THE KABUL INSURRECTION OF 1841-42.

SIR VINCENT EYRE

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THE

KABUL INSURRECTION

OF

1841–42.

[REVISED AND CORRECTED FROM
LIEUTENANT EYRE'S ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT.]

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS narrative, originally written to utilize the otherwise vacant hours of an Afghán captivity, has been long out of print, having been withdrawn from publication by the author, with a view to subsequent revision and republication, should opportunity offer. But amid the vicissitudes of an Indian career, new duties and more attractive subjects gradually withdrew his thoughts from the saddening reminiscences of the Kábul catastrophe. Meanwhile the public mind seemed to have grown weary of the matter, and the cotemporary journal of the author's distinguished fellow-captive, Lady Sale, seemed amply sufficient to supply whatever popular appetite might still survive for so plentiful a "supper of horrors."

But now that history seems to be to some extent repeating itself, and with a new Afghán war actually on our hands, there has been naturally a general rush to the book-shelves in search of the dusty records of past transactions and adventures beyond the Indus, and thus the quondam captive of Akbar Khán finds himself, not

without some reluctance, yielding to the newly awakened popular impulse and to the pressure of the times, and figuring, perhaps superfluously, as a "veteran on the stage" in the evening of life.

The narrative was originally published simultaneously with Lady Sale's volume, and passed rapidly through several editions before the writer himself had an opportunity of reading it in print. His supply of stationery being scanty, the manuscript was cramped into the smallest possible space, and thus admitted of being conveyed by stealth to General Pollock's camp at Jallálábád. On one occasion a considerable portion was lost in transit and had to be entirely re-written, no copy having been kept. After perusal by General Pollock it was transmitted by him to Lord Ellenborough's private secretary, the late Sir Henry Durand, and was then, at his Lordship's suggestion, transmitted to the writer's family in England with a view to immediate publication.

It may, in fact, be said to have supplied the British public with the first regularly detailed accounts of the British military and political operations at Kábul from the outbreak of the insurrection on the 2nd November, 1841, to the final catastrophe in January, 1842. It was written under circumstances more than usually favourable to ensure strict historic fidelity; for, besides having been personally an eye-witness throughout, the author found himself in daily

close proximity with many of the chief survivors, among whom were the unfortunate General himself and his second in command, besides several members of the military and political staff. He was thus in a position to hear and to record much that would other wise have been beyond his reach; and, by a diligent and careful comparison of their various statements and experiences, as well as by access to the public documents in their possession, to combine the whole into a faithful and, he hopes, impartial narrative, which has so satisfactorily stood the crucial test of time as to be deemed worthy to be interwoven with the standard histories of that memorable period.

It has been considered advisable, for the benefit of readers of the present day, to prefix two preliminary chapters, the first containing a brief description of the geography and the inhabitants of Afghánistán, derived partly from his own notes, but chiefly from the best published sources available to him while wintering in Italy.

The second chapter gives a retrospective summary of the first Afghán war, and contains the substance of a lecture delivered by the author at the Royal United Service Institution in 1869. It is to be hoped the reader will thus be aided to a more complete understanding of the main narrative.

As a plain relation of facts, he has found but little requiring suppression or alteration, but inasmuch as,

in the fervid ardour of youth, some of his own commentaries on the acts of officers far his superiors in rank, though made in fearless honesty of purpose, do not altogether meet the approval of his maturer judgment, and are, moreover, no longer needed to instigate public inquiry, they have, in the present edition, been either modified or altogether omitted. It is hoped that the occasional omission of those "youthful indiscretions" may not be found to detract from the vital interest of the main narrative, and that this revival of an "over-true tale" may be not without its public use, even in the midst of present triumphs, on account of the solemn warnings it conveys. The valuable aid so generously afforded by the author's friend Colonel Malleson in superintending this volume through the press, in the midst of his own pressing literary avocations, demands an expression of more than ordinary gratitude.

VINCENT EYRE,

Major-General, late Royal Artillery (Bengal).

Rome, 1st January 1879.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

Brief Account of Afghanistan and its Inhabitants . . 1

CHAPTER II.

A Retrospect of the First Afghan War 31

CHAPTER III.

Condition of Afghanistan in 1841.—First Symptoms of Disturbance; Expedition to the Zurmat Valley; Arrival of Muhammad Akbar Khan at Bamian; Force of the Pass at Buta-i-Khak; Treachery of Hamza Khan; Personal dislike of Europeans evinced by the Afghans; March of Genera Sale to Gandamak; Insurrection at Kabul 65

CHAPTER IV.

Page

Popular Outbreak in Kabul; Murder of Sir Alexander Burnes; Unhappy want of Promptitude in Checking the Rebellion; Attack on Captain Lawrence and Lieutenant Sturt; Character of General Elphinstone; Unmilitary Position and Construction of the Cantonment at Kabul 80

CHAPTER V.

The 37th Regiment attacked on its return from Khurd-Kabul; Murder of Lieutenants Maule and Wheeler; Loss of the Commissariat fort; Successful attack on the fort of Muhammad Sharif; Engagements with Afghan horse and foot; the Enemy's plan to reduce the British by starvation; Brigadier Shelton sent for from Bala Hisar 97

CHAPTER VI.

Difference of Opinion between Brigadier Shelton and Sir William Macnaghten; Annoyance from the fire of the Enemy out of several forts; Storming of the Rika-Bashi fort, under Brigadier Shelton; Perilous Situation and Bravery of Lieutenant Bird; Further Engagements with the Enemy; Superiority of the Afghans in the use of Fire-arms 115

CHAPTER VII.

Page

Events in Kohistan, as related by Major Pottinger; Treachery of the Nijrao Chiefs; Murder of Lieutenant Rattray; Gallantry of Lieutenant Haughton; Attack by the Enemy on the Charikar Cantonment; Major Pottinger wounded; Death of Captain Codrington; Deplorable Scarcity of Water; Disappearance of Dr. Grant; Retreat towards Kabul; Perils of Major Pottinger and Lieutenant Haughton; they Escape to Cantonment 132

CHAPTER VIII.

Contemplated withdrawal from the Cantonment at Kabul, and Removal to the Bala Hisar; this Movement opposed by Brigadier Shelton; Disappointed expectation of receiving aid from General Sale; Mahmud Khan's fort strangely allowed to remain in the Possession of the Enemy; Letter from the Envoy to the General; Unprofitable Operations at the Village of Bemaru; Arrival of Muhammad Akbar Khan at Kabul 152

CHAPTER IX.

A Second Expedition to Bemaru; Major Swayne takes a wrong Direction; Increasing Numbers and Vigilance of the Enemy; Our Force driven back with severe loss; the Enemy carry off a Gun; Reinforcements unfortunately countermanded; Observations 163

CHAPTER X.

Page

Our Passiveness; Conferences and Negotiations with the Insurgent Chiefs; Loss of Muhammad Sharif's fort; Terms agreed on 183

CHAPTER XI.

Preparations for Evacuating; more Conferences; more Delays; more Difficulties; Muhammad Akbar's Plot against the Envoy; his Murder 204

CHAPTER XII.

Suspense in Cantonment; Council of War; Terms accepted; Hostages given; Postponement of Departure. . . . 241

CHAPTER XIII.

The Retreat of the Army and its Annihilation . . . 255

CHAPTER XIV.

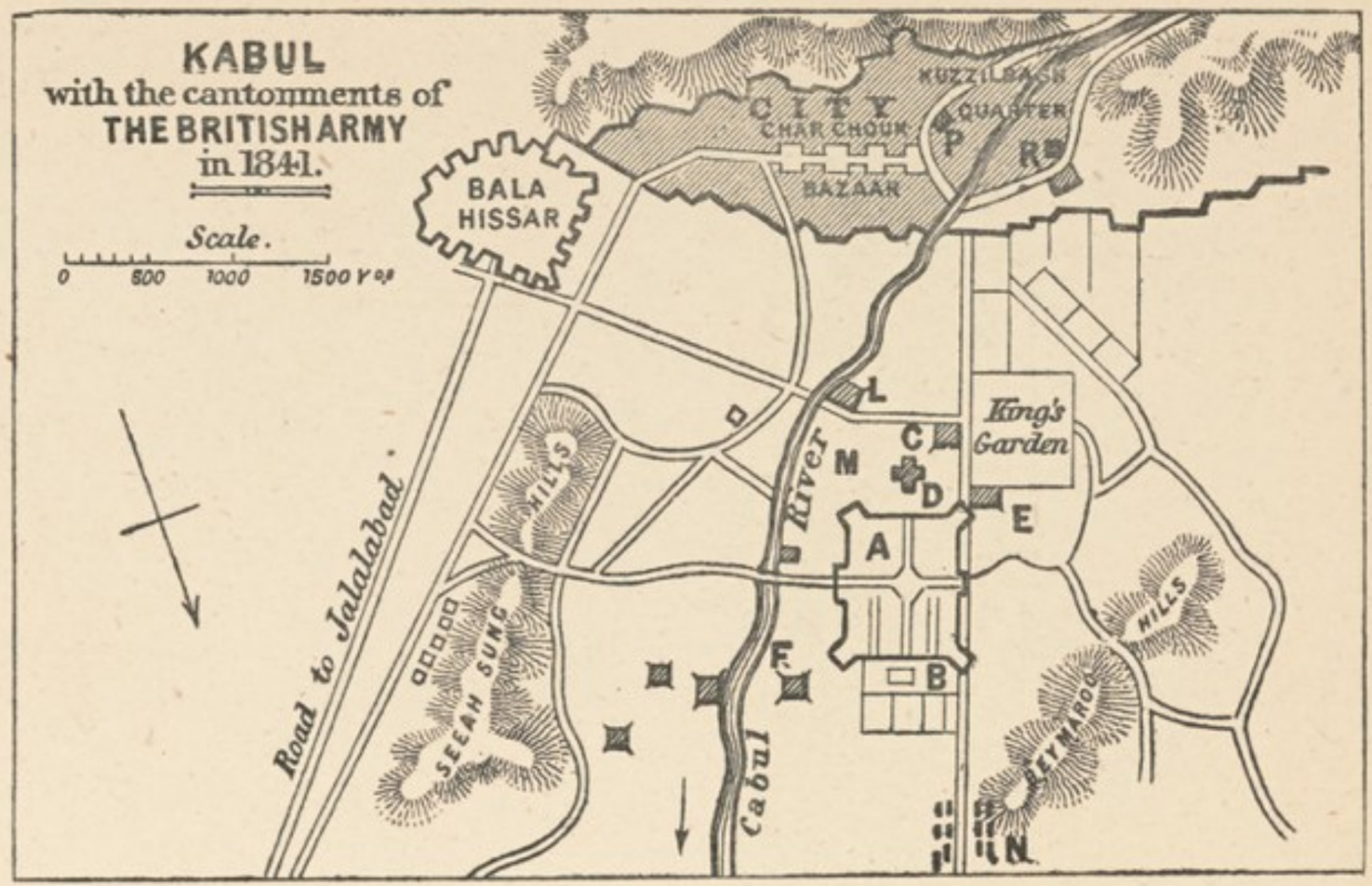
Page
Captivity of the Hostages 294

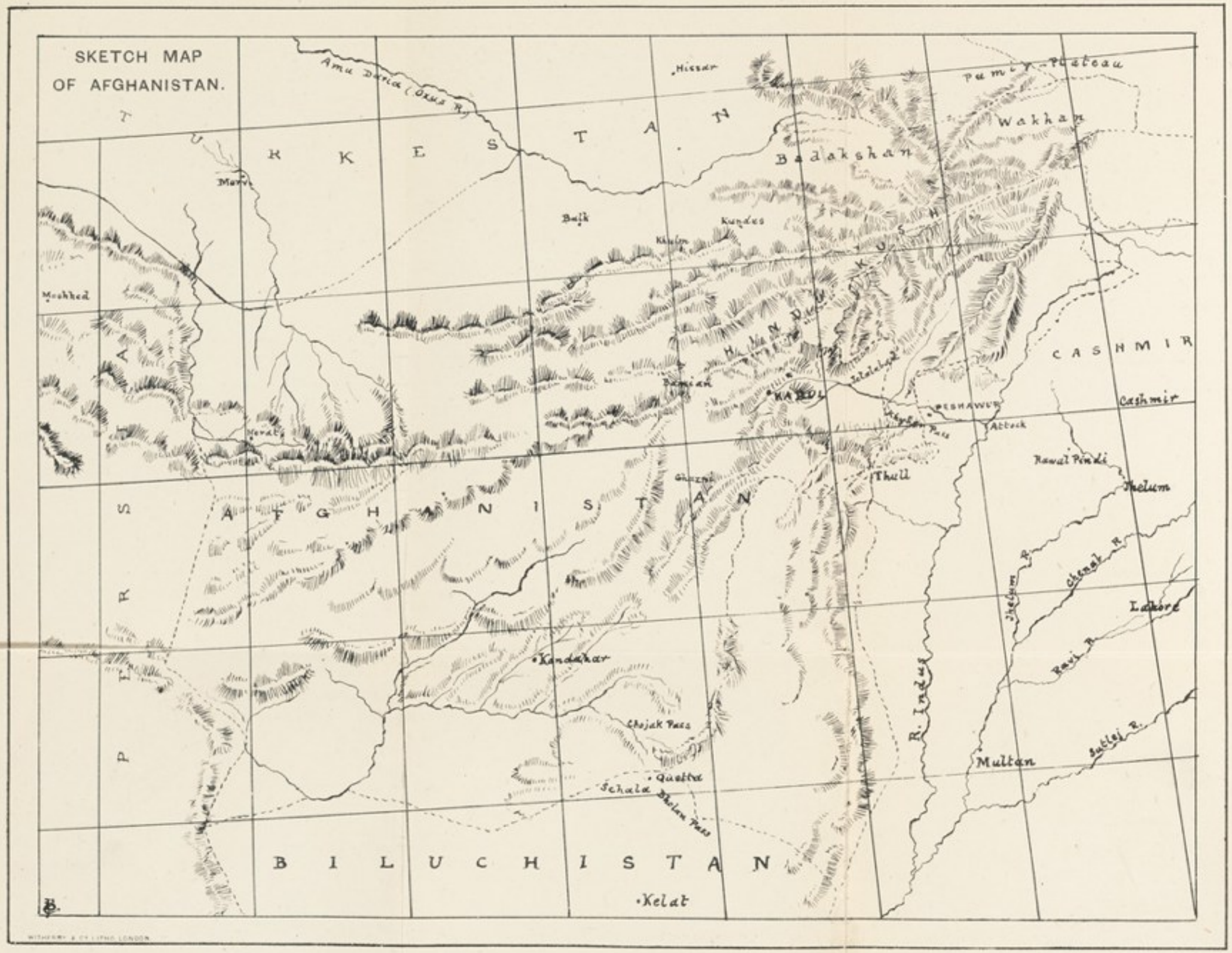
Appendix A. 317

Appendix B. 329

Appendix C. 335

A. Cantonment.
B. Mission Residence.
C. Commissariat Fort.
D. Magazine.
E. Mahomed Shereef's Fort.
F. Rikabashee Fort.
H. Zulficar's Fort.
L. Mahmood Khan's Fort.
M. Spot where the Envoy was murdered.
N. Village of Beymaroo.
P. Sir A. Burne's House.
R. Anquetil's Fort.




SKETCH MAP
OF AFGHANISTAN.
Amu Daria (Oxus R.)
Hissar
Pamir Plateau
Wakhan
Badakshan
TURKESTAN
Merv
Balk
Kundus
Khulm
Meshhed
HINDU KUSH
CASHMIR
Cashmir
Bamian
KABUL
Jelalabad
PESHAWUR
Attock
Rawal Pindi
Jhelum
Thull
Ghazni
AFGHANISTAN
PERSIA
Jhelum R.
Chenab R.
Lahore
Ravi R.
Kandahar
Chojak Pass
R. Indus
Multan
Sutlej R.
Quetta
Sehala
Bholan Pass
BILUCHISTAN
Kelat
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THE KABUL INSURRECTION OF 1841-42.

CHAPTER I.

Brief Account of Afghanistan and its Inhabitants.

Geographical Position.—The country now inhabited by the numerous tribes known by the common name of Afgháns may be briefly said to be bounded on the north and north-west by the stupendous mountain range of Hindú-Khush, or Indian Caucasus, on the south by Bilúchistán and part of Sindh, on the east by the great river Indus, and on the west by the extensive desert tracts that border the Persian empire.

The difficulties of access that Afghánistán opposes on all sides to an invading army, surrounded as it is by vast tracts of mountain and desert, the former only to be traversed by surmounting steep ridges and threading

narrow defiles where a few hundreds of well armed and resolute men could effectually oppose the passage of as many thousands, entitle it to be considered, in a military sense, as one of the strongest countries in the whole world, whilst the manly independence of its hardy inhabitants, their sturdy valour, and their skill in the use of weapons of war, to which they are trained from early boyhood, combine to render them far from despicable opponents, especially on their own ground, for even the disciplined warriors of Europe.

Cities.—The chief cities of Afghánistán are Kábul, Ghazní, Kandahár, Hirát, Jallálábád, and Pesháwar, each situated in a fertile and well-watered valley, enclosed more or less by lofty hills, and fortified in the usual oriental style with high walls, either of mud, stone, or brick, with round or polygonal flanking towers. Pesháwar became a Sikh possession in 1823, and has formed part of the British Indian dominions since 1849.

Mountains.—The three principal mountain ranges, from which innumerable branches diverge in all directions, are those of Hindú-Khush, Safaid Koh, and Sulaimán. The first, under which I include the great Paropamisan chain which forms the northern barrier extending from east to west, is a continuation of the great Himálayan range of northern India, the last of whose long line of giant snow-clad peaks, the *Koh-i-Baba,* rears its hoary head about seventy miles to the

north-west of Kábul. Its height is eighteen thousand feet above the sea. Thence to its termination in the vicinity of Hirát this prodigious rampart of mountains loses much of its sublimity. The race of people called Hazáras are dispersed among its valleys, where they have been settled from time immemorial.

The SUFAID KOH, or great "White Mountain" range, whose culminating snow-clad peak attains an elevation of fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-two feet, stretches from east to west, between the Khaibar hills and Ghazní, like a stupendous impassable barrier, whose *minimum* height is said to be twelve thousand five hundred feet, and from whose long uniform ridge are thrown off an infinity of spurs on either flank to north and south. At intervals along its course it sends forth long mountainous ramifications in a southerly direction towards Bilúchistán, and gives rise to several rivers, including the *Arghandáb* (a feeder of the Helmand), flowing west towards Kandahár; the *Kábul* river, flowing north towards the capital and thence turning eastward to Pesháwar; the *Kuram* and *Gomál* rivers, flowing south and east through the famous valleys and passes so named, to mingle their respective waters with those of the great river Indus in the vicinity of Isakbel and Derá Ismáíl Khán.

The SULAIMAN range runs in a direction nearly parallel with the Indus and perpendicular to that of Sufaid Koh. Its highest peak, the Takht-i-Sulaimán,

or "Throne of Solomon," is eleven thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and the average height of the whole range is about equal to that of the Pyrenees.

The valleys enclosed within these vast mountain ranges, and their numerous ramifications, are peopled by almost as many distinct tribes, each governed in a great measure by its own simple laws and customs: of these a brief account will be given from the best sources available.

Passes.—There are four principal routes available for military purposes and general traffic between India and Afghánistán from along the line of our Indus frontier, between Pesháwar in the north and Rorí in the south. These are known as the Khaibar, the Kuram, the Gomál, and the Bolán passes.

The direct route from Pesháwar to Kábul lies through the Khaibar pass, over a total distance of one hundred and ninety miles. The pass itself is thirty-three miles long, and is defended, at a distance of eight miles from its eastern entrance, by the fort of Alí Masjid. Sixty-seven miles beyond that is the walled town and fertile valley of Jallálábád, about one thousand nine hundred and sixty-four feet above the sea. Thence to Kábul the route presents a continuous series of ascents and of tedious and difficult passes; those chiefly worthy of mention being *Gandámak, Jagdallak, Tizín, Haft Kotul,* and *Khurd Kábul,* the latter only ten miles from Kábul itself, and all have been the scenes of deadly struggles

with British forces during the first Afghán campaign, with its series of successes, disasters, and final retributive triumphs.

The KURAM valley is entered at Thal, sixty-six miles from the British fortress of Kohát. A march of fifty miles along the bank of the river leads to Kuram fort, and sixty miles beyond that is the Paiwar pass, at a height of eight thousand feet above the sea. Thence to the summit of the Shatar Gardan pass, on the ridge of the Sufaid Koh, the route lies between precipitous peaks and over rugged spurs of a most formidable character, if defended by a skilful and resolute enemy. The descent to the valley of the Logar on the northern side is of a similar character, and leads eventually through a comparatively easy route to Kábul.

The GOMAL pass penetrates the Sulaimán range about sixteen miles west of Tánk, through a narrow defile, with a continuous ascent to Kotal-i-Sarmand, seven thousand five hundred feet above the sea, one hundred and forty-five miles by road. Thence following the course of the river another easy pass leads to the final ascent of the crest of a steep mountain range, beyond which the city of Ghazní is reached.

This route has been followed during many centuries by the mercantile clan known as *Povindahs,* in their annual journeys to and from India with merchandise, and who boldly encounter considerable peril from the robber tribes that persistently beset their path through

the passes, obliging them to fight their way with loss of life and property, and yet still adhere to their favourite time-honoured route.

The *Bolán* pass has its entrance near the town of Dádar, seven hundred and forty-two feet above the sea, and five hundred miles south of the *Khaibar* pass. There is a continuous ascent through the Hálá mountains for sixty miles to the crest of the pass, which is five thousand eight hundred feet above the sea, and thence to Qetta, which has an elevation of five thousand five hundred and forty feet. The Bolán river flows through the greater portion of the pass. The last three miles are very contracted, between towering precipitous cliffs.

Qetta has lately become an advanced British frontier post, and is distant one hundred and fifty miles from Kandahár; to reach which it is necessary to traverse the Pishín valley and the lofty Khojak pass, which reaches an elevation of seven thousand four hundred and fifty feet; whence to the plain of Kandahár there is a long descent of four thousand feet.

Climate.—The superior coolness and salubrity of the climate in most parts of Afghánistán would appear to be due less to the differences of latitude than of elevation. The following table exhibits the comparative heights of the principal places on the two grand routes lately travelled by our armies, and, as a general rule, the climate may be said to improve in proportion to

the increase of altitude. (I derive the heights here given from Major Hough's valuable narrative of the march and operations of the army of the Indus.)

Route from Pesháwar to Kábul.	Above the sea.
Pesháwar	1,068 feet.
Jallálábád	1,964 ,,
Sultánpur	2,300 ,,
Fathábád	3,098 ,,
Gandámak	4,616 ,,
Jagdallak	5,375 ,,
Tizín	6,488 ,,
Haft Kotal	8,173 ,,
Khurd-Kábul	7,466 ,,
Kábul	6,247 ,,

Route from Shikárpur to Kandahár & Ghazní.	Above the sea.
Shikárpur	250 feet
Dádar	743 ,,
Sir-i-bolán	4,494 ,,
Qettah (in the valley of Shawl)	5,637 ,,
Kojak pass	7,457 ,,
Kandahár	3,484 ,,
Qalát-i-Ghalzí	5,773 ,,
Ghazní	7,726 ,,

At Pesháwar and Jallálábád the summer heat, though less intense than in India, is still dreadfully oppressive and unfavourable in its effects on the European constitution. On the Kábul route the temperate climate begins at Gandámak, beyond which snow usually covers the ground during the middle of winter, when few travellers expose themselves voluntarily to the risks and inconveniences of the road. On the route from Shikárpur to Kandahár the Bolán pass forms a similar boundary between the hot and cold climates; Dádar, which lies on the south side, being insufferably hot, whilst the splendid valley of Shawl, at the northern extremity, enjoys a delightfully cool and healthy temperature. The Khojak pass, through which lies the direct line of communication between Qettah and Kandahár, being blocked up by snow during winter, all traffic along that route is suspended. Nevertheless, the rigorous winters for which Kábul and Ghazní are

so notorious are unknown at Kandahár, where snow seldom falls, and where an army can with ease keep the field throughout the year. Snow begins to cover the hills around Kábul about the beginning of October, but seldom visits the plain before December, when it accumulates fast upon the ground until the end of January or middle of February, from which period to the end of April rain falls in great abundance. The remainder of the year is dry.

Tribes.—The principal Afghán tribes, of whom it is desirable to give some account in this work, are comprised in four great divisions, viz. :—

1. The Abdálís, or Dúránís.
2. The Ghalzís.
3. The Bírdúránís.
4. The Kaukars.

The two first are distributed over that portion of Afghánistán which lies west of the Sulaimán range, whilst the two last occupy the less civilized tracts on the opposite side of it.

Duranis.—The Abdálís, or Dúránís, as they are more commonly designated, are divided into nine great clans, of which the four principal are the *Popalzís*, *Alakhzís*, *Baurikzís*, and *Achikzís*. These again are subdivided into *Khails*, or families, of which by far the most eminent is that of the *Sadúzís*, a branch of the Popalzís, which, from a very remote period, has been regarded as the head of all the Dúránís.

From this distinguished stock sprang the celebrated Ahmad Sháh, the founder of the Dúrání monarchy, by whose talents, energy, and prudence, the Afghán nation was for the first time united under a native king, and whose grandson, Sháh Shujá-ul-Mulk, was destined, a century later, to become a tool in the hands of European politicians, and to experience some of the most extraordinary reverses of fortune that are recorded in the annals of the world.

The whole Dúrání population is conjectured to fall little short of one million souls.

The kháns, or chiefs, hold their lands by military tenure, originally granted by their Persian conqueror, Nádir Sháh, on the express stipulation that they should furnish a horseman for every plough, the performance of which engagement has been exacted as rigidly as circumstances would admit by every subsequent occupant of the throne. Under the Sadúzí dynasty all the great offices of state were monopolized by chiefs of the Dúrání tribe, who having been mainly instrumental in the original constitution of the empire, and being bound by the ties of clanship to their monarch, were naturally considered to have a primary claim to honorary rewards and courtly distinctions. Each of the great Dúrání clans has, or had, its own *Sirdár*, or commander chosen by the king out of the head family, the Sirdár in his turn appointing some of the leading kháns to the chief civil and

military control of each *ulús*, or subdivision of a clan.

The administration of justice in criminal and civil cases is not, however, except in large towns and cities, entrusted to any one individual, but has, from time immemorial, been vested in a *jirga*, or council, composed, in the more important cases, of the kháns, elders, and mullás of the neighbourhood; but minor offences and disputes are settled by village *jirgas*, elected by the people themselves.

This primitive system of judicature is not peculiar to the Dúránís, but is common to all the Afghán tribes.

The title of *Khán* was held, under the monarchy, by a patent from the king, but is bestowed by general courtesy on the petty chiefs of each small community. Every such titular khán invariably resides in his own little fort, or castle, commonly built in a square form, with high mud walls about twelve feet thick at the base and tapering to the same number of inches at the top, having numerous loopholes for musketry, and flanked at each angle by substantial towers or bastions. These forts, scattered far and wide over the face of the whole country, each having its little orchard attached, and surrounded by verdant fields of cultivation, with perchance a gushing rivulet shaded by the willow, poplar, and oleaster, in graceful groups, form one of the most pleasing characteristics of Afghán scenery.

The Dúránís, like the majority of Afghán tribes, are divided into agricultural and pastoral classes, the former having their fixed places of residence, and the latter dwelling altogether in tents, with which they form large camps and move about with their flocks and herds to find pasture. The *Achikzís* are almost wholly pastoral, and possess a large portion of the mountain range of Khojá Amrám as well as of the neighbouring plains. They are greatly addicted to plunder, and are the least civilized of all the Dúránís; yet as soldiers they rank high, and their Sirdárs have generally exercised a more than ordinary share of influence in the country.

Each Dúrání village has its *mullá*, or Muhammadan teacher, by whom the offices of religion are performed. Considerable attention and regularity is evinced by the commonalty in offering up their daily stated prayers. Hospitality is one of the most pleasing traits in the popular character, every stranger being secure of a ready welcome to such entertainment as they can provide. To these remarks the Achikzís form a solitary exception, being alike careless of the rites of hospitality and of religion.

The personal appearance of the Dúránís is manly and prepossessing, their features are generally well formed and strongly defined, and their manners are seldom otherwise than frank, social, and friendly in

the extreme. The conversation of the upper orders is often remarkably animated, intelligent, and free from prejudice and bigotry, a freedom which constitutes them, on the whole, very agreeable companions. These excellent traits are somewhat counterbalanced by the vices common, in a greater or less degree, to all Asiatics, among the most prominent of which may be enumerated avarice, duplicity, sensuality, meanness, and revenge, but in these, as in most other respects, they exhibit a manifest superiority to all other Afghán tribes, by whom they are in consequence regarded with a proportionate degree of respect.

Ghalzis.—The Ghalzís next claim our attention. They were formerly the most powerful, and are still the most numerous, of all the Afghán tribes. Their name is supposed to indicate a Turkish origin, but their settlement in Afghánistán is referred to a very remote period, and their military power and prowess are recorded by some of the earliest Muhammadan writers. In the early invasions of India by the Afgháns they took a prominent part, but their fame reached its climax by their conquest of Persia early in the last century, over which country, after having defeated in succession the armies of the Ottoman empire, they established their dominion under three consecutive kings.

The last of these Ghalzí monarchs was driven from his throne by Nádir Sháh, then in the morning of his

fame, though not without a prolonged and desperate resistance on the part of the former.

With him the power of the Ghalzís expired, but they nevertheless maintained a fierce and obstinate struggle for their liberties in Afghánistán on the invasion of that country by the same ambitious warrior. Their defence of Kandahár lasted for eighteen months, and was only terminated by a desperate but unsuccessful sortie, in which great numbers were slain. Their ascendancy received its final blow by the rise of the rival tribe of Dúránís to supreme power under Ahmad Sháh.

The remembrance of their supersession still embitters the minds of the Ghalzí nobles, who regard their successful rivals with undisguised jealousy and dislike, although in some of the leading families of the present day these inimical feelings have been much abated by judicious intermarriages. The Ghalzí chiefs exercise but little influence or authority in their own tribes beyond the circle of their own immediate dependants. In this respect their position differs from that of the Dúrání nobles, who derived additional powers from the crown, the stability of which must however in a great measure depend on the maintenance of a settled government in the country. Under the monarchy a Dúrání governor was appointed by the king over the whole Ghalzí tribe, in whom authority was vested for the management of the revenue, the maintenance

of troops, and the administration of justice in all cases requiring his interference.

Under such a system the influence of the Ghalzí kháns gradually declined, the people becoming accustomed to act independently of them, and referring almost every dispute to the village *jirga*.

The absence of any minor local controlling authorities renders blood feuds of common occurrence, both between private individuals and whole communities. The Ghalzís to the west of Ghazní conform more nearly to the Dúránís in their general habits than those to the east of that city. They are, taken as a whole, a brave, hardy, warlike, and handsome race, simple and frugal in their fare, possessing great bodily strength, stern, violent, vindictive, impatient of control, intelligent, energetic, and ever ready to unite under their own chiefs against a common foe or in a popular cause.

Though all are either husbandmen or shepherds, yet every man can, on emergency, at once transform himself into a soldier. They are more ignorant and barbarous than the Dúránís, and possess a large share of their virtues and vices in common.

Under the restraining and improving influence of a strong and civilized government they might probably be transformed into valuable subjects, but there seems little likelihood of any such desirable metamorphosis at present. The following table exhibits the distribu-

tion, numbers, and occupations of the different divisions of the tribe:—

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GHALZI TRIBES.

Family.	Clan.	No. of Families.	Locality.	General observations.
Túrán, the elder branch.	Hotakí .	6,000	South of Mukúr range.	Chiefly follow agriculture and commerce, but live much in tents and feed flocks.
	Tokhí .	12,000	Qalát-i-Ghalzí, valley of Tarnák, and hill country on edge of Paropamisan mountains.	
Búrán, the younger branch.	Sulaimán Khail.	35,000	East and north of Ghazní.	viz.:—Ahmadzís, in Altámúr and Spaiza, and are pastoral. Stánízís, north of Ghazní; agricultural. Qaisar Khail and Ismaílzís, south and east of Ghazní, and part of Zurmat; agricultural and pastoral.
	Alikhail .	8,000	Plain of Zurmat	Agricultural.
	Sahák .	6,000	Pughmán and Kharwár.	Agricultural and pastoral.
	Andar .	12,000	Shilghar . . .	Agricultural.
	Tarakí .	12,000	Mukúr and neighbourhood.	Agricultural and pastoral.
	Khárotí	6,000	Hills between Gomál river and Sulaimán range.	Agricultural and pastoral.
	Shírán.	6,000	Part of Koh-Dámán and along bank of Kábul river.	Agricultural and pastoral.

BIRDURANIS.—The *Bírdúraní* tribes are next to be considered. They are strictly an agricultural people, and inhabit the hills and plains east and north of the Sulaimán range, extending from the foot of the Indian Caucasus to the latitude of Dera Ismaíl Khán, and including every imaginable variety of climate from the bleak, wintry, and scarcely habitable regions of

perennial snow, to the equally uncomfortable extreme of excessive heat.

The only clans requiring particular mention here are the *Yúsufzís* and the *Khaibarís*, the former inhabiting the mountains and valleys north of Pesháwar, and the latter the hilly regions on the right bank of the Kábul river between Jallálábád and the Indus. South of these are the *Khattaks*, *Bangashís*, *Túrís*, and *Wazírís*, together with the numerous clans of *Dámám*, which latter are considered altogether distinct from the *Bírdúránís*. To the left of the Kábul river are the *Momands* and *Tarkúlánís*, the latter possessing the country called *Bájúr*.

Yusufzis.—Elphinstone estimates the *Yúsufzí* population at seven hundred thousand souls. They are the most vicious and barbarous of all the Afgháns, and being perpetually engaged in intestine strife are in a state but little removed from anarchy, blood feuds being so numerous that there are few villages whence the husbandman dares to venture forth to plough and sow unarmed with his sword and rifle. The collection of revenue has generally been found impracticable. Yet, sunk as they are in the very depths of depravity, in no part of Afghánistán are the outward observances of the Muhammadan religion so strictly observed and intolerance so unhappily prevalent.

The *Sikhs*, during their rule in the Panjáb, found the *Yúsufzís* to be brave and formidable opponents, ren-

dering the continued presence of a large force at and around Pesháwar necessary to inspire dread and enforce submission. I may add that the Yúsufzí soldiers who were enlisted in the British service during our first campaign in Afghánistán, performed excellent and faithful service on various occasions under Captain Ferris and other English officers.

KHAIBARIS. — The *Khaibarí* tribes are so called from inhabiting the Khaibar mountains, separating the valley of Pesháwar from that of Jallálábád.

This range, in fact, forms the north-eastern barrier of Afghánistán, through whose stupendous defiles the tide of invasion was wont to pour its predatory hordes of hardy warriors from the north-west into the rich and fertile plains of Hindústán. The Khaibarís, firmly established as the acknowledged guardians of this important thoroughfare, have not failed to reap every possible advantage from their position by levying a heavy toll on every traveller, from the invading conqueror at the head of his armed hosts down to the solitary and peaceful wayfarer venturing with his little stock of merchandize to a distant market.

Besides the toll levied on travellers, the Khaibarís have for many generations past received an annual stipend from the ruler of Kábul for the benefits derived from an open road for commerce.

The three principal clans are the *Afrídís*, the

Shainwarís, and the *Urakzís,* numbering altogether about twelve thousand souls.

They are esteemed excellent marksmen with the Afghán jazail, or rifle, which has an iron or wooden projection at the end of the barrel, which they rest on the ground, and thus take steady and effectual aim at a distance of eight hundred yards. They are proverbially faithless in their engagements, being constantly tempted by the hope of plunder, to attack parties whose safety they have previously guaranteed.

INDEPENDENT PATHAN TRIBES ON THE PANJAB FRONTIER.

Tribes.	Frontier Districts adjoining.
Hussainzís	Hazára.
Jadans Bonairwais Swátís Ránízís Usmánkhailís Upper Momands	Pesháwar.
Afrídís	Pesháwar and Kohát.
Bazotís Sípáhs Urakzís Zímasht Afgháns Túrís	Kohát.
Wazírís	Kohát and Dera Ismaíl Khán.
Sheoránís Ushtiránís	Dera Ismaíl Khán.
Khitráns	Dera Ghází Khán.

These people are barbarians of a rude patriarchal type —without any government beyond the "jirgas," or Councils of Elders, and without any religion beyond

the worst form of Muhammadanism. Blood for blood, and fire and sword against all infidels, are their ruling ideas. They are priest-ridden, sensual, avaricious, and predatory; faithless, also, and bloodthirsty. Each tribe and section of a tribe has its internecine wars, each family its hereditary blood feuds, and each individual his personal foes. Consequently they are always armed, even while grazing cattle, driving beasts of burden, or tilling the soil. They will undertake military service, but are impatient of discipline, and are true to their salt unless led away by fanaticism.

The task of establishing friendly relations with tribes so fickle and treacherous is one of extreme difficulty—friendship with one tribe is apt to be enmity with another; and treaties ratified one day are repudiated the next. Nothing unites them but a common danger, and a common jealousy of the intrusion of strangers.

These tribes always resisted Sikh rule, under which such heavy duties were levied as to reduce trade to the lowest ebb, and heavy revenue was demanded from those tribes within the Sikh border.

Conciliatory measures have been adopted under British rule, transit duties have been abolished, taxation reduced, and friendly relations cultivated.

The border Pathâns are freely admitted into the public service, military, police, or civil. Charitable dispensaries have been established all along the border. open,

free of charge, to all nationalities and creeds, and patients are often fed at the public expense. Land and water communications have been improved, new roads constructed, serais and resting-places set up where required, and weekly steamers established on the Indus.

Satisfactory results have followed. The former hatred against the ruling power is passing away; raids, once chronic, are now exceptional; cultivation is rapidly extending; and many frontier clans pray for protection and permission to settle in British territory. The trade through the Pesháwar passes is rapidly increasing. The tolls on the Indus ferries have risen from four thousand rupees in 1857 to twenty-five thousand in 1867. The tonnage on the Upper Indus has increased from eight hundred boats with cargoes aggregating two hundred and sixty-five thousand maunds in 1855, to more than three thousand boats with nearly one million and a quarter maunds in 1865–66.

Mercantile fairs are about to be established at Pesháwar and Dera Ismaíl Khán. The study of Pushtú is encouraged by rewards, and Pushtú schools in the interior of frontier districts are aiding in the work of civilization.

Kákars.—The Kákar tribes occupy a large tract of country to the south of the *Khoja Amrán* mountains and to the north-west of Bilúchistán. They are chiefly a pastoral people, yet possessing many small

highly-cultivated valleys. Though more rude and ignorant, they are far less turbulent than other Afgháns, but owing to their remote position they are also less known and appreciated; nor are they of sufficient importance, in a political or military view, to require a more lengthened notice in this work.

To the four great tribes already described the common name of *Afghán* strictly appertains, but besides these Afghánistán has other inhabitants, of an origin altogether distinct, of whom it is expedient to give a separate account. The most important of these are the *Tájiks* and the *Hazáras*.

Tájiks.—The Tájiks, though now forming a part and parcel of the Afghán nation, were formerly a distinct people, and are supposed by Mr. Elphinstone to be descended from those Arabian soldiers of the Prophet who, in the first century of Muhammadanism, after overrunning the whole of Persia and Túrkistán, and propagating their faith by force of arms in those countries, carried the war into Afghánistán, where they obtained possession of the plains, but the inhabitants subsequently, collecting their forces in the mountains and descending upon their invaders, partially reduced them to a state of dependence from which they have never since emerged.

These are now mixed up with the Afghán population, to whom they have become in most respects

assimilated, and with whom they frequently intermarry.

