may be usefully employed against an enemy, . . . and unless the illustrious British Government helps me with ammunition, I should find myself in a very difficult position.”—Letter from the Amir dated February 10th. See *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 5 p. 68. On the 11th of December he had written :—“The degree and extent of the desolation of the country and the destruction of the materials of the Afghan Empire are such that they cannot be restored and replaced with little money and small funds.” (*Ibid.* p. 13.)

either at Peshawar, or in the Khyber ; and in his reply, though still complaining of the shortness of the notice accorded to him, he wrote that he had set about equipping the necessary force, and hoped that his troops would arrive at Kandahar within the appointed time.

On the 1st of April, the Amir wrote to the Viceroy that the new Governor of Kandahar, Sirdar Mahomed Hashim Khan, escorted by a thousand horsemen, had left Kabul on the 21st of March, followed, on the 24th by two thousand eight hundred infantry, under the command of General Ghulam Hyder Khan, and that it was his intention, as soon as he received news of the arrival of his cavalry, to march himself for Kandahar, with as many troops as he could equip and provide with transport, taking with him "all the tribal chiefs" of Kabul, whose presence might be considered injurious, and leaving only "faithful servants and conscientious officials at Kabul."¹

Whilst an Afghan force was on its way to Kandahar, transport for bringing back the British garrison of that city was coming up from India, laden with provisions for man and beast ; all camping grounds were being stocked with forage, and big tents pitched at every halting place in the Bolan ; while Major Westmacott was busy securing the goodwill of the tribesmen by promising high prices for food and forage supplied, and undertaking that no foraging parties should enter their villages.

During the months which had elapsed since the raising of the siege of Kandahar, the garrison of that city had been subjected to much ignorant criticism, and the following Farewell Order of its new commander, Major-General R. Hume²—Phayre had returned

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 5, p. 85.

² The Major-General arrived at Kandahar on the 29th of November with the Chief of his Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Little, and his Assistant Quartermaster-General, Major M. J. King-Harman.

Hume was a distinguished officer, but not more distinguished than Phayre ; and after the admirable manner in which the latter had performed the onerous duties that devolved upon him in both phases of the war, he ought not to have been passed over in favour of a man who had taken no part in either campaign.—H. B. H.

to his original appointment of Inspector-General of Communications—was a strong and generous protest against the aspersions cast upon its courage and its discipline :—

“ Before parting with the regiments of the Bombay Army, whom he may not again meet, the Major-General takes this opportunity of publicly recording his opinion that, from his personal experience, there is nothing in the appearance and bearing of any of those regiments to justify the manner in which they have been publicly held up as inferior in soldier-like qualities. Major-General Hume would, with the greatest confidence, command any body of the Bombay troops on active service in the field, were he appointed to do so by higher authority, and feels assured that his confidence in them would not be misplaced.”¹

The above order was issued on the 12th of April, in the belief that the Third Brigade would start for India the following day, but, delayed by violent storms, it did not march until the 17th. The Second Brigade followed on the 20th, and, on the 21st, General Hume handed over the city with fifty thousand rupees, three thousand rifles, and eighteen field-pieces to Sirdar Mahomed Hashim, who had arrived on the 16th, and accompanied by the Ex-Resident, Colonel St. John, marched with the Cavalry and the First Infantry Brigade for Quetta. With his arrival at that station on the 4th of May, the Second Afghan War, so far as Great Britain and India were concerned, was at an end ; but Afghanistan had still months of civil strife to go through before the unity, which Lord Lytton had made it his object to destroy, could be restored. News from Herat, received prior to the departure of the British troops, had shown that Ayub Khan was not inclined to yield Kandahar to Abdur Rahman without a struggle ; and one of the new Governor's first

¹ “ I was glad to see General Hume's order about the Bombay troops. I expect they were more sinned against than sinning. The best troops in the world will get defeated if under a bad general.” (Extract letter from Sir Charles Macgregor to General Hon. A. E. Hardinge, Commander-in-Chief Bombay Army, dated Simla, June 2nd, 1881.)