They possess but little landed property, and reside principally in the neighbourhood of the large towns, where they employ themselves in manufactures or trade, or as servants to Afghán masters. They are usually denominated *Pársíwáns*.

Kohistánís.—Of those Tájiks who retained their independence and landed possessions, the people now called *Kohistánís* are the modern representatives. These differ widely from their subjugated brethren, and possess the strong, fertile, and extensive province of *Kohistán,* to the north of Kábul, comprising the valleys of *Panjshír, Ghurband,* and *Nijráo.* The Kohistání population has been estimated at forty thousand. The principal town is *Istálif,* situated at the base of the Ghurband mountains, and unsurpassed in picturesque beauty.

The houses being built on the slope of a hill, and rising in a succession of irregular terraces, one above another, form an imposing spectacle, the beauty and grandeur of which is greatly augmented by the innumerable orchards and vineyards that enliven the surrounding landscape, and the magnificent snow-clad peaks of Hindú-Khush, with its mountainous progeny spreading their mazy branches far and wide, towering in the rear and perfecting a picture that has but few parallels in nature. Istálif is celebrated for

the superior excellence of its fruit, but more especially of its grapes, which are grown in prodigious abundance, and in size, flavour, and variety are perhaps equal to any in the world. Apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, and other European fruits, grow in the greatest profusion, but the mulberry tree is more extensively planted than any other, the dried fruit being ground into flour and converted into bread, which forms a cheap and wholesome article of food for the common people. The Kohistánís are rude, violent, and contentious, their chief delight being in war. They are very efficient as infantry, especially in mountain warfare, and can take the field in large bodies, at the shortest notice, subsisting for weeks together on dried mulberries alone, of which each soldier carries a bagful. The people are more completely under the control of their kháns than is the case with any of the tribes before noticed.

They are regarded by their neighbours with mingled feelings of dread, distrust, and aversion. They have generally resisted every attempt to render them tributary to the Kábul rulers, and have always enjoyed a considerable degree of independence.

Hazáras.—The *Hazáras* inhabit the Paropamisan mountains between Hirát and Kábul, and though formerly composing but one people have long been divided by religious schism into two sects or branches, the *Sunís* and the *Shíahs,* the former occupying the

western, and the latter the eastern, half of their wild and rugged country. The *Suní* Hazáras are usually called *Aimáks,* whilst the *Shíah* branch alone retains the name of *Hazáras.*

Their square Tátar features sufficiently distinguish them from the Afgháns, independent of their many essential differences in other respects. The *Aimáks* dwell almost wholly in tents, feeding flocks and cultivating the few arable strips of land that nature has allotted them. Their chiefs possess many strongholds in the most inaccessible parts of the mountains, and exercise an almost despotic sway over their own tribes.

The *Hazáras* dwell in open villages defended by high towers, and the chiefs in small forts. Their country is more rugged and barren, and its climate more inclement, than that of the Aimáks. They are simple, good humoured, and sociable, but hot tempered, and, when their enmity is aroused, at once stubborn, fierce, and revengeful. They are constantly engaged in strife, either amongst themselves or against the Aimáks, Uzbegs, and Afgháns, sturdily resisting the payment of tribute to the Kábul government whenever opportunity offers. In religion they are zealously attached to their own sect, and uncompromising in their hatred of all Sunís. Their chiefs are, with a few exceptions, equally despotic as those of their Aimák brethren.

Kazilbáshís.—I next proceed to notice the principal foreign settlers whose numbers, wealth, and influence, entitle them to distinct consideration. Foremost among these are the *Kazilbáshís,* or Persian colonists, who emigrated from their own country in the time of Nádir Sháh, and of whom not less than twelve thousand dwell in the city of Kábul alone, where they occupy a fortified quarter called the *Chandaul.* They have smaller settlements in the towns of Kandahár and Hirát, and have obtained several small grants of land in various other parts of the country.

Many of the chiefs held situations of trust and importance under the Dúráni monarchs.

Amid the frequent struggles for the empire that have distracted the land after the death of Ahmad Sháh, their usual policy has been to maintain an armed neutrality, cautiously abstaining from joining either party until the issue of the struggle seemed no longer doubtful, when they of course declared in favour of the strongest. But although politically timid, they are personally brave, and, being able to muster a strong force in the field, they are always certain of being welcomed as acceptable auxiliaries to whichever party they attach themselves.

The sectarian differences in religion between them and the Afgháns must ever prevent anything like real cordiality on either side, the Kazilbáshís being *Shíahs,* like the Persians, whilst all the Afgháns are

Sunís in faith. The Kazilbáshís are vain and fond of display. They usually dress well, and attend more to domestic comfort and personal cleanliness than the Afgháns, who are very careless of such matters. They also surpass the latter in general refinement and civilization, but are inferior to them in manly virtues and in religious toleration.

Arabs.—The *Arabs* are the only other foreign settlers of any importance. They are computed at two thousand families, and a large portion of their number were employed under the Dúrání monarchs to garrison the Bálá Hisár, or royal citadel, of Kábul.

Sháh Shujá, on his restoration to the throne in 1839, enlisted several hundreds in his service, who remained faithful to him amid his subsequent disasters.

Description of Kábul.—The city of Kábul has been so often described that its principal features must be already pretty familiar to the majority of English readers. The traveller who for the first time approaches it from the direction of Jallálábád, after having passed through the savage defiles and toiled over the barren steeps that intervene, feels both relieved and delighted, on entering the plain of Kábul, by the cheerful and picturesque aspect of the distant city, descried afar off in a gorge between two lofty hills, up and along whose steep and rocky ridges is discernible a long line of massive wall, with numerous

half-ruined towers, once forming an imposing barrier of defence against the sudden and devastating inroads of the western tribes.

On the left, or eastern extremity, occupying a low spur of hill and commanding the entire town, the Bálá Hisár, or citadel, with its lofty stone walls, bulky bastions, and enclosed crowd of high-storied dwellings, forms a striking object. The mountains of *Pughmán* and *Koh Dámán*, covered with snow during two-thirds of the year, form a magnificent background to the scene. Green fields of various kinds of grain and clover, blossoming orchards, and small square forts, are thickly interspersed over the adjacent plains, which, however, are intersected on the eastern side by low barren hills that somewhat injure the otherwise rich and extensive prospect. On the western side of the city, and separated from it by the gorge through which the Kábul river flows, is a most beautiful valley, varying in width from eight to twelve miles, encircled by a succession of mountain ranges whose most distant summits reflect a dazzling glare from their white mantles of perennial snow. On the gentle slopes at the base are well-stocked orchards, cultivated terraces, and villages embosomed in wood, whilst the plain below presents to view one vast garden of lavish plenty through which the river of Kábul and its tributary streams pursue their winding courses, distributing their crystal waters, en route, among innumerable artificial

canals that diverge in all directions to irrigate the upland fields.

Castles, villages, orchards, and plantations of poplar, willow, and other trees, are thickly scattered over the diversified landscape, the view of which from an eminence near Bábar's tomb deservedly constitutes one of the chief boasts of Kábul. The city is very irregularly laid out, and, with exception of the celebrated covered bazar and the tomb of Taimúr Sháh, contained no public buildings at all striking.* The streets are narrow, and the houses lofty with flat roofs. To many of the better sort of private dwellings a garden is attached. The largest portion of the city stands on the right bank of the river, the opposite side being principally lined with walled gardens and private forts of the upper classes.

The covered bazar consisted of five open squares connected by four arcades, down the centre of which a marble aqueduct conveyed a small running stream. The sides were lined with shops exhibiting a wealthy display of home and foreign produce.

That which most excited a stranger's admiration was the number of fruiterers' shops, where every variety of tempting and delicious fruit was piled up in matchless profusion.

* The former no longer exists, having been destroyed by General Pollock in October, 1842, as an act of retributive vengeance for the insult there offered to the body of a British envoy on the 23rd of December, 1841.

Crowds of busy merchants and lounging idlers, in the various costumes of Asia, thronged this favourite mart during the greater part of the day and night, excepting on Fridays, when the shops of all true believers were shut and business suspended, whilst the inhabitants attended to their religious duties, or enjoyed their diversions in the gardens and fields of the suburbs. The garden that contains the tomb of the Emperor Bábar was their usual place of resort on these occasions, and they could not possibly have selected a more suitable spot. One of the strangest sights in Kábul is that of the ladies gliding about the crowded streets enveloped from head to feet in white sheets, having a very small network in front of the eyes to peep through. This ghostly costume affords the most perfect concealment to both face and figure, and has a tendency to excite a feeling of curiosity in all foreign beholders. That is, under the circumstances, very excusable, their reputation for beauty being amply sustained by the handsome features and rosy complexions of their offspring. So impenetrable is the disguise of this out-door dress, the fashion of which is never varied, that it is impossible for a man to distinguish his own wife when he meets her abroad.

The facility thus afforded for intrigue may be easily conceived, although it is probable that even the most fertile imagination of an Englishman would fall short of the reality.

The plains to the north and east of Kábul are low and swampy in many places, being subject, during the rainy months, to inundation from the river.

Much more might be written illustrative of a country and people that recent events have rendered so interesting to Englishmen, but I believe there is scarcely anything of importance on these subjects that may not be found most ably and adequately described in the admirable work of the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, the correctness of whose information has now been fully tested, and in hardly a single instance impugned.

CHAPTER II.

A Retrospect of the First Afghan War.

Perhaps no Governor-General of India ever assumed the reins of office with more benevolent inclinations and more peaceable intentions than Lord Auckland in 1836; yet, within less than two years, he plunged headlong into a war to which, there is reason to believe, he was all along secretly averse, and which has been since stamped by universal public opinion as the most unjust, ill-advised, and unnecessary that had ever engaged the energies of a British army, or risked the honourable reputation of the British name throughout the East.

It is now a well-established fact that the initiative in the Afghán war was taken in opposition to the opinion, and even in defiance of the protests, of the Court of Directors, who were at that time the nominal

trustees of India; and that a large share of the responsibility belongs to Her Majesty's Ministers in England, who, in common with Lord Auckland's official advisers, believed that the stability of our Indian empire was being so seriously threatened by the warlike operations of Persia, secretly influenced by Russian diplomacy in Central Asia, as to render it absolutely necessary for the rulers of India to arouse themselves to ward off the impending danger by some outward demonstration of power in that quarter.

A new monarch had recently succeeded to the throne of Persia, whose partialities had betrayed themselves in favour of a Russian alliance, in opposition to the interests of Great Britain, whose influence had heretofore prevailed over all rivals at the Court of Tehrán; and among the earliest results of this change, was the determination to hurl a Persian army against the fortress of Hirát, which had long been in possession of the Afgháns, but to which an old claim on the part of Persia was now conveniently revived.

A general belief prevailed among European and Asiatic diplomatists of that period that the possession of Hirát by Persia must necessarily threaten not only the safety of Afghánistán, but of the rich plains of the Panjáb (at that time in possession of the great Sikh ruler Ranjít Singh) and of British India lying beyond. Therefore it was but natural that Afgháns, Sikhs, and English should be anxious for some sort of alliance

for purposes of mutual defence against a common enemy.

But, when it is considered what large disciplined forces might have been easily concentrated on any threatened point of our Indian frontier, how powerful an army of friendly Sikhs at that time occupied the Panjáb, and what formidable physical obstacles the intervening country presents at all times to the march of a large invading force, hampered with artillery, commissariat, and other necessary *impedimenta*, it is difficult to account for the panic that so generally prevailed, on any other rational ground than a consciousness of some weak and combustible points in the heterogeneous fabric of our Indian empire, which might cause it to collapse or explode suddenly and disastrously on the application of any sufficiently exciting forces from without.

It is to be hoped that the interval of forty years which has since elapsed has gradually placed our moral and material hold of India upon a much sounder basis than then existed,

At that time the chief power in Afghánistán was in the able hands of Dost Muhammad Khán, whose capital was Kábul and three of whose brothers governed at Kandahár. Hirát itself was held as an independent principality by Sháh Kámrán, a Sadúzí prince, whose father and uncles once reigned over Afghánistán, betraying and supplanting each other by turns, until

themselves betrayed and supplanted by the great Bárakzí chiefs, whose power now predominated, and whose elder brother, Fath Khán, had long acted the part of minister and king-maker, until at length treacherously put to a cruel death by Sháh Kámrán, against whom Dost Muhammad and the other surviving brothers of Fath Khán accordingly cherished the bitterest feelings of hatred and revenge.

To gratify this dire hostility, the Kandahár brothers were now willing to lend themselves to the designs of Persia, not without hope of some benefit resulting to themselves. But their great chieftain at Kábul, more far-sighted and patriotic than they, had solemnly cautioned them against the danger of incurring the enmity of the British, to the superior value of whose alliance he was fully alive, although Russia was at that very time bidding high for his adherence.

Matters were in this unsatisfactory state when, in September, 1837, Sir Alexander Burnes presented himself before Dost Muhammad at Kábul, as the accredited agent of the Indian Government, on a so-styled "commercial" mission, the real ob ect of which was, however, sufficiently transparent.

The two men were already personally known to each other; Burnes having, about five years previously, been most hospitably entertained by the Kábul chief when passing through that city as a private traveller *en route* to Europe; hence his reappearance at the

present momentous crisis could not but be hailed as a favourable omen of the friendly intentions of the British Government, whose representative he now was. His reception was, accordingly, of the most cordial and flattering description, and to all appearance he had an easy game to play; and it is probable that had he been allowed to arrange matters in his own way, all difficulties would have been smoothed over, and all motive for hostilities removed.

The obvious policy of the British Government at that period was to conciliate the goodwill of the Afghán nation (of whom Dost Muhammad was the acknowledged and popular *de facto* ruler), as the most effective barrier we could raise against present and future innovations of the Western powers; and this we had now a glorious opportunity of effecting through the timely instrumentality of Burnes, than whom no agent could have been found so appositely qualified for such a task, or more zealous to consummate so desirable a result.

But it was not so to be! Lord Auckland and his official advisers had, from the very first, conceived an inveterate distrust of Dost Muhammad for the difficulties of whose position they failed to make due allowance, and whose many sterling qualities as a ruler they equally failed to understand and appreciate. In point of fact, they had meanwhile conceived a favourite policy of their own, entirely opposed to that

so earnestly recommended by Burnes, and the result was his summary recal from Kábul early in 1838, and the temporary triumph of Russian and Persian interests in the councils of Kábul and Kandahár.

A Persian army, with some Russian officers in its train, had meanwhile already laid siege to Hirát, and all India looked on in wonder and alarm at the eventful drama enacting at her distant portal in the north-east. Fortunately, few Asiatic powers understand how to conduct siege operations; and Persia, even with the aid of Russian officers, and with its own monarch in person at the head of a sufficiently powerful army and battering train, formed no exception to the rule. The siege lingered on from November, 1837, until September, 1838, affording ample time for intermediate action on the part of the British.

The credit of this prolonged defence was due, in an eminent degree, to the accidental presence within the walls of Hirát of a young British officer of the Bombay Artillery, Eldred Pottinger by name. His professional skill and personal energy were of the utmost use in directing the defensive operations, and keeping alive the martial spirit of the garrison. On more than one occasion the Afghán commander, Yár Muhammad (who was also Sháh Kámrán's prime minister), was on the point of yielding to his assailants, but was shamed into a show, at least, of fresh courage by the entreaties, reproaches, and even

friendly violence of Pottinger, who would not suffer him to retreat from the breach when retreat on his part must have been the signal for general flight, but literally dragged him forcibly again and again to the front, until the enemy, in despair at the pertinacity of resistance encountered, retired discomfited and crestfallen to their trenches.

According to the authority of Russian officers engaged in the siege, the Sháh of Persia's army amounted to forty thousand men, with sixty guns; and among the former was a Russian battalion, which I understand to have been composed of Russian refugees settled in Persia. Not content with eighteen-pounder and twenty-four-pounder siege guns, the fire from which, if properly concentrated and sustained, must have speedily effected a practicable breach, the Persian engineer entrusted with the siege operations established a foundry in the midst of the camp, wherein four monster seventy-pounder guns were cast, from whose fire vast and immediate results were expected. Two of these burst on trial, killing several bystanders; the other two stood the test better, and several days were then occupied in hewing stone balls of the required calibre from the marble supplied by the monuments of a neighbouring burial-place; and it may have been the periodical advent of these unfriendly, though fortunately harmless visitors, which Pottinger likens in his journal to the "three shots a-day which the Spanish

army before Gibraltar fired for some time, and which the garrison called after 'The Trinity.'"

The garrison of Hirát possessed very few pieces of ordnance wherewith to return these boisterous compliments; but, happily for them, it was not until five months had elapsed that Persian self-conceit could bring itself to take council from the Russian officers by erecting regular breaching batteries against particular points of the fortifications. The situation of the defenders then became more critical, and Pottinger's professional abilities were called into constan request.

The walls of Hirát, as then existing, formed a large quadrangle, enclosing a space of nearly one square mile, being about one thousand six hundred yards long by one thousand four hundred broad, each face having about thirty round bastions; those at the four angles surpassing the rest in height and bulk; a deep wet ditch, having a fausse-braye, surrounding the whole. The walls, which were from twenty-five to thirty feet high, stood on an elevated mound of earth, varying from forty to sixty feet above the level of the ground, and were of unburnt brick. There were five gates, each defended by a small outwork. On the north side stood the citadel, overlooking the city and enclosed by lofty defences of a similar character, but in a very dilapidated condition. The defenders of Hirát justly felt more faith in their double fausse-braye than in their

walls, which now began to crumble rapidly under the concentrated fire of the enemy's round shot.

At length, on the 24th of June, the long-threatened assault took place, which was confidently expected to carry all before it. The Persian astrologers, after closely consulting the stars, had predicted a signal triumph for their monarch on that day. The assaulting force was to advance in five divisions, each under its own independent commander. The Russian battalion formed the forlorn hope of one of them; but its leader (General Borowski) was shot down at the very first onset, and, by some accident, the men composing it contrived to get under the fire of the Persian batteries, in addition to the bullets and missiles of the Afgháns, and were obliged to beat a retreat, with a loss of four officers and two hundred and fifty men killed and wounded. Better success for some time seemed in store for another of the storming columns, which actually penetrated the defences, carrying all before it, but being feebly supported from behind, was again and again driven back, though more than once on the very verge of victory, but was as often baffled by the indomitable pluck of Eldred Pottinger, who, when all seemed lost, drove the faint-hearted Yáh Muhammad before him to the rescue, as already related. Russian accounts do not hesitate to give the young English officer full credit for the result, so triumphant to the Afgháns, so humiliating to their

opponents; and one of them adds, "The Sháh was in a violent rage at the failure, and gave orders to encompass the place with a high wall of mud, armed with towers, in order to starve the garrison out."

This desperate struggle was succeeded by a prolonged lull, during which famine and discord seemed but too likely to effect that wherein ordinary appliances of war had failed; when at a most critical juncture, the Sháh took alarm at some open hostilities of the British on the Persian coast, and suddenly withdrew his forces, being careful, however, before his departure, to saw asunder the seventy-pounder guns which were to have accomplished such wonders, each weighing five tons, and which he was unwilling to leave behind as an additional trophy for the now exulting Hirátís.

As Eldred Pottinger, whom history will always celebrate as the "Hero of Hirát," was subsequently my honoured friend and associate in the eventful episode of my own early experiences during the Kábul troubles, I have been unable to resist the temptation, at the risk of repeating what some may deem a threadbare tale, of entering into the above details (partly obtained from original sources) relating to the first great drama wherein he so conspicuously and so honourably figured, and whereupon, in fact, the chief interest of the war was so long concentrated. Should any similar crisis occur, whether in India or elsewhere, let us hope that another such British hero as Eldred

Pottinger may as opportunely start forth into the full blaze of fame, fired by his example, animated by his spirit, and as competent to uphold the glory of his country, and to disconcert the ambitious schemes of its enemies.

It is time I should now return to Lord Auckland and his new project, whereby the future safety of our north-west frontier was to be secured against the designs of Russian and Persian ambition. This consisted originally of a tri-partite treaty, wherein the British Indian Government, Ranjít Singh, the ruler of the Panjáb, and Sháh Shujá, the long-dethroned monarch of Afghánistán, were the principal parties concerned. Thirty years had elapsed since the last-named personage had been driven from his throne to find, after some years of perilous adventure in Kashmír and the Panjáb, a hospitable asylum in British territory; from which he twice issued forth at long intervals to engage in ineffectual efforts to regain his lost dominions. Meanwhile, Dost Muhammad, a younger brother of the murdered Fath Khán, had risen to supreme power through his military ability and irrepressible force of character. Since 1826, he had contrived to hold his own against all antagonists, and had, by his frank urbanity of demeanour, his aptitude for business, manliness, and uniform success in the attainment of his aims, acquired a strong hold on the hearts and minds of the great mass of the Afghán people. Sháh Shujá,

on the contrary, was remembered chiefly for the absence of all those high qualities as a man and a ruler which shone so conspicuously in his rival; nor was his return to power a subject of desire to any save a few self-interested partizans and needy relatives. In spite of these drawbacks, however, it had been determined by the British Indian Government to suit their own policy by dispossessing the one and reinstating the other, without any real deference to the wishes and aspirations of the people most interested in the matter.

Accordingly, in a manifesto dated the 1st October, 1838, this new policy was publicly set forth, whereby our Sikh ally, Ranjít Singh, being "guaranteed in his present possessions, bound himself to co-operate with the British for the restoration of Sháh Shujá to the throne of his ancestors." On the 8th of November following, the news of the retirement of the Persians from Hirát was published by Government, but was not allowed to alter the political programme which had been already determined, further than by causing a diminution of the numerical strength of the British force to be employed, which afforded the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Henry Fane, a pretext for withdrawing from the personal command of the expedition, the policy of which he had never approved, his place being filled by Sir John Keane.

On the 10th December the Bengal force, under Sir Willoughby Cotton, marched from Farozpur, proceed-

ing by the left bank of the river Satlaj to Rohrí, where that river joins the Indus. Sháh Shujá had already started in advance to Shikápur, escorted by Hindústání levies numbering six thousand men, raised and disciplined by British officers for his special service. He was accompanied by Sir William MacNaghten, who had been appointed envoy and minister at his court, and who had been one of the chief promoters of the expedition. Another force, five thousand six hundred strong, moved from Bombay through Sindh to the same point, where an admirable bridge of boats had been prepared by officers of the Bengal Engineers for the passage of the whole over the great river Indus. The entire invading force, when combined, amounted to twenty-one thousand, together with about four times that number of camp followers and upwards of thirty thousand camels. This long miscellaneous array, consisting of cavalry, infantry, artillery, with their attendant *impedimenta* of wheeled carriages and laden animals of every description, filed over the bridge in perfect order, presenting a picturesque and memorable spectacle.

Owing to the undisguised dislike manifested by the Amírs of Sindh to the passage of so many British troops through their country, there seemed every probability of hostilities breaking out in that quarter at the very commencement of the campaign, which must necessarily have delayed the onward progress of the

army towards Afghánistán; but yielding to the force of circumstances, backed by the undeniable arguments of strong battalions eager for the plunder of the rich capital of Haidarábád, they had the good sense to succumb before compromising themselves too far, although they thereby obtained but a brief respite from the hard and inevitable fate in store, and which overtook them about four years later.

It is needless that I should dwell minutely on the military events of a campaign so well known as that which replaced Sháh Shujá on his throne; but it may, nevertheless, be useful to glance, *en passant*, at some of the physical difficulties which the country opposed to the passage of our army. Having safely crossed the Indus, the vast invading host dragged its seemingly interminable length over one hundred and forty-six miles of dreary desert, bordering Biluchistán on the east; and there many hundreds of poor horses, camels, and bullocks perished from weariness and thirst, leaving their skeletons to mark unmistakably to future travellers the track of the invaders.

Then came the formidable Bolán Pass, sixty miles in length, where fortunately no enemy occupied the heights, although stragglers ran considerable risk from stray Bilúchí robbers, ever on the watch behind the rocks for passing prey. Here the animals suffered severely, and perished by hundreds. Emerging from this dismal gorge into the lovely and inviting valley of

Shawl, seemed like passing from purgatory to paradise; but here, owing partly to a scanty harvest and partly to the wanton devastation caused by some of the troops themselves, provisions fell alarmingly short for so great a multitude, and famine prices prevailed. The neighbouring Khán of Kalát was suspected of aggravating these difficulties, and was marked for future punishment.

Pushing on, therefore, with the least possible delay, the Khujak Pass was reached, presenting a long succession of steep and difficult ascents and descents, with some exceedingly narrow gorges where no draught cattle could work with effect. The artillery, including a heavy battering-train, was therefore dragged up and lowered down by the persevering manual labour of the English soldiers, occupying five days. The summit of the pass is seven thousand four hundred and forty-nine feet above the sea. Here, too, much loss was sustained in commissariat baggage-animals, and much valuable property sacrificed in consequence. Fortunately, the Afgháns were too disunited among themselves to offer any organized resistance, and the army reached Kandahár on the 25th April, 1839, without any show of opposition. The Kandahár chiefs had fled for refuge to Persia without striking a blow, and the inhabitants tendered their reluctant homage to the old monarch, who was thus unceremoniously thrust upon them by foreign bayonets.

On the 27th June died Ranjít Singh, the famous old "Lion of the Panjáb," and our ally in the present expedition. On the self-same day Sir John Keane, leaving behind him a strong garrison at Kandahár, and even the siege-train which had been brought so far with such heavy cost and labour, pursued his march to Ghazní, where he encountered his first openly defiant foe in the person of Prince Haidar, a son of Dost Muhammad, who, with a garrison of three thousand five hundred Afgháns, defended the fortress and citadel, which were of formidable strength and susceptible of a prolonged defence. Now was discovered the extraordinary blunder that had been committed in leaving behind the battering-train, without the aid of which the risk of utter failure seemed imminent. At this crisis Major George Thomson, of the Bengal Engineers, came to the rescue with the happy proposal to blow open the only accessible gate with gunpowder. This was successfully accomplished in the partial obscurity of early dawn by a party of sappers, headed by Lieutenant Durand, of the Bengal Engineers, who volunteered for the duty, and who survived the dangerous hazard to attain high rank and distinction among those illustrious soldier-statesmen who have contributed so largely to the maintenance of our national honour in India.*

* He became widely known to fame as Sir Henry Durand, and was Governor of the Panjáb, when an accidental death overtook

The governor, Haidar Khán, was taken prisoner, and such was the panic produced among the troops of Dost Muhammad, who had taken up a position at Arghandí to dispute the British advance to Kábul, that, abandoning for the time all hope of maintaining his sovereignty, he fled with about two thousand faithful adherents towards Bámíán. A select party of British officers, headed by the since illustrious Outram, and escorted by two thousand Afghán horse under command of Hájí Khán Kákar, a notorious turncoat, volunteered to start in pursuit, and, pushing their way by forced marches over stupendous mountain passes, must have overtaken the fugitive Amír, encumbered as he was with his family and baggage, before he could reach the frontier, had not the aforesaid "Hájí" proved himself a traitor, whose real object was to throw every obstacle in the way of their progress and success. Thus Dost Muhammad escaped to Bukhárá, not without the sympathies of many British hearts, until the wheel of fortune should once more give a revolution in his favour.

On the 6th of August, Sháh Shujá, attended by Sir William MacNaghten, and escorted by the British troops, made his triumphal entry into Kábul, and took up his abode in the Bálá Hisár, or Royal Citadel. There, on the 8th of September, he was joined by his

him, in the midst of an useful career that promised to culminate in a still loftier sphere of action.

eldest son, Prince Timúr, who had meanwhile penetrated through the Khaibar Pass from Pesháwar, under the escort of a Sikh contingent furnished by Ranjít Singh, and under the political control of Colonel, afterwards Sir Claude, Wade, encountering but little opposition. And thus was the first act of this wondrous drama of real life brought to a successful termination.

Sir Henry Fane, the experienced general to whom the conduct of the Afghán expedition had been originally offered, had been also among the first to caution Lord Auckland of the dangers and difficulties that would inevitably beset the British troops in that country after the first successful result should have been achieved. Sir William MacNaghten, the British envoy, upon whom the chief political management of affairs was thenceforth to fall, was not long in experiencing the prophetic nature of that counsel. It soon became evident that Sháh Shujá could only be maintained on his throne by the continued presence of a British force. This was, however, reduced to a moiety by the return of nearly the whole Bombay and a portion of the Bengal divisions to India. With the latter went Sir John Keane, soon to be made a peer for the conquest of Ghazní, leaving Sir Willoughby Cotton in chief command of the remaining troops across the Indus, amounting to about ten thousand men, distributed over a wide extent of country, to garrison the chief cities and such other places as required their

protecting presence. Advantage was taken of the return of the Bombay column to punish Mihráb Khán, the unlucky Khán of Kalát, for his so-called refractory conduct, to which allusion has already been made. He now offered an obstinate but ineffectual resistance to the attack on his stronghold, which was taken by assault by General Wiltshire on the 15th October, wherein the brave chief himself was killed. His death must have occasioned some pangs of remorse to Sháh Shujá, whom he had formerly befriended in distress.

The two years which followed the establishment of Sháh Shujá at Kábul were chiefly remarkable for the activity of our political officers, great and small, who were scattered far and wide over the land to assist in carrying out, as far as in them lay, the policy of our Government, which seems to have mainly consisted in consolidating the power of the Sháh, and in extending, as Lord Auckland himself expressed it, "the salutary nfluence of the British name." The most prominent of these political agents, both in ability and influence, were D'Arcy Todd at Hirát; Rawlinson (now Sir Henry) and Leech at Kandahár; Eldred Pottinger in Kohistán; Macgregor (now Sir George) at Jallálábád; Arthur Conolly, on a special mission at Khukand; and Sir Alexander Burnes at Kábul. But besides these was a host of minor stars, each of whom added his quota to the grand work of "consolidation," which was not always synonymous with "pacification," and

very generally ended in carving out some active work for the military in his immediate vicinity.

Foremost of those worthy of honourable mention was D'Arcy Todd, who had succeeded Pottinger as British representative at Hirát, on the departure of the latter to recruit his health after the siege. Of Todd's long series of political encounters with the arch-intriguer Yár Muhammad, whose sole object seemed to be to extort money by working on our political fears and jealousies, I refrain from entering into the unedifying particulars; but that which really formed the distinguishing feature of his mission to Hirát was his successful effort to induce the Khán of Khaiva to set at liberty some four hundred and sixteen unfortunate Russian captives whose detention as slaves in Khaiva had been made a convenient and, it must be admitted, a perfectly just, pretext by Russia for invading that country. This noble triumph of humanity and of sound policy he accomplished by twice deputing a British officer, entirely on his own responsibility, to work on the fears and hopes of the Khaivan chief. The negotiations auspiciously begun by James Abbott were judiciously followed up and brought to a successful issue by Richmond Shakespear, both being at that time subalterns of the Bengal Artillery; and to the latter fell the enviable lot of escorting the whole party of emancipated captives to the Russian frontier at Oranburgh, where they were safely delivered over to

the commandant for restoration to their friends. The Russians, not to be outdone in acts that grace humanity, restored to the Khaivans merchandize valued at two millions sterling, and, more precious than all beside, forty prisoners, among whom were representatives of the wealthiest families in Khaiva. Seldom, if ever, has a negotiation been effected in the East so creditable to all parties concerned; nor since the brightest days of chivalry have the honours of knighthood which rewarded Shakespear been more worthily won. Sir Richmond Shakespear amply fulfilled the promise of his youth, and rose to high political position in India; dying in 1861. But James Abbott is still to the fore, with the rank of general in the army, and during our subsequent struggles with the Sikhs in the Panjáb rendered eminently good service at a critical period and in a manner well deserving of honourable remembrance.

Thus the Afghán campaign, with all its faults and drawbacks, bore some really good fruit, and evidenced in a remarkable manner what a store of excellent raw *matériel* for the manufacture of heroes and statesmen had been previously lying dormant in the Indian army. In this respect, indeed, it may be said to have awakened to new life the latent but laudable ambition of our officers, young and old, and to have transmitted a forward impulse even to the present generation—an impulse which I earnestly hope may never cease to operate

for their own and the public good. Many remarkable episodes, accompanied by gallant deeds and victorious issues, imparted an interest to the first year of our occupation of Afghánistán, and the temporary success of our policy may be said to have reached its culminating point on the defeat of Dost Muhammad at Bámíán, and his subsequent unconditional surrender on the 3rd November, 1840. As an old Bengal artilleryman, I cannot pass by in silence the successful passage of Major Garbett's troop of horse artillery over the stupendous passes of Hindú Khush, at an altitude little below that of Mont Blanc, although the feat (of which we were then so proud) has very recently been creditably rivalled by some British batteries in Lord Napier's glorious Abyssinian expedition.

The year 1841 opened with a smiling prospect of peace and tranquillity, to be soon rudely disturbed by rebellious risings in various directions. The faults of our policy and the real weakness of our position began to grow more and more manifest to friends and foes. Had but Sháh Shujá, our puppet king, proved himself a proper man for the position into which we had thrust him, all might have gone on swimmingly until such time as we could, with a good grace, have left him to the loyal care of his own subjects, with all the *éclat* due to our own success and moderation. But his unpopularity naturally extended to us as his supporters, although our political leaders were wilfully blind to

the fact; and, in the fulness of time, just as a winter of Siberian severity was setting in, the popular volcano suddenly burst forth, and found us unprepared. The result is too well known and too bitterly remembered to need repetition here. It was my own youthful fate to be the first to narrate the dismal tragedy to my countrymen in all its miserable details. I have been since informed, by competent authority, that my humble volume had the unprecedented and perhaps unpardonable effect of depriving the great Duke of Wellington of a whole night's slumber; and severe might have been the penalty for the author (then only a youthful subaltern of artillery) had not his statements, wherein many unwelcome truths were faithfully though perhaps indiscreetly blurted out, been so abundantly confirmed by the concurrent testimony of trustworthy witnesses as to have held their ground in the pages of history down to the present day.

I have often since thought that perhaps too much importance has been attached to the Kábul disaster, viewed in its military aspects. Politically and morally its awful lessons can never be over-rated, and certainly should never be forgotten; but regarded simply as a military discomfiture, it was in fact the result of a *surprise*, somewhat like that whereby the celebrated Gulliver found himself tied and bound during sleep, and at the mercy of the Lilliputians. We English went on slumbering contentedly, as though the

Afgháns, whose country we had so coolly occupied, were our very best friends in the world, and quite content to be our obedient servants to boot, until one cold morning in November we woke up to the unpleasant sounds of bullets in the air, and an infuriated people's voices in revolt, like the great ocean's distant, angry roar, in a rising tempest. The best troops and the ablest generals in the world must ever find themselves placed at a great disadvantage under such circumstances. It should always be remembered that our winter supplies of food, and firewood, and forage, had not yet been laid in; that the few days' supply in store was indifferently guarded, and fell an easy prey to the enemy before we had quite recovered our senses from the first scare of our rude awakening; that thenceforward we had to turn out and fight daily against greatly superior numbers, backed by the strong forts wherewith the Kábul valley was studded, and which latter we had to batter and carry by storm one after the other, in order thereby to obtain the needful supplies for our daily wants; so that, while our position was in a general sense defensive, we were obliged, in point of fact, to act continually on the offensive, which we nevertheless contrived to do with success until such time as we had exhausted the supplies laid up in the forts within our reach. Then, indeed, our position became, for the first time, hopeless; for even soldiers cannot sustain life on cannon balls and leaden

bullets; and so it came to pass that our destiny became eventually dependent on the persuasive powers of our political officers in their attempts to treat with wily and embittered Afghán chiefs.

And this induces me to say that my own historical recollections and experiences have not impressed me with a profound confidence in the efficacy of mere diplomacy, conducted by even the most talented and sagacious of political agents, with Oriental potentates. These latter are far greater proficients than ourselves in that peculiar use of language which consists in successfully "concealing the thoughts;" and I entirely coincide with the view taken of such matters by the honest artillery gunner who was overheard, during one of our Indian campaigns, to say to a comrade, while pointing exultingly to a field battery of big guns drawn by elephants, "I say, Bill! *Them's the Politicals!*" At all events, matters fared very badly with us at Kábul when the arguments of big guns ceased to prevail: and we were soon made to experience the truth long ago enunciated by the old Roman poet:—

> "Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos,
> Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris!"

While, therefore, I freely concede all due honour to the illustrious garrisons of Kandahár and Jallálábád, which, under Nott and Sale, so gallantly held those important posts against all opponents during the revolt, I claim for the defenders of Kábul that fair allowance

should be made for the serious disadvantages under which they struggled from the very first, and beneath which they eventually succumbed, so far at least as to become the unconsenting victims of a hollow treaty formed with the assassin of our envoy—a treaty whose sole object on his part was to lure our garrison outside of its defences into those savage and formidable passes which form the highway from Kábul to Pesháwar, and where treachery, cold, and famine would, they well knew, effectually combine for its destruction.

Still, their triumph was but of brief duration:—a few short months sufficed to place Kábul again in our possession. Sir George Pollock, with his noble army of retribution, amply retrieved past disasters, and happily effected the liberation of those British captives (myself included) who had meanwhile been the unwilling recipients of rough Afghán hospitality—sometimes confined closely to lofty forts, sometimes hurried about from spot to spot on the backs of horses and camels in narrow valleys, as nomadic wanderers amid precipitous mountain-passes; lodging the while in such rude huts as they could construct for themselves from the branches of juniper bushes, or in the mud hovels of the primitive inhabitants; sometimes treated with friendly deference, at others with systematic rudeness; and finally, when General Pollock approached Kábul, forced to fly, escorted by a strong guard of soldiers, over those self-same lofty mountain-passes

leading to Kullum, in Uzbeg Tartary, across which Major Garbett had in happier times, as previously related, dragged his horse-artillery guns. Had we once got into the clutches of the Uzbegs, I opine this chapter would never have been written, but, in a happy moment of inspiration, my old hero Pottinger (for he was of the party) betook to mesmerising our keeper with the prospect of a sufficiency of gold to keep him in comfort for the remainder of his life; and one fine morning, in the valley of Bámián, within sight of those gigantic images cut in the perpendicular rock which excite the wonder of travellers, we found ourselves all at once in the position of free agents. General Pollock, learning how affairs stood, despatched Sir Richmond Shakespear to our aid with six hundred Kazzilbásh horsemen from Kábul; and thus the latter officer enjoyed once more the triumph and *éclat* of taking a conspicuous part in proclaiming "liberty to the captives;" his own countrymen and countrywomen being this time the favoured objects of his zeal.

Kábul reconquered, we might possibly have maintained our military hold upon Afghánistán even to the present day; but our game there had been played out. Sháh Shujá was dead, having been basely murdered by one of his own trusted followers about two months after the British retreat from his capital. There was no longer any object to gain by remaining against the wishes of the people, whilst the drain upon our Indian

finances caused by this war had already swelled the public debt by fifteen millions, and every month's delay threatened but to accelerate our financial ruin. Lord Ellenborough, therefore, wisely determined to evacuate the country, and to restore the exiled Amír Dost Muhammad Khán; an act of retributive justice which we have never had cause to repent; for he proved himself a most able and politic ruler till his death, which took place so late as June 1863.

No one now doubts that our position in Afghánistán was a false one—and fraught with danger in more ways than one. Apprehensive of Russian aggression and intrigue, and counting on the fears and forbearance of our powerful neighbours and rivals, the Sikhs, we had the temerity to march an army past their country into the wild and unknown regions of Afghánistán, and thus to risk our force being cut off from its base of operations, and from its nearest available supports; and although no such catastrophe actually occurred, and temporary success attended the hap-hazard invasion of a friendly country, still we eventually were taught a lesson in the school of adversity which ought assuredly to suffice as a salutary caution in the future.