acts was to send a cavalry regiment to hold Girishk, strengthening the position a little later with two guns, a second regiment of cavalry and one of infantry. This force, early in June, fell upon Ayub Khan's advanced guard, and, according to advices which St. John reported to Simla, entirely defeated it. Whether the sources from which St. John derived his information were altogether trustworthy, seems doubtful; for, on the 30th of June, he was fairly confident that Ayub Khan would not attempt to leave Herat, and on the 21st of July, he had to telegraph to the Indian Government that that Prince was already three hundred miles from that city, and only a few marches from Girishk.¹ Unwarned by Burrows's defeat, Ghulam Hyder committed the error of advancing to meet the enemy, and when he had concentrated at Girishk, Ayub Khan made a rapid march, crossed the Helmand by a ford lower down the stream, and was in a fair way to capture Kandahar by a *coup de main*, when Abdur Rahman's lieutenant overtook him at Atta Karez. The battle that ensued was long, and, for a time, indecisive. Ayub Khan repeating the tactics which had proved successful at Maiwand, got his cavalry completely round his adversary's right flank and in rear of his baggage, and then made a direct attack on his infantry. Repulsed by a cavalry charge, he brought up reinforcements; at this critical moment, the Ghilzai regiment and the Kandahari Cavalry came over to him; and the engagement ended in a general flight, in which the Amir's troops lost all their guns, baggage, and treasure. The news of the defeat of his Commander-in-Chief brought Abdur Rahman himself into the field. Leaving his eldest son, Habbibula Khan, to represent him at Kabul, he marched for Southern Afghanistan with twelve thousand men; ten thousand tribesmen joining him en route. On his approach, Ayub Khan evacuated Kandahar, which had opened its gates to him after his victory, and took up a strong position on the slopes of the hill above the site of the old

¹ *Afghanistan* (1881), No. 5, p. 116.

city, with the Ex-Wali's contingent in reserve on its crest. The two forces, which were about equal in strength, met on the 22nd of September; both fought with great fierceness; both were well commanded; and for two hours it was impossible to say to which side victory would incline. Then, the Kabul army's flanks began to fall back, but its centre, led by Abdur Rahman in person, held firm, and the contingent posted on the summit of the hill, detecting signs of weakening in Ayub Khan's troops, went over to the winning side.* Taking advantage of the confusion into which this treachery had thrown the enemy, the Amir pressed forward with the whole of his army, and defeated his rival as completely as that rival, two months before, had defeated Ghulam Hyder Khan.

Ayub Khan fled towards Herat; but, before leaving Kabul, Abdur Rahman had sent instructions to Sirdar Kudus Khan, the Governor of Afghan Turkestan, to march at once on that city, and he had taken it by assault on the 4th of September. Deprived of his expected refuge, the fugitive Prince turned aside into Persia, where he remained till 1888, when, after an unsuccessful attempt to bring about a rising against his cousin the Amir, he surrendered to the British Government, and now resides at Murree as a political prisoner at large; whilst his brother Yakub, the Ex-Amir, divides his time between Mussoorie and Dera Dun.

Though in his Despatch of the 11th of November, Lord Hartington had declared that there was no room for compromise between the two absolutely conflicting lines of policy, one or other of which he and his colleagues had had to choose; and though, in his Despatch of the 3rd of December, he had clearly indicated that he regarded the restoration of the entire district of Pishin to Afghanistan as an integral part of the policy which the Government had deliberately adopted, the arguments in favour of its retention ultimately prevailed with him, and it remained a British possession, with consequences to India which will be briefly set forth in a concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XLI

Consequences of the War

EXTENSION OF THE FRONTIER—ALIENATION OF THE INDEPENDENT TRIBES

HISTORY nowhere presents a closer parallel than that which exists between the causes, conduct, and consequences of the Afghan war of 1838-42, and the causes, conduct, and consequences of the Afghan war of 1878-80. Both had their origin in the fear of Russia, yet neither had Russia for its object. Each was begun under a fatal misconception of its character, cost, and probable duration. Each, though, in intention, directed solely against a Prince, became, in its progress, a struggle with a People. Each ran a long and chequered course, and was marked by incidents little creditable to British honour and British humanity. Each closed with a march which surrounded political failure with a halo of military success, and gave an air of freedom to an inevitable retreat. Each left behind it, to the people of India, a legacy of indebtedness and poverty—to the people of Afghanistan, a legacy of bitter memories and deep distrust of British promises. Each failed of its object—nay, more than failed—for, instead of establishing on the throne of Kabul a sovereign devoted to British interests, the one ended in the restoration of the able Prince to depose whom it had been begun ; and the other, in the nomination to the Amirship of the last man on whom, from its own point of view, the choice of the Indian Government should have fallen, because the man apparently most likely to prefer Russia's influence to that of Great Britain.