But matters have meanwhile become very much altered for the better on our north-western frontier. The great Sikh army no longer exists; and British rule extends throughout the Panjáb, even up to the very borders of Afghánistán.

Our north-western frontier is by nature one of the strongest in the world, being protected along its whole length by the great and rapid river Indus, which would, of course, in case of necessity, be strongly guarded at its few assailable points; whilst immediately beyond its banks lie the rugged mountains of Afghánistán, only to be penetrated by a few formidable defiles, which we could occupy on very short notice, and safely bid defiance to all comers. The Sulaimán range runs nearly parallel with the Indus, and its average height is about the same as that of the Pyrenees, the lofty peaks attaining from six thousand to eleven thousand five hundred feet. To these natural defences may be added those vast desert tracts that border our possessions in Sindh crossed by our army in 1838, and of which I have already given some account; and when, in addition to all these obstacles to the progress of an invading army, we take into consideration the immense facilities at our disposal for concentrating troops and munitions of war by river, road, and railway, at any particular point of attack, of which we must necessarily have ample means of ascertaining sufficiently beforehand to afford ample time for preparation, and the strong British reserves which could so readily be poured in by sea from our various colonies, I cannot bring myself to believe that any Russian general would risk his own and his country's reputation in any such Quixotic adventure.

But it may be urged that Russia might possibly count on the near approach of her army being the signal for a general revolt and rising among our own native soldiers and subjects. If so, I firmly believe she would reckon without her host. The character of Russian rule, as popularly described, has not failed to reach the ears of the inhabitants of India, who are generally very shrewd judges of their own worldly interests; and when the question merely turned on a change of European masters, I believe their answer would be somewhat similar to that given by our own Charles II. to his brother James, when the latter remonstrated with the former for heedlessly exposing his life by walking unguarded about the London parks. "Brother," replied the merry monarch, "don't distress yourself! Rest assured that my subjects will never take my life to make you king!" It may suffice to recur to the formidable Sikh invasion of 1845–46, and our subsequent desperate struggles with that nation in 1848–49, which offered such favourable opportunities to our native subjects for revolt, had any such disposition been widely prevalent; yet, even with such tempting opportunities, they remained perfectly quiescent. No stronger proof could be required that, for the mere alternative of a change of masters (and that a change for the worse), an insurrectionary movement, as an aid to invasion, would be a very unwise and unsafe dependence.

Doubtless there are, among the millions who populate India, many unwise and ignorant bigots, both Muhammadan and Hindú, to whom a Christian and foreign rule must be distasteful, and numberless reckless and unruly spirits who sigh for the good old times of anarchy and universal plunder, such as existed when we first took the field to repress the marauding Mahrattas who levied black mail throughout the best part of Hindústán, and aimed at its universal conquest. But, on the whole, I believe that India has never been so wisely, unselfishly, and beneficently governed as since our gracious Queen assumed the supreme sway. Never has there been manifested such an earnest and universal desire to do justice to its people, by improving their general condition, by elevating them in the moral and social scale of being, and so preparing the way for their gradual admission to offices of trust and power.

The storm of the great mutiny of 1857 has effected wonders in clearing the political atmosphere, and in giving an impulse to civilization, with its beneficent train of material blessings, such as the natives are fast learning to appreciate, and which can scarce fail to render them more and more contented with our sway. Well may they pause and reflect whether it is likely that Russia, similarly circumstanced and with her well-known antecedents in an opposite direction, either would or could do as much.

It cannot, however, be denied that the Russian progress in Central Asia since the Crimean war, and especially during the last ten years, has been of a startling and even of an aggressive character, so far as British India is concerned. But the conditions of warfare and the capacity of India to resist an invader have materially altered since Timúr and Bábar obtained their easy triumphs, at the head of rude, undisciplined Tátár hordes. They had no siege guns, with their cumbrous appendages of heavy ordnance-stores, to impede their progress across the long succession of mountain ranges that intervene between Central Asia and the British Indian possessions; and those who venture to predict a successful issue to any modern invading force from that quarter must altogether ignore or undervalue not only the formidable physical difficulties but also the strength and efficiency of our magnificent army in India, which I believe to be more than a match for the best troops that could be brought into the field against us.

To attack a country so situated, with any chance of success, an overwhelming force would be necessary, accompanied by heavy artillery, and with supports and arsenals within moderate distance in its rear. But it has been well said by an able writer in the "Edinburgh Review," when referring to the difficulty of conducting military operations in Afghánistán: "Take a small force, and you are beaten; take a large one, and you

are starved." The stern lesson enforced by the Russians on the great Napoleon at Moscow will scarcely be lost upon themselves. Afghánistán is the great breakwater established by nature against an inundation of northern forces in these times.

Lord Napier's success in surmounting the physical difficulties of Abyssinia furnishes no practical precedent, inasmuch as his march was almost unopposed; but the small bill of nine millions sterling which accrued, notwithstanding this favourable circumstance, ought to operate as a caution to rulers ambitious of invading the north-west frontier of India, by even the easiest route available.

By general consent such a route is most likely to be found in the direction of Merv, and thence by Hirát to Kandahár, and should Russia show unmistakable indications of aggressive intentions in the direction of Persia and Hirát, it may serve as a fresh stimulus for us to strengthen to the utmost that double line of barrier which is so fortunately within our grasp in the Sulaimán range and in the river Indus behind it, and calmly and fearlessly defy the foe, should he really undertake so vast and so perilous an expedition. Happy shall we then be if, in addition to our physical sources of strength, we are reinforced by a third *moral* barrier behind us—the barrier of a loyal and contented people!

At the same time, viewed apart from international rivalries and jealousies, and those vast schemes of un-

scrupulous and restless ambition wherewith Russia is accredited by the world at large, it may be fairly admitted, on the other hand, that the legitimate objects of opening out new sources of commerce, and its attendant civilized advantages, are sufficiently worthy in themselves to enlist our sympathy as the consistent advocates of human progress; and in no region of the earth have those blessings been heretofore more at a discount than in the savage wilds and among the cruel slave-making Khanates of Central Asia.

With these advantages secured, and with the increased protection to life and property which the continued presence of a dominant civilized power cannot fail to realize, it may be confidently expected (and we English should rejoice in the expectation) that the long-dormant, though fertile resources of Bukhárá, Samarkand, Khukand, and neighbouring states, will be rapidly developed, and therewithal open out new fields for enterprise and new triumphs for civilization.

CHAPTER III.

CONDITION OF AFGHANISTAN IN 1841.—FIRST SYMPTOMS OF DISTURBANCE.—EXPEDITION TO THE ZURMAT VALLEY.—ARRIVAL OF MUHAMMAD AKBAR KHAN AT BAMIAN.—FORCE OF THE PASS AT BUTA-I-KHAK.—TREACHERY OF HAMZA KHAN.—PERSONAL DISLIKE OF EUROPEANS EVINCED BY THE AFGHANS.—MARCH OF GENERAL SALE NO GANDAMAK.—INSURRECTION AT KABUL.

When Major-General Elphinstone assumed the command of the troops in Afghánistán in April, 1841, the country enjoyed a state of apparent tranquillity to which it had for many years been a stranger. This remark applies more particularly to those provinces which lie north-east of Ghazní, comprehending Kábul proper, Kohistán, Jallálábád, and the neighbouring districts. The Ghalzí tribes, occupying a large portion of the country between Ghazní and Kandahár, had

never been properly subdued, and the permanent occupation of Kalát-i-Ghalzí by our troops had so alarmed their jealous love of independence, as to cause, during the months of July and August, a partial rising of the tribes, which, however, the valour of our Hindústání troops under Colonel Wymer at Haft-asír, and of the 5th Bengal Cavalry under Colonel Chambers at Mukúr, speedily suppressed. Some of the principal chiefs delivered themselves up as hostages, and quiet was restored. To the west of Kandahár, a notorious freebooter, named Aktar Khán, having collected about seven thousand followers, horse and foot, was signally defeated near Girishk, on the banks of the Hírmand, in the month of July, by a detachment of the Sháh's regular troops under Captain Woodburn, consisting of only one infantry regiment, two horse-artillery guns, under Lieutenant Cooper, besides two regiments of *Janbáz*, or Afghán horse: the latter, however, behaved ill, and can hardly be said to have shared in the glory of the unequal conflict. Captain Griffin, with the Bengal 2nd Native Infantry, was, a few days after, equally successful in an attack on the enemy in the same quarter. Aktar Khán fled to the hills with a few followers, and the land again enjoyed repose. Kohistán, whose wild and turbulent chiefs had sturdily maintained their independence against the late ruler, Dost Muhammad Khán, seemed at last to have settled down into a state of quiet, though unwilling, subjec-

tion to Sháh Shujá. The Nijráo chiefs formed an almost solitary exception to this show of outward submission; and Sir William Macnaghten had strongly urged, at an early period of the year, the expediency of sending a force into that country as soon as practicable. Since our first occupation of Kábul, Nijráo had become a resort for all such restless and discontented characters as had rendered themselves obnoxious to the existing government. The fact of our having permitted them so long to brave us with impunity, had doubtless been regarded by the secret enemies of the new rule as a mark of conscious weakness, and may have encouraged them, in no slight degree, to hatch those treasonable designs against the State which were so suddenly developed in November, 1841, and which were for the time, unhappily, but too successful.

Major Pottinger, having been appointed political agent in Kohistán, arrived from Calcutta in May, 1841, and was one of the first to prognosticate the coming storm. He lost no time in representing to the envoy the insufficiency of our military force in Kohistán, consisting at that time of merely two 6-pounder guns, and the Kohistání regiment raised by Lieutenant Maule, of the Bengal Artillery, which excellent young officer was on the first outbreak of the rebellion cruelly butchered by his own men, or, which is the same thing, with their consent. This regiment was stationed at Chárikár, a post of no strength, and ill

adapted for making a protracted defence, as was afterwards proved. The Major was, however, considered in the light of an alarmist, and he only succeeded in procuring a few Házirbásh horsemen and a 17-pounder gun, with a small detachment of the Sháh's Artillery, and a very scanty supply of ammunition.

About the end of September, Major Pottinger came to Kábul for the purpose of impressing on the Envoy that, unless strong measures of prevention were speedily adopted, he considered a rise in Kohistán as in the highest degree probable. His apprehensions were considered by the Envoy as not altogether unfounded, and he was empowered to retain as hostages the sons of the leading chiefs whose fidelity he suspected. The first interruption to the state of outward tranquillity, which I have described above, occurred early in September. Captain Hay, in command of some Házirbáshes, and Lieutenant Maule, with his Kohistání regiment (which had been relieved at Chárikár by the Gúrkah, or 4th Regiment, Sháh's Subsidized Force, officered from the line, under Captain Codrington), and two 6-pounder guns, had been sent into the Zurmat valley to collect the annual revenue, with orders likewise to make an attempt to seize certain noted plunderers, among whom were some of the murderers of Colonel Herring, who had long infested the road between Ghazní and Kábul. The revenue was in the course of being quietly paid, when Captain Hay was mischievously informed by

Mullá Mumín, collector of revenue in Zurmat (who shortly after distinguished himself as one of our bitterest foes), that the men whom he wished to seize were harboured in a certain neighbouring fort of no strength whatever, and that the inhabitants would doubtless give them up rather than risk a rupture with the Government. Captain Hay immediately proceeded thither, but found the place much stronger than he had been led to expect, and the people obstinately prepared to resist his demands. On approaching the fort he was fired upon; and finding the 6-pounder shot, of which he gave a few rounds in return, made no impression on the mud walls, he had no alternative but to retreat.

The Envoy, on receiving Captain Hay's report, immediately despatched a sufficient force to punish the rebels. It consisted of two hundred of Her Majesty's 44th Infantry, 5th Native Infantry, 6th Regiment Shah's Subsidized Force, four guns of Abbot's battery, two iron 9-pounders Mountain Train, two companies of Sháh's Sappers, and two squadrons of Anderson's Horse. These were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver, and were accompanied by Captain G. H. Macgregor,* the political agent at Gandámak, who happened to be then at Kábul on business. The force commenced its march on the 27th September, and

* Now Major-General Sir George H. Macgregor, K.C.B.

reached the Zurmat valley without the slightest interruption. On the approach of our troops the rebels had fled to the hills in the greatest consternation, leaving their forts at our mercy. The principal strongholds were destroyed with powder, and the force prepared to return to Kábul.

Meanwhile the hydra of rebellion had reared its head in another far more formidable quarter. Early in October three Ghalzí chiefs of note suddenly quitted Kábul, after plundering a rich káfila at Tizín, and took up a strong position in the difficult defile of Khurd-Kábul, about ten miles from the capital, thus blocking up the pass, and cutting off our communication with Hindústán. Intelligence had not very long previously been received that Muhammad Akbar Khán, second son of the ex-ruler Dost Muhammad Khán, had arrived at Bámián from Khulum for the supposed purpose of carrying on intrigues against the Government. It is remarkable that he was nearly connected by marriage with Muhammad Sháh Khán and Dost Muhammad Khán,* also Ghalzís, who almost immediately joined the above-mentioned chiefs. Muhammad Akbar had, since the deposition of his father, never ceased to foster feelings of intense hatred towards the English nation; and, though often urged by the fallen ruler to deliver himself up, had resolutely preferred the life of

* This chief must not be confounded with the ex-ruler of the same name.

a houseless exile to one of mean dependence on the bounty of his enemies. It seems therefore in the highest degree probable that this hostile movement on the part of the Eastern Ghalzís was the result of his influence over them, combined with other causes which will be hereafter mentioned. The march of General Sale's brigade to their winter quarters at Jallálábád, and ultimately to India, had only been deferred until the return of the force from Zurmat, but was now hastened in consequence of this unwelcome news. On the 9th October the 35th Regiment Native Infantry, under Colonel Monteath, C.B., one hundred of the Sháh's Sappers, under Captain G. Broadfoot, a squadron of the 5th Cavalry, under Captain Oldfield, and two guns of Captain Abbot's battery, under Lieutenant Dawes, were sent on in advance to the entrance of the pass at Búta-i-khák, where, on the following night, they were attacked by a large number of rebels, who, taking advantage of the high ground and deep ravines in the neighbourhood of the camp, maintained a sharp fire upon them for several hours, by which thirty-five Sepoys were killed and wounded.

On the morning of the 11th General Sale marched from Kábul with Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry to join the camp at Búta-i-khák, and on the following morning the whole proceeded to force the pass of Khurd-Kábul. Intelligence had been received that the enemy, besides occupying the heights of this truly formidable

defile, which in many places approach to within fifty yards of each other, rising up almost perpendicularly to an elevation of five hundred or six hundred feet, had erected a *sunga,* or stone breastwork, in the narrowest part of the gorge, flanked by a strong tower. The advance guard, consisting of the Sháh's Sappers, a company of Her Majesty's 13th Foot, another of the 35th Native Infantry, and two guns under Lieutenant Dawes, was met about midway through the pass, which is nearly five miles long, by a sharp and continued discharge of jazáils from the strong posts of the enemy. This was returned by our men with precision and effect, notwithstanding the disadvantages of their situation; flanking parties gallantly struggled up the height to dislodge the enemy from thence, while the Sappers rushed on to destroy the above-mentioned breastwork. Through this, however, the stream which flows down the middle of the defile had already forced a passage, and, as the enemy abandoned it, as well as the flanking tower, on the approach of our troops, Lieutenant Dawes passed his guns through the interval at full speed, getting them under the shelter of a rock beyond the sustained and murderous fire of the enemy's jazáilchís, it being impossible to elevate the guns sufficiently to bear upon them. The flankers did their duty nobly, and the fight had lasted for about half an hour, during which the conduct of the Sháh's Sappers, under Captain Broadfoot, was creditable in

the highest degree, when the approach of the main column, under General Sale, who had been already shot through the leg, enabled Captain Seaton* of the 35th Regiment, who commanded the advance guard, to push on. This he did, running the gauntlet to the end of the pass, by which time the enemy, fearful of being taken in rear, abandoned their position and retired towards Khabar-i-Jabár, on the road to Tizín. The 35th Regiment, Sháh's Sappers, Lieutenant Dawes's guns, and a party of Házirbásh under Captain Trevor, encamped at Khurd-Kábul, Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry returning to Búta-i-khák. During their return, parties who still lurked among the rocks fired upon the column, thereby doing some mischief.

In these positions the divided force remained encamped for several days, awaiting the return to Kábul of the troops from Zurmat. During this time several *shab-khúns*, or night attacks, were made on the two camps, that on the 35th Regiment at Khurd-Kábul being peculiarly disastrous from the treachery of the Afghán Horse, who admitted the enemy within their lines, by which our troops were exposed to a fire from the least suspected quarter: many of our gallant Sepoys and Lieutenant Jenkins thus met their death.

On the 20th October General Sale moved with his force to Khurd-Kábul, having been previously joined

* Afterwards known as Major-General Sir T. Seaton, K.C.B.

by the 37th Regiment under Major Griffiths, Captain Abbot's guns, the Mountain Train under Captain Backhouse, one hundred of Anderson's Irregular Horse under Lieutenant Mayne, and the remainder of the Sháh's Sappers and Miners. About the 22nd the whole force there assembled, with Captain Macgregor, political agent, marched to Tizín, encountering much determined opposition on the road.

By this time it was too evident that the whole of the eastern Ghalzís had risen in one common league against us. Their governor, or viceroy, Humza Khán, had in the interval gone forth under pretence of bringing back the chiefs to their allegiance; on his return, however, which took place nearly at the time at which General Sale marched from Khurd-Kábul, the treacherous nature of his proceedings had been discovered, and he was placed by the Sháh in confinement; he had been suspected, indeed, before. General Sale remained at Tizín until the 26th October.

It must be remarked that, for some time previous to these overt acts of rebellion, the always strong and ill-repressed personal dislike of the Afgháns towards Europeans had been manifested in a more than usually open manner in and about Kábul. Officers had been insulted and attempts made to assassinate them. Two Europeans had been murdered, as also several camp followers; but these and other signs of the approaching storm had unfortunately been passed over as mere

ebullitions of private angry feeling. This incredulity and apathy is the more to be lamented, as it was pretty well known that on the occasion of the *shab-khún,* or first night attack on the 35th Native Infantry at Búta-i-khák, a large portion of our assailants consisted of the armed retainers of the different men of consequence in Kábul itself, large parties of whom had been seen proceeding from the city to the scene of action on the evening of the attack, and afterwards returning. Although these men had to pass either through the heart or round the skirts of our camp at Siyáh Sang, it was not deemed expedient even to question them, far less to detain them.

On the 26th October, General Sale started in the direction of Gandámak,—Captain Macgregor, political agent, having, during the halt at Tizín, half frightened, half cajoled, the refractory Ghalzí chiefs into what the sequel proved to have been a most hollow truce; for the term *treaty* can scarcely be applied to any agreement made with men so proverbially treacherous as the whole race of Afgháns have proved themselves to be from our first knowledge of their existence up to the present moment. Of the difficulties experienced by General Sale during his march to Gandámak, and of the necessity which induced him subsequently to push on to Jallálábád, the public are aware. On the day of his departure from Tizín the 37th Native Infantry, three companies of the Sháh's Sappers, under Captain

Walsh, and three guns of the Mountain Train, under Lieutenant Green, retraced their steps towards Kábul, and encamped at Khabar-i-Jabár, to wait as an escort to the sick aud convalescent. The Sappers continued their march back to Kábul unopposed; the rest remained here unmolested until the 1st November, when they broke ground for Khurd-Kábul. Here, in the afternoon of the 2nd, Major Griffiths, who commanded the detachment, received a peremptory order from General Elphinstone to force his way without loss of time to Kábul, where the insurrection had already broken out in all its violence. While striking his camp he was attacked by the mountaineers, who now began to assemble on the neighbouring heights in great numbers, and his march through the pass from Búta-i-khák to Kábul was one continued conflict, nothing saving him from heavy loss but the steadiness and gallantry of his troops, and the excellence of his own dispositions. He arrived in cantonments before daybreak on the morning of the 3rd November.

The two great leaders of the rebellion were Amín-ullah Khán, the chief of Logae, and Abd-ullah Khán, Achakzoe, a chief of great influence, and possessing a large portion of the Pishín valley.

Amín-ullah Khán had hitherto been considered one of the staunchest friends of the existing Government; and such was the confidence placed in him by the Wazír, that he had selected him to take charge of

Humza Khán, the lately superseded governor of the Ghalzís, as a prisoner to Ghazní. This man now distinguished himself as one of our most inveterate enemies. To illustrate the character of his coadjutor, Abd-ullah Khán, it will be sufficient to relate the following anecdote. In order to get rid of his elder brother, who stood between him and the inheritance, he caused him to be seized and buried up to the chin in the earth. A rope was then fastened round his neck, and to the end of it was haltered a wild horse: the animal was then driven round in a circle, until the unhappy victim's head was twisted from his shoulders. This same man is also mentioned in terms of just abhorrence by Captain A. Conolly in his Travels.

But though the two above-named chiefs took a leading part in the rebellion, there can be little doubt that it had its origin in the deep offence given to the Ghalzís by the ill-advised reduction of their annual stipends—a measure which had apparently been forced upon Sir William Macnaghten by the pecuniary necessities of the king. This they considered, and with some show of justice, as a breach of faith on the part of our Government: at all events, that was surely mistaken economy which raised into hostility men whose determined spirit under a sense of wrong the following anecdote may illustrate. When oppressed by Nádir Sháh, the Ghalzí tribes, rather than succumb to the tyrant's will, took refuge in the mountains

amidst the snow, where with their families they fed for months on roots alone: of these they sent a handful to Nádir, with the message, that, so long as such roots could be procured, they would continue to resist his tyranny. Such were many of the men now leagued together by one common feeling of hatred against us.

A passage occurring in a posthumous memorandum by the Envoy, now in Lady Macnaghten's possession, requires insertion here.

"The immediate cause of the outbreak in the capital was a seditious letter addressed by Abd-ullah Khán to several chiefs of influence at Kábul, stating that it was the design of the Envoy to seize and send them all to London! The principal rebels met on the previous night, and, relying on the inflammable feelings of the people of Kábul, they pretended that the king had issued an order to put all infidels to death; having previously forged an order from him for our destruction, by the common process of washing out the contents of a genuine paper, with the exception of the seal, and substituting their own wicked inventions."

Such at least is the generally received version of the story, though persons are not wanting who would rashly pronounce the king guilty of the design imputed to him.

But, however that may be, it is certain that the events which I have already narrated ought to have

been enough to arouse the authorities from their blind security. It ought, however, to be stated that, alarmed by certain symptoms of disaffection in different parts of the country, and conscious of the inadequacy of the means he then possessed to quell any determined and general insurrection, Sir William had, a few months previously, required the presence of several more regiments: he was, however, induced to cancel this wise precautionary measure. But, even had this additional force arrived, it is next to certain that the loss of British honour, subsequently sustained, could only have been deferred for a period. A fearfully severe lesson was necessary to remove the veil from the eyes of those who, drawing their conclusions from their wishes, *would* consider Afghánistán as a settled country. It is but justice to Sir William Macnaghten to say that such recommendations from him as were incompatible with the retrenching system were not received at head-quarters in a way encouraging to him as a public officer.

CHAPTER IV.

POPULAR OUTBREAK IN KABUL.—MURDER OF SIR ALEXANDER BURNES.—UNHAPPY WANT OF PROMPTITUDE IN CHECKING THE REBELLION.—ATTACK ON CAPTAIN LAWRENCE AND LIEUTENANT STURT.—CHARACTER OF GENERAL ELPHINSTONE.—UNMILITARY POSITION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE CANTONMENT AT KABUL.

November 2nd, 1841.—At an early hour this morning the startling intelligence was brought from the city that a popular outbreak had taken place; that the shops were all closed; and that a general attack had been made on the houses of all British officers residing in Kábul. About 8 A.M. a hurried note was received by the Envoy in cantonments from Sir Alexander Burnes,* stating that the minds of the people had been strongly

* The Envoy lived in the cantonment, and Sir A. Burnes in the city.

excited by some mischievous reports, but expressing a hope that he should succeed in quelling the commotion. About 9 A.M., however, a rumour was circulated, which afterwards proved but too well founded, that Sir Alexander had been murdered, and Captain Johnson's treasury plundered. Flames were now seen to issue from that part of the city where they dwelt, and it was too apparent that the endeavour to appease the people by quiet means had failed, and that it would be necessary to have recourse to stronger measures. The report of fire-arms was incessant, and seemed to extend through the town from end to end.

Sir William Macnaghten now called upon General Elphinstone to act. An order was accordingly sent to Brigadier Shelton, then encamped at Siyáh Sang, about a mile and a half distant from cantonments, to march forthwith to the *Bálá Hisár*, or *royal citadel*, where his Majesty Sháh Shujá resided, commanding a large portion of the city, with the following troops, viz., one company of Her Majesty's 44th Foot, a wing of the 54th Regiment Native Infantry under Major Ewart, the 6th Regiment Sháh's Infantry under Captain Hopkins, and four Horse Artillery guns under Captain Nicholl; and on arrival there to act according to his own judgment, after consulting with the king.

The remainder of the troops encamped at Siyáh Sang were at the same time ordered into cantonments; viz., Her Majesty's 44th Foot under Lieutenant-

Colonel Mackerell, two Horse Artillery guns under Lieutenant Waller, and Anderson's Irregular Horse. A messenger was likewise despatched to recall the 37th Native Infantry from Khurd-Kábul without delay. The troops at this time in cantonments were as follows: viz., 5th Regiment Native Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver; a wing of 54th Native Infantry; five 6-pounder field guns, with a detachment of the Sháh's Artillery, under Lieutenant Warburton; the Envoy's body-guard; a troop of Skinner's Horse, and another of local Horse, under Lieutenant Walker; three companies of the Sháh's Sappers, under Captain Walsh; and about twenty men of the Company's Sappers, attached to Captain Paton, Assistant Quarter-master-General.

Widely spread and formidable as this insurrection proved to be afterwards, it was at first a mere insignificant ebullition of discontent on the part of a few desperate and restless men, which military energy and promptitude ought to have crushed in the bud. Its commencement was an attack by certainly not three hundred men on the dwellings of Sir Alexander Burnes and Captain Johnson, paymaster to the Sháh's force; and so little did Sir Alexander himself apprehend serious consequences, that he not only refused, on its fisrt breaking out, to comply with the earnest entreaties of the wazír to accompany him to the Bálá Hisár, but actually forbade his guard to fire on the assailants,

attempting to check what he supposed to be a mere riot by haranguing the attacking party from the gallery of his house. The result was fatal to himself; for, in spite of the devoted gallantry of the Sepoys, who composed his guard and that of the paymaster's office and treasury on the opposite side of the street, who yielded their trust only with their latest breath, the latter were plundered, and his two companions, Lieutenant William Broadfoot, of the Bengal European Regiment, and his brother, Lieutenant Burnes, of the Bombay Army, were massacred, in common with every man, woman, and child found on the premises, by these bloodthirsty miscreants. Lieutenant Broadfoot killed five or six men with his own hand before he was shot down.

No man, surely, in a highly responsible public situation—especially in such a one as that held by the late Sir Alexander Burnes—ought ever to indulge in a state of blind security, or to neglect salutary warnings, however small. It is indisputable that such warnings had been given to him; especially by a respectable Afghán named Táj-Muhammad, on the very previous night, who went in person to Sir A. Burnes to put him on his guard, but retired disgusted by the incredulity with which his assertions were received. It is not for me to comment on his public character. It is the property of the civilized portion of the world; but it is due to another, little known beyond the immediate sphere in which he moved, to say that, had this out-

break been productive of no effects beyond the death of Lieutenant William Broadfoot, it could not be sufficiently deplored: in him was lost to the State not only one of its bravest and most intelligent officers, but a man who for honesty of purpose and soundness of judgment, I may boldly aver, could not be surpassed.

The king, who was in the Bálá Hisár, being somewhat startled by the increasing number of the rioters, although not at the time aware, so far as we can judge, of the assassination of Sir A. Burnes, despatched one of his sons with a number of his immediate Afghán retainers, and that corps of Hindústánís commonly called Campbell's Regiment, with two guns, to restore order: no support, however, was rendered to these by our troops, whose leaders appeared so thunderstruck by the intelligence of the outbreak, as to be incapable of adopting more than the most puerile defensive measures. Even Sir William Macnaghten seemed, from a note received at this time from him by Captain Trevor, to apprehend little danger, as he therein expressed his perfect confidence as to the speedy and complete success of Campbell's Hindústánís in putting an end to the disturbance. Such, however, was not the case; for the enemy, encouraged by our inaction, increased rapidly in spirit and numbers, and drove back the king's guard with great slaughter, the guns being with difficulty saved.

It must be understood that Captain Trevor lived at this time with his family in a strong *búrj*, or tower, situated by the river side, near the Kazilbásh quarter, which, on the west, is wholly distinct from the remainder of the city. Within musket shot, on the opposite side of the river, in the direction of the strong and populous village of Dih Afghán, is a fort of some size, then used as a godown, or storehouse, by the Sháh's commissariat, part of it being occupied by Brigadier Anquetil, commanding the Sháh's force. Close to this fort, divided by a narrow watercourse, was the house of Captain Troup, brigade major of the Sháh's force, perfectly defensible against musketry. Both Brigadier Anquetil and Captain Troup had gone out on horseback early in the morning towards cantonments, and were unable to return; but the above fort and house contained the usual guard of Sepoys; and in a garden close at hand, called the *Yábú-Khána*, or lines of the baggage-cattle, was a small detachment of the Sháh's Sappers and Miners, and a party of Captain Ferris's jazailchís. Captain Trevor's tower was capable of being made good against a much stronger force than the rebels at this present time could have collected, had it been properly garrisoned.

As it was, the Házirbásh, or King's Life-guards, were, under Captain Trevor, congregated round their leader, to protect him and his family; which duty, it will be seen, they well performed under very trying

circumstances. For what took place in this quarter I beg to refer to a communication made to me at my request by Captain Colin Mackenzie, Assistant Political Agent at Pesháwar, who then occupied the godown portion of the fort above mentioned, which will be found hereafter.

I have already stated that Brigadier Shelton was early in the day directed to proceed with part of the Siyáh Sang force to occupy the Bálá Hisár, and, if requisite, to lead his troops against the insurgents. Captain Lawrence, military secretary to the Envoy, was at the same time sent forward to prepare the king for that officer's reception. Taking with him four troopers of the Body-guard, he was galloping along the main road, when, shortly after crossing the river, he was suddenly attacked by an Afghán, who, rushing from behind a wall, made a desperate cut at him with a large two-handed knife. He dexterously avoided the blow by spurring his horse on one side; but, passing onwards, he was fired upon by about fifty men, who, having seen his approach, ran out from the Láhor gate of the city to intercept him. He reached the Bálá Hisár safe, where he found the king apparently in a state of great agitation, he having witnessed the assault from the window of his palace. His Majesty expressed an eager desire to conform to the Envoy's wishes in all respects in this emergency.

Captain Lawrence was still conferring with the king,

when Lieutenant Sturt, our executive engineer, rushed into the palace, stabbed in three places about the face and neck. He had been sent by Brigadier Shelton to make arrangements for the accommodation of the troops, and had reached the gate of the *Díwán Khána*, or hall of audience, when the attempt at his life was made by some one who had concealed himself there for that purpose, and who immediately effected his escape. The wounds were fortunately not dangerous, and Lieutenant Sturt was conveyed back to cantonments in the king's own palanquin, under a strong escort. Soon after this, Brigadier Shelton's force arrived; but the day was suffered to pass without anything being done demonstrative of British energy and power. The murder of our countrymen, and the spoliation of public and private property, was prepetrated with impunity within a mile of our cantonment, and under the very walls of the Bálá Hisár.

Such an exhibition of weakness on our part taught the enemy their strength—confirmed against us those who, however disposed to join in the rebellion, had hitherto kept aloof from prudential motives, and ultimately encouraged the nation to unite as one man for our destruction.

It was, in fact, the crisis of all others calculated to test the qualities of a military commander, to bring forth genius from its lurking place, or to detect the absence of that rarest of nature's gifts. It would be

the height of injustice to a most amiable and gallant officer not to notice the long course of painful and wearing illness, which had materially affected the nerves, and probably even the intellect, of General Elphinstone; cruelly incapacitating him, so far as he was personally concerned, from acting in this sudden emergency with the promptitude and vigour necessary for our preservation. Major-General Elphinstone had some time before represented to Lord Auckland the shattered state of his health, stating plainly and honestly that it had unfitted him to continue in command, and requesting permission to resign. Lord Auckland acceded to his wishes; and the General was on the point of returning to India, thence to embark for England, when the rebellion unhappily broke out. No one, who knew General Elphinstone, could fail to esteem his many excellent qualities both in public and private life. To all under his command, not excepting the youngest subaltern, he was ever accessible, and in the highest degree courteous and considerate: nor did he ever exhibit, either in word or practice, the slightest partiality for officers of his own service over those of the Company. His professional knowledge was extensive; and, before disease had too much impared his frame for active exertion, he had zealously applied himself to improve and stimulate every branch of the service. He had, indeed, but one unhappy fault as a general—the result, probably, of age and infirmity—

and this was a want of confidence in his own judgment, leading him too often to prefer the opinions of others to his own, until, amidst the conflicting views of a multitude of counsellors, he was at a loss which course to take.* Hence much of that indecision, procrastination, and want of method which occasionally paralyzed our efforts, gradually disheartened the troops, and ultimately proved a source of calamity to all concerned. I will nevertheless add, that during the siege no one exposed himself more fearlessly or frequently to the enemy's fire than General Elphinstone: but his gallantry was never doubted. Unhappily, Sir William Macnaghten at first made light of the insurrection, and, by his representations as to the general feeling of the people towards us, not only deluded himself, but misled the General in council. The unwelcome truth was soon forced upon us, that in the whole Afghán nation we could not reckon on a single friend.

But though no active measures of aggression were taken, all necessary preparations were made to secure the cantonment against attack. It fell to my own lot

* Lady Sale writes to the same effect:—"We are now in circumstances which require a man of energy to cope with them. Major Thain is said to be a good adviser, but, unfortunately, it is not always in the multitude of counsellors that there is wisdom; and so many proffered their advice and crossed his, that Thain withdrew his, and only now answers such questions as are put to him." . . . "General Elphinstone vacillates on every point. His own judgment appears to be good, but he is swayed by the last speaker."

to place every available gun in position round the works. Besides the guns already mentioned, we had in the magazine six 9-pounder iron guns, three 24-pounder howitzers, one 12-pounder ditto, and three 5½-inch mortars: but the detail of artillerymen fell very short of what was required to man all these efficiently, consisting of only eighty Panjábís belonging to the Sháh, under Lieutenant Warburton, very insufficiently instructed, and of doubtful fidelity.

To render our position intelligible, it is necessary to describe the cantonment, or fortified lines so called. It is uncertain to whom the blame justly attaches for the faults which I am about to describe, but the credit of having selected a site for the cantonments, or controlled the execution of its works, is not a distinction now likely to be *claimed* exclusively by *any one*. But it must always remain a wonder that any Government, or any officer or set of officers, who had either science or experience in the field, should, in a *half*-conquered country, fix their forces (already inadequate to the services to which they might be called) in so extraordinary and injudicious a military position. Every engineer officer who had been consulted, since the first occupation of Kábul by our troops, had pointed to the Bálá Hisár as the only suitable place for a garrison which was to keep in subjection the city and the surrounding country; but, above all, it was surely the only proper site for the *magazine*,

on which the army's efficiency depended. In defiance, however, of rule and precedent, the position eventually fixed upon for our magazine and cantonment was a piece of low swampy ground, commanded on all sides by hills or forts. It consisted of a low rampart and a narrow ditch in the form of a parallelogram, thrown up along the line of the Kohistán road, one thousand yards long and six hundred broad, with round flanking bastions at each corner, every one of which was commanded by some fort or hill. To one end of this work was attached a space nearly half as large again, and surrounded by a simple wall. This was called the "Mission Compound:" half of it was appropriated for the residence of the Envoy, the other half being crowded with buildings, erected without any attempt at regularity, for the accommodation of the officers and assistants of the mission, and the Envoy's body-guard. This large space required in time of siege to be defended, and thus materially weakened the garrison; while its very existence rendered the whole face of the cantonment, to which it was annexed, nugatory for purposes of defence. Besides these disadvantages, the lines were a great deal too extended, so that the ramparts could not be properly manned without harassing the garrison. On the eastern side, about a quarter of a mile off, flowed the Kábul river in a direction parallel with the Kohistán road. Between the river and cantonments, about

one hundred and fifty yards from the latter, was a wide canal. General Elphinstone, on his arrival in April, 1841, perceived at a glance the utter unfitness of the cantonment for purposes of protracted defence, and when a new fort was about to be built for the magazine on the south side, he liberally offered to purchase for the Government, out of his own funds, a large portion of the land in the vicinity, with the view of removing some very objectionable inclosures and gardens, which offered shelter to our enemy within two hundred yards of our ramparts; but neither was his offer accepted, nor were his representations on the subject attended with any good result. He lost no time, however, in throwing a bridge over the river, in a direct line between the cantonments and the Siyáh Sang camp, and in rendering the bridge over the canal passable for guns; which judicious measure shortened the distance for artillery and infantry by at least two miles, sparing, too, the necessity which existed previously of moving to and fro by the main road, which was commanded by three or four forts as well as from the city walls. Moreover, the Kábul River being liable to sudden rises, and almost always unfordable during the rainy season (March and April), it will easily be understood that the erection of this bridge was a work of much importance. But the most unaccountable oversight of all, and that which may be said to have contributed most largely to our sub-

sequent disasters, was that of having *the commissariat stores detached from cantonmeuts,* in an old fort which, in an outbreak, would be almost indefensible. Captain Skinner, the chief commissariat officer, at the time when this arrangement was made, earnestly solicited from the authorities a place *within* the cantonment for his stores, but received for answer that "no such place could be given him, as they were far too busy in erecting barracks for the men, to think of commissariat stores." The Envoy himself pressed this point very urgently, but without avail. At the south-west angle of cantonments was the bázár village, surrounded by a low wall, and so crowded with mud huts as to form a perfect maze. Nearly opposite, with only the high road between, was the small fort of Muhammad Sharíf, which perfectly commanded our south-west bastion. Attached to this fort was the Sháh Bágh, or king's garden, surrounded by a high wall, and comprising a space of about half a square mile. About two hundred yards higher up the road towards the city, was the commissariat fort, the gate of which stood very nearly opposite the entrance of the Sháh Bágh. There were various other forts at different points of our works, which will be mentioned in the course of events. On the east, at the distance of about a mile, was a range of low hills dividing us from the Siyáh Sang camp; and on the west, about the same distance off, was another somewhat higher range, at the north-east

flank of which, by the road-side, was the village of *Bemárú*, commanding a great part of the Mission Compound. In fact, we were so hemmed in on all sides, that, when the rebellion became general, the troops could not move out a dozen paces from either gate, without being exposed to the fire of some neighbouring hostile fort, garrisoned too by marksmen who seldom missed their aim. The country around us was likewise full of impediments to the movements of artillery and cavalry, being in many places flooded, and everywhere closely intersected by deep water-cuts.

I cannot help adding, in conclusion, that almost all the calamities that befel our ill-starred force may be traced more or less to the defects of our position; and that our cantonment at Kábul. whether we look to its situation or construction, must ever be spoken of as discreditable to the military skill and judgment of those responsible for the faults above described.

[The author's description of the faulty and insecure construction and position of the cantonment was fully verified by the present Major-General Sir Frederic Abbot, when serving as Chief Engineer with General Pollock's army, and after a careful survey of the spot in September, 1842. He thus reports upon it:—

" One glance of the accompanying plan is sufficient to show the extreme faultiness of the position. The

cantonment appears to have been purposely surrounded with difficulties; indeed, a stranger might suppose that many of the mud forts, approaching so closely to the walls, must have been built for the express purpose of besieging it. With this full knowledge of the difficulties of their position, it is a matter of surprise that our military authorities did not throw themselves into the Bálá Hisár, a movement that might have been effected with little loss at any period of the siege, by holding the heights of Siyáh Sang whilst passing the munitions from place to place; and even had carriage been wanting for the commissariat stores, our troops, holding the town of Kábul at their mercy, could have secured provisions to any amount."

No higher corroborative testimony than the above could be wished or expected. It may, however, now be stated, without hesitation, that what have been deemed "military" errors had a "political" origin, and were the natural result of regarding Afghánistán as a settled country, and the British force as a mere police establishment. When employed against an open enemy in the field, military commanders know what is expected of them, and arrange their plans accordingly, but when their every action, involving expenditure, is subject to civil control, so that not even the simplest field-work can be undertaken without a reference to that controlling power, which, in its turn, must perhaps refer the matter to a thrifty Government

some two thousand miles distant, and when they are authoritatively assured that all around them breathes peace and lasting quiet, even the wisest generals may be tempted by a love of ease, or by a distaste for petty interference, to become callous in allowing that which they secretly disapprove; and, being dependent on the civil authorities for information, may be imperceptibly ensnared into a state of fatal security.

And thus it was at Kábul, and to that fruitful source of mischief may be traced those faulty military arrangements whose disastrous tendency was but too truly foreseen and honestly pointed out by Brigadier Roberts and others, while yet there was time to remedy the evil.

When Sir Willoughby Cotton, on his return march from Kábul, met his successor, General Elphinstone, in the Panjáb, he congratulated the latter on having obtained so pleasant a post, where all was in a state of peaceful repose, little dreaming that the paradise of ease and quiet he thus confidently bequeathed was like that of a mine of gunpowder to which the lighted slow-match had already been applied.]

CHAPTER V.

THE 37TH REGIMENT ATTACKED ON ITS RETURN FROM KHURD-KABUL. — MURDER OF LIEUTENANTS MAULE AND WHEELER. — LOSS OF THE COMMISSARIAT FORT. — SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON THE FORT OF MUHAMMAD SHARIF. — ENGAGEMENTS WITH AFGHAN HORSE AND FOOT.—THE ENEMY'S PLAN TO REDUCE THE BRITISH BY STARVATION. — BRIGADIER SHELTON SENT FOR FROM BALA HISAR.

November 3rd.—AT 3 A.M. the alarm was sounded at the eastern gate of cantonments, in consequence of a brisk file-firing in the direction of Siyáh Sang, which turned out to proceed from the 37th Regiment Native Infantry on its return from Khurd-Kábul, having been closely followed up the whole way by a body of about three thousand Ghalzís. The regiment managed, nevertheless, to save all its baggage excepting a few tents, which were left on the ground for want of carriage, and to bring in all the wounded safe.

A more orderly march was never made under such trying circumstances, and it reflects the highest credit on Major Griffiths and all concerned. This regiment was a valuable acquisition to our garrison, being deservedly esteemed one of the best in the service. Three guns of the Mountain Train, under Lieutenant Green, accompanied them, and were of the greatest use in defending the rear on the line of march. In consequence of their arrival, a reinforcement was sent into the Bálá Hisár, consisting of the left wing 54th Native Infantry, with Lieutenant Green's guns, one iron 9-pounder, one 24-pounder howitzer, two $5\frac{1}{2}$-inch mortars, and a supply of magazine stores. They all reached it in safety, though a few shots were fired at the rear-guard from some orchards near the city. Brigadier Shelton was ordered to maintain a sharp fire upon the city from the howitzers and guns, and to endeavour to fire the houses by means of shells and carcasses from the two mortars; should he also find it practicable to send a force into the city, he was to do so.

Early in the afternoon a detachment under Major Swayne, consisting of two companies 5th Native Infantry, one of Her Majesty's 44th, amd two Horse Artillery guns under Lieutenant Waller, proceeded out of the western gate towards the city, to effect, if possible, a junction at the Láhor gate with a part of Brigadier Shelton's force from the Bálá Hisár. They

drove back and defeated a party of the enemy who occupied the road near the Sháh Bágh, but had to encounter a sharp fire from the Kohistán gate of the city, and from the walls of various enclosures, behind which a number of marksmen had concealed themselves, as also from the fort of Mahmúd Khán commanding the road along which they had to pass. Lieutenant Waller and several Sepoys were wounded. Major Swayne, observing the whole line of road towards the Láhor gate strongly occupied by some Afghán horse and jazailchís, and fearing that he would be unable to effect the object in view with so small a force unsupported by cavalry, retired into cantonments. Shortly after this, a large body of the rebels having issued from the fort of Mahmúd Khán, nine hundred yards south-east of cantonments, extended themselves in a line along the bank of the river, displaying a flag; an iron 9-pounder was brought to bear on them from our south-east bastion, and a round or two of shrapnel caused them to seek shelter behind some neighbouring banks, whence, after some desultory firing on both sides, they retired.

Whatever hopes may have been entertained, up to this period, of a speedy termination to the insurrection, they began now to wax fainter every hour, and an order was despatched to the officer commanding at Kandahár to lose no time in sending to our assistance the 16th and 43rd Regiments Native Infantry (which were under

orders for India), together with a troop of Horse Artillery, and half a regiment of Cavalry; an order was likewise sent off to recall General Sale with his brigade from Gandámak. Captain John Conolly, political assistant to the Envoy, went into the Bálá Hisár early this morning, to remain with the king, and to render every assistance in his power to Brigadier Shelton.

On this day Lieutenant Richard Maule, commanding the Kohistání Regiment, which on its return from Zurmat had been stationed at Kaedara in Kohistán, about twenty miles north-west of Kábul, with the object of keeping down disaffection in that quarter, being deserted by his men, was, together with local Lieutenant Wheeler, his adjutant, barbarously murdered by a band of rebels. They defended themselves resolutely for several minutes, but at length fell under the fire of some jazails. Lieutenant Maule had been previously informed of his danger by a friendly native, but chose rather to run the risk of being sacrificed than desert the post assigned him. Thus fell a noble-hearted soldier and a devout Christian.

November 4th.—The enemy having taken strong possession of the *Sháh Bágh*, or King's Garden, and thrown a garrison into the fort of Muhammad Sharíf, nearly opposite the bázár, effectually prevented any communication between the cantonment and commissariat fort, the gate of which latter was commanded

by the gate of the Sháh Bágh on the other side of the road.

Ensign Warren, of the 5th Native Infantry, at this time occupied the commissariat fort with one hundred men, and having reported that he was very hard pressed by the enemy, and in danger of being completely cut off, the General, either forgetful or unaware at the moment of the important fact that upon the possession of this fort we were entirely dependent for provisions, and anxious only to save the lives of men whom he believed to be in imminent peril, hastily gave directions that a party under the command of Captain Swayne, of Her Majesty's 44th Regiment, should proceed immediately to bring off Ensign Warren and his garrison to cantonments, abandoning the fort to the enemy. A few minutes previously an attempt to relieve him had been made by Ensign Gordon, with a company of the 37th Native Infantry and eleven camels laden with ammunition; but the party were driven back, and Ensign Gordon killed. Captain Swayne now accordingly proceeded towards the spot with two companies of Her Majesty's 44th; scarcely had they issued from cantonments ere a sharp and destructive fire was poured upon them from Muhammad Sharíf's fort, which, as they proceeded, was taken up by the marksmen in the Sháh Bágh, under whose deadly aim both officers and men suffered severely; Captains Swayne and Robinson of the 44th being killed, and

Lieutenants Hallahan, Evans, and Fortye wounded, in this disastrous business. It now seemed, to the officer on whom the command had devolved, impracticable to bring off Ensign Warren's party, without risking the annihilation of his own, which had already sustained so rapid and severe a loss in officers; he therefore returned forthwith to cantonments. In the course of the evening, another attempt was made by a party of the 5th Light Cavalry; but they encountered so severe a fire from the neighbouring enclosures as obliged them to return without effecting their desired object, with the loss of eight troopers killed and fourteen badly wounded. Captain Boyd, the Assistant Commissary-General, having meanwhile been made acquainted with the General's intention to give up the fort, hastened to lay before him the disastrous consequences that would ensue from so doing. He stated that the place contained, besides large supplies of wheat and átá, all his stores of rum, medicine, clothing, &c., the value of which might be estimated at four lacs of rúpís; that to abandon such valuable property would not only expose the force to the immediate want of the necessaries of life, but would infallibly inspire the enemy with tenfold courage. He added that we had not above two days' supply of provisions in cantonments, and that neither himself nor Captain Johnson, of the Shah's commissariat, had any prospect of procuring them elsewhere under existing circumstances.

In consequence of this strong representation on the part of Captain Boyd, the General sent immediate orders to Ensign Warren to hold out the fort to the last extremity. (Ensign Warren, it must be remarked, denied having received this note.) Early in the night a letter was received from him to the effect that he believed the enemy were busily engaged in mining one of the towers, and that such was the alarm among the Sepoys that several of them had actually made their escape over the wall to cantonments; that the enemy were making preparations to burn down the gate; and that, considering the temper of his men, he did not expect to be able to hold out many hours longer, unless reinforced without delay. In reply to this he was informed that he would be reinforced by 2 A.M.

At about 9 o'clock P.M. there was an assembly of staff and other officers at the General's house, when the Envoy came in and expressed his serious conviction that, unless Muhammad Sharíf's fort were taken that very night, we should lose the commissariat fort, or at all events be unable to bring out of it provisions for the troops. The disaster of the morning rendered the General extremely unwilling to expose his officers and men to any similar peril; but, on the other hand, it was urged that the darkness of the night would nullify the enemy's fire, who would also most likely be taken unawares, as it was not the custom of the Afgháns to maintain a very strict watch at night. A

man in Captain Johnson's employ was accordingly sent out to reconnoitre the place; he returned in a few minutes with the intelligence that about twenty men were seated outside the fort near the gate, smoking and talking; and from what he overheard of their conversation, he judged the garrison to be very small, and unable to resist a sudden onset. The debate was now resumed, but another hour passed and the General could not make up his mind. A second spy was despatched, whose report tended to corroborate what the first had said. I was then sent to Lieutenant Sturt, the engineer, who was nearly recovered from his wounds, for his opinion. He at first expressed himself in favour of an immediate attack, but, on hearing that some of the enemy were on the watch at the gate, he judged it prudent to defer the assault till an early hour in the morning: this decided the General, though not before several hours had slipped away in fruitless discussion.

Orders were at last given for a detachment to be in readiness at 4 A.M. at the Kohistán gate; and Captain Bellew, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General, volunteered to blow open the gate; another party of Her Majesty's 44th were at the same time to issue by a cut in the south face of the rampart, and march simultaneously towards the commissariat fort, to reinforce the garrison. Morning had, however, well dawned ere the men could be got under arms; and they were on the point of marching off, when it was reported

that Ensign Warren had just arrived in cantonments with his garrison, having evacuated the fort. It seems that the enemy had actually set fire to the gate; and Ensign Warren, seeing no prospect of a reinforcement, and expecting the enemy every moment to rush in, led out his men by a hole which he had prepared in the wall. Being called upon in a public letter from the Assistant Adjutant-General to state his reasons for abandoning his post, he replied that he was ready to do so before a court of inquiry, which he requested might be assembled to investigate his conduct; it was not, however, deemed expedient to comply with his request.

It is beyond a doubt that our feeble and ineffectual defence of this fort, and the valuable booty it yielded, was the first *fatal* blow to our supremacy at Kábul, and at once determined those chiefs—and more particularly the Kazilbáshes—who had hitherto remained neutral, to join in the general combination to drive us from the country.

Captain Trevor, having held out his house against the rebels until all hope of relief was at an end, was safely escorted into cantonments this morning, with his wife and seven children, by his Házirbásh horsemen, who behaved faithfully, but now, out of regard for their families, dispersed to their houses. Captain Mackenzie, likewise, after defending his fort until his ammunition was expended, fought his way into canton-

ments late last night, having received a slight wound on the road. His men had behaved with the utmost bravery, and made several successful sallies. (See his own account.)

November 5th.—It no sooner became generally known that the commissariat fort, upon which we were dependent for supplies, had been abandoned, than one universal feeling of indignation pervaded the garrison; nor can I describe the impatience of the troops, but especially the native portion, to be led out for its recapture—a feeling that was by no means diminished by their seeing the Afgháns crossing and re-crossing the road between the commissariat fort and the gate of the *Shâh Bágh,* laden with the provisions upon which had depended our ability to make a protracted defence. Observing this disposition among the troops, and feeling the importance of checking the triumph of the enemy in its infancy, I strenuously urged the General to send out a party to capture Muhammad Sharíf's fort by blowing open the gate, and volunteered myself to keep the road clear from any sudden advance of cavalry, with two Horse Artillery guns, under cover of whose fire the storming party could advance along the road, protected from the fire of the fort by a low wall, which lined the road the whole way. The General agreed; a storming party from the 5th Native Infantry was ordered; the powder bags were got ready; and at about 12 mid-day we issued from the western gate:

the guns led the way, and were brought into action under the partial cover of some trees, within one hundred yards of the fort. For the space of twenty minutes the artillery continued to work the guns under an excessively sharp fire from the walls of the fort; but the storming party, probably in uncertainty as to an entrance having been secured, had in the meantime remained stationary under cover of the wall by the road side. The General, who was watching proceedings from the gateway, observing that the gun ammunition was running short, and that the troops had from some unknown cause failed to take advantage of the best opportunity for advancing, recalled us into cantonments: thus the enemy enjoyed their triumph undiminished.

November 6th.—It was now determined to take the fort of Muhammad Sharíf by regular breach and assault. At an early hour, three iron 9-pounder guns were brought to bear upon its north-east bastion, and two howitzers upon the contiguous curtain. I took charge of the former, and Lieutenant Warburton of the latter. In the space of about two hours a practicable breach was effected, during which time a hot fire was poured upon the artillerymen from the enemy's sharpshooters, stationed in a couple of high towers which completely commanded the battery, whereby, as the embrasures crumbled away from the constant concussion, it became at length a difficult task to work the guns.

A storming party, composed of three companies, viz. one company of Her Majesty's 44th under Ensign Raban, one company 5th Native Infantry under Lieutenant Deas, one company 37th under Lieutenant Steer, the whole commanded by Major Griffiths, speedily carried the place. Poor Raban was shot through the heart, when conspicuously waving a flag on the summit of the breach.

As this fort adjoined the Sháh Bágh, it was deemed advisable to dislodge the enemy from the latter, if possible. Learning that there was a large opening in the wall in the north side of the garden, and being left to exercise my own discretion, I took a 6-pounder gun thither, and fired several rounds of grape and shrapnell upon parties of the enemy assembled within under the trees, which speedily drove them out; and had a detachment of infantry been ordered to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded to throw themselves into the building at the principal entrance by the road side, the place might have been easily carried permanently, and immediate repossession could have been then taken of the commissariat fort opposite, which had not yet been emptied of half its contents. While this was going on, a reconnoitring party under Major Thain, Aide-de-Camp, consisting of one Horse Artillery gun, one troop 5th Cavalry, and two companies of infantry, scoured the plain to the west of cantonments; and having driven the enemy from several

enclosures, were returning homeward, when large numbers of Afghán horse and foot were observed to proceed from the direction of the city towards the south-west extremity of a hill, which runs in a diagonal direction from north-east to south-west across the plain, to the west of cantonments. A risálah of Anderson's Horse had been stationed on the summit of this hill all the morning as a picket, whence they had just been recalled, when a large body of the enemy's horse reached the base, and proceeded to crown the summit. Major Thain's party, observing this, came to a halt; and a few minutes afterwards a reinforcement opportunely arrived, consisting of one risálah of Irregular Horse under Captain Anderson, one troop of ditto under Lieutenant Walker, and two troops 5th Cavalry under Captains Collyer and Bott. I now considered it my duty to join the Horse Artillery gun, which had no officer with it, and I accordingly left the 6-pounder gun under the protection of Captain Mackenzie, who, with a few of his jazailchís, had now joined me, having been engaged in skirmishing across the plain towards the west end of the Sháh Bágh, where, finding an opening, he had crept in with his men, and cleared that part of the garden, but, not being supported, had been obliged to retire with a loss of fifteen killed out of ninety-five.

I now advanced with the Horse Artillery gun, supported by a troop of the 5th Cavalry, to the foot of

the hill, and opened fire upon the enemy, while the rest of the cavalry, headed by Anderson's Horse, rode briskly up the slope to force them off. The officers gallantly headed their men, and encountered about an equal number of the enemy, who advanced to meet them. A hand-to-hand encounter now took place, which ended in the Afghán Horse retreating to the plain, leaving the hill in our possession. In this affair Captain Anderson personally engaged, and slew the brother-in-law of Abd-ullah Khán. Meanwhile the enemy began to muster strong on the plain to the west of the Sháh Bágh, whence they appeared to be gradually extending themselves towards the cantonments, as if to intercept our return; it was therefore deemed prudent to recall the cavalry from the height, and show front in the plain, where they could act with more effect. A reinforcement of two companies of infantry and one Horse Artillery gun was sent out, and the whole force was drawn up in order of battle, anticipating an attack, with one gun on either flank. In this position a distant fire was kept up by the enemy's jazailchís, which was answered principally by discharges of shrapnell and round shot from the guns; the heights, too, were again crowned by the Afghán horse, but no disposition was manifested by them to encounter us in open fight, and, as the night gradually closed in, they slowly retired to the city. On this occasion about one hundred of the enemy fell on the hill, while the

loss on our side was eight troopers killed and fourteen wounded.

It will be remembered that I left a 6-pounder gun at the opening in the wall of the Sháh Bágh. After my departure, large numbers of the enemy's infantry had filled the west end of the Sháh Bágh, and, stealing up among the trees, and close to the high wall, towards the gun, kept up so hot and precise a fire as to render its removal absolutely necessary. Captain Mackenzie had been joined by a party of Her Majesty's 44th; with whom, and with a few of his own men, he endeavoured to cover the operation, which was extremely difficult, it being necessary to drag the gun by hand over bad ground. Several of the Sháh's gunners were killed, and many of the covering party knocked over, the gun being barely saved. I may here add, that from this time forward the jazailchís, under the able direction of Captain Mackenzie, who volunteered to lead them, were forward to distinguish themselves on all occasions, and continued to the very last a most useful part of our force.

November 8th.—An attempt was made by the enemy to mine one of the towers of the fort we captured on the 6th, which could not have happened had we taken possession of the gate of the Sháh Bágh at the same time. Our chief cause of anxiety now was the empty state of our granary. Even with high bribes and liberal payment, the Envoy could only procure a scanty

supply, insufficient for daily consumption, from the village of Bemárú, about half a mile down the Kohistán road, to the north. The object of the enemy undoubtedly was to starve us out; to effect which, the chiefs exerted their whole influence to prevent our being supplied from any of the neighbouring forts. Their game was a sure one; and so long as they held firmly together, it could not fail to be sooner or later successful. During the short interval of quiet which ensued after our capture of the fort, the rebels managed to rig out a couple of guns which they procured from the work-yard of Lieutenant Warburton (in charge of the Sháh's guns), situated, unfortunately, in the city. These they placed in a position near Mahmúd Khán's fort, opposite the south-east bastion of cantonments. All this time a cannonade was daily kept up on the town by Captain Nicholl of the Horse Artillery in the Bálá Hisár; but, though considerable damage was thereby done, and many of the enemy killed, it required a much more powerful battery than he possessed to ruin a place of such extent. On the morning of the 2nd, when the rebellion commenced, the two guns, which were sent with Campbell's Hindústanís into the city, had been left outside the gate of the Bálá Hisár in the confusion and hurry of retreat, where they had ever since remained. So jealous a watch was kept over these by the enemy from the houses of the Sháh Bázár, that it was found impossible to get

them back into the fort; and it was necessary for our troops to maintain an equally strict watch to prevent their being removed by the enemy, who made several desperate efforts to obtain them. An attempt of this kind took place to-day, when the rebels were driven back into the city with considerable loss.

November 9th.—The General's weak state of health rendering the presence of a coadjutor absolutely necessary, to relieve him from the command of the garrison, Brigadier Shelton, the second in command, was, at the earnest request of the Envoy, summoned in from the Bálá Hisár, in the hope that, by heartily co-operating with the Envoy and General, he would strengthen their hands and rouse the sinking confidence of the troops. He entered cantonments this morning, bringing with him one Horse Artillery gun, one Mountain Train ditto, one company of Her Majesty's 44th, the Shah's 6th Infantry, and a small supply of átá.

[The following memorandum of Brigadier Shelton's services, extracted from the "Naval and Military Gazette" of the following year, bears strong evidence of his previous experience in war, and gallantry in the field:—

"General Shelton entered the Army in November, 1805. In 1808, he was present at the battles of Roleiça and Vimiera. In 1809, in the retreat to Corunna and in the expedition to Walcheren. In 1810, at the battle of Busaco. In 1811-12, at the sieges of Badajos. In

1812, at the battle of Salamanca, the taking of Madrid, and in the retreat from Burgos. In 1813, at the battle of Vittoria, and at the siege of San Sebastian, where he lost his right arm. In 1814, in operations before Bayonne. In Canada (Lake Ontario). In 1824, employed in the operations and capture of Arracan. In 1841, he marched with a brigade to Afghánistán, and in February was despatched to the Nazian Valley, and undertook military operations there, after which he marched to Kábul. Except three months' leave on account of his wound, he served during the whole of the Peninsular war; and, as he was a Captain in 1812, he had more than *Subaltern* experience in that war! At the end of the war he went to Sandhurst, and obtained the usual certificate. He has been twenty years in India."]

CHAPTER VI.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN BRIGADIER SHELTON AND SIR WILLIAM MACNAGHTEN.—ANNOYANCE FROM THE FIRE OF THE ENEMY OUT OF SEVERAL FORTS.—STORMING OF THE RIKA-BASHI FORT, UNDER BRIGADIER SHELTON.—PERILOUS SITUATION AND BRAVERY OF LIEUTENANT BIRD.—FURTHER ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ENEMY.—SUPERIORITY OF THE AFGHANS IN THE USE OF FIRE-ARMS.

November 10*th*.—HENCEFORWARD Brigadier Shelton bore a conspicuous part in the drama upon the issue of which so much depended. He had, however, from the very first, seemed to despair of the force being able to hold out the winter at Kábul, and strenuously advocated an immediate retreat to Jállálábád.

Sir William Macnaghten and his suite were altogether opposed to Brigadier Shelton in this matter, it

being in his (the Envoy's) estimation a duty we owed the Government to retain our post, at whatsoever risk. This difference of opinion, on a question of such vital importance, was attended with unhappy results, inasmuch as it deprived the General, in his hour of need, of the strength which unanimity imparts, and produced an uncommunicative and disheartening reserve in an emergency which demanded the freest interchange of counsel and ideas.

[Acting on the principle "*audi alteram partem,*" I here insert the arguments used by one of Brigadier Shelton's ablest apologists :—

"We are told that he from the first advocated an immediate retreat to Jallálábád, and that Sir William Macnaghten and his suite were altogether opposed to Brigadier Shelton in this matter. We find General Shelton never altering this opinion, but at last Lieutenant Sturt, upon 20th December, and Major Pottinger, 26th December, advocating it, the chief military authorities having also adopted it. The Envoy had, however, opposed it—and Lieutenant Eyre condemns it. But the Duke of Wellington is reported to have said in the House of Lords: '*After the first few days,* particularly after the negotiations at Kábul had commenced, it became hopeless for him (General Elphinstone) to maintain his position: it became evident that sooner or later a movement, which might possibly fail, to march the troops from Kábul, must be

undertaken, and that an attempt must be made to move them to a place of safety.' Hear, also, what that gallant soldier, Sir Robert Sale, says, who had a few days previously left Kábul, and evidently knew that such a move ought to have been made on Jallálábád, for in page 17 of the Blue Book, he writes from that place, so early as the 15th November, '*Under these circumstances, a regard for the honour and interest of our Government compels me to adhere to my plan, already formed, of putting this place into a state of defence, and holding it, if possible, until the Kábul force falls back upon me.*' The natural conclusion of the above is, that had General Shelton been in command, he would, regardless of the opinion of the Envoy, have retreated at an early period on Jallálábád, and there is every reason to believe that he would have saved the greater part of the force.

"The facts appear to be these—Brigadier Shelton was ordered into the cantonment by his superior officer, Major-General Elphinstone, when the difficulties, dangers, and deranged discipline of the force under that officer's command appear to have already attained a power beyond the energies of his failing health to contend with; but the Major-General did not resign his command nor quit the cantonment; and, although the Brigadier's advice may have been asked, and even taken, yet no responsibility could have justly attached to that advice, even though it were bad and unsound,

so long as his superior officer continued in the command. The great fault attending the fearful crisis appears to have been (what in moments of hazard and danger is almost always the case) too many advisers; and it is a surprise to me that the step was not taken of removing all the non-effectives to the Bálá Hisár. At the head of these was Sir W. Macnaghten. Why was His Excellency in the military cantonment instead of being at the Darbár of Sháh Shujá-ul-Mulk, at which he was the representative of Her Majesty? Had the sick General, the Envoy, and all the women and children, been removed, as so many embarrassments to a place already exposed to the constant attacks of a vigorous enemy, discipline might have been restored to the British forces; but was the Brigadier in a situation to adopt this energetic step? or, had he suggested it, is there any reason to believe that it would have been obeyed?

"Some say the Brigadier ought to have assumed the command. If the Envoy thought so, he might have interfered. The assuming command must be at the risk of an officer's commission, if he fails! The defect in the General, Lieutenant Eyre points out; before Brigadier Shelton was consulted all our supplies were gone—the enemy were on the 9th November too strong to be attacked and the cantonment defended at the same time. Let people recollect *Buenos Ayres*, in 1807, and a crowded city; Kábul having, also, flat-roofed houses—fancy three thousand men even (Whitelocke had

a much larger force), entering a city, with twenty thousand to thirty thousand men, armed to the teeth—guns could not fire on those on the tops of houses—the streets might be clear, but even at Ghazní it was so—but the house-tops were crowded with men—*we* took *them* by surprise. We had enriched the people, and the chiefs, become rich, could pay numerous followers; the feeling against us was too strong to be changed after eight days of rebellion; and soldiers become dispirited when they find the prospect of starvation, and no means of averting their destruction. The delay of Sir John Moore's retreat, and through a dreadful winter,—because political expediency advised a march on Madrid,—in the horrors of which General Shelton shared, and the terrible retreat from Moscow, must have been in his recollection; and he therefore wished to retreat before the snow should fall, and before the last day's provisions were served out."]

But I am digressing.—About 9 A.M. on the 10th the enemy crowned the heights to the west in great force, and almost simultaneously a large body of horse and foot, supposed to be Ghalzís, who had just arrived, made their appearance on the Siyáh Sang hills to the east, and, after firing a feu-de-joie, set up a loud shout, which was answered in a similar way by those on the opposite side of us. This was supposed to be a preconcerted signal for a joint attack on the cantonments. No movement was, however, made on the western side to

molest us, but on the eastern quarter parties of the enemy, moving down into the plain, took possession of all the forts in that direction. One of these, called the Riká-báshí fort, was situated directly opposite the Mission Compound, at the north-east angle of cantonments, within musket-shot of our works, into which the enemy soon began to pour a very annoying fire; a party of sharp-shooters at the same time, concealing themselves among the ruins of a house immediately opposite the north-east bastion, took deadly aim at the European artillerymen who were working the guns, one poor fellow being shot through the temple in the act of sponging. From two howitzers and a 5½-inch mortar, a discharge of shells into the fort was kept up for two hours.

At this time not above two days' supply of provisions remained in garrison, and it was very clear that, unless the enemy were quickly driven out from their new possession, we should soon be completely hemmed in on all sides. At the Envoy's urgent desire, he taking the entire responsibility on himself, the General ordered a force to hold themselves in readiness, under Brigadier Shelton, to storm the Riká-báshí fort. About 12 A.M. the following troops assembled at the eastern gate:—two Horse Artillery guns, one Mountain Train gun, Walker's Horse, Her Majesty's 44th Foot under Colonel Mackerell, 37th Native Infantry under Major Griffiths, 6th Regiment of Sháh's Force under Captain

Hopkins. The whole issued from cantonments, a storming party consisting of two companies from each regiment taking the lead, preceded by Captain Bellew, who hurried forward to blow open the gate. Missing the gate, however, he blew open a wicket of such small dimensions as to render it impossible for more than two or three men to enter abreast, and these in a stooping posture. This, it will be seen, was one cause of discomfiture in the first instance; for the hearts of the men failed them when they saw their foremost comrades struck down, endeavouring to force an entrance under such disadvantageous circumstances, without being able to help them. The signal, however, was given for the storming party, headed by Colonel Mackerell. On nearing the wicket, the detachment encountered an excessively sharp fire from the walls, and the small passage, through which they endeavoured to rush in, merely served to expose the bravest to almost certain death from the hot fire of the defenders. Colonel Mackerell, however, and Lieutenant Bird of Sháh's 6th Infantry, accompanied by a handful of Europeans and a few Sepoys, forced their way in; Captain Westmacott of the 37th being shot down outside, and Captain M'Crae sabred in the entrance. The garrison, supposing that these few gallant men were backed by the whole attacking party, fled in consternation out of the gate, which was on the opposite side of the fort, and which ought to have been the point assailed. Un-

fortunately, at this instant a number of the Afghán cavalry charged suddenly round the corner of the fort next the wicket: the cry of "Cavalry!" was raised; a bugler sounded the retreat, and it became for the time a scene of *sauve qui peut*. The officers, knowing the fearful predicament of their commander, exhorted their men to charge forward; but a private of the 44th, named Steward, who was afterwards promoted for his gallantry, alone obeyed the call. At this critical juncture Brigadier Shelton's acknowledged courage redeemed the day; for, exposing his own person to a hot fire, he stood firm amidst the crowd of fugitives, and by his exhortations and example at last rallied them; advancing again to the attack, again our men faltered, notwithstanding that the fire of the great guns from the cantonments, and that of Captain Mackenzie's jazailchís from the north-east angle of the Mission Compound, together with a demonstration on the part of our cavalry, had greatly abated the ardour of the Afghán horse. A third time did the Brigadier bring on his men to the assault, which now proved successful. We became masters of the fort.* But what, in the meantime, had been

* The following remarks of the "Naval and Military Gazette" are worthy of consideration:—

"We would here observe, with respect to the panic amongst the troops at the Riká-báshí fort, although not immediately connected with our subject, that, whilst it is the especial office of discipline to correct the tendency to such disasters, instances of the sort may be adduced, even in the ranks of the bravest of the brave. Napier tells us, 'that no age, no nation, ever sent forth braver

passing inside the fort, where, it will be remembered, several of our brave brethren had been shut up, as it were, in the lion's den?

On the first retreat of our men, Lieutenant Bird, with Colonel Mackerell and several Europeans, had hastily shut the gate by which the garrison had for the most part evacuated the place, securing the chain with a bayonet; the repulse outside, however, encouraged the enemy to return in great numbers, and, it being impossible to remain near the gate on account of the hot fire poured in through the crevices, our few heroes speedily had the mortification to see their foes not only re-entering the wicket, but, having drawn the bayonet, rush in with loud shouts through the now re-opened gate. Poor Mackerell, having fallen, was literally hacked to pieces, although still alive at the termination of the contest. Lieutenant Bird, with two Sepoys, retreated into a stable, the door of which they closed; all the rest of the men, endeavouring to escape through the wicket, were met

troops to battle than those who stormed Badajos.' Yet, the same eminent writer relates, that, during the raging of that storm, 'some of the soldiers, perceiving a lighted match on the ground, cried out, "A mine!" At that word, such is the power of imagination, those troops whom neither the strong barrier, nor deep ditch, nor the high walls, nor the deadly fire of the enemy, could stop, staggered back, appalled by a chimera of their own raising; and, in this disorder, a French reserve drove on them with a firm and rapid charge, and pitching some men over the walls, and killing others outright again cleared the ramparts, even to the St. Vincent.'"

and slaughtered. Bird's place of concealment at first, in the confusion, escaped the observation of the temporarily triumphant Afgháns; at last it was discovered, and an attack commenced at the door. This, being barricaded with logs of wood, and whatever else the tenants of the stable could find, resisted their efforts, while Bird and his now solitary companion, a Sepoy of the 37th Native Infantry (the other having been struck down), maintained as hot a fire as they could, each shot taking deadly effect from the proximity of the party engaged. The fall of their companions deterred the mass of the assailants from a simultaneous rush, which must have succeeded; and thus that truly chivalrous young officer stood at bay with his equally brave comrade for upwards of a quarter of an hour, when, having only five cartridges left, in spite of having rifled the pouch of the dead man, they were rescued as related above. Our troops literally found the pair "grim and lonely there," upwards of thirty of the enemy having fallen by their unassisted prowess.*

Our loss on this occasion was not less than two hundred killed and wounded. Four neighbouring forts were immediately evacuated by the enemy, and occupied by our troops: they were found to contain about one thousand four hundred maunds of grain; in removing

* Lieutenant Bird's promising career was tragically closed on the subsequent retreat, when almost within sight of Jallálábád.

which no time was lost, but as it was not found practicable to bring off more than half before night-fall Captain Boyd, the Assistant Commissary-General, requested Brigadier Shelton that a guard might be thrown into a small fort, where it must be left for the night; this was, however, refused, and on the following morning, as might have been expected, the grain was all gone: permanent possession was, however, taken of the Riká-báshí and Zulfikár forts, the towers of the remainder being blown up on the following day.

Numbers of Ghalzí horse and foot still maintaining their position on the Siyáh Sang heights, Brigadier Shelton moved his force towards that quarter. On reaching the base of the hill, fire was opened from the two Horse Artillery guns, which, with the firm front presented by our troops, caused the enemy shortly to retire towards the city, and ere we turned homeward not a man remained in sight.

November 13th.—The enemy appeared in great force on the western heights, where, having posted two guns, they fired into cantonments with considerable precision. At the earnest entreaty of the Envoy, it was determined that a party, under Brigadier Shelton, should sally forth to attack them, and, if possible, capture their guns.

[Lady Sale observes:—

"It was with great difficulty the Envoy persuaded the General and Brigadier to consent to a force going out; and it was late before the troops were ready." . .

"The General again (as in the late attack on the Riká-báshí fort) asked the Envoy if he would take the responsibility of sending out the troops on himself; and, on his conceding, the force was sent. The Envoy had also much angry discussion on this point with Brigadier Shelton.

"But all these delays of conference lost much time, and it was between 4 and 5 P.M. before operations commenced."]

The force ordered for this serivce was not ready until 3 P.M. It consisted of the following troops:—two squadrons 5th Light Cavalry, under Colonel Chambers; one squadron Sháh's 2nd Irregular Horse, under Lieutenant Le Geyt; one troop of Skinner's Horse, under Lieutenant Walker; the Body Guard; six companies Her Majesty's 44th, under Major Scott; six companies 37th, under Major Swayne; four companies Sháh's 6th Infantry, under Captain Hopkins; and one Horse Artillery gun and one Mountain Train do. under myself, escorted by a company of 6th Sháh's under Captain Marshall. After quitting cantonments, the troops took the direction of a gorge between the two hills bounding the plain, distant about a mile (the enemy's horse crowning that to the left), and advanced in separate columns at so brisk a pace, that it seemed a race which should arrive first at the scene of action. The infantry had actually reached the foot of the hill, and were on the point of ascending to the charge, ere the Horse

Artillery gun, which had been detained in the rear by sticking fast in a canal, could be got ready for action; nor had more than one round of grape been fired, ere the advance, led on by the gallant Major Thain, had closed upon the foe, who resolutely stood their ground on the summit of the ridge, and unflinchingly received the discharge of our musketry, which, strange to say, even at the short range of ten or twelve yards, seemed to do little execution! From this cause the enemy, growing bolder every moment, advanced close up to the bayonets of our infantry, upou whom they pressed so perseveringly, as to succeed in driving them backwards to the foot of the hill, wounding Major Thain on the left shoulder and sabring several of the men. Several rounds of grape and shrapnell were now poured in, and threw them into some confusion, whereupon a timely charge of our cavalry, Anderson's Horse taking the lead, drove them again up the hill, when our infantry once more advancing carried the height, the enemy retreating along the ridge, closely followed by our troops, and abandoning their guns to us. The Horse Artillery gun now took up a position in the middle of the gorge, whence it played with effect on a large body of horse assembled on the plain west of the hill, who forthwith retreated to a distance.

[Lady Sale, eye-witness to this scene, writes thus:—

"The Afghán cavalry charged furiously down the hill upon our troops in close column. The 37th Native

Infantry were leading, the 44th in the centre, and the Sháh's 6th in the rear. No square or balls were formed to receive them. All was a regular confusion; *my very heart felt as if it leapt to my teeth when I saw the Afgháns ride clean through them.* The onset was fearful. They looked like a cluster of bees; but we beat them, and drove them up again.

"The 5th Cavalry and Anderson's Horse charged them up the hill again, and drove them along the ridge. Lieutenant Eyre quickly got the Horse Artillery gun into the gorge, between the Bemárú hills and that to the left (the gorge leading to the plain towards the lake). From this position, he soon cleared that plain, which was covered with horsemen."]

Our troops had now got into ground where it was impracticable for Horse Artillery to follow. I accordingly pushed forward with one artilleryman and a supply of drag-ropes and spikes, to look out for the deserted guns of the enemy; one of these, a 4-pounder, was easily removed along the ridge by a party of the Sháh's 8th Infantry; but the other, a 6-pounder, was awkwardly situated in a ravine half-way down the side of the hill, our troops, with the Mountain Train 3-pounder, being drawn up along the ridge just above it. The evening was now fast closing in, and a large body of Afghán infantry occupied some enclosures on the plain below, whence they kept up so hot a fire upon the gun, as to render its removal by no means an easy

task; but the Envoy having sent us a message of entreaty that no exertions might be spared to complete the triumph of the day by bringing off *both* the enemy's guns, and the further detention of the troops being attended with risk, as the enemy, though driven from the hill, still maintained a threatening attitude below, I descended with the Horse Artillery gunner, and, having driven in a spike, returned to assist in making sure of the captured 4-pounder. This, from the steepness of the hill, and the numerous water-cuts which everywhere intersected the plain, proved a somewhat troublesome business. Lieutenant Macartney, however, with a company of the Sháh's 6th Infantry, urged on his men with zeal, and we at last had the satisfaction to deposit our prize safe within the cantonment gates. Meanwhile the enemy, favoured by the darkness, pressed hard upon our returning troops, and by dint of incessant firing and shouting rendered their homeward march somewhat disorderly, effecting, however, but little damage.

It was no small disadvantage under which we laboured, that no temporary success of our troops over those of the enemy could be followed up, nor even possession be retained of the ground gained by us at the point of the bayonet, owing to the necessity of withdrawing our men into their quarters at night. On reaching the cantonment, we found the garrison in a state of considerable alarm, and a continual blaze of

musketry illuminating the whole line of rampart. This had arisen from a demonstration of attack having been made by the enemy on the south-west bastion, which had been immediately checked by a few rounds of grape from the guns, and by a well-directed fire from the jazailchís under Captain Mackenzie; but it was long ere quiet could be restored, the men continuing to discharge their pieces at they knew not what.

Our infantry soldiers, both European and Native, might have taken a salutary lesson from the Afgháns in the use of their fire-arms; the latter, as a general rule, taking steady deliberate aim, and seldom throwing away a single shot; whereas our men seemed to fire entirely at random, without any aim at all; hence the impunity with which the Afghán horsemen braved the discharge of our musketry in this day's action within twelve yards, not one shot, to all appearance, taking effect.