There was yet another feature in which the later contest was the counterpart of the earlier. Both taught so forcibly the folly of the fears which gave them birth that experience, for a time, silenced misconceptions, and men who had been warm partisans of pressing forward over deserts and mountains in search of that elusive fiction "a scientific frontier," returned to India thankful for the defences with which Nature has richly endowed her. The wisdom so dearly bought may be summed up in the words of five distinguished men, three of whom wrote from contemporary knowledge of the first war, and two out of personal experience of the second.

"Triumph you may; confident you may be, as I am, in the gallantry of your troops; but when, through their gallantry, the victory has been gained and you have succeeded, then will come your difficulties."¹

"The whole question (of the occupation of Afghanistan) is one of commissariat; that of commissariat, one of means of transport."²

"Afghanistan merits the character given to Spain by the first Henry of France: Invade with a large force, and you are destroyed by starvation; invade with a small force, and you are overwhelmed by a hostile people."³

"It has always appeared to me that, however confident our officers in those days were of the sound policy which led to the expedition, a large majority of those who survived it, or who have studied that question since the war in Afghanistan . . . have deprecated very strongly an advance into that country, or any very intimate interference with its affairs. It could not supply the food for such an army as we should require there, and therefore its supplies must come from a distance. It can, indeed, scarcely feed its own population, however hardy and abstemious it is known to be. . . To endeavour

¹ Duke of Wellington in 1839.

² *Ibid.*, Letter to Lord Ellenborough in 1842.

³ Major-General Sir Henry Durand's *History of the First Afghan War*.

to hold such a country firmly, to try to control such a people, is to court misfortune and calamity. The Afghan will bear poverty, insecurity of life, but he will not tolerate foreign rule. The moment he has a chance he will rebel. His nature, his religion, the habits of his life, all tend to foster feelings of independence and hardihood.”¹

“For my part I think we shall make a very great mistake if we annex any considerable part of Afghanistan. It is a wretched country, and could not support an army for any length of time; and I am quite sure that, with India at our back, we could not keep up a force of 20,000 men in one place”; and, “I must say that the people who said that, when once we gave up our frontier, there was no telling where we are to stop, seem to have prophesied rightly.”²

“It may not be very flattering to our *amour propre*, but I feel sure I am right when I say that the less the Afghans see of us, the less they will dislike us. Should Russia, in future years, attempt to conquer Afghanistan, or invade India through it, we should have a better chance of attaching the Afghans to our interests if we avoid all interference with them in the meantime. . . . The longer and more difficult the line of communication is, the more numerous and greater the obstacles which Russia would have to overcome; and, so far from shortening one mile of the road, I would let the web of difficulties extend to the very mouth of the Khyber Pass.”³

The truths contained in these quotations have double value as being equally true for both of Afghanistan’s neighbours. Where India cannot subsist an army of twenty thousand men, neither can Russia; if it would be madness in the Russian Government to entangle itself in a web of difficulties in the hope of shaking Great Britain’s hold upon India, it will always be madness in an Indian Government to entangle itself in a similar web for the purpose of weakening Russia’s

¹ Minute by Sir John Lawrence in 1869.

² Sir D. Stewart—Kandahar, in 1879 and 1880.

³ Sir F. Roberts—Kabul, in 1880.

authority in Central Asia. To a Russian, as to a British army, would be given the choice between perishing of starvation or at the hands of a hostile people. The difficulties which Wellington foresaw as awaiting a victorious British army on its arrival at Kabul, would be greater, not less, for a victorious Russian army on entering that city; because, for the latter even more than for the former, the question of how to maintain itself there would be one of commissariat, and that of commissariat one of transport.

And as, in one direction, these dicta apply equally to Russia and to India, so, in another, they are equally true of the subjects of the Amir and the Independent Pathan Tribes; for, of the latter also, it may be said that they will bear poverty and insecurity of life, but they will not tolerate foreign rule; that the moment they have a chance they will rebel; and that the best way of attaching them to our interests in the hour of a Russian invasion—admitting that such an invasion were possible—is to avoid all interference with them in the meantime. That policy of non-interference with the border tribes steadily pursued by Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and Lord Northbrook, was broken by the war. With three British armies trying to force their way to the heart of Afghanistan, it was impossible to avoid coming into collision with the tribes whose territories they violated; and the numerous punitive expeditions which grew out of these collisions, aroused fierce resentment in the breasts of despoiled and homeless men. Time, however, would have softened that resentment if, on the cessation of hostilities, the Indian Government had reverted to a policy to the results of which, writing in October, 1876, Lepel Griffin, then Secretary to the Punjab Government, could bear the following fine testimony:—

“The frontier tribes are slowly, but surely, losing their suspicion of and dislike to the British Government. The change is gradual; but if we look back twenty, or even ten, years we see how substantial has been the progress made. They are still savage, fanatical, and

ignorant, but they have learned to believe in the fairness of our intentions, and so far appreciate our rule that they leave their hills in large numbers, abandon their predatory life, and settle quietly in British territory.”¹

Looking back over the twenty-eight years that have elapsed since the evacuation of Afghanistan, the reverse of the above picture presents itself to the eyes of the inquirer. Slowly, but surely, one tribe after another—Kakars, Zobites, Waziris, Urakzais, Afridis, Mohmands, and Yusufzais—have come to regard the Indian Government with ever-growing distrust and dislike ; to disbelieve utterly in the fairness of the intentions of a neighbour which, with or without pretext, has not scrupled to penetrate deep into their territories, and makes no secret of its determination to bring them under its authority. The one fatal consequence of the war of 1878 was just this change of policy towards the border tribes, and it is directly traceable to an unfortunate concession made by the Gladstone Cabinet to views that it did not share. Had Lord Hartington fallen back at the southern extremity of India’s North-West frontier as completely as he fell back at its northern extremity, a fresh advance, on different lines, beginning *ab ovo*, would have presented itself to public opinion in its true magnitude, and have met with wide discussion and weighty opposition ; but the annexation

¹ The impartial testimony of the *Statements of Moral and Material Progress in India* confirm Griffin’s report.

1873-74. “The North-West Frontier is reported never to have been so tranquil since the annexation of the Punjab.”

1874-75. “A continuous policy of conciliation, a growing trade, and a wholesome fear of speedy chastisement for hostile acts, have combined to make the tribes amenable, and to render the frontier districts almost as tranquil as those of the interior.”

1875-76. “The Punjab Frontier from Hazara to Sind was, with one exception, peaceable and orderly throughout the year, and more so than in any other year since the annexation of the province.”

1876-77. “If the whole condition of the border from Hazara to Sind be considered, it will be found that in no year since the annexation of the Punjab has the border been generally more tranquil.”

of Quetta and Pishin, and the creation of outposts in Kakar territory to protect the Harnai railway, made possible that "insidious creeping over the country like a mist" so indignantly repudiated by Sir William Mansfield when Commander-in-Chief in India. The fruits of this method so far have been one big war and many little wars; the locating a number of small garrisons in inaccessible regions, in the midst of hostile peoples;¹ a large addition to India's military forces; a big increase in her military and political charges; the concentration of a large part of her army within sight of the north-west frontier; and the creation of a fresh school of alarmists, even wilder in their visions of coming evil than their predecessors—men who are never weary of predicting the triumphant march of Russian armies over passes compared with which the Khyber and the Bolan are open and level roads.² It would be giving these prophets too little credit for a knowledge of the profession to which most of them belong, to assume that they have faith in their own predictions. No experienced soldier can believe that a Russian force, encumbered with heavy artillery, long

¹ The establishment of such outposts was condemned in advance by Sir E. Hamley:—"It appears to be believed that posts pushed up the passes would lessen the chances of future contests with the unruly hill-tribes. That they are unruly would appear an excellent reason for keeping them in our front rather than in our rear. Posts separated by such distances and such inaccessible country, can exercise no influence over the inhabitants between; on the contrary, we should thus be offering them new and potent means of molesting us." (Extract from Lecture delivered on the 13th of December, 1878. *Journal of the United Service Institution*, Vol. XXII. No. XCVIII. p. 1037.)

² "In forming an idea of a march in force through such passes, it may assist us to remember that an English Army Corps, say 24,000 strong with artillery, extends with its combatant forces only, on a European road about 16 miles in length, and with its *trains* 27 miles. Allowing only a slight increase for the nature of the road, the combatants of a similar force in the pass would stretch 18 miles, the total with trains 30. Thus, when the head of the combatant column issued from the pass, its rear would be nearly two days' march behind; and considering the host of animals required for the necessary supplies on such an expedition, the rear of the trains could then scarcely be less than six days behind the head of the column." (Ibid. p. 1029.)