[Lady Sale remarks as follows:—

"There is also a peculiarity in the Afghán mode of fighting—that of every horseman carrying a foot-soldier behind him to the scene of action, where he is dropped, without the fatigue of walking to his post. The horsemen have two or three match-locks or jazails each, slung at their backs, and are very expert in firing at the gallop. These jazails carry much further than our muskets."]

In this affair Captain Paton, Assistant Quartermaster-

General, had the misfortune to receive a wound in the left arm, which rendered amputation necessary, and the valuable services of one of our most efficient staff officers were thus lost. This was the last success our arms were destined to experience. Henceforward it becomes my weary task to relate a catalogue of misfortunes and difficulties, which, following close upon each other, disheartened our officers and soldiers, and finally sunk us all into irretrievable ruin, as though Heaven itself, for its own inscrutable purposes, had doomed our downfall. But here it is fit I should relate the scenes that had all this while been enacting at our solitary outpost in Kohistán.

CHAPTER VII.

EVENTS IN KOHISTAN, AS RELATED BY MAJOR POTTINGER. — TREACHERY OF THE NIJRAO CHIEFS. — MURDER OF LIEUTENANT RATTRAY. — GALLANTRY OF LIEUTENANT HAUGHTON. — ATTACK BY THE ENEMY ON THE CHARIKAR CANTONMENT. — MAJOR POTTINGER WOUNDED. — DEATH OF CAPTAIN CODRINGTON. — DEPLORABLE SCARCITY OF WATER.—DISAPPEARANCE OF DR. GRANT. — RETREAT TOWARDS KABUL. — PERILS OF MAJOR POTTINGER AND LIEUTENANT HAUGHTON. — THEY ESCAPE TO CANTONMENT.

On the 15th November, Major Pottinger, C.B., and Lieutenant Haughton, Adjutant of the Sháh's 4th or Gúrkah Regiment, came in from Chárikár, both severely wounded, the former in the leg, and the latter having had his right hand amputated, besides several cuts in the neck and left arm. Their escape was wonderful.

The following is an outline of what had taken place

in Kohistán, from the commencement of the insurrection up to the present date.

It appears, from Major Pottinger's account of the transactions of that period, that it was not without reason he had so urgently applied to Sir William Macnaghten for reinforcements. Towards the end of October, premonitory signs of the coming tempest had become so unequivocally threatening as to confirm Major Pottinger in his worst suspicions, and in his conviction that order could not possibly be restored without a departure on the part of Government from the long-suffering system which had been obstinately pursued with respect to Nijráo in particular; but his conviction alone could do little to stem the torrent of coming events.

About this time Mír Masjídí, a contumacious rebel against the Sháh's authority, who had been expelled from Kohistán during General Sale's campaign in that country in 1840, and who had taken refuge in Nijráo after the fashion of many other men of similar stamp, obstinately refusing to make his submission to the Sháh even upon the most favourable terms, openly put himself at the head of a powerful and well-organized party, with the avowed intention of expelling the Firingís and overturning the existing government. He was speedily joined by the most influential of the Nijráo chiefs. A few of these made their appearance before Laghmání, where Major Pottinger resided, and proffered their ser-

vices towards the maintenance of the public tranquillity. It will be seen that their object was the blackest treachery.

I shall here relate Major Pottinger's story, almost in his own words, as given to me.

In the course of the forenoon of the 3rd of November, Major Pottinger had an interview with a number of the more influential chiefs in his house or fort, and, about noon, went into the garden to receive those of inferior rank, accompanied by his visitors: here they were joined by Lieutenant Charles Rattray, Major Pottinger's Assistant. In discussing the question of the rewards to which their services might entitle them, the head men declared that, although *they* were willing to agree to Major Pottinger's propositions, they could not answer for their clansmen, and the above-mentioned petty chiefs, who were awaiting the expected conference at some little distance. Mr. Rattray, accordingly, in company with several of the principal, joined the latter, and, shortly after, proceeded with them to an adjoining field, where numbers of their armed retainers were assembled, for the purpose of ascertaining their sentiments on the subject of the conference. While thus engaged, this most promising and brave young officer apparently became aware of intended foul play, and turned to leave the field, when he was immediately shot down. At this time Major Pottinger was still sitting in his garden, in company with several

of the above-mentioned chiefs, and had just received intelligence of the purposed treachery from Muhammad Kásim Khán, a díbáshí of Házirbásh, a small detachment of which composed a part of his escort: he had with difficulty comprehended the man's meaning, which was conveyed by hints, when the sound of firing was heard:—the chiefs that were with him rose and fled, and he escaped into the fort by the postern gate; which having secured, he, from the terre-plein of the rampart, saw poor Mr. Rattray lying badly wounded in the field at the distance of some three hundred yards, and the late pretended negotiators making off in all directions with the plunder of the camp of the Házirbásh detachment. Of these plunderers a party passing close to Mr. Rattray, and observing that life was not extinct, one of them put his gun close to his head, and blew his brains out,—several others discharging their pieces into different parts of his body.

Major Pottinger's guard, being by this time on the alert, opened a fire, which speedily cleared the open space; but the enemy, seeking shelter in the numerous watercourses, and under the low walls surrounding the fort, harassed them incessantly until the appearance of Lieutenant Haughton, Adjutant of the Gúrkah Regiment, who, advancing from Chárikár, where the corps was cantoned, distant about three miles, speedily drove the assailants from their cover. Captain Codrington, who commanded the regiment, chanced to be in Lagh-

mání at this very time; and, on Mr. Haughton's approach, he led out a sortie and joined him: the skirmish was sharp, and the enemy suffered severely, Captain Codrington remaining in possession of an adjacent canal, the bank of which was immediately cut to supply the tank of the fort with water in case of accidents.

The evening had now closed in, and the enemy had retired, taking up a position which seemed to threaten the Chárikár road. Captain Codrington accordingly left Laghmání in haste, strengthening Major Pottinger's party to about one hundred men, these having to garrison four small forts. He promised, however, to relieve them the next morning, and to send a further supply of ammunition, of which there only remained one thousand five hundred rounds. Captain Codrington reached Chárikár unmolested; and the enemy, returning to their former point of attack, carried off their dead with impunity, the garrison being too weak to make a sally. On the morning of the 4th, Captain Codrington despatched four companies with a 6-pounder gun, according to promise. Their march caused numbers of the enemy now assembled on all sides to retreat; but one large body remained in position on the skirts of the mountain range to their right, and threatened their flank. Lieutenant Haughton, who commanded, detached Ensign Salusbury with a company to disperse them, which, in spite of the disparity of numbers, was effected in good style. Unhappily the

Gúrkahs, being young soldiers, and flushed with success, pressed forward in pursuit with too much eagerness, regardless of the recalling bugle, when at last Mr. Salusbury with difficulty halted them, and endeavoured to retrace his steps. The enemy, observing the error they had committed in separating themselves too far from their main body, rallied and followed them in their retreat so closely, as to oblige Mr. Salusbury to halt his little band frequently, and face about. Lieutenant Haughton, consequently, in order to extricate the compromised company, halted his convoy, and despatched the greatest part of his men in the direction of the skirmish. All this encouraged the other parties of the enemy who had retired to return, against whom, in numbers not less than four thousand men, Haughton maintained his ground until rejoined by his subaltern, when, seeing the hopelessness of making good his way to Laghmání, he retreated, and regained in safety the fortified barracks at Chárikár. Many of the men fell in this expedition, which would have proved infinitely more disastrous, from the number of the enemy's cavalry, who latterly seemed to gain confidence at every stage, but for the extraordinary gallantry and conduct of Lieutenant Haughton, who, with a handful of men and a gun, protected the rear of our over-matched troops. Mr. Salusbury was mortally wounded, and the trail of the gun gave way just as the party reached Chárikár.

This disappointment led Major Pottinger to believe that no second attempt would be made to relieve them; and as he had no ammunition beyond the supply in the men's pouches, he determined to retreat on Chárikár after dark: the better to hide his intention, he ordered grain to be brought into the fort. Meantime the Chárikár cantonment was attacked on all sides, and in the afternoon large bodies of the enemy were detached thence, and joining others from that part of the valley, recommenced their investment of Laghmání. That part of the Major's garrison, which occupied the small fort to the east of the principal one, defended by himself, although their orders were not to vacate their posts until after dark, being panic-stricken, did so at once, gaining the stronger position, but leaving behind several wounded comrades and their havildár, who remained staunch to his duty: these, however, were brought off. Major Pottinger then strengthened the garrison of a cluster of adjacent huts, which, being surrounded by a sort of rude fortification, formed a tolerably good outwork; but the want of European officers to control the men was soon lamentably apparent, and in a short time the Gúrkahs, headed by their native officer, abandoned the hamlet, followed as a matter of course by the few Afghán soldiers attached to Captain Codrington's person, who had remained faithful until then. This last misfortune gave the enemy cover up to the very gate of the main stronghold, and before

dark they had succeeded in getting possession of a gun-shed built against its outer wall, whence they commenced mining.

As soon as night had fairly closed in, Major Pottinger drew together the Gúrkah garrison outside the postern gate, under pretence of making a sortie, and thus separated them from the Afgháns and their followers, who remained inside; he then marched for Chárikár, the garrison of the remaining fort joining him as he drew on; he passed by the investing posts in perfect silence, taking his route along the skirts of the mountains to avoid the main road, and arrived in safety at Chárikár. In Laghmání he abandoned the hostages whom he had taken from the Kohistán chiefs, two boxes of treasure containing two thousand rupees, about sixty stand of jazails, all his office records, Mr. Rattray's, Dr. Grant's, and his own personal property, and a number of horses belonging to himself, and the above-mentioned two officers, and to some horsemen who had not deserted; for the greater part of his mounted escort had fled in the beginning of the affray. The Hirátís, and seven or eight Pesháwarís, were the only Afgháns who adhered to him; the Kábulís had deserted to a man immediately on the murder of Mr. Rattray; they had been much disgusted the preceding month, as well as their comrades who proved unfaithful too, by the sudden reduction of a portion of his escort; which naturally led them to apprehend that their

livelihood from the British service was of a precarious nature.

On the morning of 5th November large bodies of the enemy closed in round the Chárikár barracks, and about 7 o'clock they attacked the outposts with a spirit engendered by the success of the preceding evening. Captain Codrington requested Major Pottinger to take charge of what artillery he had, and to move a squadron in support of the skirmishers, which he did. The skirmishers were driven in, and, while retreating, Major Pottinger was wounded in the leg by a musket-shot. Encouraged by this, and by the unfinished state of the works round the barracks, in the entrance of which there was no gate, the enemy advanced with great determination to the attack, and dislodged the Gúrkahs from some mud huts outside, which were still occupied by a part of the regiment. In this affair Captain Codrington, an officer of whose merits it is difficult to speak too highly, fell mortally wounded. The main post was, however, successfully defended, and the enemy driven back with considerable loss; upon which Lieutenant Haughton (who had now succeeded to the command, the only remaining officer being Mr. Rose, a mere youth), made a sortie and drove the enemy out of the gardens occupied by them in the morning, maintaining his ground against their most desperate efforts until after dark. Relief was then sent to the garrison (consisting of about fifty men) of Khoja Mír's fort,

which it had been found expedient to occupy previously, because it commanded the interior of the barracks on the southern side.

From this time the unfortunate horses and cattle of the garrison were obliged to endure the extremity of thirst, there being *no* water for *them*, and the supply for even the fighting-men scanty in the extreme, obtained only from a few pools in the ditch of the rampart, which had been formed by a seasonable fall of rain. During the 6th the enemy renewed their attack in augmented numbers, the whole population of the country apparently swarming to the scene of action. Notwithstanding two successful sorties, all the outposts were driven in by dark, and thenceforth the garrison was confined to the barrack itself.

On the 7th the enemy got possession of Khoja Mír's fort: the regimental múnshí had been gained over, and through him the native officer was induced to surrender. From the towers of that fort, on the 8th, the enemy offered terms, on the condition that all the infidels should embrace Muhammadanism. Major Pottinger replied that they had come to aid a Muhammadan sovereign in the recovery of his rights; that they consequently were within the pale of Islám, and exempt from coercion on the score of religion. The enemy rejoined, that the king himself had ordered them to attack the Káfirs, and wished to know if Major Pottinger would yield on receiving an order. He refused to

do so, except on the production of a written document. All this time the garrison was sorely galled from the post of vantage in possession of the enemy.

On the 9th, the enemy were enabled by the carelessness of the guard to blow up a part of the south-west tower of the barracks; but, before they could profit by the breach and the panic of the men, Mr. Haughton rallied the fugitives, and, leading them back, secured the top of the parapet wall with a barricade of boards and sand-bags.

On the 10th, the officers drew their last pool of water, and served out *half a wineglass* to each fighting-man.

On the 11th, all could not share even in that miserable proportion, and their sufferings from thirst were dreadful. During the night a sortie was made, and some of the followers brought in a little water from a distant place, the sight of which only served to aggravate the distress of the majority; still, however, the fortitude of these brave and hardy soldiers remained unshaken, although apathy, the result of intense suffering, especially among Hindús, began to benumb their faculties.

On the 12th, after dark, Mr. Haughton ordered out a party to cover the water-carriers in an attempt to obtain a supply; but the over-harassed Sepoys, unable to restrain themselves, dashed out of the ranks on approaching the coveted element, instead of standing to their arms to repel the enemy, and, consequently, the expedition failed in its object. Another sortie, consist-

ing of two companies under Ensign Rose, was then ordered out, one of which, having separated from the other, dispersed in search of water; that under Mr. Rose himself fell on a post of the besiegers, every man of which they bayoneted; but, being unaccountably struck with a panic, the men fled back to the barracks, leaving Mr. Rose almost alone, who was then obliged to return, having accomplished his object but partially. These circumstances were communicated by Mr. Haughton to Major Pottinger (whose wound had disabled him from active bodily co-operation in these last events), together with the startling intelligence that the corps was almost wholly disorganized from the large amount of killed and wounded, the hardships it had undergone, the utter inefficiency of the native officers, who had no sort of control over the soldiers, the exhaustion of the men from constant duty, and the total want of water and provisions.

Relief from Kábul, for which Major Pottinger had written repeatedly, seemed now hopeless, and an attempt at protracted defence of the post appeared likely to ensure the destruction of its brave defenders. Major Pottinger considered that the only remaining chance of saving any portion of the regiment was a retreat to Kábul; and, although that was abundantly perilous, he entertained a hope that a few of the most active men who were not encumbered with wives and children might escape. Then was felt most bitterly the impolicy

of the encouragement which had been held out to all the recruits to bring their families with them, on what, even at the time of their being raised, was looked on by the most able officers as likely to prove a campaign of several years. Mr. Haughton coincided in the Major's views, and it was agreed, to ensure secrecy, that the men should not be informed of their intentions until paraded for the march.

This wretched state of things continued until the afternoon of the 13th, when Mr. Haughton discovered amongst the Panjábí artillerymen two who had deserted a few days previously, and who apparently had returned for the purpose of seducing their comrades. He immediately seized them; but, while he was in the act of their apprehension, the jemadár of the artillery, himself a Panjábí Mussulmán, snatched a sword from a bystander, and cut down that officer, repeating his blows as he lay on the ground. Before the astonished Gúrkahs could draw their knives or handle their muskets, this miscreant, followed by all the artillerymen and the greater number of the Muhammadans in the barracks, rushed out of the gate and escaped. The tumult and confusion occasioned by this impressed Major Pottinger with the idea that the enemy had driven the men from the walls; under this impression he caused himself to be carried to the main gate, but on his arrival he found that Dr. Grant had secured that point, and rallied the men. The

native officers immediately gathered round him, with many of the Sepoys, to assert their fidelity; but demoralization had evidently progressed fearfully, as may be judged from the fact that the garrison had plundered the treasure and the quarters of the deceased Captain Codrington the instant the Major had left them, and that in the face of the enemy's fire they had pulled down the officers' boxes, which had been piled up as traverses to protect the doorway, broken them open, and pillaged them. Dr. Grant then amputated Mr. Haughton's right hand, and hastily dressed the severe wounds which he had received on his left arm and on his neck. In the evening the doctor spiked all the guns with his own hands, and the garrison then left the barracks by the postern gate. The advance was led by Major Pottinger (Mr. Haughton, who accompanied him, being unable to do more than sit passively on his horse), Dr. Grant brought out the main body, and Ensign Rose, with the Quartermaster Sergeant, commanded the rear.

Notwithstanding the previous sufferings of these unfortunate men, it may be said that here commenced their real disasters. In vain did Major Pottinger attempt to lead his men to seize a building generally occupied by the enemy after night-fall, by the possession of which the exit of the main body from the barracks might be covered. In fact, it was with much difficulty that he eventually succeeded in halt-

ing them at about half a mile from the barracks until the main body and rear should close up. The men were naturally occupied entirely with their families, and such property as it had been impossible to prevent their bringing away; and discipline, the only source of hope under such circumstances, was at an end.

After the junction of the main body and rear, Dr. Grant suddenly disappeared, and was not afterwards seen.

The regiment then proceeded along the road to Sinjit Dara, where Major Pottinger knew that water could be procured. On reaching the first stream the last remnant of control over this disorderly mob was lost; much delay took place, and, in moving on, the advance became suddenly separated from the main body. After an anxious search Major Pottinger effected a rejunction.

At Sinjit Dara they quitted the road, to avoid alarming the villages and any outposts that might be stationed there; and much time was lost in regaining the track from the other side; at Istálif the same manœuvre was practised. Major Pottinger now found very few inclined to push on; exhaustion from the pain of his wound precluded the possibility of his being of any further use as a leader; and he determined to push on with Mr. Haughton towards Kábul, although with faint hope that the strength of either would prove adequate to the exertion. Having no guide, they got

into many difficulties; and day was breaking by the time they reached the range of mountains half way between Chárikár and Kábul. Men and horses were by this time incapable of further endurance: the latter, it must be remembered, had been ten days without water previously to starting, and five days without food; they were still upwards of twenty miles from any place of safety; their sufferings from their wounds, fatigue, hunger, and thirst, made life a burden, and at this time despair had almost obtained a victory—but God sustained them. By Mr. Haughton's advice they sought shelter in a very deep but dry ravine, close to a small village, hoping that their proximity to danger might prove a source of safety; as it was probable that the inhabitants, who by this time must have been on the alert, would scarcely think of looking for their prey close to their own doors. The companions of Major Pottinger and Mr. Haughton were a Sepoy of the regiment, a múnshí, and the regimental *baniah*. In the forenoon they were alarmed by a firing on the mountains above them; the cause of this, as it appeared afterwards, was that a few of the fugitive Gúrkahs had ascended the hills for safety (which, indeed, it was Major Pottinger's wish to do, until he yielded to the arguments of his companion), whither they were pursued and massacred by the country people. The rest of the day passed in tranquillity; and again, under the friendly shroud of

darkness, having previously calculated their exact position, did this sorely-bestead little party resume their dangerous route. It was providential that Major Pottinger had, from his habits as a traveller through unknown and difficult regions, accustomed himself to ascertain and remember the bearings of the most conspicuous landmarks of the countries he traversed, it was therefore comparatively easy for him to lead the way over the steep and rugged peaks, by which alone they might hope to find a safe path,—for the main road, and even the more accessible tracks across the tops of the mountains, were closely beset, and watch-fires gleamed in all directions. Indeed Ghulám-Muyan ud-dír, a distinguished partizan in the service of the rebels, had been despatched from Kábul, with a number of his most active followers, purposely to intercept and seize the Major, of whose flight intelligence had been early received, and actually was at that time patrolling those very heights over which the fugitives passed. But the protecting hand of Providence was displayed not only in leading them unharmed through the midst of their enemies, but in supplying them with mental fortitude and bodily strength. Weak and exhausted, their hardy and usually sure-footed Turkmán horses could scarcely strain up the almost impracticable side of the mountain, or preserve their equilibrium in the sharp, sudden descents which they encountered, for path there was none. On one occasion Mr

Haughton, whose desperate wounds I have already described, fell off, and, being unable to rise, declared his determination of awaiting his fate where he lay. The Major refused to desert him, and both slept for about one hour, when, nature being a little restored, they pushed on until they descended into the plain of Alifát, which they crossed, avoiding the fort of that name, and struggling up the remaining ridge that separated them from the plain of Kábul, they entered it by the southern end of the Kábul lake. Intending now to cross the cultivation, and to reach cantonments by the back of the Sháh's garden, Major Pottinger missed his road close to Qila-i-buland, and found himself within the enemy's sentries; but being unwilling to alarm them by retracing his steps, after discovering his mistake, he led the way towards Dih Afghán. Here they were challenged by various outposts, to whom they answered after the fashion of Afghán horsemen; but they were compelled, in order to avoid suspicion, actually to enter the city of Kábul, their only hope now being in the slumberous security of the inhabitants at that hour (it being now about 3 A.M.), and in the protection of their Afghán dress and equipments. The Gúrkah sepoy, who, strange to say, had kept up with them *on foot*, had his outward man concealed by a large *posthin*, or sheep-skin cloak. They pursued their way through the lanes and bázár of the city, without any interruption, except the occasional

gruff challenge of a sleepy watchman, until they gained the skirts of the city. There they were like to have been stopped by a picket which lay between them and the cantonment. The disposition to a relaxation of vigilance as the morning approaches, which marks the Afghán soldier, again befriended them; they had nearly passed the post before they were pursued. Desperation enabled them to urge their wearied horses into a pace, which barely gave them the advantage over their enemies who were on foot; and they escaped with a volley from the now aroused picket, the little Gúrkah freshening his way in the most surprising manner, considering his previous journey. A few hundred yards further brought them within the ramparts of our cantonment, where they were received by their brethren in arms as men risen from the dead.

[The gallant Haughton still survives, as a Major-General and "Companion of the Star of India," in the Bengal Staff Corps, having filled with great credit several important posts.

Major Eldred Pottinger, C.B., the hero of Hirát, having been compelled by failing health to seek a change of climate, was attacked by malignant fever at Hong-kong, where he died, aged 32, on the 13th November 1843, the anniversary of his retreat from

Chárikár. A monument was erected to his memory, in the cathedral of Bombay, by public subscription, "in token of the admiration and respect in which his character as a soldier and his conduct as a man are held by his friends in the Presidency."]

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTEMPLATED WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CANTONMENT AT KABUL, AND REMOVAL TO THE BALA HISAR.—THIS MOVEMENT OPPOSED BY BRIGADIER SHELTON.—DISAPPOINTED EXPECTATION OF RECEIVING AID FROM GENERAL SALE. — MAHMUD KHAN'S FORT STRANGELY ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE POSSESSION OF THE ENEMY.—LETTER FROM THE ENVOY TO THE GENERAL. — UNPROFITABLE OPERATIONS AT THE VILLAGE OF BEMARU.—ARRIVAL OF MUHAMMAD AKBAR KHAN AT KABUL.

November 16*th*.—THE impression made on the enemy by the action of the 13th was so far salutary, that they did not venture to annoy us again for several days. Advantage was taken of this respite to throw magazine supplies from time to time into the Bálá Hisár, a duty which was ably performed by Lieutenant Walker, with a risálah of Irregular Horse under cover of night. But even in this short interval of comparative rest, such was the wretched construction of

the cantonment, that the mere ordinary routine of garrison duty, and the necessity of closely manning our long line of rampart both by day and night, was a severe trial to the health and patience of the troops; especially now that the winter began to show symptoms of unusual severity. There seemed, indeed, every probability of an early fall of snow, to which all looked forward with dread, as the harbinger of fresh difficulties and of augmented suffering.

These considerations, and the manifest superiority of the Bálá Hisár as a military position, led to the early discussion of the expediency of abandoning the cantonment and consolidating our forces in the above-mentioned stronghold. The Envoy himself was, from the first, greatly in favour of this move, until over-ruled by the many objections urged against it by the military authorities; to which, as will be seen by a letter from him presently quoted, he learnt by degrees to attach some weight himself; but to the very last it was a measure that had many advocates, and I venture to state my own firm belief that, had we at this time moved into the Bálá Hisár, Kábul might have been still in our possession. The chief objections urged were, 1st, the difficulty of conveying our sick and wounded; 2ndly, the want of fire-wood; 3rdly, the want of forage for the cavalry; 4thly, the triumph that our abandonment of cantonments would afford the enemy; 5thly, the risk of defeat on the way thither.

On the other hand it was advanced, 1st, that, though to carry the sick would be *difficult*, it still was not *impossible*; for so short a distance two, or even three, men could be conveyed on each dúlí; some might manage to walk, and the rest could be mounted on the yábús and camels, on top of their loads; 2ndly, although wood was scarce in the Bálá Hisár, there was enough for purposes of cooking, and for the want of fires the troops would be amply compensated by the comparative ease and comfort they would enjoy in other respects; 3rdly, the horses must, in the case of there being no forage, have been shot; but the want of cavalry would have been little felt in such a situation; 4thly, as we should have destroyed all that was valuable before leaving, the supposed triumph of the enemy would have been very short-lived, and would soon have given way to a feeling of disappointment at the valueless nature of their acquisition, and of dismay at the strength and security of our new position; 5thly, the distance did not exceed two miles, and one-half of that distance was protected by the guns of the Bálá Hisár. If we had occupied the Siyáh Sang hills with a strong party, placing guns there to sweep the plain on the cantonment side, the enemy could have done little to impede our march, without risking a battle with our whole force in a fair field, to which they were generally averse, but which would, perhaps, have been the *best* mode for *us* of deciding the struggle.

To remove so large a force, clogged with so many thousands of camp followers, without loss of some kind, was, of course, next to impossible; but ought such considerations to have interfered with a step which would have been attended in the long run with such great military and political advantages? Our troops, once collected in the Bálá Hisár, could have been spared for offensive operations against the city and the neighbouring forts, by which means plenty of food and forage would in all probability have been readily procured, while the commanding nature of the position would have caused the enemy to despair of driving us out, and a large party would probably have been ere long formed in our favour. Such were the chief arguments employed on either side; but Brigadier Shelton having firmly set his face against the movement from the first moment of its proposition, all serious idea of it was gradually abandoned, though it continued to the very last a subject of common discussion.

November 18*th*.—Accounts were this day received from Jallálábád, that General Sale, having sallied from the town, had repulsed the enemy with considerable loss. At the beginning of the insurrection, General Sale's brigade was at Gandámak; and I have already mentioned, that an order recalling it to Kábul was immediately despatched by the Envoy. General Sale, on receipt of it, summoned a council of war, by

which it was unanimously agreed to be impracticable to obey the order. The circumstances of his march to Jallálábád are already well known to the public. The hope of his return had tended much to support our spirits; our disappointment was therefore great to learn that all expectation of aid from that quarter was at an end. Our eyes were now turned towards the Kandahár force as our last resource, though an advance from that quarter seemed scarcely practicable so late in the year.

Much discussion took place this evening regarding the expediency of taking Mahmúd Khán's fort. There were many reasons to urge in favour of making the attempt. It was one of the chief resorts of the rebels during the day, and they had established a battery of two guns under the walls, from which they constantly fired upon our foraging parties, and upon the south-east bastion of cantonments. It was about nine hundred yards distant from our rampart, which was too far for breaching with the 9-pounders, but a dry canal, which ran towards it in a zigzag direction, afforded facilities for a regular approach within three hundred yards, of which advantage might have been taken to enable the artillery to make a breach. Secondly, this fort commanded the road all the way up to the Bálá Hisár and the possession of it would at once have secured to us an easy communication with that place, and with the city. Thirdly, the Envoy declared his opinion that the moral effect

derived from its possession would be more likely to create a diversion in our favour, than any other blow we could strike, as the Afgháns had always attached great importance to its occupation and had a superstitious opinion that whatever party held possession of it were sure to be masters of Kábul. These considerations had decided the General in favour of making the attempt this very night, by blowing open the gate, and a storming party was actually warned for the duty; but some sudden objections being raised, the plan was given up, and never afterwards resumed by the military. It was, however, the cause of no small astonishment to the officers in the Bálá Hisár, who, from their commanding situation, could observe all that took place on both sides, that Mahmúd Khán's fort should have been suffered to remain in the hands of the enemy, though at night it was often garrisoned by a mere handful of men. This fort, nevertheless, gave abundant occupation to the artillery, who, when nothing else was going on, were frequently employed in disturbing the enemy in that quarter with one of the iron 9-pounders, and an occasional shelling from the mortar.

November 19*th*.—A letter was this day received by the General from the Envoy to the following effect :—"That, all hope of assistance from Jallálábád being over, it behoved us to take our future proceedings into consideration. He himself conceived it our imperative

duty to hold on as long as possible in our present position, and he thought we might even struggle through the whole winter by making the Mahomedans and Christians live chiefly upon flesh, supposing our supplies of grain to fail; by which means, as the essentials of wood and water were abundant, he considered our position might be rendered impregnable. A retreat towards Jallálábád would teem not only with disaster, but dishonour, and ought not to be contemplated until the very last extremity. In eight or ten days we should be better able to judge whether such extremity should be resorted to. In that case, we should have to sacrifice not only the valuable property of Government, but his majesty Sháh Shujá, to support whose authority we were employed by Government; and even were we to make good our retreat to Jallálábád, we should have no shelter for our troops, and our camp followers would all be sacrificed. He had frequently thought of negotiating, but there was no party of sufficient power and influence to protect us. Another alternative would to be throw ourselves into the Bálá Hisár; but he feared that would be also a disastrous retreat, to effect which much property must be necessarily sacrificed. Our heavy guns might be turned against us, and food and fuel might be scarce, for a further supply of which we might be dependent on sorties into the city, in which, if beaten, we must of course be ruined. On the whole, he was decidedly

of opinion that we should hold out; it was still possible that reinforcements might arrive from Kandahár, or something might turn up in our favour; there were hopes, too, that on the setting in of winter the enemy would disperse. He had been long disposed to recommend a blow being struck to retrieve our fortunes such as taking Mahmúd Khán's fort; but he had since reason to believe this would not answer. In eight or ten days, he concluded, it would remain for the military authorities to determine whether there was any chance of improving our position, and to decide whether it would be more prudent to attempt a retreat to Jallálábád, or to the Bálá Hisár. If provision sufficient for the winter could be procured, on no account would he leave the cantonment."

November 22nd.—The village of Bemárú (or "*husbandless,*" from a beautiful virgin who was buried there) was situated about half a mile to the north of cantonments, on the Kohistán road, at the north-east extremity of a hill which bounded the plain to the west. As it was built on a slope, and within musket-shot, the upper houses commanded a large portion of the Mission Compound. From this village we for a long time drew supplies, the Envoy largely bribing the proprietor, to which, however, the enemy in some measure put a stop, by taking possession of it every day. This morning, large bodies of Afghán horse and foot, having again issued from the city, proceeded to

crown the summit of the above-mentioned hill. It was determined, at the recommendation of the Envoy, to send a party of our troops to forestall the enemy in the occupation of the village, and Major Swayne, 5th Native Infantry, was appointed to that duty, with a detachment composed as follows:—a Wing 5th Native Infantry, two risálas Irregular Horse, one risála 5th Light Cavalry, and one Mountain Train gun. The party had already reached the village, when it was deemed proper to send after it a Horse Artillery gun, which I was requested by the General to accompany. Major Swayne, however, it would seem, found the village already occupied by a body of Kohistánís, and the entrance blocked up in such a manner that he considered it out of his power to force a passage. On arriving at the place with the Horse Artillery gun, I found him in an orchard on the road-side, the trees of which partially protected the men from a very sharp fire, poured in amongst them from the houses. There being no shelter for the gun here, nor any mode of employing it to advantage, it was ordered to cross some fields to the right, and take up a position where it could best fire upon the village, and upon the heights above it, which were now crowded with the enemy's infantry. In order to protect the horses, I drew up the gun near the fort of Zulfa Khán, under the walls of which they had shelter; but for the gun

itself no other position could be found than in the open field, where it was exposed to the full fire of the enemy posted in the village and behind the neighbouring walls. The Mountain Train gun was also with me, and both did some execution among the people on the summit of the hill, though to little purpose.

Major Swayne, whose orders were to storm the village, would neither go forward nor retire; but concealing his men under the cover of some low wall, he all day long maintained a musketry fire on the houses of Bemárú, but without satisfactory result. The cavalry were drawn up in rear of the gun on the open plain, as a conspicuous mark for the Kohistánís, and where, as there was nothing for them to do, they accordingly did nothing. Thus we remained for five or six hours, during which time the artillery stood exposed to the deliberate aim of the numerous marksmen who occupied the village and its immediate vicinity, whose bullets continually sang in our ears, often striking the gun, and grazing the ground on which we stood. Only two gunners, however, out of six were wounded, but the cavalry in our rear had many casualties both among men and horses.

Late in the evening, a party of Afghán horse moving round from behind Bemárú, proceeded towards a fort in our rear, whence a cross fire was opened upon us. Brigadier Shelton now joined, bringing with him a

reinforcement from the 5th Native Infantry, under Colonel Oliver. Major Swayne, with two companies, was then sent to reconnoitre the fort whence the fire proceeded, and the Horse Artillery gun was at the same time moved round, so as to bear upon the Afghán cavalry, who hovered among the trees in the same quarter. While engaged in this operation, I received a bullet through the left hand, which for the present terminated my active services. Shortly after this the troops were recalled into cantonments.

It was worthy of note, that Muhammad Akbar Khán, second son of the late Amír Dost Muhammad Khan, arrived in Kábul this night from Bámíán. This man was destined to exercise an evil influence over our future fortunes. The crisis of our struggle was already nigh at hand.

CHAPTER IX.

A SECOND EXPEDITION TO BEMARU.—MAJOR SWAYNE TAKES A WRONG DIRECTION.—INCREASING NUMBERS AND VIGILANCE OF THE ENEMY.—OUR FORCE DRIVEN BACK WITH SEVERE LOSS.—THE ENEMY CARRY OFF A GUN.—REINFORCEMENTS UNFORTUNATELY COUNTERMANDED.—OBSERVATIONS.

November 23rd.—This day decided the fate of the Kábul force. At a council held at the General's house on the night of the 22nd it was determined, on the special recommendation of the Envoy, that, in consequence of the inconvenience sustained by the enemy so frequently taking possession of Bemárú, and interrupting our foraging parties, a force, under Brigadier Shelton, should on the following morning take the village by assault, and maintain the hill above it against whatever number of the enemy might appear.

Accordingly, at 2 A.M. the under-mentioned troops* moved out of cantonments in perfect silence by the Kohistán gate, and skirting the masjid immediately opposite, which was held by a company of Her Majesty's 44th, took the direction of the gorge at the further extremity of the Bemárú hill, which they ascended, dragging the gun to the top with great difficulty, from the rugged and steep nature of the side, which labour was greatly facilitated by the exertions of two hundred commissariat sarwúns, who had volunteered for the occasion. The whole force then moved to the knoll at the north-east extremity of the hill, which overhung the village of Bemárú. The gun was placed in position commanding an inclosure in the village, which, from its fires, was judged to be the principal bivouac of the enemy, and a sharp fire of grape commenced, which evidently created great confusion, but it was presently answered by a discharge of jazails; the enemy forsaking the open space, and covering themselves in the houses and towers: to this we replied in the

* 1 H. A. gun, under Sergt. Mulhal.
5 Cos. H. M. 44th, under Capt. Leighton.
6 Cos. 5th N. I., under Lieut.-Col. Oliver.
6 Cos. 37th N.I., under Major Kershaw, H. M. 13th.
Sappers, 100 men, under Lieut. Laing.
1 Squadron 5th Lt. Cav., under Capt. Bott.
1 Do. Irregular Horse, under Lieut. Walker.
100 men, Anderson's Horse.

intervals of the cannonade by discharges of musketry. It was suggested by Captain Bellew and others to Brigadier Shelton to storm the village, while the evident panic of the enemy lasted, under cover of the darkness, there being no moon: to this the Brigadier did not accede.

When the day broke, parties of the enemy were descried hurrying from the village, and making across the plain towards the distant fort, their fire having previously slackened from the failure of their ammunition. At this time, certainly, not above forty men remained in the village. A storming party, consisting of two companies 37th Native Infantry, and some Europeans, under Majors Swayne and Kershaw, were ordered to carry the village; but Major Swayne, taking a wrong direction, missed the principal entrance, which was open, and arrived at a small *khirkhí*, or wicket, which was barricaded, and which he had no means of forcing, so that he was obliged to cover himself and his men as well as he could from the sure aim of the enemy's marksmen, by whose fire his party suffered considerably, himself being shot through the neck.

After remaining thus for about half an hour, he was recalled by the Brigadier, who observed large bodies of armed men pouring out from the city towards the scene of conflict. Meanwhile Lieutenant Walker had been directed to lead his Irregular Horse down

into the plain on the west side of the hill, to cut off such fugitives from the village as he might be able to intercept, and to cover himself from the fire of infantry under the walls of an old fort not far from the base of the hill. Brigadier Shelton, leaving three companies of the 37th Native Infantry in the knoll above Bemárú as a reserve, under Major Kershaw, moved back with the troops and guns to the part of the hill which overlooked the gorge.

Shortly after this it was suggested to raise a *sanga*, or stone breastwork, for the protection of the troops wholly exposed to the distant fire of the enemy's jazails, but this proposition was not acted on. Immense numbers of the enemy, issuing from the city, had now crowned the summits of the hill opposite the gorge,—in all, probably ten thousand men. The plain on the west of the two hills was swept by swarms of their cavalry, who evidently designed to cut off the small party of Irregular Horse under Lieutenant Walker; while the failure of our attempt to storm the village had rendered it easy for the enemy to throw strong reinforcements into it, and to supply the ammunition of which they had been in great want.

About 7 A.M. the fire from the enemy's hill was so galling that the few skirmishers sent to the brow of our hill could with difficulty retain their posts. As an instance of the backwardness which now began to develop itself among our men, it must be men-

tioned that Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver endeavoured to induce a party of his own regiment to follow him to the brow of the hill, to keep down the sharp fire of a number of the enemy, who had ensconced themselves in a small ravine commanding the foremost square; not a man would follow him,—and it was only after that brave officer had gone forward himself into the thickest of the fire, saying, "Although my men desert me, I myself will do my duty," that about a dozen were shamed into performing theirs. The remainder of the troops (the infantry formed into two squares, and the cavalry being drawn up *en masse* immediately in their rear,) suffered severely without being able to retaliate, from the comparatively short range of the musket. Our single gun maintained as hot a fire on the masses of the enemy as possible, doing great execution; but the want of a second gun to take up the fire was sensibly felt, inasmuch as after a short time the vent became too hot for the artillerymen to serve. This state of things continued until between 9 and 10 o'clock, when a large party of the enemy's cavalry threatened our right flank, and, to prevent his destruction, Lieutenant Walker was recalled. This demonstration, however, was repulsed by a well-directed discharge of shrapnell from the Horse Artillery gun, by one of which a chief of consequence, supposed to be Abd-ullah Khán, Achakzae, was mortally wounded.

By the recall of Lieutenant Walker the enemy were enabled to surround our position at all points, except that facing the cantonments; our gun ammunition was almost expended, and the men were faint with fatigue and thirst (no water being procurable), while the number of killed and wounded was swelled every instant.

About this time (between 10 and 11 A.M.) large bodies of the enemy's infantry advanced across the plain from the Sháh Bágh to the end of the hill, to cut off the supplies of ammunition coming from cantonments, as also the *dhúlís* on which we endeavoured to send off a few of the wounded. These, however, were checked by a party of our troops in the masjid, opposite the Kohistán gate, and by about fifty jazailchís under the temporary command of Captain Trevor, (Captain Mackenzie, their leader, having been requested by Brigadier Shelton to act as one of the staff for the day,) who lined some low walls and watercourses, as well as by frequent discharges of round shot and shrapnell from the cantonment guns under Lieutenant Warburton.

Previously to this, numbers of the most daring Ghází had descended into the gorge, and, taking advantage of some hillocks on the ascent towards our position, had crept gradually up, maintaining a deadly fire on our skirmishers, who were, unfortunately, wholly exposed; they became at length disheartened, and gave

way. At this moment the Brigadier offered a reward of one hundred rúpís to any man who should take a flag of the enemy which had been planted behind a tumulus about thirty yards in front of the square, and he fruitlessly endeavoured to induce the men to charge bayonets; several of the officers at the same time advanced to the front, and actually pelted the enemy with stones. All attempts, however, to encourage our men were in vain. The attacking party were now emboldened to make a rush upon our gun; our cavalry were ordered to charge, but again in vain, for the men would not follow their officers. The panic spread, and our troops gave way, except the second square, which had been formed about two hundred yards in the rear, and three companies under Major Kershaw at the other extremity of the hill; behind this second square the officers with great difficulty rallied the fugitives, leaving the gun in the hands of the enemy, who lost no time in walking off with the limber and horses.

By this time the news of Abd-ullah Khán's wound had spread among the ranks of the enemy, causing great confusion, which extended to the Gházís now in possession of the gun. This, and the tolerably firm attitude resumed by our troops, induced them to content themselves with the limber and horses, and retire. Their retreat gave fresh courage to our disheartened soldiers, who again took possession of

the gun, and advanced to the brow of the hill, where were found the bodies of Captain Macintosh and Lieutenant Laing, as well as those of the soldiers slain in the onset, including two Horse Artillery men, who, with a devotedness worthy of British soldiers, had perished while vainly endeavouring to defend their charge. Some fresh gun-ammunition having now arrived from cantonments, carried by Lascars, a fire was again opened on the ranks of the enemy; but we were unable to push the advantage gained by the momentary disorder alluded to above, because, in fact, the cavalry would not act. In the observations on this action, made hereafter, there will be found some palliation for the backwardness of the cavalry on this occasion, in spite of the gallant bearing of their leaders; the infantry were too few, and too much worn out and disheartened, to be able to make a forward movement. The consequence was, that not only did the whole force of the enemy come on with renewed vigour and spirits, maintaining at the same time the fatal jazail fire which had already so grievously thinned our ranks, but fresh numbers poured out of the city, and from the surrounding villages, until the hill occupied by them scarcely afforded room for them to stand.

This unequal conflict having lasted until past noon, during which period reinforcements and an additional gun had been in vain solicited from the cantonments,

Brigadier Shelton sent Captain Mackenzie to request Major Kershaw to move up his reserve (which could scarcely so be called, having been the whole day hard pressed by large bodies of the enemy in the village, and by parties occupying ruins and broken ground on the skirts of his position). The Major, fearing that, if he abandoned the knoll on which he had been stationed, our retreat to the cantonments (then becoming more and more imperatively necessary) might be cut off, made answer, that "he begged to suggest that the Brigadier should fall back upon him." Before this message could be delivered, the front ranks of the advanced square, at the Brigadier's extremity of the hill, had been literally mowed down;—most of the artillerymen, who performed their duty in a manner which is beyond praise, shared the same fate. The manœuvre practised by the Ghází's previously was repeated by still greater numbers. The evident unsteadiness of our troops, and the imminent danger to which the gun was a second time exposed, induced the Brigadier, after repeated suggestions from Sergeant Mulhall, who commanded the battery, to order the gun to be limbered up—a second limber having arrived from cantonments—and to retire towards Major Kershaw's position. Scarcely had this movement been commenced, when a rush from the Ghází's completely broke the square;—all order was at an end:—the entreaties and commands of the officers, endea-

vouring to rally the men, were not even listened to, and an utter rout ensued down the hill in the direction of cantonments, the enemy closely following, whose cavalry, in particular, made a fearful slaughter among the unresisting fugitives. Major Kershaw's party, perceiving this disaster, endeavoured to escape; but strong parties, issuing from the village, cut off their retreat, and thus great numbers of our Sepoys perished: the grenadier company, especially, was all but annihilated. The mingled tide of flight and pursuit seemed, to those who manned the walls of cantonment, to be about to enter the gate together; and, by some fatality, the ammunition of the great guns in battery within the cantonments was almost expended. A heavy fire, however, was opened from the Sháh's 5th Infantry in the Mission Compound; a fresh troop of the 5th Cavalry, under Lieutenant Hardyman, charged across the plain towards the enemy, joined by Lieutenant Walker, who had rallied fifteen or twenty of his own men; during which gallant effort this most promising and brave young officer received a mortal wound. These operations, assisted by a sharp discharge from the jazáilchís under Captain Trevor, contributed to check the pursuit; and it was observed at the time, and afterwards ascertained to be correct, that a chief (Usmán Khan) voluntarily halted his followers, who were among the foremost, and led them off; which may be reckoned, indeed,

the chief reason why the mass of our people who on that day went forth to battle were not destroyed. Our loss was tremendous; the principal part of the wounded having been left in the field, including Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver, where they were miserably cut to pieces. Our gun and second limber, which, while endeavouring to gallop down the hill, had overturned on rough ground, we had the mortification to behold triumphantly carried off by the enemy.

About half an hour previous to the flight of our troops, a note had been written to the Assistant Adjutant-General by Captain Troup, earnestly requesting that the Mountain Train gun, which had by that time been repaired, might be sent out with the least possible delay, and the first idea that suggested itself to that officer after our defeat was, that by quickly bringing this gun to bear upon the Horse Artillery gun, then in the hands of the enemy, the latter might still be saved. He therefore galloped with speed to cantonments, where finding the Mountain Train gun just ready to start, he was on the point of leading it out of the gate, when his progress was interrupted by the Assistant Adjutant-General, on the plea that it would now be of no use. This is the more to be lamented, as from the spot occupied by Captain Trevor's jazailchís, who, protected by a low wall, still kept up a sharp and effectual fire on the enemy, the range to the side of the hill whence the Afgháns were endeavouring to carry off the

captured gun, about which they clustered in thousands was so short, that grape, even from a small calibre, must have prevented the execution of their intentions. Had the company of fresh infantry which was drawn up outside the gate, under command of Lieutenant Alexander, moved forward in company with the mountain gun to the support of the above gallant handful of jazailchís, excellent service might have been rendered. But it seemed as if we were under the ban of Heaven.

Observations.

In this miserable and disastrous affair no less than six great errors must present themselves, even to the most unpractised military eye, each of which contributed in no slight degree to the defeat of our troops, opposed as they were by overwhelming numbers.

1st. The first and perhaps most fatal mistake of all was the taking out a *single* gun. The General Order by the Marquess of Hastings, expressly forbidding less than two guns to take the field, under any circumstances or on any pretence whatever, when another is available, must be well known at least to every officer who has served in India. This positive prohibition was the offspring of dearly-bought experience, and the action

of Bemárú affords another convincing example of the risk to which a single gun is exposed when unsupported by the fire of a second. It was certainly the Brigadier's intention to take the mountain gun also; but this had unfortunately been disabled on the previous day, and it had been twice specially reported, both to the Brigadier and to the General the foregoing night, by Captain Troup, that it could not be got ready before 12 A.M. on the following day.

2ndly. The second error is scarcely less evident than the first. Had immediate advantage been taken of the panic which our unexpected cannonade created among the possessors of the village, whose slack fire afforded sufficient evidence of the actual fact that they were not only contemptible in numbers, but short of ammunition,—had, I say, a storming party been led to the attack under cover of the darkness, which would have nullified the advantage they possessed in being under cover, the place must inevitably have fallen into our hands, and thus would the principal object of the sally have been gained, and a good line of retreat secured for our troops in case of necessity.

3rdly. The third error was so manifest as to be quite unaccountable. A party of one hundred sappers had accompanied the force for the express purpose of raising a *sanga*. The fittest place for such a work would have been half-way along the ridge occupied by

us, where our troops would then have been wholly protected from the fire of the jazails from the opposite hill, while the enemy could not have advanced to the attack without exposing themselves to the full effects of our musketry and grape. It would, in fact, have infused into our troops a sense of security from any sudden charge of the enemy's horse, and at the same time have enabled our own cavalry to issue forth with the assurance of having in their rear a place of defence on which to fall back if hard pressed by the enemy. It has been seen that no such defence was raised.

4thly. All have heard of the British SQUARES at *Waterloo,* which defied the repeated desperate onsets of Napoleon's choicest *cavalry.* At *Bemárú* we formed squares to resist the *distant fire of infantry,* thus presenting a solid mass against the aim of perhaps the best marksmen in the world, the said squares being securely perched on the summit of a steep and narrow ridge up which no cavalry *could* charge with effect. A Peninsular General would consider this to be a novel fashion; yet Brigadier Shelton had the benefit of Peninsular experience in his younger days, and, it must be owned, was never surpassed in dauntless bravery.

5thly. Our cavalry, instead of being found upon the plain, where they might have been useful in protecting our line of communications with the canton-

ments, and would have been able to advance readily to any point where their services might have been required, were hemmed in between two infantry squares, and exposed for several hours to a destructive fire from the enemy's jazails, on ground where, even under the most favourable circumstances, they could not have acted with effect. This false and unsatisfactory position of course discouraged the troopers; and, when the infantry finally gave way, the two arms of the service became mixed up in a way that greatly increased the general confusion, and rendered it impossible for the infantry to rally, even had they been so disposed. The truth is, that the cavalry were not allowed fair play, and such a position must have disgusted and dispirited *any* troops.

6thly. Shortly after our regaining possession of the gun, one of the Brigadier's staff, Captain Mackenzie, feeling convinced that, from the temper of the troops and from the impossibility of rectifying the false position in which the force was placed, not only was success beyond hope, but that defeat in its most disastrous shape was fast approaching, proposed to the Brigadier to endeavour to effect a retreat while it was yet in his power to do so with comparative impunity. His reply was, "Oh, no! we will hold the hill some time longer." At that time, even if the slaughter of the soldiery, the loss of officers, the evident panic in our ranks, and the worse than false nature of our

position, had not been sufficient to open all eyes as to the impossibility even of partial success, (for the real object of the expedition, viz. the possession of the village of Bemárú, had been, as it were, abandoned from the very first,) the weakness and exhaustion of both men and horses, who were not only worn out by bodily fatigue, but suffering grievously from extreme thirst and the debility attendant on long fasting, ought to have banished all idea of further delaying a movement in which alone lay the slightest chance of preserving to their country lives, by the eventual sacrifice of which not even the only solace to the soldier in the hour of misfortune, the consciousness of unimpaired honour, was likely to be gained.

[These criticisms gave rise to much discussion in the English papers. On behalf of Brigadier Shelton they may be summed up as follows:—

1. It is admitted in the narrative that the Brigadier "*in vain solicited an additional gun*" to be sent from cantonments, and ought not therefore to be held responsible on that score. Owing to the paucity of European Artillery gunners only one of the Horse Artillery guns could be manned for field operations at one time, as it was considered by the General essential to retain a small reserve of European artillerymen for defensive purposes within the long extent of ramparts. Hence the Mountain Train gun was usually substituted, but chanced on this occasion to be out of repair.

2. The Brigadier seems to have objected to risk a night attack, on principle, and cannot be held responsible for the failure of the storming party at daybreak, which arose solely from missing the proper entrance to the village, which was open, and time was thus given to the enemy to pour forth from the city in overwhelming numbers.

3. With regard to the omission to raise a "*sanga,*" or breastwork, for which purpose one hundred sappers had been sent out with the force, it has been alleged that "*these men were too busily employed in fighting to be available for such a work.*"

4 and 5. It has been asserted that what the author has termed "*Squares*" were not squares at all. "The enemy were trying to turn our flanks, and the Afghán horsemen were pushing up hill, so *the flanks were thrown back to give a flanking fire*"—the odds against us being about 15,000 to 800!

On the other hand Lady Sale, who was an eye-witness of the day's proceedings, describes what occurred as follows:—

"I had taken up my post of observation, as usual, on the top of the house, whence I had a fine view of the field of action, and where, by keeping behind the chimneys, I escaped the bullets that continually whizzed past me. Brigadier Shelton having brought forward shirmishers to the brow of the hill, formed the remainder of his infantry into two squares—the one

about two hundred yards in rear of the other, the intervening space being crammed with our cavalry, who, from the nature of the ground, were exposed to the full fire of the enemy without being able to act themselves."

"The number of the enemy's footmen must have been upwards of ten thousand (some say fifteen thousand), and the plain, on the north-west of the hills, was swept by not less than three thousand or four thousand Afghán cavalry. . . . The fight continued till about 10 o'clock, by which time our killed and wounded became very numerous. In spite of the execution done by our shrapnell, the fire of the enemy told considerably more than ours did, from the superiority of their jazails and jingáls over our muskets. . . . They also fought from behind sangas and hillocks, whilst our men were perfectly exposed; our troops also labouring under the disadvantage of being drawn up in square, from an apprehension of an attack from the Afghán cavalry."

"The vent of the gun became too hot for the artillerymen to serve it.

"At this time (half-past 9 A.M.) a party of Gházíás ascended the brow of the hill. . . . It is possible that the Brigadier might not have seen their advance; but when they had nearly attained the summit, they had an evident advantage over us, as their shots generally told in firing up at our men, whose persons

were wholly exposed, whilst only a few of their heads were visible to our troops, and *the old fault of firing too high most probably sent all our shots harmlessly over their heads,* for to hit them it was requisite to fire on the ground. When they fairly appeared above ground, it was very evident that our men were not inclined to meet them. Every field-glass was now pointed to the hill with intense anxiety by us in cantonments, and we saw the officers urging their men to advance on the enemy. Most conspicuous were Mackintosh, Laing, Troup, Mackenzie, and Layton; who, to encourage the men, pelted the Gházíás with stones as they climbed the hill; and, *to do the fanatics justice, they returned the assault with the same weapons.* Nothing would do; our men would not advance, though this party did not appear to be a hundred and fifty in number. At length one of the Gházíás rushed forward, waving his sword over his head; a Sipáhí of the 37th darted forth and met him with his bayonet; but instead of a straight charge, he gave him a kind of side stroke with it, and they both fell, and both rose again. Both were killed eventually, the Gházíá was shot by another man. It was very like the scenes depicted in the battles of the Crusaders. The enemy rushed on—drove our men before them very like a flock of sheep, with a wolf at their heels. They captured one gun. The artillerymen fought like heroes; two were killed at the gun; Sergeant Mulhall received three

wounds; poor Laing was shot whilst waving his sword over the gun, and cheering the men. . . . Brigadier Shelton says that when our men ran he ordered the halt to be sounded; at which the troops mechanically arrested their flight, and fell into their places!

"They ran till they gained the second square, which had not broken; and the men finding a stand, turned about, gave a shout, and then the Gházíás were, in their turn, panic-struck, abandoned the gun, but made off with the limber and horses. On this we re-took the gun, without resistance. . . . At this time I was standing on the ramparts, and heard the Envoy, in my presence, ask the General (Elphinstone) to pursue the flying troops into the city, which he refused, saying, 'it was a wild scheme, and not feasible.'"

This account coincides exactly with the statements made by those officers engaged in the action whom I had opportunities of consulting. The reader can therefore form his own judgment.

6. It must be admitted, in Brigadier Shelton's favour, that the odds were fearfully against him, although had reinforcements been sent out to his aid at the critical time the result might have been widely different, and he would have been deservedly extolled as a hero.]

CHAPTER X.

OUR PASSIVENESS. — CONFERENCES AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INSURGENT CHIEFS.—LOSS OF MUHAMMAD SHARIF'S FORT.—TERMS AGREED ON.

November 24th.—Our troops had now lost all confidence; and even such of the officers as had hitherto indulged the hope of a favourable turn in our affairs, began at last reluctantly to entertain gloomy forebodings as to our future fate. Our force resembled a ship in danger of wrecking among rocks and shoals, for want of an able pilot to guide it safely through them. Even now, at the eleventh hour, had the helm of affairs been grasped by a hand competent to the important task, we might perhaps have steered clear of destruction; but, in the absence of any such deliverer, it was but too evident that Heaven alone could save us by some unforeseen interposition.

I have already mentioned the new bridge thrown over the river by General Elphinstone: this the enemy, advancing up the bed of the river under cover of the bank, to-day began to demolish. I must do Brigadier Shelton the justice to say that he, seeing the vast importance of the bridge in case of a retreat (an alternative of which he never lost sight), had strongly urged the erection of a field-work for its protection; in fact there was a small unfinished fort near at hand, which one night's work of the sappers would have rendered fit for the purpose, and a small detachment thrown into it would have perfectly commanded the bridge. But this simple precaution was neglected, and the result will be seen in the sequel.

Captain Conolly now wrote in from the Bálá Hisár, strongly advising an immediate retreat thither, on which movement several of the chief military and all the political officers considered our only hope of holding out through the winter to depend. But the old objections were still urged against the measure by Brigadier Shelton and others; and the General, in a letter this day addressed to the Envoy, expressed his opinion that "the movement, if not altogether impossible, would be attended with great difficulty, encumbered as we should be with numerous sick and wounded. The enemy would doubtless oppose us with their whole force, and the greater part of the troops would be required to cover the operation, thus leaving the cantonments

imperfectly defended; that the men were harassed, dispirited, and greatly reduced in numbers; and failure would be attended with certain destruction to the whole force. To remove the ammunition and stores would be the work of several days, during which the enemy would hover around, and offer every obstacle to our operations. Our wounded were increased, whilst our means of conveying them were diminished. Would the Bálá Hisár hold the force with all the followers? Water was already said to be selling there at a high price.* We had barely twenty days' supply of provisions in the cantonments; and, even supposing we could find means to carry it with us, there was no prospect of obtaining more in the Bálá Hisár. A retreat thence would be worse than from our present position, after having abandoned our cattle; and the sick and wounded must be left behind us." In these opinions Brigadier Shelton entirely concurred. An appalling list of objections, it must be confessed, but insufficient to shake my belief that a removal of the force into the Bálá Hisár was not only practicable but necessary for our safety and honour, while the risks attending it, though formidable, were only such as we ought, as soldiers, to have unhesitatingly incurred. Sháh Shujá had moreover declared himself impatient to receive us; and, even had the dreaded ruin overwhelmed us in

* This report was entirely untrue.

the attempt, would it not have been a more manly and honourable course, than the inglorious treaty we shortly afterwards entered into with a treacherous band of rebels, by which we deserted the sovereign whom it was our duty to protect to the last drop of our blood? Had we boldly sallied forth, preferring death to dishonour, would not the fate of our poor fellows have been a hundredfold happier than that they subsequently experienced, in their miserable retreat, inasmuch as they would have died in the consciousness of having bravely done their duty? Never were troops exposed to greater hardships and dangers; yet, sad to say, never did soldiers shed their blood wlth less beneficial result than during the investment of the British lines at Kábul.

But, to return to my narrative.

A letter to the address of the Envoy was this day received from Usmán Khán*, Bárakzí, a near relative of the new king, and generally supposed to have a favourable leaning towards us, wherein he took credit to himself for having "checked the ardour of his followers in their pursuit of our flying troops on the preceding day, when, by following up their success, the loss of our cantonments and the destruction of our force was inevitable; but that it was not the wish of

* This chief had sheltered Captain Drummond in his own house since the first day of the outbreak.

the chiefs to proceed to such dreadful extremities, their sole desire being that we should quietly evacuate the country, leaving them to govern it according to their own rules, and with a king of their own choosing." On the receipt of this friendly communication, the Envoy requested the General to state his opinion regarding the possibility, in a military point of view, of retaining our position in the cantonments; as, in case of a negative reply, he might be able to enter into negotiations with the existing rulers of the country.

The General replied to the effect that "we had now been in a state of siege for three weeks; our provisions were nearly expended, and our forage entirely consumed, without the prospect of procuring a fresh supply; that our troops were much reduced by casualties, and the large number of sick and wounded increased almost daily; and that, considering the difficulty of defending the extensive and ill-situated cantonment, the near approach of winter, the fact of our communications being cut off, and that we had no prospect of reinforcement, with the whole country in arms against us; he did not think it possible to retain our present position in the country, and therefore thought the Envoy ought to avail himself of the offer to negotiate, which had been made him."

November 27th.—Nothing else of consequence took place until this morning, when two deputies from the assembled chiefs, having made their appearance at

the bridge, were ushered into cantonments by Captains Lawrence and Trevor, the Envoy having agreed to confer with them, on condition that nothing should be proposed which it would be derogatory in him to consider. The interview took place in the officers' guard-room at the eastern gate; the exact particulars did not transpire, but the demands made by the chiefs were such as it was impossible to comply with, and the deputies took leave of the Envoy with the exclamation that "we should meet again in battle!" "We shall at all events meet," replied Sir William, "at the day of judgment." At night the Envoy received a letter from the chiefs proposing terms of so disgraceful and insulting a nature, as seemed at once to preclude all hope of terminating our difficulties by treaty. The tenor of them was as follows: "That we should deliver up Sháh Shujá and his whole family; lay down our arms; and make an unconditional surrender; when they might perhaps be induced to spare our lives, and allow us to leave the country on condition of never returning." The Envoy's reply was such as well became the representative of his country's honour. "He was astonished," he said, "at their departing from that good faith for which he had given them credit, by violating the conditions on which he had been led to entertain proposals for a pacific arrangement; that the terms they proposed were too dishonourable to be entertained for a moment; and that,

if they persisted in them, he must again appeal to arms, leaving the result to the God of battles."

December 1*st*.—No active renewal of hostilities took place until to-day, when a desperate effort was made by the enemy to gain possession of the Bálá Hisár, which they endeavoured to effect by a night attack, in the first instance, on the *Búrj-i-lákh*, an isolated tower forming an outwork to the fortress, and from its elevated position commanding almost the entire works. This point was, however, strongly reinforced without delay by Major Ewart, commanding the garrison, and notwithstanding the determined spirit exhibited by the enemy, who made repeated charges up the hill, they were repulsed with considerable slaughter.

December 4*th*.—At an early hour the enemy moved out in force from the city, and, having crowned the Bemárú hills, posted two guns in the gorge, from which they maintained a tolerably brisk fire for several hours into the cantonments, effecting fortunately but little mischief; in the evening they, as usual, retired to their respective haunts. During the night a rush was suddenly made by a party of Afgháns to the gate of Muhammad Sharíf's fort, garrisoned by our troops, which they attempted, in imitation of our own method at the taking of Ghazní, to blow open with powder bags, but without success.

December 5*th*.—This day the enemy completed the destruction of our bridge over the river, which they

commenced on the 24th ult., no precaution having been taken to prevent the evil. Day after day we quietly looked on without an effort to save it, orders being in vain *solicited* by various officers for preventive measures to be adopted. In consequence of the enemy having commenced mining one of the towers of Muhammad Sharíf's fort, the garrison was reinforced, and Lieutenant Sturt succeeded during the night in destroying the mine. This, however, could only be effected at the expense of opening a passage under the walls, which it became necessary to barricade; and although this measure of precaution was efficiently executed, such was the nervous state of the party composing the garrison, that no reliance could be placed on their stability in case of an attack.

December 6th.—The garrison of Muhammad Sharíf's fort was relieved at an early hour by one company of Her Majesty's 44th, under Lieutenant Grey, and one company 37th Native Infantry, under Lieutenant Hawtrey, an amply sufficient force for the defence of the place against any sudden onset; but, unhappily, the fears of the old garrison were communicated to the new, and, owing to the representations of Lieutenant Hawtrey, the defences were minutely examined by Lieutenant Sturt, the garrison engineer, and by him pronounced to be complete. Scarcely, however, had that officer returned to cantonments, ere information was conveyed to the General that the detachment,

having been seized with a panic, had taken flight over the walls, and abandoned the fort to the enemy. It would appear that a small party of jazailchís, having crept up to the undermined tower under cover of the trees in the Sháh Bágh, had fired upon the garrison through the barricaded breach which I have above described, unfortunately wounding Lieutenant Grey, upon whose departure for medical aid, the Europeans, deprived of their officer, lost what little confidence they had before possessed, and collecting their bedding under the walls, betrayed symptoms of an intention to retreat. The enemy meanwhile, emboldened by the slackened fire of the defenders, approached momentarily nearer to the walls, and, making a sudden rush to the barricade, completed the panic of the garrison, who now made their escape over the walls in the greatest consternation, deaf to the remonstrances of their gallant commander. The Sepoys, who at first remained staunch, contaminated by the bad example set them, refused to rally; and Lieutenant Hawtrey, finding himself deserted by all, was obliged reluctantly to follow, being the last to leave the fort.

The enemy, though at first few in numbers, were not slow to avail themselves of the advantage afforded them, and their banner was soon planted in triumph on the walls.

December 7th.—The European garrison was this day

withdrawn from the bazár, and three companies of the 37th Native Infantry substituted in their room.

[This deplorable affair of Muhammad Sharíf's fort was made the subject of much censorious comment and of mutual recrimination at the time; and writing, as I did, before the excitement caused by these disastrous events had been calmed down, and when it seemed inevitable that nothing less would satisfy the public mind than a thorough sifting of facts, I felt in a manner compelled, as a faithful narrator of events, and in the cause of truth and justice, to lay bare what then seemed a serious evil, regardless of unpleasant consequences. But now the case is altogether different, and I feel that I should not be justified in reviving needlessly an ungracious topic which had best be forgotten.

Moreover, while looking back calmly, through a long vista of years, on those sad events of my younger days, and with a more ripe military experience than I then could boast, I feel persuaded that there was a natural tendency among the actors in those trying scenes (myself included) to view what were in reality accidental and exceptional errors or backslidings, on the part of officers or men, through an exaggerated medium. For, after all, there was nothing very surprising in the occupants of a small fortified outpost being seized with a temporary panic on discovering that their enemies outside were secretly undermining

the walls, with the probable intent to blow up the interior garrison at any moment! Such incidents are by no means so rare as might be supposed in time of war, even among the bravest troops in the world, and when we consider the continuous hardships and trials which these harassed and half-starved soldiers had undergone during the previous seven weeks, we ought not to marvel if their nervous system had become temporarily unstrung. Let it the rather be remembered, to their lasting credit, how these self-same men fought their way, only a few days subsequently, under the personal leading of their brave brigadier, during the fatal and ever-memorable retreat from Kábul, through a long series of difficult mountain passes, and opposed on all sides by a countless host of fanatical Afgháns, as hereafter recorded in these pages; and—let the voice of a worn-out opprobrium be silenced for evermore! *]

The alarming discovery having been made that our supply of provisions had been materially overrated, and that not even a sufficiency for one day remained in store, Captain Hay was despatched with a convoy of military stores into the Bálá Hisár, with orders to bring back the animals laden with grain.

* Though somewhat late in the day, I rejoice in the opportunity now afforded me of offering the above tribute of the respect due alike to the dead and to the living.

He started several hours before daybreak, but on reaching the Siyáh Sang hill, a few straggling shots being fired upon his rear, the men riding the laden *yábús* (Afghán ponies) were panic-stricken, and, hastily casting the loads to the ground, galloped for safety to the front. Much private property was lost at the same time, for, notwithstanding all the opposition that had been made to the proposal of a retreat to the Bálár Hisár, the General in some degree deferred to the opinions of those who favoured the movement, by adopting the half-measure of sending in magazine supplies from time to time by driblets. This led many to suppose that the whole force would sooner or later retreat thither, and accordingly advantage was taken of every opportunity to send in a few private necessaries in advance. On this occasion the attempt failed in the manner I have above related; but Captain Hay nevertheless accomplished the primary object of his journey, by bringing back as much provisions as could be collected on so short a notice.

December 8th.—The Envoy, having addressed a public letter to the General, requested him to state "whether or not it was his opinion that any further attempt to hold out against the enemy would merely have the effect of sacrificing both His Majesty Sháh Shujá and ourselves; and whether, supposing this to be so, the only alternative left was not to negotiate for our safe retreat out of the country, on the most

favourable terms possible?" The General, in reply, stated his conviction that "the present situation of the troops was such, from the want of provisions and the impracticability of procuring more, that no time ought to be lost in entering into negotiations for a safe retreat from the country: That, as regarded the troops at Kandahár, and the rumours of their approach to our assistance, he would be sorry, in the absence of all authentic information, to risk the sacrifice of the troops by waiting for their arrival, when we were ignorant even of their having commenced their march, and were reduced to three days' supply of provisions for our Sepoys at half rations, and almost without any forage for our horses and cattle: That our number of sick and wounded in hospital exceeded six hundred, and our means for their transport were far from adequate, owing to the death by starvation of so many of our camels, from which cause also we should be obliged, at this inclement season, to leave their tents and bedding behind, with such a march before us: That, as regarded the king, he must be excused from entering upon that point of the Envoy's letter, and leave its consideration to his better knowledge and judgment; but he might be allowed to say that it little became him, as commanding the British troops in Afghánistán, to regard the necessity of negotiation in any other light than as concerned *their* honour and welfare, for both of which he should be answer-

able, by a further stay here, after the sudden and universal rebellion against His Majesty's authority which had taken place throughout his dominions: That the whole of the grain and forage in the vicinity was exhausted, and the defence of the extensive and ill-selected cantonment would not admit of distant expeditions to obtain supplies from the strongly fortified dwellings of an armed and hostile population; our present numbers being insufficient for its defence, and obliging the whole of the troops to be almost constantly under arms. In conclusion, he could only repeat his opinion that the Envoy should lose no time in entering into negotiations." This letter was countersigned by Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, and Colonel Chambers, who entirely concurred in the opinions it expressed. Meanwhile starvation stared us in the face, and it became necessary to adopt immediate measures for obtaining a further supply of provisions. A consultation was accordingly held with this object at the General's house, and it was determined that an attack should be made on the neighbouring fort of *Khoja Ruwash* at an early hour the following morning.

December 9th.—The morning dawned, but no signs of preparation appeared for the proposed enterprise; no bridge was laid down for the passage of the guns and cavalry; no troops were in readiness to march; and it was plain that either no orders had been given, or no attention had been paid to them. Thus,

notwithstanding the importance of its object, the expedition was suffered to die a natural death.

Upon this subject I shall only remark that Brigadier Shelton commanded the garrison, and that with him the necessary arrangements rested.

[The following explanation has since been given in an English paper:—

"The real fact is, the Envoy found from his informant that there were plenty of provisions in the village, (and in another, *Khadabad*, near it,) but it was fully armed, and it was declared that the whole armed force of the city would sally out to resist our march to the place; and hence the *Envoy* and *General* decided on the force not being sent. Was this the Brigadier's fault?"]

Intelligence having been this day received of a decisive victory gained over the enemy by General Sale at Jallálábád, the Envoy conceived it might have the effect of modifying the General's opinion regarding the immediate necessity of negotiating with the rebel chiefs, and addressed him a letter on the subject. The General, however, declared in reply, that, pleasing as the intelligence was, it could not in the slightest degree influence our position, so as to affect the expediency of our treating; in forming which opinion he was much influenced by the joint representations that had been just made to him by Captains Boyd and Johnson, the respec-

tive heads of the Company's and Sháh's commissariat, wherein they declared their utter inability to procure grain or forage within three or four miles, and that, although three days' supply of *átá* (ground wheat) might still be procurable from the Bálá Hisár, yet every additional day's delay now crippled the cattle more and more, and rendered our position more perilous. Notwithstanding these apparently conclusive arguments, there existed strong grounds for believing that the Bálá Hisár contained a much larger supply of provisions than was generally supposed.

December 10*th*.—Another convoy of military stores was despatched to the Bálá Hisár this morning under command of Lieutenant Le Geyt, by whom a further supply of *átá* was brought back in return.

December 11*th*.—The rebel chiefs having manifested an inclination to treat, the Envoy, accompanied by Captains Lawrence, Mackenzie, and Trevor, went out to meet them on the plain towards Siyáh Sang. There were present Muhammad Akbar Khán, Usmán Khán, Muhammad Khán Naib Amír (commonly called Naib Amír), Bárakzís;—Muhammad Sháh Khán, Hamza Khán, Khuda Khán, Ghalzís;—Jay-at Ulal Khán, Pupalzí;—Khán Sharín Khán, Kazilbásh;—and several others of inferior note, but all heads of tribes. After the exchange of salutations, Sir William addressed the assembled Kháns, alluding to past times, during which relations of perfect cordiality and friend-

ship had existed between them and the English. He greatly lamented that feelings of so pleasant and mutually beneficial a nature should have been thus rudely interrupted; but professed himself wholly ignorant of the causes of such interruption. He proceeded to state that sentiments of good will towards the Afghán nation had principally induced the British Government to lend their aid, in restoring to the seat of his ancestors a king, who, notwithstanding his misfortunes, originating in causes to which he would not then allude, had ever reigned in the hearts of the mass of his people; that the restoration of their monarch had apparently given the utmost satisfaction to all classes throughout his dominions. If, however, that satisfaction had passed away, and given place to emotions of a wholly contrary nature (and he supposed that the assembled Sirdárs and Kháns might be considered the mouth-piece of the people), it no longer became the British Government to persist in a course so displeasing to those chiefly interested in the result. On this account he was willing to enter into negotiations, for the smoothing over of present difficulties, and for the adopting of such measures as were likely to be the most conducive towards the re-establishment of that mutual friendship between the British and Afghán Governments, the maintenance of which, he felt assured, must be earnestly desired by both parties. To all these propositions

Muhammad Akbar Khán and Usmán Khán, as the principal personages present, expressed, with the hearty concurrence of the inferior chiefs, their entire assent, adding many expressions of their personal esteem for the Envoy himself, and their gratitude for the way in which the exiled Amír had been used. The Envoy then requested permission to read to them a paper containing a general sketch of the proposed treaty. This being agreed to, the articles of the treaty were read and discussed. Their general purport was to the effect—That the British should evacuate Afghánistán, including Kandahár, Ghazní, Kábul, Jallálábád, and all the other stations absolutely within the limits of the country so called;—that they should be permitted to return not only unmolested to India, but that supplies of every description should be afforded them in their road thither, certain men of consequence accompanying them as hostages; —that the Amír Dost Muhammad Khán, his family, and every Afghán now in exile for political offences, should be allowed to return to their country;—that Sháh Shujá and his family should be allowed the option of remaining at Kábul or proceeding with the British troops to Ludiána, in either case receiving from the Afghán Government a pension of one lakh of rúpís per annum;—that means of transport for the conveyance of our baggage, stores, &c., including that required by the royal family, in case

of their adopting the latter alternative, should be furnished by the existing Afghán Government;—that an amnesty should be granted to all those who had made themselves obnoxious on account of their attachment to Sháh Shujá and his allies, the British; —that all prisoners should be released;—that no British force should be ever again sent into Afghánistán, unless called for by the Afghán Government, between whom and the British nation perpetual friendship should be established on the sure foundation of mutual good offices.

To all these terms the chiefs cordially agreed, with the exception of Muhammad Akbar, who cavilled at several, especially that of the amnesty, but was overruled by his coadjutors. He positively refused to permit the garrison to be supplied with provisions until it had quitted cantonments, which movement he clamorously demanded should take place the following morning. His violence caused some confusion; but the more temperate of his party having interfered, it was finally agreed that our evacuation of the cantonments should take place in three days—that provisions should be supplied—and that to all the above-mentioned articles of this new treaty a formal assent in writing should be sent, with all the usual forms of a restored peace. The chiefs, on returning to the city, took with them Captain Trevor as a hostage for the sincerity of the Envoy. During

the whole of this interview, which took place not far from the bottom of the Siyáh Sang hills, great anxiety was felt in the cantonments from the apparent danger to which the Envoy was exposed,—he being accompanied only by a few troopers of the Body-guard,—and from the circumstance of large bodies of the enemy's horse and foot being seen to pass towards the scene of conference from the city, their leaders evidently with much difficulty restraining their advance beyond a certain point. Sir William, however, although not unaware of the perfidious nature of those he had to deal with, nor insensible to the risk he ran, (a shot, in fact, from the fanatic multitude, having whistled over the heads of the gentlemen in attendance on him, as they advanced towards the rendezvous,) wisely imagined that a display of confidence was the best mode of begetting good faith. It is, however, pretty certain that the tumultuary movements of the Afghán troops, whose presence was in direct violation of the stipulations under which the conference was held, were not without their cause, it having been the earnest desire of Muhammad Akbar to seize upon the Envoy's person at that very meeting, from which step he was with difficulty restrained by the other Kháns. But no sense of personal danger could have deterred a man of Sir William's truly chivalrous and undaunted character from the performance of any duty, private or public.

Would that he had been more alive to the apprehensions which influenced common men! We might not then have to mourn over the untimely fate of one whose memory must be ever cherished in the hearts of all who knew and were capable of appreciating him, notwithstanding the disastrous termination of his political career, as that of a good, and, in many essential points, a great man.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARATIONS FOR EVACUATING.—MORE CONFERENCES.—MORE DELAYS.—MORE DIFFICULTIES.—MUHAMMAD AKBAR'S PLOT AGAINST THE ENVOY.—HIS MURDER.

December 12th.—It is undeniable that Sir William Macnaghten was forced into this treaty with men whose power he despised, and whose treachery was proverbial, against his own judgment, by the pressing representations of our military heads. It is no less true that, whatever may have been his political remissness or want of foresight before the rebellion broke out, he had, throughout the perils that afterwards beset us, displayed a truly British spirit of unflinching fortitude and indefatigable energy, calculated, under more auspicious leaders, to have stimulated the zeal and valour of the troops, and to have cheered them under the trials and hardships they were called on to endure; and I can safely add,

without fear of contradiction, that scarcely an enterprise was undertaken throughout the siege but at the suggestion, and even the entreaties, of the Envoy, he volunteering to take on himself the entire responsibility. Justice demands this tribute to the memory of one, whose acts, as they will assuredly undergo the severe scrutiny of his countrymen, it therefore becomes the duty of every eye-witness, who bears testimony on the subject, not only to shield from misrepresentation, but, where they are deserving of it, to hold up to public admiration. I am led to write this solely by my public knowledge of the man. If I could bring myself, on matters of such vital importance, to follow the dictates of mere private feeling, my bias would be altogether on the side of my late lamented military chief, and for whose infirmities every allowance ought, in common justice, to be made. With a mind and talents of no ordinary stamp, and a hitherto unsullied fame, he committed the fatal error of transporting himself suddenly from a state of prolonged luxurious repose, at an advanced age, to undertake the fatigues and cares inseparable from high military command, in a foreign, uncongenial climate; he thus not only ruined his already shattered health, but (which to a soldier was a far worse calamity) grievously damaged that high reputation which his early services had secured for him.

The terms of the new treaty were immediately made known to Sháh Shujá, by which that unfortunate monarch found himself once more doomed to an old age of exile and degradation. The first step towards its fulfilment was the withdrawal of our troops from the Bálá Hisár, which was to have taken place this very day, but was postponed for a short time longer to admit of the necessary preparations being made. A deputation of chiefs had an interview in the close of the day, who were the bearers of a most unexpected proposition, to the effect that Sháh Shujá should continue king, on condition of intermarrying his daughters with the leading Afghán chiefs, and abandoning the offensive practice of keeping the chief nobles of his kingdom waiting for hours at his gate in expectation of audience. The Afgháns hate ceremony, which Sháh Shujá carried at all times to an absurd extent, hence much of his unpopularity. This arrangement was not intended to annul those parts of the treaty which related to our immediate evacuation of the country, for the fulfilment of which some married families were demanded as hostages.

December 13*th*.—Such was the inveterate pride of the king, that he yielded a most reluctant consent to the above-mentioned proposals, notwithstanding that the only alternative was the instant resignation of his kingdom. Little confidence was, however, placed by the Envoy in the sincerity of the chiefs,

whose hatred of the Dúráni ruler was notorious. As our retreat was now fully decided on, and our well-stocked magazine was shortly to fall a prey to our enemies, the General ordered that some ammunition should be distributed to certain of the camp-followers; and commanding officers were directed to indent for new arms and accoutrements, in exchange for such as were old and damaged. The reins of discipline had, however, by this time become so terribly relaxed, and so little attention was paid to superior orders by either officers or men, that many of the officers in command of companies rested content with sending their men to the magazine, to help themselves at will, the stores being unfortunately, in the absence of any finished building for their reception, arranged under the trees of an orchard, in charge of a small guard. The consequence was, as might have been expected, a scene of confusion and plunder, which was rendered worse by a rush of camp-followers, who, imagining that a licence had been given for every one to take whatever he pleased, flocked in hundreds to the spot, and terribly increased the tumult; insomuch that the authority of several officers, who, observing what was going on, exerted themselves to restore order, was for several minutes set at naught. At last, however, the place was cleared of the intruders, and the greater portion of the stolen articles was recovered the same evening.