transport trains, and hosts of followers, will ever enter India *vià* Gilghit or Chitral, nor, yet, that a feigned attack by either of those routes to cover a real invasion by one of the older roads, can carry panic into India, and disorganize the Government's plans for her defence; but, by persuading others that such a danger exists, the new Forward Party has been enabled to exalt the military at the expense of the civil power, to tighten its grip on the public purse, and so to organize and distribute the Indian Army that a third advance on Kabul and Kandahar can be made to appear a simple undertaking compared to the second and the first. To appear, not to be, a simple undertaking. A third advance on those cities will mean a third Afghan war, and a third Afghan war will prove more costly and more dangerous than either of its forerunners—more costly, because it will have for its object the permanent occupation of Afghanistan; more dangerous, because the Afghans are better armed than when they narrowly missed annihilating Roberts at Kabul, and defeating Stewart at Ahmed Khel; because the Pathan element in the Native army is stronger than when the rifles of the 29th Punjab Infantry warned the defenders of the Spin Gawai Kotal of the approach of a British column; and because the India of to-day is a less trustworthy base from which to engage in a war of conquest, than was the India of 1838, or 1878. A national Government, embarking on the most indefensible of wars, can always count on the blind support of the majority of its countrymen; an alien Government appeals in vain to the passions and prejudices of its subjects. The former Afghan wars had no national enthusiasm behind them; the war of the future will be waged in the teeth of national condemnation. The educated Native knows that India, with her land frontier triply guarded by river, desert, and mountain has no reason to fear foreign invasion; and no sophistry can convince him that the Scientific Frontier of the Forward Party will add to his security or fail to add to his burdens; and it must not be forgotten that the educated Native has to-day greater opportunities of influencing

his uneducated countrymen than he had seventy, or even thirty, years ago.

No Secretary of State, no Viceroy has ever pretended that wars of aggression can be rendered popular with the Indian people ; but in the Despatch which closed Lord Lawrence's career, that great statesman laid down, for all time, the antecedent conditions on which India's foreign Government can enjoy security in the face of a threatened invasion :—

Previous abstinence from entanglement at either Kabul, Kandahar, or any similar outpost ; a compact, highly equipped and disciplined army, on which full reliance can be placed ; the contentment, if not the attachment, of the masses of the people ; a sense of security of title and possession in the minds of the Chiefs and Native aristocracy ; the construction of material works calculated to enhance the comfort of the people, whilst adding to its own political and military strength ; the husbanding of the nation's finances and the multiplying and consolidating of its resources ; quiet preparation for contingencies, which, in India, statesmen should never disregard ; and such steady avoidance of all conduct that could invite foreign aggression, or stir up restless spirits to domestic revolt, as would inspire its subjects and neighbours with full confidence in the rectitude and honesty of its intentions.

On such broad foundations something greater may be achieved than mere immunity from panic in the face of danger threatening from without—namely, the creation of a strong and prosperous India, loyal to the connection to which she owes her unity ; but they can never be laid whilst money which should be left in the people's pockets, or spent on reproductive works, is wasted on fortifications and strategic railways, the maintenance of an army greatly in excess of its legitimate strength, and the upkeep of outposts which serve no purpose save to irritate and provoke the tribes whom they are supposed to control. Political reforms mock a nation's hopes so long as material conditions

remain unimproved ; and because Militarism and Poverty always have been, and always will be, indissolubly allied, the dearest wish of every lover of England and India must be to create in both countries a Forward Party which shall take as its watchword—Progress founded on Peace.

FINIS.

APPENDIX

Casualty List of British Officers during the War

KILLED

1. Major A. D. Anderson, 23rd Bengal Pioneers.
Lieutenant F. C. C. Angelo, 31st Punjab Infantry.
Lieutenant F. M. Barclay, 45th Bengal Infantry. (Mortally wounded.)
2nd Lieutenant H. J. O. Barr, 66th Foot.
5. Major Wigram Battye, Corps of Guides.
Major H. H. Birch, 27th Punjab Infantry.
Major G. F. Blackwood, Royal Horse Artillery.
Brigadier-General H. F. Brooke, Commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade, Kandahar Field Force.
Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow, C.B., 72nd Highlanders.
10. Captain S. G. Butson, 9th Lancers.
Major Sir P. Louis N. Cavagnari, K.C.B.
Lieutenant R. T. Chute, 66th Foot.
Lieutenant-Colonel R. S. Cleland, 9th Lancers. (Mortally wounded.)
Lieutenant Duncan Cole, 30th Bombay Infantry.
15. Major John Cook, V.C., 5th Gurkhas. (Mortally wounded.)
Captain G. M. Cruikshank, Royal Engineers.
Captain F. J. Cullen, 66th Foot.
Captain J. Dundas, V.C., Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant T. O. FitzGerald, 27th Punjab Infantry.
20. Lieutenant St. J. W. Forbes, 92nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant O. E. S. Forbes, 14th Bengal Lancers.
Captain St. J. T. Frome, 72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant C. H. Gaisford, 72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant-Colonel James Galbraith, 66th Foot.
25. Captain E. S. Garratt, 66th Foot.
Captain F. T. Goad, 5th Hyderabad Contingent. (Mortally wounded.)
Chaplain Rev. G. M. Gordon, Church Missionary Society.
Lieutenant W. R. P. Hamilton, V.C., Corps of Guides.
Lieutenant Edward Hardy, Royal Horse Artillery.