At 2 P.M. the troops in the Bálá Hisár, consisting of the 54th Native Infantry, half of Captain Nicholl's troop of Horse Artillery, and a detachment of the Mountain Train, with two howitzers, under Lieutenant Green, commenced their evacuation of that fortress. They were also encumbered with an iron 9-pounder gun, and a 24-pounder brass howitzer, drawn by bullocks, which it was the General's wish should have been left behind, but his order to that effect had by some accident missed its destination. As the utmost scarcity of provisions prevailed in cantonments, Captain Kirby, the commissariat officer, had zealously exerted himself to collect a supply of about one thousand six hundred maunds of wheat and flour to carry thither. Much delay, however, occurred in packing and loading; and, the best part of the day being nearly spent ere above one-third of that quantity was ready, Major Ewart deemed it advisable to move off without further loss of time. He found Muhammad Akbar Khán in waiting with a small body of followers outside the gate, for the purpose of escorting him to cantonments; and, as the evening drew nigh, a dense crowd of armed Afgháns had been observed to collect on the Siyáh Sang hill, along the base of which our troops must pass, giving rise to suspicions of some meditated treachery. While the rear-guard, with the Mountain Train gun and a portion of the baggage, was leaving the gate, some of Muhammad

Akbar's followers, pushing quietly past them, endeavoured to effect an entrance into the fort; but on their being recognized by the king's guard, the gates were immediately shut, and a round or two of grape fired upon the intruders, with so indiscriminate an aim as to endanger the lives of Captain Conolly and several of the Sepoys, of whom some were severely wounded. It can scarcely be doubted that Muhammad Akbar's intention was to have seized the gate with a few of his men, until a rush of the Afgháns from the hill should have enabled him to carry the body of the place by storm. The vigilance of the garrison having defeated this plan, the wily chief, imagining that the gates would again be opened to re-admit our troops, informed Major Ewart that, owing to the lateness of the hour and the threatening attitude assumed by the crowd on the hill, it would be necessary to postpone his march until the following morning. In consequence of this sudden, ill-timed announcement, Major Ewart applied to the king for the immediate readmission of his troops for shelter during the night; but the monarch, whose suspicions of foul play on the part of Muhammad Akbar were now fully awakened, positively refused to accede to the request. The prospect of passing the night in the low marshy ground under the walls, without tents, bedding, fire-wood, or food for officers or men, was sufficiently cheerless; while the fear of treachery on

the part of Muhammad Akbar, and the dangerous vicinity of an armed multitude, whose watch-fires already gleamed on the adjacent hills, tended but little to relieve the discomforts of such a situation. The cold was intensely bitter, and perhaps so miserable a night had never before been spent by Indian troops.

December 14*th*.—At an early hour this morning, Muhammad Akbar having declared his readiness to proceed, the troops commenced their march. The advance-guard was suffered to proceed unmolested; but the rear-guard, on reaching the base of the Siyáh Sang hill, was fired upon by the enemy, who crowned the ridge; and the iron 9-pounder being for a few moments accidentally separated from the column in crossing a water-cut, an instantaneous rush was made upon it by a number of Afgháns, and a poor sick European artilleryman, who for want of a more suitable conveyance had been lashed to the gun, was unmercifully butchered. The approach of the rear-guard, and a round or two of grape from the Mountain Train howitzer, drove off the assailants; and they were restrained from offering any additional annoyance by the exertions of Muhammad Akbar himself, who, galloping in amongst them with a few followers, threatened to cut down any who dared to be guilty of further opposition to the progress of the detachment, which accordingly reached cantonments safe at about 9 A.M.

December 16*th*.—Sháh Shujá having, for reasons best known to himself, withdrawn his consent to the arrangement which was to have continued him in the possession of his rights, the treaty resumed its original form; but the chiefs positively refused to supply provisions or forage, until we should further assure them of our sincerity by giving up every fort in the immediate vicinity of cantonments. Forage had for many days been so scarce, that the horses and cattle were kept alive by paring off the bark of trees, and by eating their own dung over and over again, which was regularly collected and spread before them. The camp-followers were destitute of other food than the flesh of animals which expired daily from starvation and cold. The daily consumption of átá by the fighting-men was about one hundred and fifty maunds, and not above two days' supply remained in store. By giving up the forts in question, all of which commanded the cantonment, we should place ourselves entirely at the mercy of the enemy, who could at any time render our position untenable. But our leaders now seemed to consider that we had no other chance left than to concede to the demands of the chiefs, however unreasonable; and our troops were accordingly withdrawn from the Rikábáshí, Magazine, and Zulfikár's forts, and from the Masjid opposite the western gate, all of which were forthwith occupied by the Afgháns, who, on their part, sent in Nassar-ullah Khán, a brother of Nawáb

Zamán Khán, as a hostage, and a supply of about one hundred and fifty maunds of átá for the troops. They likewise promised us two thousand camels and four hundred yábús for the march to Jallálábád.

December 18*th*.—The delay of the chiefs in furnishing the necessary carriage, and the Sháh's dilatoriness in deciding on his future course, compelled us from day to day to postpone our departure. Meanwhile the increasing severity of the winter rendered every hour's procrastination of the utmost consequence; and this morning our situation was rendered more desperate than ever by a heavy fall of snow, which covered the ground to the depth of five inches, and never afterwards disappeared. Thus a new enemy entered on the scene, which we were destined to find even more formidable than an army of rebels.

December 19*th*.—The Envoy wrote an order for the evacuation of Ghazní, and it was arranged that the 27th Native Infantry, which garrisoned the place, should march through the Zurmat valley, and pursue the route of Derá Ishmaíl Khán. The 22nd was fixed for our departure.

December 20*th*.—The Envoy had an interview with the chiefs, who now demanded that a portion of our guns and ammunition should be immediately given up. They also required Brigadier Shelton as a hostage. It was proposed by Lieutenant Sturt to the General to break off the treaty, and march forth-

with to Jallálábád, devoting all the means of transport we possessed to the service of the sick, and the conveyance of such public stores as were absolutely necessary. But neither the General nor his immediate advisers could bring themselves to adopt a course which would have saved the national honour, at the risk of sacrificing our whole force.

It has been truly said that a council of war never fights. A door of hope had, until this day, still remained open to us in the approach of Colonel Maclaren's force to our assistance from Kandahár; we now heard with despair of its retreat from Tází, in consequence of the snow.

December 21*st*.—The Envoy met Usmán Khán and Muhammad Akbar Khán on the plain, when four hostages were fixed upon, two of whom (Captains Conolly and Airey) were at once given over. Brigadier Shelton, having expressed a decided objection to undertake the duty, was not insisted upon. In the evening Captains Trevor and Drummond were permitted to return to cantonments, the latter officer having been concealed in the city since the 2nd of November.

December 22*nd*.—I was ordered to conduct an officer of Nawáb Zamán Khán over the magazine, that he might make choice of such stores as would be most acceptable to the chiefs. I recommended a large pile of 8-inch shells to his notice, which I knew would be of no use to the chiefs, as the mortars

were with Captain Abbott's battery at Jallálábád. He eagerly seized the bait, and departed in great glee, with his prize laden on some old ammunition-waggons.

The Envoy at the same time sent his carriage as a present to Muhammad Akbar Khán. That same night the last-named chief spread the net, into which Sir William Macnaghten was, on the following day, so miserably lured to his destruction. Captain Skinner, at this time living under Muhammad Akbar's protection, was made the bearer of proposals to the Envoy, of so advantageous a nature, as to prove, in his forlorn circumstances, irresistibly tempting.

Amin-ullah Khán, the most influential of the rebels, was to be seized on the following day, and delivered up to us as a prisoner. Muhammad Khán's fort was to be immediately occupied by one of our regiments, and the Bálá Hisár by another. Sháh Shujá was to continue king; Muhammad Akbar was to become his wazír, and our troops were to remain in their present position until the following spring. That a scheme like this, bearing impracticability on its very face, should have for a moment deceived a man of Sir William's usual intelligence and penetration, is indeed an extraordinary instance of infatuation, that can only be accounted for on the principle that a drowning man will catch at a straw. Our fortunes were now at their lowest ebb; the chiefs were appa-

rently delaying our departure until the snow should have formed an impassable barrier to the removal of our troops, who, even in the absence of an enemy, would but too probably perish from cold and famine. A treaty formed with men famed for falsehood and treachery, and who had already shown an utter disregard of some of its most important stipulations, could be regarded as little better than so much waste paper; added to which considerations, Sir William felt that his own fame was deeply involved in the issue of that policy,* of which he had from the very first been the prime advocate and upholder, and that with it he must stand or fall. The specious project of Muhammad Akbar offered a solution to the difficulties that beset his path, at which he grasped with an eagerness engendered by despair. The strength of the rebels had hitherto lain in their unanimity; the proposed stroke of policy would at once dissolve the confederacy, and open a road by which to retrieve our ruined fortunes. On either hand there was danger; and, miserable as Sir William's life had been for the past six weeks, he was willing to stake his all on the issue of a plan which seemed to offer a faint hope of recovering the ground we had lost.

In a fatal hour he signed his name to a paper consenting to the arrangement. His doom was sealed.

* That of invading Afghánistán for the purpose of restoring Sháh Shujá as king.

The whole was a scheme got up by the chiefs, to test his sincerity.

December 23rd.—At about noon Sir William Macnaghten, attended by Captains Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie, left the mission-house to attend a conference with Muhammad Akbar Khán on the plain towards Siyáh Sang. Previously to this he had requested the General that two regiments and two guns might be in readiness for secret service, and that, as the interview would be of a critical nature, the garrison might be kept well on the alert, and the walls strongly manned. In leaving the cantonments, Sir William expressed his disappointment at the paucity of men on the ramparts, and the apparent inertness of the garrison at such a critical moment, saying, "However, it is all of a piece with the military arrangements throughout the siege." On his leaving the gate only sixteen troopers of the Body-guard were in attendance, but the remainder shortly afterwards joined, under Lieutenant Le Geyt.

Sir William now for the first time explained to the officers who accompanied him the objects of the present conference, and Captain Lawrence was warned to be in readiness to gallop to the Bálá Hisár, to prepare the king for the approach of a regiment.

Apprehensions being expressed of the danger to which the scheme might expose him, in case of treachery on the part of Muhammad Akbar, he re-

plied, "Dangerous it is; but if it succeeds, it is worth all risks: the rebels have not fulfilled even one article of the treaty, and I have no confidence in them; and if by it we can only save our honour, all will be well. At any rate, I would rather suffer a hundred deaths than live the last six weeks over again."

Meanwhile crowds of armed Afgháns were observed hovering near the cantonment and about Muhammad Khán's fort, causing misgivings in the minds of all but the Envoy himself, whose confidence remained unshaken. On arriving near the bridge, they were met by Muhammad Akbar Khán, Muhammad Sháh Khán, Dost Muhammad Khán, Khuda Baksh Khán, Azád Khán, and other chiefs, amongst whom was the brother of Amín-ullah Khán, whose presence might have been sufficient to convince Sir William that he had been duped.

The usual civilities having passed, the Envoy presented Akbar Khán with a valuable Arab horse, which had only that morning been purchased for three thousand rúpís. The whole party then sat down near some rising ground, which partially concealed them from cantonments.

Captain Lawrence having called attention to the number of inferior followers around them, with a view to their being ordered to a distance, Muhammad Akbar exclaimed, "No, they are all in the secret;"

which words had scarcely been uttered, when Sir William and his three companions found themselves suddenly grasped firmly by the hands from behind, whilst their swords and pistols were rudely snatched away by the chiefs and their followers. The three officers were immediately pulled forcibly along and compelled to mount on horseback, each behind a Ghalzí chief, escorted by a number of armed retainers, who with difficulty repelled the efforts of a crowd of fanatic Gházís, who, on seeing the affray, had rushed to the spot, calling aloud for the blood of the hated infidels, aiming at them desperate blows with their long knives and other weapons, and only deterred from firing by the fear of killing a chief. The unfortunate Envoy was last seen struggling violently with Muhammad Akbar, "consternation and horror depicted on his countenance."

On their nearing Muhammad Khán's fort, renewed attempts were made to assassinate the three captive officers by the crowd there assembled. Captain Trevor, who was seated behind Dost Muhammad Khán, unhappily fell to the ground, and was instantly slain. Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie reached the fort in safety, but the latter was much bruised in various parts of his body, and both were greatly exhausted from the excitement they had undergone.

At the entrance of the fort, a furious cut was aimed at Captain Mackenzie's head by a ruffian named

Mullah Múmin, which was warded off by Muhammad Sháh Khán, that chief receiving the blow on his own shoulder. Being taken into a small room, they found themselves still in continual jeopardy from repeated assaults of the Gházís without, who were with the greatest difficulty restrained from shooting them through the window, where the hand of some recent European victim (afterwards ascertained to be that of the Envoy himself) was insultingly held up to their view. Throughout this trying scene they received repeated assurances of protection from the Ghalzí chiefs; but Amín-ullah Khán coming in gave vent to a torrent of angry abuse, and even threatened to blow them from a gun. It is deserving of notice, that, amidst the congratulations which on all sides met the ear of Muhammad Sháh Khán on the events of the day, the solitary voice of an aged Mullá was raised in condemnation of the deed, which he solemnly pronounced to be "foul" and calculated to cast a lasting disgrace on the religion of Muhammad. At midnight they were removed to the house of Muhammad Akbar Khán. As they passed through the streets of Kábul, notwithstanding the excitement that had prevailed throughout the day, it resembled a city of the dead; nor did they meet a single soul.

By Akbar Khán they were received courteously, and were now informed for the first time by Captain Skinner of the murder of the Envoy and Captain

Trevor. That Sir William Macnaghten met his death at the hands of Muhammad Akbar himself there can be no reasonable doubt. That chief had pledged himself to his coadjutors to seize the Envoy that day, and bring him into the city, when the chiefs hoped to have been able to dictate their own terms, retaining him as a hostage for their fulfilment. Finding it impossible, from the strenuous resistance Sir William offered, to carry him off alive, and yet determined not to disappoint the public expectation altogether,—influenced also by his tiger passions, and the remembrance of his father's wrongs,—Muhammad Akbar drew a pistol, the Envoy's own gift a few hours before, and shot him through the body, which was immediately hacked to pieces by the ferocious Gházís, by whom the dismembered trunk was afterwards carried to the city, and publicly exposed in the Chár Chauk, or principal mart. The head was taken to the house of Nawáb Zamán Khán, where it was triumphantly exhibited to Captain Conolly.

Such was the cruel fate of Sir William Macnaghten, the accomplished scholar, the distinguished politician, and the representative of Great Britain at the court of Sháh Shujá-ul-Mulk.

It cannot but be acceptable to my readers, if I here present entire the interesting and important letters of Captains Mackenzie and Lawrence on this melancholy subject.

Letter addressed by CAPTAIN C. MACKENZIE *to* LIEUTENANT VINCENT EYRE.

MY DEAR EYRE,

YOU ask for a minute account of the circumstances attending the assassination of the late Sir William Macnaghten, and my own detention and imprisonment on that occasion. You may remember that, for many days previous to the fatal 23rd December, the poor Envoy had been subjected to more wear and tear, both of body and mind, than it was possible for the most iron frame and the strongest intellect to bear without deeply feeling its effects. He had fulfilled all the preliminary conditions of the treaty which had been proposed between the British and the Afghán insurgents, whereas the Kháns had in no one particular adhered to their engagements. Bad faith was evident in all their proceedings, and our condition was a desperate one; more especially as Sir William had ascertained, by bitter experience, that no hope remained in the energies and resources of our military leaders, who had formally protested that they could do nothing more. Beset by this disgraceful imbecility on the one hand, and by systematic treachery on the other, the unfortunate Envoy was driven to his wits' end, and, as will be seen, forgot, in a fatal moment, the wholesome rule which he had theretofore laid down for himself, of refusing to hold communication with individuals of the rebel party, especially with him who was notorious, even amongst his villanous countrymen, for ferocity and treachery, to wit, Muhammad Akbar Khán. Late in the evening

of the 22nd December, Captain James Skinner, who, after having been concealed in Kábul during the greater part of the siege, had latterly been the guest of Muhammad Akbar, arrived in cantonments, accompanied by Muhammad Sadíq Khán, a first cousin of Muhammad Akbar, and by Sirwár Khán, the Arhání merchant who in the beginning of the campaign had furnished the army with camels, and who had been much in the confidence of Sir A. Burnes, being in fact one of our staunchest friends. The two latter remained in a different apartment, while Skinner dined with the Envoy. During dinner, Skinner jestingly remarked that he felt as if laden with combustibles, being charged with a message from Muhammad Akbar to the Envoy of a most portentous nature.

Even then I remarked that the Envoy's eye glanced eagerly towards Skinner with an expression of hope. In fact, he was like a drowning man catching at straws. Skinner, however, referred him to his Afghán companions, and after dinner the four retired into a room by themselves. My knowledge of what there took place is gained from poor Skinner's own relation, as given during my subsequent captivity with him in Akbar's house. Muhammad Sadíq disclosed Muhammad Akbar's proposition to the Envoy, which was, that the following day Sir William should meet him (Muhammad Akbar) and a few of his immediate friends, viz. the chiefs of the Eastern Ghalzís, outside the cantonments, when a final agreement should be made, so as to be fully understood by both parties; that Sir William should have a considerable body of troops in readiness, which, on a given signal, were

to join with those of Muhammad Akbar and the Ghalzís, assault and take Mahmúd Khán's fort, and secure the person of Amín-ullah. At this stage of the proposition Muhammad Sadíq signified that, for a certain sum of money, the head of Amín-ullah should be presented to the Envoy; but from this Sir William shrunk with abhorrence, declaring that it was neither his custom nor that of his country to give a price for blood. Muhammad Sadíq then went on to say, that, after having subdued the rest of the Kháns, the English should be permitted to remain in the country eight months longer, so as to save their *purdah* (veil, or credit), but that they were then to evacuate Afghánistán, as if of their own accord; that Sháh Shujá was to continue king of the country, and that Muhammad Akbar was to be his wazír. As a further reward for his (Muhammad Akbar's) assistance, the British Government were to pay him thirty lacs of rupees, and four lacs of rupees per annum during his life! To this extraordinary and wild proposal, Sir William gave ear with an eagerness which nothing can account for but the supposition, confirmed by many other circumstances, that his strong mind had been harassed, until it had, in some degree, lost its equipoise; and he not only assented fully to these terms, but actually gave a Persian paper to that effect, written in his own hand, declaring as his motives that it was not only an excellent opportunity to carry into effect the real wishes of Government, which were to evacuate the country with as much credit to ourselves as possible, but that it would give England time to enter into a

treaty with Russia, defining the bounds beyond which neither were to pass in Central Asia. So ended this fatal conference, the nature and result of which, contrary to his usual custom, Sir William communicated to none of those who, on all former occasions, were fully in his confidence, viz. Trevor, Lawrence, and myself. It seemed as if he feared that we might insist on the impracticability of the plan, which he must have studiously concealed from himself. All the following morning his manner was distracted and hurried in a way that none of us had ever before witnessed. It seems that Muhammad Akbar had demanded a favourite Arab horse, belonging to Captain Grant, Assistant Adjutant-General of the force. To avoid the necessity of parting with the animal, Captain Grant had fixed his price at the exorbitant sum of five thousand rupees; unwilling to give so large a price, but determined to gratify the Sirdár, Sir William sent me to Captain Grant to prevail upon him to take a smaller sum, but with orders that if he were peremptory, the five thousand rupees should be given. I obtained the horse for three thousand rupees, and Sir William appeared much pleased with the prospect of gratifying Muhammad Akbar by the present.

After breakfast, Trevor, Lawrence, and myself were summoned to attend the Envoy during his conference with Muhammad Akbar Khán. I found him alone, when, for the first time, he disclosed to me the nature of the transaction he was engaged in. I immediately warned him that it was a plot against him. He replied hastily, "A plot! let me alone for that, trust me for that!" and

I consequently offered no further remonstrance. Sir William then arranged with General Elphinstone that the 54th Regiment, under Major Ewart, should be held in readiness for immediate service. The Sháh's 6th, and two guns, were also warned. It is a curious circumstance, and betrays the unhappy vacillation of poor Elphinstone, that, after Sir William had actually quitted the cantonment in full expectation that everything had been arranged according to his desire, he (the General) addressed a letter to him, which never reached him, remonstrating on the danger of the proposed attack, and strongly objecting to the employment of the two above regiments. About 12 o'clock Sir William, Trevor, Lawrence, and myself set forth on our ill-omened expedition. As we approached the Siyáh Sang gate, Sir William observed with much vexation that the troops were not in readiness, protesting at the same time, however, that, desperate as the proposed attempt was, it was better that it should be made, and that a thousand deaths were preferable to the life he had lately led.

After passing the gate, he remembered the horse which he had intended as a present for Akbar, and sent me back for it. When I rejoined him I found that the small number of the body-guard who had accompanied him, had been ordered to halt, and that he, Trevor, and Lawrence, had advanced in the direction of Mahmúd Khán's fort, being some five hundred or six hundred yards from the eastern rampart, and were there awaiting the approach of Muhammad Akbar and his party, who now made their appearance. Close by were some hillocks,

on the further side of which from the cantonment a carpet was spread where the snow lay least thick, and there the Kháns and Sir William sat down to hold their conference. Men talk of presentiment; I suppose it was something of the kind which came over me, for I could scarcely prevail upon myself to quit my horse. I did so, however, and was invited to sit down among the Sirdárs. After the usual salutations Muhammad Akbar commenced business, by asking the Envoy if he was perfectly ready to carry into effect the proposition of the preceding night? The Envoy replied, "Why not?" My attention was then called off by an old Afghán acquaintance of mine, formerly chief of the Kábul police, by name Ghulám Muyan-ud-dín. I rose from my recumbent posture, and stood apart with him conversing. I afterwards remembered that my friend betrayed much anxiety as to where my pistols were, and why I did not carry them on my person. I answered that although I wore my sword for form, it was not necessary at a friendly conference to be armed *cap-a-pie*. His discourse was also full of extravagant compliments, I suppose for the purpose of lulling me to sleep. At length my attention was called off from what he was saying, by observing that a number of men, armed to the teeth, had gradually approached to the scene of conference, and were drawing round in a sort of circle. This Lawrence and myself pointed out to some of the chief men, who affected at first to drive them off with whips; but Muhammad Akbar observed that it was of no consequence, as they were in the secret. I again resumed my

conversation with Ghulám Muyan-ud-dín, when suddenly I heard Muhammad Akbar call out, "Bigír! Bigír!" (seize! seize!), and turning round, I saw him grasp the Envoy's left hand with an expression in his face of the most diabolical ferocity. I think it was Sultán Ján who laid hold of the Envoy's right hand. They dragged him in a stooping posture down the hillock, the only words I heard poor Sir William utter being "Az baráí Khudá!" (for God's sake!) I saw his face however, and it was full of horror and astonishment. I did not see what became of Trevor, but Lawrence was dragged past me by several Afgháns, whom I saw wrest his weapons from him. Up to this moment I was so engrossed in observing what was taking place, that I actually was not aware that my own right arm was mastered, that my urbane friend held a pistol to my temple, and that I was surrounded by a circle of Gházís with drawn swords and cocked jazails. Resistance was in vain, so listening to the exhortations of Ghulám Muyan-ud-dín, which were enforced by the whistling of divers bullets over my head, I hurried through the snow with him to the place where his horse was standing, being despoiled *en route* of my sabre, and narrowly escaping divers attempts made on my life. As I mounted behind my captor, now my energetic defender, the crowd increased around us, the cries of "Kill the Káfir" became more vehement, and, although we hurried on at a fast canter, it was with the utmost difficulty Ghulám Muyan-ud-dín, although assisted by one or two friends or followers, could ward off and avoid the sword cuts aimed at me, the rascals being afraid to

fire lest they should kill my conductor. Indeed he was obliged to wheel his horse round once, and taking off his turban (the last appeal a Mussulmán can make), to implore them for God's sake to respect the life of his friend. At last, ascending a slippery bank, the horse fell. My cap had been snatched off, and I now received a heavy blow on the head from a bludgeon, which fortunately did not quite deprive me of my senses. I had sufficient sense left to shoot ahead of the fallen horse, where my protector with another man joined me, and clasping me in their arms, hurried me towards the wall of Muhammad Khán's fort. How I reached the spot where Muhammad Akbar was receiving the gratulations of the multitude, I know not, but I remember a fanatic rushing on me and twisting his hand in my collar until I became exhausted from suffocation. I must do Muhammad Akbar the justice to say, that, finding the Ghází bent on my slaughter, even after I had reached his stirrup, he drew his sword and laid about him right manfully, for my conductor and Mirza Bahá-ud-dín Khán were obliged to press me up against the wall, covering me with their own bodies, and protesting that no blow should reach me, but through their persons.

Pride, however, overcame Muhammad Akbar's sense of courtesy, when he thought I was safe, for he then turned round to me, and repeatedly said in a tone of triumphant derision, "Shumá mulk-i-má me-gíred!" (*You'll* seize my country, will you!) He then rode off, and I was hurried towards the gate of the fort. Here new dangers awaited me, for Mullá Múmin, fresh from

the slaughter of poor Trevor, who was killed riding close behind me,—Sultán Ján having the credit of having given him the first sabre cut,—stood here with his followers, whom he exhorted to slay me, setting them the example by cutting fiercely at me himself. Fortunately a gun stood between us, but still he would have effected his purpose, had not Muhammad Sháh Khán at that instant, with some followers, come to my assistance. These drew their swords in my defence, the chief himself throwing his arm round my neck, and receiving on his shoulder a cut aimed by Mullá Múmin at my head. During the bustle I pushed forward into the fort, and was immediately taken to a sort of dungeon, where I found Lawrence safe, but somewhat exhausted by his hideous ride and the violence he had sustained, although unwounded. Here the Ghalzí chiefs, Muhammad Sháh Khán, and his brother Dost Muhammad Khán, presently joined us, and endeavoured to cheer up our flagging spirits, assuring us that the Envoy and Trevor were not dead, but on the contrary quite well. They stayed with us during the afternoon, their presence being absolutely necessary for our protection. Many attempts were made by the fanatics to force the door, to accomplish our destruction. Others spit at us and abused us through a small window, through which one fellow levelled a blunderbuss at us, which was struck up by our keepers and himself thrust back. At last Amín-ullah made his appearance, and threatened us with instant death. Some of his people most officiously advanced to make good his word,

until pushed back by the Ghalzí chiefs, who remonstrated with this iniquitous old monster, their master, whom they persuaded to relieve us from his hateful presence. During the afternoon a human hand was held up in mockery to us at the window. We said that it had belonged to an European, but were not aware at the time that it was actually the hand of the poor Envoy. Of all the Muhammadans assembled in the room discussing the events of the day, one only, an old Mullá, openly and fearlessly condemned the acts of his brethren, declaring that the treachery was abominable, and a disgrace to Islám. At night they brought us food, and gave us each a postín to sleep on. At midnight we were awakened to go to the house of Muhammad Akbar in the city. Muhammad Sháh Khán then, with the meanness common to all Afgháns of rank, robbed Lawrence of his watch, while his brother did me a similar favour. I had been plundered of my rings and everything else, previously, by the under-strappers.

Reaching Muhammad Akbar's abode, we were shown into the room where he lay in bed. He received us with great outward show of courtesy, assuring us of the welfare of the Envoy and Trevor, but there was a constraint in his manner for which I could not account. We were shortly taken to another apartment, where we found Skinner, who had returned, being on parole, early in the morning. Doubt and gloom marked our meeting, and the latter was fearfully deepened by the intelligence which we now received from our fellow-captive of the base murder of Sir William and Trevor. He informed us that the

head of the former had been carried about the city in triumph. We of course spent a miserable night. The next day we were taken under a strong guard to the house of Zamán Khán, where a council of the Kháns was being held. Here we found Captains Conolly and Airey, who had some days previously been sent to the Nawáb's house as hostage for the performance of certain parts of the treaty which was to have been entered into. A violent discussion took place, in which Muhammad Akbar bore the most prominent part. We were vehemently accused of treachery, and everything that was bad, and told that the whole of the transactions of the night previous had been a trick of Muhammad Akbar, and Amín-ullah, to ascertain the Envoy's sincerity. They declared that they would now grant us no terms, save on the surrender of the whole of the married families as hostages, all the guns, ammunition, and treasure. At this time Conolly told me that on the preceding day the Envoy's head had been paraded about in the court-yard; that his and Trevor's bodies had been hung up in the public bazár, or *chauk;* and that it was with the greatest difficulty that the old Nawáb, Zamán Khán, had saved him and Airey from being murdered by a body of fanatics, who had attempted to rush into the room where they were. Also that previous to the arrival of Lawrence, Skinner, and myself, Muhammad Akbar had been relating the events of the preceding day to the *Jírga*, or council, and that he had unguardedly avowed having, while endeavouring to force the Envoy either to mount on horseback or to move more

quickly, *struck* him, and that, seeing Conolly's eye fastened upon him with an expression of intense indignation, he had altered the phrase and said, "I mean I *pushed* him." After an immense deal of gabble, a proposal for a renewal of the treaty, not, however, demanding all the guns, was determined to be sent to the cantonments, and Skinner, Lawrence, and myself, were marched back to Akbar's house, enduring *en route* all manner of threats and insults. Here we were closely confined in an inner apartment, which was indeed necessary for our safety. That evening we received a visit from Muhammad Akbar, Sultán Ján, and several other Afgháns. Muhammad Akbar exhibited his double-barrelled pistols to us, which he had worn the previous day, requesting us to put their locks to rights, something being amiss. *Two of the barrels had been recently discharged*, which he endeavoured, in a most confused way, to account for by saying that he had been charged by a havildár of the escort, and had fired both barrels at him. Now, all the escort had run away without even attempting to charge, the only man who advanced to the rescue having been a Hindú Jemadár of Chaprásís, who was instantly cut to pieces by the assembled Ghází's. This defence he made without any accusation on our part, betraying the anxiety of a liar to be believed. On the 26th, Captain Lawrence was taken to the house of Amín-ullah, whence he did not return to us. Captain Skinner and myself remained in Akbar's house until the 30th. During this time we were civilly treated, and conversed with numbers of Afghán gentlemen who came to visit us. Some of them

asserted that the Envoy had been murdered by the unruly soldiery. Others could not deny that Akbar himself was the assassin. For two or three days we had a fellow-prisoner in poor Sirwár Khán, who had been deceived throughout the whole matter, and out of whom they were then endeavouring to screw money. He of course was aware from his countrymen that, not only had Akbar committed the murder, but that he protested to the Ghází that he gloried in the deed. On one occasion a múnshí of Major Pottinger, who had escaped from Chárikár, named Mohan Bír, came direct from the presence of Muhammad Akbar to visit us. He told us that Muhammad Akbar had begun to see the impolicy of having murdered the Envoy, which fact he had just avowed to him, shedding many tears either of pretended remorse, or of real vexation, at having committed himself. On several occasions Muhammad Akbar personally, and by deputy, besought Skinner and myself to give him advice as to how he was to extricate himself from the dilemma in which he was placed, more than once endeavouring to excuse himself for not having effectually protected the Envoy, by saying that Sir William had drawn a sword-stick upon him. It seems that meanwhile the renewed negotiations with Major Pottinger, who had assumed the Envoy's place in cantonments, had been brought to a head, for, on the night of the 30th, Akbar furnished me with an Afghán dress (Skinner already wore one) and sent us both back to cantonments. Several Afgháns, with whom I fell in afterwards, protested to me that they had seen Muhammad Akbar shoot the Envoy with his own hand; amongst them Mirza Bahá-ud-dín

Khán, who, being an old acquaintance, always retained a sneaking kindness for the English.

I am, my dear Eyre, yours very truly,

C. MACKENZIE.

Kábul, 29th July, 1842.

Letter addressed by CAPTAIN G. ST. P. LAWRENCE, *late Military Secretary to the Envoy, to* MAJOR POTTINGER, C.B., *late in charge of the Kábul Mission.*

SIR,

IN compliance with your request, I have the honour to detail the particulars of my capture, and of the death of my ever-to-be-lamented chief.

On the morning of the 23rd December, at 11 A.M., I received a note from the late Sir W. H. Macnaghten, warning me to attend, with Captains Trevor and Mackenzie, an interview he was about to have with Sirdár Muhammad Akbar Khán. Accordingly, with the above-named officers, at about 12, I accompanied Sir William, having previously heard him tell Major-General Elphinstone to have two regiments of infantry and two guns ready for secret service. In passing through cantonments, on my observing that there were more Afgháns in cantonments than usual, or than I deemed safe, the Envoy directed one of his Afghán attendants to proceed and cause them all to leave, at the same time remarking how

strange it was that, although the General was fully acquainted with the then very critical state of affairs, no preparations appeared to have been made, adding, "However, it is all of a piece with the military arrangements throughout the siege." He then said, "There is not enough of the escort with us," to which I replied, that he had only ordered eight or ten, but that I had brought sixteen, and that I would send for the remainder, which I accordingly did, asking Lieutenant Le Geyt to bring them, and to tell Brigadier Shelton, who had expressed a wish to attend the next interview, that he might accompany them. On passing the gate, we observed some hundreds of armed Afgháns within a few yards of it, on which I called to the officer on duty to get the reserve under arms, and brought outside to disperse them, and to send to the General to have the garrison on the alert. Towards Mahmúd Khán's fort were a number of armed Afgháns, but we observed none nearer.

The Envoy now told us that he, on the night previous, had received a proposal from Sirdár Muhammad Akbar Khán to which he had agreed, and that he had every reason to hope it would bring our present difficulties to an early and happy termination; that Muhammad Akbar Khán was to give up Naib Amín-ullah Khán as a prisoner to us, for which purpose a regiment was to proceed to Mahmúd Khán's fort, and another corps was to occupy the Bálá Hisár. Sir William then warned me to be ready to gallop to the king with the intelligence of the approach of the regiment, and to acquaint him with Akbar's proposal. On one of us remarking that the scheme seemed

a dangerous one, and asking if he did not apprehend any treachery, he replied: "Dangerous it is, but, if it succeeds, it is worth all risks; the rebels have not fulfilled even one article of the treaty, and I have no confidence in them, and if by it we can only save our honour, all will be well; at any rate, I would rather suffer a hundred deaths than live the last six weeks over again." We proceeded to near the usual spot, and met Sirdár Muhammad Akbar Khán, who was accompanied by several Ghalzí chiefs, Muhammad Sháh Khán, Dost Muhammad Khán, Khudá Baksh Khán, Azád Khán, &c. After the usual salutations, the Envoy presented a valuable horse which Akbar had asked for, and which had been that morning purchased from Captain Grant for three thousand rupees. The Sirdár acknowledged the attention, and expressed his thanks for a handsome brace of double-barrelled pistols which the Envoy had purchased from me, and sent to him, with his carriage and pair of horses, the day before.

The party dismounted, and horse-cloths were spread on a small hillock which partially concealed us from cantonments, and which was chosen, they said, as being free from snow. The Envoy threw himself on the bank with Muhammad Akbar and Captains Trevor and Mackenzie beside him; I stood behind Sir William till, pressed by Dost Muhammad Khán, I knelt on one knee, having first called the Envoy's attention to the number of Afgháns around us, saying that if the subject of the conference was of that secret nature I believed it to be, they had better be removed. He spoke to Muhammad Akbar, who

replied, "No, they are all in the secret." Hardly had he so said, when I found my arms locked, my pistols and sword wrenched from my belt, and myself forcibly raised from the ground and pushed along, Muhammad Sháh Khán, who held me, calling out, "Come along, if you value your life." I turned, and saw the Envoy lying, his head where his heels had been, and his hands locked in Muhammad Akbar's, consternation and horror depicted in his countenance. Seeing I could do nothing, I let myself be pulled on by Muhammad Sháh Khán. Some shots were fired, and I was hurried to his horse, on which he jumped, telling me to get up behind, which I did, and we proceeded, escorted by several armed men who kept off a crowd of Gházís, who sprang up on every side shouting for me to be given up for them to slay, cutting at me with their swords and knives, and poking me in the ribs with their guns: they were afraid to fire, lest they should injure their chief. The horsemen kept them pretty well off, but not sufficiently so to prevent my being much bruised. In this manner we hurried towards Muhammad Khán's fort, near which we met some hundreds of horsemen who were keeping off the Gházís, who here were in greater numbers, and more vociferous for my blood. We, however, reached the fort in safety, and I was pushed into a small room, Muhammad Sháh Khán returning to the gate of the fort and bringing in Captain Mackenzie, whose horse had there fallen. This he did, receiving a cut through his nímcha (Scother coat) on his arm, which was aimed at that officer, who was ushered into the room with me, much exhausted and bruised from blows on his

head and body. We sat down with some soldiers who were put over us with a view to protect us from the mob, who now surrounded the house, and who till dark continued execrating and spitting at us, calling on the men to give us up to be slaughtered.

One produced a hand (European) which appeared to have been recently cut off; another presented a blunderbuss, and was about to fire it, when it was knocked aside by one of our guard. Several of the Sirdárs came in during the day, and told us to be assured that no harm should befall us; that the Envoy and Trevor were safe in the city (a falsehood, as will be afterwards seen). Naib Amín-ullah Khán and his sons came also. The former, in great wrath, said that we either should be, or deserved to be, blown away from a gun. Muhammad Sháh Khán and Dost Muhammad Khán begged he would not so talk, and took him out of the room. Towards night food was given to us, and postíns to sleep on: our watches, rings, and silk handkerchiefs were taken from us; but in all other respects we were unmolested. The followers of Muhammad Sháh Khán repeatedly congratulated him on the events of the day, with one exception, viz. an old Mullá, who loudly exclaimed that "the name of the faithful was tarnished, and that in future no belief could be placed in them; that the deed was foul and could never be of advantage to the authors." At midnight we were taken through the city to the house of Muhammad Akbar Khán, who received us courteously, lamenting the occurrences of the day: here we found Captain Skinner, and for the first time heard the dreadful and astounding intelligence

of the murder of the Envoy and Captain Trevor, and that our lamented chief's head had been paraded through the city in triumph, and his trunk, after being dragged through the streets, stuck up in the Chár Chauk, the most conspicuous part of the town. Captain Skinner told us, that the report was, that on Muhammad Akbar Khán's telling Sir William to accompany him, he refused, resisted, and pushed the Sirdár from him; that in consequence he was immediately shot and his body cut to pieces by the Gházís; that Captain Trevor had been conveyed behind Dost Muhammad Khán as far as Muhammad Khán's fort, where he was cut down, but that his body was not mangled, though carried in triumph through the city. On the following morning (24th) we (Captain Skinner, Mackenzie, and self) were taken to Nawáb Zamán Khán's house, escorted by Sultán Ján and other chiefs, to protect us from the Gházís; there we met Captains Conolly and Airey (hostages) and all the rebel Sirdárs assembled in council. The Envoy's death was lamented, but his conduct severely censured, and it was said that now no faith could be placed in our words. A new treaty, however, was discussed, and sent to the General and Major Pottinger, and towards evening we returned as we came to Muhammad Akbar's, where I remained a prisoner, but well and courteously treated till the morning of the 26th, when I was sent to Naib Amín-ullah Khán. On reaching his house I was ushered into his private apartment. The Naib received me kindly, showed me the Envoy's original letter in reply to Muhammad Akbar's proposition, touching his being made Sháh Shujá's Wazír, receiving a lakh

of rupees on giving the Naib a prisoner to us, thirty lakhs on the final settlement of the insurrection, &c. To this the Naib added that the Envoy had told Muhammad Akbar's cousin that a lakh of rupees would be given for his (Amín-ullah Khán's) head. I promptly replied, "'Tis false," that Sir William had never done so, that it was utterly foreign and repugnant to his nature, and to British usage. The Naib expressed himself in strong terms against the Envoy, contrasting his own fair and open conduct with that of Sir William. He told me that General Elphinstone and Major Pottinger had begged I might be released, as my presence was necessary to enable them to prepare bills on India, which it had been arranged the Sirdárs were to get. After some delay, consequent on my asking for Captain Mackenzie to be released with me, and Muhammad Akbar's stoutly refusing the release of either of us, I was sent into cantonments on the morning of the 29th, escorted by the Naib's eldest son and a strong party of horse and foot, being disguised as an Afghán for my greater protection. I must here record that nothing could exceed the Naib's kindness and attention to me while under his roof.