30. Lieutenant C. J. R. Hearsey, 9th Lancers.
 Captain P. C. Heath, Brigade-Major, 1st Brigade, Kandahar
 Field Force.
 Lieutenant T. Rice Henn, Royal Engineers.
 Lieutenant C. W. Hinde, 1st Bombay Grenadiers.
 Lieutenant A. Honeywood, 66th Foot.
35. Mr. W. Jenkyns, C.I.E., Civil Service, Political Officer.
 Lieutenant W. N. Justice, 30th Bombay Infantry.
 Surgeon A. H. Kelly, Bengal Medical Department.
 Captain J. A. Kelso, Royal Artillery.
 Lieutenant F. G. Kinloch, 5th Bengal Cavalry.
40. Lieutenant G. H. Lumsden, 8th Bengal Cavalry.
 Lieutenant Hector Maclaine, Royal Horse Artillery.
 Captain W. H. McMath, 66th Foot.
 2nd Lieutenant E. S. Marsh, 2-7th Fusiliers.
 Lieutenant C. A. Montanaro, Royal Artillery. (Mortally wounded.)
45. Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Newport, 28th Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant C. Nugent, Royal Engineers.
 2nd Lieutenant W. R. Olivey, 66th Foot.
 Lieutenant E. G. Osborne, Royal Horse Artillery.
 Lieutenant W. C. Owen, 3rd Bombay Cavalry.
50. Lieutenant E. Palmer, Bengal Commissariat Department. (Mor-
 tally wounded.)
 Captain C. F. Powell, 5th Gurkhas. (Mortally wounded.)
 Lieutenant M. E. Rayner, 66th Foot.
 Lieutenant T. J. O'D. Renny, 4th Punjab Infantry. (Mortally
 wounded.)
 Major W. Reynolds, 3rd Sind Horse.
55. Lieutenant W. P. Ricardo, 9th Lancers.
 Captain W. Roberts, 66th Foot. .
 Captain E. D. Shafto, Royal Artillery.
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Shewell, Deputy Commissary-General.
 (Mortally wounded.)
 Captain H. F. Showers, 1st Punjab Infantry.
60. Captain H. F. Smith, 30th Bombay Infantry.
 Surgeon W. B. Smyth, M.B., C.S.I.
 Captain N. J. Spens, 72nd Highlanders.
 Lieutenant F. C. Stayner, 19th Bombay Infantry.
 Captain E. Straton, 2-22nd Foot.
65. 2nd Lieutenant B. S. Thurlow, 51st Foot.
 Major R. J. Le Poer Trench, 19th Bombay Infantry.
 Major T. B. Vandeleur, 2-7th Fusiliers. (Mortally wounded.)
 Major S. J. Waudby, 19th Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant C. G. Whitby, 1st Bombay Grenadiers.
70. Lieutenant H. V. Willis, Royal Artillery.
 Lieutenant N. C. Wiseman, 1-17th Foot.

2nd Lieutenant F. P. F. Wood, 2-7th Fusiliers.
 Lieutenant O. B. Wood, Transport Department.
 Lieutenant I. D. Wright, Royal Artillery.

Total Killed—74.

WOUNDED

1. Lieutenant-Colonel H. S. Anderson, 1st Bombay Infantry (Grenadiers).
 Lieutenant L. S. Hyde Baker, 3rd Punjab Cavalry.
 Major S. D. Barrow, 10th Bengal Lancers.
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. Battye, 2nd Gurkhas.
5. Captain F. D. Battye, Corps of Guides.
 Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Broome, 2nd Punjab Cavalry.
 Lieutenant A. M. Caulfield, 66th Berks Regiment.
 Lieutenant N. F. F. Chamberlain, Central India Horse.
 Lieutenant D. Chesney, 23rd Pioneers.
10. Major J. J. Scott Chisholme, 9th Lancers.
 Captain W. Conolly, 2nd Battalion 7th Royal Fusiliers.
 Lieutenant W. Cook, 3rd Sikhs.
 Major R. Corbett, E-3 Royal Artillery.
 Surgeon A. Duncan, M.D., Indian Medical Department.
15. Lieutenant E. J. N. Fasken, 3rd Sikhs.
 Lieutenant C. H. Fergusson, 72nd Highlanders.
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. FitzHugh, 5th Gurkhas.
 Captain N. P. Fowell, E-B Royal Horse Artillery.
 Lieutenant C. F. Gambier, 5th Punjab Cavalry.
20. Captain A. J. Garrett, Hyderabad Contingent.
 Captain D. F. Gordon, 92nd Gordon Highlanders.
 Lieutenant S. D. Gordon, 19th Bengal Lancers.
 Colonel Sir H. H. Gough, V.C.
 Captain J. Grant, 1st Bombay Infantry (Grenadiers).
25. Captain F. L. Graves, 6-11 Royal Artillery.
 Lieutenant-Colonel C. J. Griffiths, 3rd Sikhs.
 Captain C. H. Hamilton, Royal Artillery.
 Captain T. Harris, 66th Berks Regiment.
 Lieutenant H. R. L. Holmes, 45th Sikhs.
30. Major J. S. Iredell, 30th Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant-Colonel J. Lawson, 59th Foot.
 Lieutenant-Colonel G. Luck, 15th Hussars.
 Lieutenant H. B. Lynch, 66th Berks Regiment.
 Major J. A. F. H. Stewart-Mackenzie, 9th Lancers.
35. Colonel J. H. P. Malcolmson, 3rd Sind Horse.
 Surgeon-Major J. Martin, Army Medical Department.
 Lieutenant H. S. Massy, 19th Bengal Lancers.

- Captain M. Mayne, 3rd Bombay Cavalry.
 Surgeon C. J. McCartie, M.D., Indian Medical Department.
40. Captain S. A. Menzies, 92nd Gordon Highlanders.
 Lieutenant S. C. H. Monro, 72nd Highlanders.
 Lieutenant A. M. Monteith, 3rd Sind Horse.
 Major H. C. Morse, 8th Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant J. Burn-Murdoch, Royal Engineers.
45. Captain R. H. Murray, 72nd Highlanders.
 Colonel T. R. Nimmo, 28th Bombay Infantry.
 Captain J. V. Nugent, 51st Light Infantry.
 Surgeon C. W. Owen, Indian Medical Department.
 Captain A. J. Poole, 67th Regiment.
50. Surgeon-Major A. F. Preston, M.B., Army Medical Department.
 Captain A. J. F. Reid, 29th Punjab Infantry.
 Lieutenant J. H. E. Reid, 3rd Bombay Cavalry.
 Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft, 4th Gurkhas.
 Lieutenant H. W. Seymour, 16th Bombay Infantry.
55. Major J. B. Slater, 2nd Sikhs.
 Surgeon A. K. Stewart, Poona Horse.
 Lieutenant D. W. Stewart, 92nd Gordon Highlanders.
 Lieutenant C. J. L. Stuart, 2nd Punjab Cavalry.
 Lieutenant L. Sunderland, 72nd Highlanders.
60. Major E. T. Thackeray, V.C., Royal Engineers.
 Lieutenant F. J. Tobin, 23rd Regiment Bombay Infantry.
 Deputy Surgeon-General S. C. Townsend.
 Captain C. J. W. Trower, 9th Lancers.
 Captain D. M. D. Waterfield, Royal Artillery.
65. Major R. J. Watson, 1st Battalion Worcester Regiment.
 Lieutenant S. Watson, 59th Foot.
 Captain H. L. Wells, Royal Engineers.
 Captain G. W. Willock, 3rd Bengal Cavalry.
 Lieutenant H. St. Leger Wood, 15th Foot.
70. Colonel P. S. Yorke, 19th Bengal Lancers.
 Captain C. Young, 5th Punjab Infantry.
 Lieutenant E. A. Young, 19th Bengal Lancers.

Total Wounded—72.

DIED FROM EXPOSURE OR DISEASE

1. Lieutenant P. E. Anderson, 25th Punjab Infantry.
 Surgeon-Major G. Atkinson, M.B., Army Medical Department.
 Captain W. B. Barker, 10th Hussars.
 Major H. G. Becher, 11th Bengal Infantry.
5. Captain John Becke, 21st Bombay Infantry.
 Lieutenant W. H. Bishop, 2-11th Foot.

- Surgeon-Major R. H. Bolton, Army Medical Department.
 Lieutenant A. Burlton-Bennet, 10th Bengal Lancers.
 Lieutenant J. F. M. Campbell, 29th Bombay Infantry.
10. Captain C. A. Carthew, 16th Bengal Cavalry.
 Captain D. T. Chisholm, 59th Foot.
 Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. J. Clarke, 72nd Highlanders.
 Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Collins, 2-60th Rifles.
 Lieutenant-Colonel G. B. Crispin, 4th Bombay Rifles.
15. Captain E. W. H. Crofton, 4-60th Rifles.
 Lieutenant R. E. L. Dacres, Royal Artillery.
 Lieutenant-Colonel A. G. Daubeny, 2-7th Fusiliers.
 Lieutenant G. G. Dawes, 1st Bengal Cavalry.
 Lieutenant A. E. Dobson, Royal Engineers.
20. Lieutenant-Colonel H. Fellowes, 32nd Punjab Pioneers.
 Captain J. H. Gamble, 1-17th Foot.
 Major J. Godson, 4th Madras Infantry.
 Surgeon H. A. C. Gray, M.B., C.M., Bengal Medical Department.
 Captain G. J. Hare, 22nd Punjab Infantry.
25. Sub-Lieutenant F. H. Harford, 10th Hussars. (Drowned.)
 Lieutenant W. F. Hennell, 1st Punjab Cavalry.
 Surgeon A. C. Keith, M.B., Army Medical Department.
 Surgeon-Major H. Kelsall, Army Medical Department.
 Lieutenant S. E. L. Lendrum, Royal Artillery.
30. 2nd Lieutenant E. D. Los, 1-25th Foot.
 Captain C. S. Morrison, 14th Bengal Lancers.
 Lieutenant A. R. Murray, Corps of Guides.
 Lieutenant-Colonel G. Nicholetts, 29th Bombay Infantry.
 Colonel J. J. O'Bryen, 22nd Punjab Infantry.
35. Major C. V. Oliver, 66th Foot.
 Lieutenant Lord Ossulston, 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade.
 Captain E. W. Perry, 40th Foot.
 Deputy Surgeon-General J. H. Porter, Army Medical Department.
 Lieutenant Brownlow Poulter, Royal Engineers.
40. Major L. A. Powys, 59th Foot.
 Captain J. J. Preston, 4th Rifle Brigade.
 Captain R. B. Reed, 1-12th Foot.
 Lieutenant J. T. Rice, Royal Engineers.
 Lieutenant S. W. T. Roberts, 27th Punjab Infantry.
45. Lieutenant H. R. Ross, Royal Artillery.
 Captain A. P. Samuells, 32nd Punjab Pioneers.
 Captain E. W. Samuells, Bengal Staff Corps.
 Captain T. a'B. Sargent, 78th Highlanders.
 Major L. Smith, 3rd Gurkhas.
50. Mr. D. B. Sinclair, C.S., Political Officer.
 Lieutenant H. H. S. Spoor, 1-25th Foot.
 Lieutenant-Colonel R. G. T. Stevenson, Poona Horse.

- Captain S. A. Swinley, 11th Bengal Lancers.
 Brigadier-General J. A. Tytler, C.B., V.C., Commanding Zaimukht Expedition.
55. Lieutenant E. P. Ventris, 3rd Buffs.
 Surgeon-Major J. Wallace, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.S.
 Surgeon J. E. Walsh, M.D., Bengal Medical Department.
 2nd Lieutenant E. H. Watson, 1-17th Foot.
 Surgeon G. Watson, M.B., Bengal Medical Department.
60. Captain A. A. Weighall, 2-11th Foot.
 Lieutenant F. Whittuck, 1st Bombay Grenadiers.
 Captain F. H. Winterbotham, Madras Sappers.
 Surgeon-Major J. H. Wright, M.R.C.S., Army Medical Department.
 Lieutenant G. M. Yaldwyn, 2-6th Foot.

Total Died—64.

ABSTRACT

<i>Killed</i>	.	.	74
<i>Wounded</i>	.	.	72
<i>Died</i>			64
<i>Total Casualties</i>			<hr/> 210

There exists no official record of the exact numbers killed, wounded, and invalided in the War; but Major G. J. Younghusband in his *Indian Frontier Warfare* puts them down at fifty thousand, "approximately equivalent to the entire force that was in the field at any one time," and this estimate is probably not exaggerated.

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