I have, &c. &c.,

(Signed) G. St. P. Lawrence,
Military Secretary,
Late Envoy and Minister.

Camp Zúdáh,
Ten miles south of Tizín.
10*th May*, 1842.

CHAPTER XII.

SUSPENSE IN CANTONMENT. — COUNCIL OF WAR. — TERMS ACCEPTED. — HOSTAGES GIVEN. — POSTPONEMENT OF DEPARTURE.

But what were our troops about all this time? Were no steps taken to rescue the Envoy and his friends from their perilous position? Where was the body-guard which followed them from cantonments? These questions will naturally occur to all who read the foregoing pages, and I wish it were in my power to render satisfactory answers.

The Native body-guard had only got a few hundred yards from the gate in their progress to the scene of conference, when they suddenly faced about and came galloping back, several shots being fired at them in their retreat. Lieutenant Le Geyt, in passing through the gate, exclaimed that the Envoy had been carried off, and it was understood that, finding his men would not advance to the rescue, he came back for assistance.

Intense was the anxiety and wretched the suspense felt by all during the rest of the day. A number of Afgháns, who were trafficking in cantonments at the time of the conference, on hearing the report of fire-arms in that direction, endeavoured to escape, but were detained by the officer at the gate. No certain tidings regarding the Envoy could be obtained: many confidently affirmed that he was alive and unharmed in Muhammad's fort; but Lieutenant Warren stoutly maintained that he had kept his eye upon Sir William from the moment of his leaving the gate, and had distinctly seen him fall to the ground, and the Afgháns hacking at his body. The agony of his poor wife during this dread interval of suspense may be imagined.

December 24th.—The fate of the Envoy and his three companions remained a mystery, until the arrival of a note from Captain Conolly notifying his death and that of Captain Trevor, and the safety of Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie.

The two latter officers had been that morning escorted to a conference of chiefs at the house of Nawáb Zamán Khán, where the late Envoy's conduct was severely commented on; but his death was nevertheless lamented. The treaty was again discussed; and, after a few alterations and additions had been made, it was sent to General Elphinstone, with an explanation of the breach of faith which had cost the Envoy his life.

General Elphinstone now requested Major Pottinger

to assume the office of political agent and adviser, which, though still suffering greatly from his wound, and incapacitated from active bodily exertion, that gallant officer's strict sense of public duty forbade him to decline, although he plainly perceived our affairs to be so irretrievably ruined as to render the distinction anything but enviable, or likely to improve his hardly-earned fame.

The additional clauses in the treaty now proposed for our renewed acceptance were—1st. That we should leave behind all our guns excepting six. 2nd. That we should immediately give up all our treasures. 3rd. That the hostages should be all exchanged for married men, with their wives and families. The difficulties of Major Pottinger's position will be readily perceived when it is borne in mind that he had before him the most conclusive evidence of the late Envoy's ill-advised intrigue with Muhammad Akbar Khán, in direct violation of that very treaty which was now once more tendered for consideration.

December 25th.—A more cheerless Christmas-day perhaps never dawned upon British soldiers in a strange land; and the few whom the force of habit urged to exchange the customary greetings of the season, did so with countenances and in tones indicative of anything but merriment. At night there was an alarm, and the drum beat to arms, but nothing occurred of any consequence.

December 26th.—Letters were received from Captain Mackeson, political agent at Pesháwar, announcing the march of strong reinforcements from India. An offer was made by Muhammad Usmán Khán to escort us all safe to Pesháwar for five lakhs of rupees; and shortly after this the Naib Amír arrived, with a verbal agreement to certain amendments which had been proposed in the treaty by Major Pottinger. He was accompanied by a Káshmír merchant and several Hindú sharofs, for the purpose of negotiating bills to the amount of fourteen lakhs of rupees, payable to the several chiefs on the promise of the late Envoy.

Major Pottinger being altogether averse from the payment of this money, and indeed strongly opposed to any treaty binding the Indian Government to a course of policy which it might find inconvenient to adopt, a council-of-war was convened by the General, consisting of himself, Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, Colonel Chambers, Captain Bellew, Assistant Quartermaster-General, and Captain Grant, Assistant Adjutant-General. In the presence of this council, Major Pottinger declared his conviction that no confidence could be placed in any treaty formed with the Afghán chiefs; that, under such circumstances, to bind the hands of Government, by promising to evacuate the country, and to restore the deposed Amír, and to waste moreover so much public money, merely to save our own lives and property, would be inconsistent with the

duty we owed our country and the Government we served; and that the only honourable course would be either to hold out to the last at Kábul, or to force our immediate retreat to Jallálábád.

This, however, the officers composing the council, one and all, declared to be impracticable, owing to the want of provisions, the surrender of the surrounding forts, and the insuperable difficulties of the road at the present season; they therefore deemed it preferable to pay any sum of money rather than sacrifice the whole force in a hopeless prolongation of hostilities. It was accordingly determined, *nem. con.*, that Major Pottinger should at once renew the negotiations which had been commenced by Sir William Macnaghten, and that the sums promised to the chiefs by that functionary previous to his murder should be paid.

Major Pottinger's objections being thus over-ruled, the tendered treaty was forthwith accepted, and a requisition was made for the release of Captain Lawrence, whose presence was necessary to prepare the bills on India. Four married hostages, with their wives and children, being required by the chiefs, a circular was sent round, to ascertain if that number would volunteer to remain, a salary of two thousand rúpís per month being guaranteed to each as an inducement.

Such, however, was the horror entertained of Afghán treachery since the late tragical occurrence, that some officers went so far as to say they would sooner shoot their

wives at once, than commit them to the charge of men who had proved themselves devoid of common honour and humanity. There were, in fact, but one or two who consented to stay, if the General considered that by so doing they would benefit the public service.

[The following are the replies, as given by Lady Sale :—

"Lieutenant Eyre said, *if it was to be productive of great good he would stay with his wife and child.* The others all refused to risk the safety of their families. Captain Anderson said he would rather put a pistol to his wife's head and shoot her; and Sturt, that his wife and mother should only be taken at the point of the bayonet : for himself, he was ready to perform any duty imposed upon him."

The simple fact is, that on the question being put officially, Lieutenant Eyre replied that he was ready to do whatever the General might think most *conducive to the public good* under the circumstances."]

December 27th.—The chiefs were informed that it was contrary to the usages of war to give up ladies as hostages, and that the General could not consent to an arrangement which would brand him with perpetual disgrace in his own country.

December 29th.—The Naib Amír came in from the city with Captain Lawrence and the sharofs, when the bills were prepared without farther delay. Captains Drummond, Walsh, Warburton, and Webb,

having been accepted as hostages, were sent to join Captains Conolly and Airey at the house of Nawáb Zamán Khán. A portion of the sick and wounded, amongst whom was Lieutenant Haughton of the Gúrkah regiment, were likewise conveyed to the city, and placed under the protection of the chiefs. Three of the Sháh's guns, with the greater portion of our treasure, were made over during the day, much to the evident disgust of the soldiery.

December 30*th*.—The remainder of the sick went into the city, Lieutenant Evans, Her Majesty's 44th Foot, being placed in command; Dr. Campbell, 54th Natve Infantry, with Dr. Berwick, of the Mission, in medical charge of the whole. Two more of the Sháh's guns were given up. It snowed hard the whole day. A crowd of armed Ghalzís and Gházís took up a threatening position close to the eastern gate, and even attempted to force an entrance into cantonments. Much annoyance was daily experienced from these people, who were in the habit of plundering the peaceable dealers, who flocked in from the city with grain and forage, the moment they issued from the cantonments; they even committed frequent assaults on our Sepoys, and orders to fire on them on such occasions where repeatedly solicited in vain, although it was well known that the chiefs themselves advised us to do so, and the General had given Brigadier Shelton positive instructions to that effect, whenever

circumstances might render it advisable. The consequence was that our soldiers were daily constrained to endure the most insulting and contemptuous taunts and treatment, from fellows whom a single charge of bayonets would have scattered like chaff, but who were emboldened by the apparent tameness of our troops, which they doubtless attributed to the want of common pluck rather than to the restraints of discipline. Captains Mackenzie and Skinner obtained their release this evening, the latter officer having, since the outbreak of the rebellion, passed through some curious adventures in the disguise of an Afghán female.

January 5th.—Affairs continued in the same unsettled state until this date. The chiefs postponed our departure from day to day on divers pretexts. It had been agreed that Nawáb Jabár Khán should escort us to Jallálábád with about two thousand followers, who were to be entertained for that purpose.

It is supposed that, up to the very last, the majority of chiefs doubted the reality of our intention to depart: and many, fearful of the civil discords for which our retreat would be the signal, would have gladly detained us at Kábul. Attempts were made continually by Akbar Khán to wean the Hindústánís from their allegiance, and to induce them to desert. Numerous cautions were received from various well-wishers, to place no confidence in the professions of the chiefs, who had sworn together to accomplish our entire

destruction. Sháh Shujá himself sent more than one solemn warning, and, finding we were bent on taking our own course, used his utmost endeavours to persuade Lady Macnaghten to take advantage of his protection in the Bálá Hisár. He also appealed to Brigadier Anquetil, who commanded the Sháh's force, "if it were well to forsake him in the hour of need, and to deprive him of the aid of that force, which he had hitherto been taught to consider as his own?" All was, however, unavailing. The General and his council-of-war had determined that go we must, and go we accordingly did.

In the foregoing chapters I have offered what I honestly believe to be a faithful narration of the dismal train of events which preceded the evacuation of Kábul, and the abandonment of Sháh Shujá, by the British army. In taking a retrospective view of those unprecedented occurrences, it is evident that our reverses may be mainly attributed to a lack of ordinary foresight and penetration on the part of the chief military and civil authorities, on their first entering on the occupation of this country; a country whose innumerable fortified strongholds and difficult mountain passes, in the hands of a proud and warlike population, never really subdued nor reconciled to our rule, though unable to oppose the march of a disciplined army through their land, ought to have induced a more than common

degree of vigilance and circumspection in making adequate provision against any such popular outbreak as might have been anticipated, and did actually occur. But, instead of applying his undeniable talents to the completion of that conquest which gained him an illustrious title and a wide renown, Lord Keane contented himself with the superficial success which attended his progress through a country hitherto untraversed by an European army since the classic days of Alexander the Great; he hurried off, with too great eagerness to enjoy the applause which awaited him in England, and left to his successors the far more arduous task of securing in their grasp the unwieldy prize of which he had obtained the nominal possession.

On his return to India, Lord Keane took with him a large portion of the Bengal force with which he had arrived at Kábul; the *whole* of the Bombay troops made a simultaneous homeward movement; and the army, with which he had entered Afghánistán, was thus reduced to a miserable moiety, before any steps had been taken to guard against surprise by the erection of a stronghold on the approved principles of modern warfare, or the establishment of a line of military posts to keep open our communications with India, on which country the army must necessarily for a long time have been entirely dependent for the munitions of war. The distance from Kábul to Firozpur, our nearest Indian station, is about six hundred miles.

Between Kábul and Pesháwar occur the stupendous and dangerous defiles of Khurd-Kábul, Tizín, Parídaral, Jagdallak, and Khaibar, throughout whose whole extent food and forage are procurable only at long intervals and even then with much difficulty.

From Pesháwar to Firozpur is the Panjáb, or country of the Sikhs, traversed by five great rivers, and occupied by a powerful nation, on whose pacific professions no reliance could be placed. Along this extended line of communication Lord Keane established but one small solitary post, in the fort of Ali Masjid, in the heart of the Khaibar pass. He left behind him, in fact, an army whose isolated position and reduced strength offered the strongest possible temptation to a proud and restless race to rally their scattered tribes in one grand effort to regain their lost independence.

In Lord Keane's successors may be seen the same disposition to be too easily satisfied with the outward semblance of tranquillity. Another brigade was ere long withdrawn from a force already insufficient for any great emergency; nor was their position for holding in subjection a vanquished people much improved by their establishment in an ill-situated and ill-constructed cantonment, with their commissariat stores separated from their lines of defence. To the latter-mentioned error may be mainly attributed the evacuation of Kábul and the destruction of the army; for there can be no doubt that, notwithstanding all the difficulties of our

position, had the cantonments been well supplied with provisions, the troops could have easily held out until the arrival of reinforcements from India. The real cause of our defeat was, beyond all question, *famine*. We were not *driven*, but *starved*,* out of Kábul; and every allowance ought in common justice to be made for men who, from the very commencement of the conflict, saw the combined horrors of starvation and a rigorous winter frowning in their face,—no succours within reach,—their retreat cut off,—and all their sanguinary efforts either altogether fruitless, or at best deferring for a few short days the ruin which on every side threatened to overwhelm them.

In connection with this subject, I may be excused for quoting, in conclusion, the powerful reasoning of a recent writer in the "Bombay Times:"—

"When a soldier finds that his every movement is directed by a master mind; that, when he is apparently thrust into the greatest danger, he finds, in truth, his greatest security; that his march to engage an apparently superior force is not a wild sacrifice, but the

* The Envoy, in a report to the Government of India, written just afterwards, but which did not reach India in due course, states, paragraph 12, there is "not one day's provisions left;" and, paragraph 17, "We had been fighting forty days against very superior numbers, under great disadvantages; in a day or two we must have perished from hunger, to say nothing of the advanced season of the year, and the extreme cold, from which our Native troops were suffering severely."

result of a well-calculated plan; when he knows that, however appearances may be, he is sure to come off with honour, for his brethren in arms are already in progress to assist him, and will not fail to be forthcoming at the hour appointed; when he sees that there is a watchful eye over him, providing for all his wants, assisting him to overcome all his difficulties, and enabling him to reap the fruit of all his successes; when he finds that even retreat is but a preparation for victory, and, as if guided by Providence, all his movements, though to him incomprehensible, are sure to prove steps to some great end;—when the soldier finds this, he rises and lies down in security, and there is no danger which he will not brave. But when, in everything they undertake, they find the reverse of the picture I have drawn; when they are marched, as they imagine, to glory, but find it is only to slaughter; when even victory brings no fruit, and retreat they discover to be flight; when the support they hope for comes not, and they find their labours to be without end or purpose; when the provisions they look for daily are issued to them no more, and they see all their efforts paralysed; the stoutest heart will fail, the bravest sink; for the soldier knows that, do what he will, his efforts can only end in ruin and dishonour."

[An intercepted letter from one of the Kábul chiefs to a friend at Kandahár throws some light on the losses

sustained by the Afgháns up to the time of the Envoy's murder. He writes as follows:—

"Abd-ulah Khán and his two sons are dead; also Táz Muhammad Khán, the son of Amír Muhammad Khán. *Great numbers of the chiefs of the Kábulís and Kazilbáshís have been killed in the various actions, and above two thousand men have been killed and wounded of the Mussulmáns.*"]

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETREAT OF THE ARMY, AND ITS ANNIHILATION.

January 6th.—At last the fatal morning dawned, which was to witness the departure of the Kábul force from the cantonments, in which it had sustained a two-months' siege, to encounter the miseries of a winter march through a country of perhaps unparalleled difficulty, where every mountain defile, if obstinately defended by a determined enemy, must inevitably prove the grave of hundreds.

Dreary indeed was the scene, over which, with drooping spirits and dismal forebodings, we had to bend our unwilling steps. Deep snow covered every inch of mountain and plain with one unspotted sheet of dazzling white, and so intensely bitter was the cold, as to penetrate and defy the defences of the warmest clothing.

No signs of the promised escort appeared: but at an

early hour the preparations commenced for our march. A cut was made through the eastern rampart, to open an additional passage for the troops and baggage, a sufficient number of gun-waggons and platform planks were taken down to the river for the formation of a temporary bridge, and every available camel and yábú (the whole amounting to two thousand) was laden with military stores, commissariat supplies, and such small proportion of camp-equipage as was indispensably necessary to shelter the troops in a climate of extraordinary rigour.

The strength of the whole force at this time was, so far as can now be ascertained, very nearly as follows:—

1 troop of Horse Artillery - - -	90	690 Europeans.
H.M.'s 44th Foot - - - - -	600	
5th Regt. Light Cavalry, 2 squad. - -	260	970 Cavalry.
5th Shah's Irreg. do. (Anderson's) - -	500	
Skinner's Horse, 1 rissála - - -	70	
4th Irreg. do. 1 do. - - - -	70	
Mission escort, or body-guard - - -	70	
5th Native Infantry - - - -	700	2,840.
37th do. - - - -	600	
54th do. - - - -	650	
6th Shah's Infantry - - - -	600	
Sappers and Miners - - - -	20	
Shah's do. - - - - -	240	
Half the Mountain Train - - -	30	
Total -		4,500 fighting-men.

6 Horse Artillery guns.
3 Mountain Train do.

Besides the above, the camp-followers amounted, at a very moderate computation, to about twelve thousand men, besides women and children. These proved from

the very first mile a serious clog upon our movements, and were, indeed, the main cause of our subsequent misfortunes. It is to be devoutly hoped that every future commander-in-chief of the Indian army will adopt decisive measures to prevent a force employed on field service from being ever again afflicted with such a curse.

The order of march was as follows:—

H.M.'s 44th Foot - - - - - -	The advance, under Brigadier Anquetil.
Sappers and Miners - - - - -	
Irreg. Horse, 1 squad. - - - - -	
3 Mountain Train guns - - - - -	
The escort, with the ladies - - - -	Main column, under Brigadier Shelton.
The invalids and sick - - - - -	
2 Horse Artillery guns - - - - -	
Anderson's Irreg. Horse - - - -	
37th Native Infantry, with treasure - -	
5th Native Infantry, with baggage - -	
54th Native Infantry - - - - -	Rear-guard, under Colonel Chambers.
6th Shah's Infantry - - - - -	
5th Light Cavalry - - - - - -	
4 Horse Artillery guns - - - - -	

All being ready at 9 A.M., the advance commenced moving out. At this time not a single Afghán was to be seen in any direction, and the peaceable aspect of affairs gave rise to strong hopes that the chiefs intended to remain true to their engagements.

At 10 A.M. a message was brought from Nawáb Jabár Khán, requesting us to defer our departure another day, as his escort was not yet ready to accompany us. By this time, however, the greater part of the force was in motion, and a crowd of Afgháns, who had issued from the village of Bemárú, impatient for

plunder, had forced their way into the northern cantonment, or Mission Compound (which, owing to some mistake, had been evacuated too soon by the Sháh's 6th Infantry), and were busily engaged in the work of pillage and destruction. The advance was delayed for upwards of an hour at the river, having found the temporary bridge incomplete; and it was noon ere the whole had crossed over, leaving a clear road for the main column to follow.

The order of march in which the troops started was, however, soon lost, and the camp-followers with the public and private baggage, once out of cantonments, could not be prevented from mixing themselves up with the troops, to the utter confusion of the whole column.

The main body, with its long train of laden camels, continued to pour out of the gate until the evening, by which time thousands of Afgháns, the majority of whom were fanatical Gházís, thronged the whole area of cantonments, rending the air with their exulting cries, and committing every kind of atrocity. The rear-guard, being unable to restrain them, was obliged to provide for its own safety by taking up a position outside, on the plain, where a great quantity of the baggage had been brought to a stand-still at the canal (within one hundred and fifty yards of the gate), whose slippery sides afforded no safe footing for the beasts of burden. The bridge across the river, being by this time impracticable, occasioned additional delay.

The Afgháns, who had hitherto been too busily engaged in the work of plunder and destruction to take much notice of the troops, now began to line the ramparts, and annoy them with a mischievous fire of jazails, under which many fell; and it became necessary, for the preservation of those who remained, to spike and abandon two of the Horse Artillery guns.

Night had now closed around; but the Gházís, having fired the residency and almost every other building in the cantonment, the conflagration illuminated the surrounding country for several miles, presenting a spectacle of fearful sublimity. In the mad fervour of their religious zeal, these ignorant fanatics even set fire to the gun-carriages belonging to the various pieces of ordnance, which we had left in position round the works, of whose use the Afghán chiefs were thus luckily deprived. The general had been often urged to destroy these guns, rather than suffer them to fall into the enemy's hands, but he considered that it would have been a breach of the treaty to do so. Before the rear-guard commenced its march, Lieutenant Hardyman of the 5th Light Cavalry, with fifty rank and file, were stretched lifeless on the snow. Much baggage was abandoned at starting, and much was plundered on the road. Scores of worn-out Sepoys and camp-followers lined the way, having sat down in despair to perish in the snow. It was 2 A.M. ere the rear-guard reached

camp at Baigrám, a distance of only five miles. Here all was confusion. The tents had been pitched without the slightest regard to regularity, those of different regiments being huddled together in one intricate mass, mixed up with baggage, camp-followers, camels, and horses, in a way which beggars description. The flimsy canvas of the soldiers' tents was but a poor protection from the cold, which towards morning became more and more intense; and thousands of poor wretched creatures were obliged to lie down on the bare snow, without either shelter, fire, or food. Several died during the night; amongst whom was an European conductor of ordnance.

About twenty jazailchís, who still held faithfully by Captain Mackenzie, suffered less than the rest, owing to their systematic mode of proceeding. Their first step on reaching the ground was to clear a small space from the snow, where they then laid themselves down in a circle, closely packed together, with their feet meeting in the centre; all the warm clothing they could muster among them being spread equally over the whole. By these simple means sufficient animal warmth was generated to preserve them from being frost-bitten; and Captain Mackenzie, who himself shared their homely bed, declared that he had felt scarcely any inconvenience from the cold. It was different with our Sepoys and camp-followers, who, having had no former experience of such hardships, were

ignorant how they might best provide against them, and the proportion of those who escaped, without suffering in some degree from frost-bites, was very small. Yet this was but the *beginning* of sorrows!

January 7th.—At 8 A.M. the force moved off in the reverse order of yesterday—if that could be called *order* which consisted of a mingled mob of soldiers, camp-followers, and baggage-cattle, preserving not even the faintest semblance of that regularity and discipline on which depended our only chance of escape from the dangers which threatened us. Even at this early stage of the retreat scarcely one-half of the Sepoys were fit for duty; hundreds had, from sheer inability to keep their ranks, joined the non-combatants, and thus increased the confusion. As for the Sháh's 6th Infantry, it was nowhere to be found; only a few straggling files were perceptible here and there; and it was generally believed that the majority of the regiment had absconded during the night to Kábul.

At starting, large clods of hardened snow adhered so firmly to the hoofs of our horses, that a chisel and hammer would have been requisite to dislodge them. The very air we breathed froze in its passage out of the mouth and nostrils, forming a coating of small icicles on our moustaches and beards.

The advance proceeded onward without molestation, though numerous small bodies of Afghán horse and foot were observed hanging about our flanks, and

moving in a parallel direction with ourselves. These were at first supposed to form a part of our escort, but the mistake was soon discovered by their attacking the rear-guard, commanded by Brigadier Anquetil, consisting of Her Majesty's 44th, Lieutenant Green's Mountain Train guns, and a squadron of Irregular Horse. Much baggage fell into the enemy's hands, who, though in some degree kept in check by the guns, exhibited a bold front, and maintained a harassing fire on our troops, whose movements were terribly crippled by the disorderly multitude that thronged the road in front. The latter being for several minutes brought to a stand-still by a deep water-cut which intersected the road, the Mountain Train guns endeavoured to pass clear of them by making a short detour, in doing which they got separated from the infantry, and—one happening at this unlucky moment to upset—the enemy seized the opportunity to rush forward and capture them, before Her Majesty's 44th, who saw too late their awkward predicament, could render effectual assistance.

A gallant example was, however, shown by Lieutenant Green and his few artillerymen, who made a sudden charge upon the foe, and spiked the guns, but, not being supported, they were obliged a second time to abandon them. Lieutenant White, the Adjutant of Her Majesty's 44th, received a severe wound through the face on this occasion.

Brigadier Anquetil now sent to the front for rein-

forcements, which, however, it was found impracticable to furnish, from the crowded state of the road. The Afghán horse shortly after this charged into the very midst of the column of baggage, and carried off large quantities of plunder, creating the greatest confusion and dismay. Numbers fell from wounds, and still greater numbers from mere bodily weakness produced by cold, fasting, and fatigue. It was found necessary to spike and abandon two more Horse Artillery guns, which the horses were found perfectly incapable of dragging any further through the deep snow.

On the arrival of the advance at Búta-i-khák, the General, having been informed that the rear was in danger of being entirely cut off, ordered a halt, and sent back all the troops that could be spared, together with the two remaining guns, to drive off the enemy, who had now assembled in great numbers in the rear, and were proceeding to crown some heights on the right commanding the road. This was, however, prevented by our troops under Brigadier Shelton, who took possession of the nearer heights, and kept the enemy in check for upwards of an hour. On this occasion, Lieutenant Shaw, of the 54th Native Infantry, was wounded severely in the thigh. Meanwhile Captain Skinner had fallen in with a follower of Muhammad Akbar Khán, from whom having learned that the chief was encamped near at hand, he accompanied the man to his master's presence. Muhammad Akbar now in-

formed Captain Skinner that he had been sent by the chiefs to escort us to Jallálábád, and declared that we had been attacked in consequence of having marched contrary to their wishes. He insisted on our halting at Búta-i-khák till the following morning, in which case he would provide food, forage, and fire-wood for the troops; but he said that he should expect six hostages to insure our not marching beyond Tizín before tidings should be received of General Sale's evacuation of Jallálábád, for which an order had been already despatched to that officer, in compliance with the stipulations of the treaty.

These terms having been agreed to, the firing ceased for the present, and the force came to a halt on some high ground near the entrance of the Khurd-Kábul pass, having in two days accomplished a distance of only ten miles from Kábul.

Here, again, the confusion soon became indescribable. Suffice it to say that an immense multitude of from fourteen thousand to sixteen thousand men, with several hundred cavalry horses and baggage cattle, were closely jammed together in one monstrous, unmanageable mass. Night again closed over us, with its attendant train of horrors, — starvation, cold, exhaustion, death; and of all deaths I can imagine none more agonising than that where a nipping frost tortures every sensitive limb, until the tenacious spirit itself sinks under the extreme of human suffering.

January 8th.—At an early hour the treacherous Afgháns again commenced to molest us with their fire, and several hundreds having assembled in hostile array to the south of the camp, the troops were drawn up in expectation of an attack. Major Thain, putting himself at the head of the 44th Foot, and exhorting the men to follow him, led them boldly on to the attack; but the enemy did not think proper to await the shock of bayonets, and effected a hasty retreat. In this business Her Majesty's 44th Foot behaved with a resolution and gallantry worthy of British soldiers.

Captain Skinner again went to communicate with Muhammad Akbar Khán, who demanded that Major Pottinger and Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie should immediately be made over to him, which was accordingly done, and hostilities again ceased; the Sirdár promising to send forward some influential men to clear the pass from the Ghalzís, who occupied it, and were lying in wait for our approach. Once more the living mass of men and animals was in motion. At the entrance of the pass an attempt was made to separate the troops from the non-combatants, which was but partially successful, and created considerable delay. The rapid effects of two nights' exposure to the frost in disorganizing the force can hardly be conceived. It had so nipped the hands and feet of even the strongest men, as to completely prostrate their powers and incapacitate them for service; even the cavalry,

THE KHURD-KABUL PASS.

who suffered less than the rest, were obliged to be lifted on their horses. In fact only a few hundred serviceable fighting-men remained.

The idea of threading the stupendous pass before us, in the face of an armed tribe of blood-thirsty barbarians, with such a dense irregular multitude, was frightful, and the spectacle then presented by that waving sea of animated beings, the majority of whom a few fleeting hours would transform into a line of lifeless carcasses to guide the future traveller on his way, can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.* We had so often been deceived by Afghán pro-

* When the avenging army under General Pollock was in progress to Kábul in the September following, Lieutenant Greenwood, of Her Majesty's 31st Regiment, writes :—

"On entering the Khurd-Kábul pass we were all struck with the utmost astonishment. The other passes are as nothing in comparison with this almost impregnable defile. The dead of General Elphinstone's army lay in heaps ; in some places they seemed to be mowed down in whole battalions. Although eight months had elapsed, they had been preserved in the snow, and their ghastly faces seemed to call upon us for revenge."

Major Smith, of Her Majesty's 9th Foot, thus describes the same scene :—

"Next morning we marched through the Khurd-Kábul pass to Búda-i-khák. The scene we witnessed was full of the most painful interest. At this fatal spot not less than three thousand individuals of the Kábul army were massacred by the Afgháns. Nine English ladies, with eighteen or twenty young children, witnessed the frightful spectacle, and shared its dangers. There is a grandeur in the scenery of this pass which seemed to accord with the hideous aspect of the road along which we travelled, strewed for two miles like a charnel house with mouldering skeletons. What feeling was excited in our troops by such objects may readily be conceived."

fessions, that little or no confidence was placed in the present truce; and we commenced our passage through the dreaded pass in no very sanguine temper of mind. This truly formidable defile is about five miles from end to end, and is shut in on either hand by a line of lofty hills, between whose precipitous sides the sun at this season could dart but a momentary ray. Down the centre dashed a mountain torrent, whose impetuous course the frost in vain attempted to arrest, though it succeeded in lining the edges with thick layers of ice, over which the snow lay consolidated in slippery masses, affording no very easy footing for our jaded animals. This stream we had to cross and recross about eight-and-twenty times. As we proceeded on-

The Rev. J. N. Allen, Chaplain to the army under General Nott, writes on the 14th October 1842:—

"Marched at 6 A.M. through the Khurd-Kábul—a stupendous pass. It is closed in by hills and overhanging rocks, which, if defended, would be exceedingly dangerous, almost impossible to crown, and a cause of immense loss even to the most intrepid and well-organized force with favourable weather. It will easily be conceived, therefore, what it must have been to the troops under General Elphinstone, starved, dispirited, and disorganized, in the month of January; the ground deep in snow, and exposed to the fire of crowds of Afgháns.

"The entrance to the pass would have formed a fine subject for Salvator Rosa. The gorge looked dark, gloomy, and threatening. The craggy and fantastic rocks towered almost perpendicularly on both sides, many of them quite so, to an enormous height. The foreground was occupied by the skeletons of the ill-fated troops, and with the larger forms of camels and horses. . . . All around was horror. A "valley of the shadow of death" it was indeed; and everyone felt sensibly relieved when we emerged from it."

wards, the defile gradually narrowed, and the Ghalzís were observed hastening to crown the heights in considerable force. A hot fire was opened on the advance, with whom were several ladies, who, seeing their only chance was to keep themselves in rapid motion, galloped forward at the head of all, running the gauntlet of the enemy's bullets, which whizzed in hundreds about their ears, until they were fairly out of the pass. Providentially the whole escaped, with the exception of Lady Sale, who received a slight wound in the arm.* It ought, however, to be mentioned, that several of Muhammad Akbar's chief adherents, who had preceded the advance, exerted themselves strenuously to keep down the fire; but nothing could restrain the Ghalzís, who seemed fully determined that nobody should interfere to disappoint them of their prey. Onward moved the crowd into the thickest of the fire, and fearful was the slaughter that ensued. An universal panic speedily prevailed, and thousands, seeking refuge in flight, hurried forward to the front, abandoning baggage, arms, ammunition, women, and children, regardless for the moment of everything but their own lives.

The rear-guard, consisting of Her Majesty's 44th

* The author's little boy (now a Major of Artillery in Bengal), who was strapped on the back of a faithful Afghán servant, had a very narrow escape, owing to the animal falling and throwing them off in the middle of the pass.

and 54th Native Infantry, suffered severely; and at last, finding that delay was only destruction, they followed the general example, and made the best of their way to the front. Another Horse Artillery gun was abandoned, and the whole of its artillerymen slain. Captain Anderson's eldest girl,* and Captain Boyd's youngest boy, fell into the hands of the Afgháns. It is supposed that three thousand souls perished in the pass, amongst whom were Captain *Paton,* Assistant-Quartermaster-General; and Lieutenant *St. George,* 37th Native Infantry; Majors *Griffiths,* 37th Native Infantry, and *Scott,* Her Majesty's 44th; Captains *Bott,* 5th Cavalry, and *Troup,* Brigadier-Major Sháh's force. Dr. *Cardew* and Lieutenant *Sturt,* engineers, were wounded, the latter mortally. This fine young officer had nearly cleared the defile when he received his wound, and would have been left on the ground to be hacked to pieces by the Gházís who followed in the rear to complete the work of slaughter, but for the generous intrepidity of Lieutenant Mein of Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry, who, on learning what had befallen him, went back to his succour, and stood by him for several minutes, at the imminent risk of his own life, vainly entreating aid from the passers by. He was at length joined by Sergeant Dean of the Sappers, with whose

* She was recovered on the 10th of May following, having been meanwhile most kindly treated in the family of Nawáb Zimán Khán at Kábul.

assistance he dragged his friend on a quilt through the remainder of the pass, when he succeeded in mounting him on a miserable pony, and conducted him in safety to camp, where the unfortunate officer lingered till the following morning, and was the only man of the whole force who received Christian burial. Lieutenant Mein was himself at this very time suffering from a dangerous wound in the head, received in the previous October, and his heroic disregard of self, and fidelity to his friend in the hour of danger, are well deserving of a record in the annals of British valour and virtue.*

On the force reaching Khurd-Kábul, snow began to fall, and continued till morning. Only four small tents were saved, of which one belonged to the General: two were devoted to the ladies and children, and one was given up to the sick; but an immense number of poor wounded wretches wandered about the camp destitute of shelter, and perished during the night. Groans of misery and distress assailed the ear from all quarters. We had ascended to a still colder climate than we had left behind, and were without tents, fuel, or food: the snow was the only bed for all, and of many, ere morning, it proved the *winding-sheet*. It is only marvellous that any should have survived that fearful night!

January 9th.—Another morning dawned, awakening

* The above passage was quoted by Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister of England, in the House of Commons. Lieutenant, now Colonel, Mein still survives on the active list.

thousands to increased misery; and many a wretched survivor cast looks of envy at his comrades who lay stretched beside him in the quiet sleep of death. Daylight was the signal for a renewal of that confusion which attended every movement of the force. The General had intended us to march at 10 A.M., but a large portion of the troops, with nearly all the camp-followers, moved off without orders at 8 A.M., and had advanced about a mile from the camp, when they were recalled by the General, in consequence of a communication from Muhammad Akbar Khán, who promised to use every endeavour to furnish us with supplies, but strongly recommended us to halt until he could make some proper arrangements for escorting us down safely. There can be no doubt that the general feeling in camp was adverse to a halt, there being scarcely even a native soldier who did not plainly perceive that our only chance of escape consisted in moving on as fast as possible. This additional delay, therefore, and prolongation of their sufferings in the snow, of which one more march would have carried them clear, made a very unfavourable impression on the minds of the native soldiery, who now for the first time began very generally to entertain the idea of deserting; nor is it at all astonishing that these symptoms should have first developed themselves amongst the Sháh's native cavalry, who were, for the most part, exceedingly young soldiers, and foresaw full well the

fatal result of all these useless and pernicious delays. The love of life is strong in every breast.

These men had hitherto behaved remarkably well, notwithstanding the numerous efforts that had been made to detach them from their duty; and, if their fealty at last gave place to the instinct of self-preservation, be it remembered in their favour, that it was not until the position of the force, of which they formed a part, had become altogether desperate beyond the reach of cure.

Towards noon Captain Skinner arrived in camp with a proposition from Muhammad Akbar Khán that all the widowed ladies and married families, whose destitute situation in camp rendered them objects of universal pity and sympathy, should at once be made over to his protection, to preserve them from further hardships and dangers; in this case he promised to escort them down safely, keeping them one day's march in rear of the army. The General, though not himself disposed to place much confidence in Muhammad Akbar's friendly professions, was strongly recommended by Captain Skinner to trust him on the present occasion, as he felt assured that such a mark of confidence would be attended with happy results to the whole force. Anxious at all events to save the ladies and children from further suffering, the General gave his consent to the arrangement, and told Captain Skinner to prepare all the married officers and ladies to depart imme-

diately with a party of Afghán horse, who were in waiting to receive them. His intention also was that all the wounded officers in camp should have had the option of availing themselves of the same opportunity to seek Muhammad Akbar's protection; but the others were hurried off by the Afgháns before this had become generally known, and only two were in time to join them.*

Up to this time scarcely one of the ladies had tasted a meal since leaving Kábul. Some had infants a few days old at the breast, and were unable to stand without assistance. Others were so far advanced in pregnancy, that, under ordinary circumstances, a walk across a drawing-room would have been an exertion; yet these helpless women, with their young families, had already been obliged to rough it on the backs of camels, and on the tops of the baggage yábús: those who had a horse to ride, or were capable of sitting on one, were considered fortunate indeed. Most had been without shelter since quitting the cantonment—their servants had nearly all deserted or been killed—and, with the exception of Lady Macnaghten and Mrs. Trevor, they had lost all their baggage, having nothing

* Captain Troup, Brigadier-Major, Sháh's force, and Lieutenant Mein, Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry, who went as Lady Sale's protector.

Lieutenants Waller and Eyre were likewise suffering from severe and painful wounds received in action at Kábul, which totally disabled them from active service.

in the world left but the clothes on their backs; those, in the case of some of the invalids, consisted of *night-dresses* in which they had started from Kábul in their litters. Under such circumstances a few more hours would probably have seen some of them stiffening corses. The offer of Muhammad Akbar was consequently their only chance of preservation. The husbands, better clothed and hardy, would have infinitely preferred taking their chance with the troops; but where is the man who would prefer his own safety, when he thought he could by his presence assist and console those near and dear to him?

It is not therefore wonderful that, from persons so circumstanced, the General's proposal should have met with little opposition, although it was a matter of serious doubt whether the whole were not rushing into the very jaws of death, by placing themselves at the mercy of a man who had so lately imbrued his hands in the blood of a British Envoy, whom he had lured to destruction by similar professions of peace and good-will.

But whatever may have been the secret intent of Akbar's heart, he was at this time our professed friend and ally, having undertaken to escort the whole force to Jallálábád, in safety. Whatever suspicions, therefore, have been entertained of his hypocrisy, it was not in the character of an *enemy* that he gained possession of the married families; on the contrary, he stood

pledged for their safe escort to Jallálábád, no less than for that of the army to which they belonged; and by their unwarrantable detention as prisoners, no less than by the treacherous massacre of the force, he broke the universal law of nations, and was guilty of an unpardonable breach of faith. Shortly after the departure of the married families, it was discovered that the troopers of the Sháh's Irregular Cavalry and of the Mission Escort were deserting in great numbers, having been enticed away, as was supposed, by Muhammad Akbar, to whom a message of remonstrance was in consequence sent. He assured the General, in reply, that not only would he refrain from enticing the men away, but that every future deserter from our camp should be shot.

Meanwhile a large body of Afghán horse had been observed in the vicinity of camp, in company with the cavalry deserters; and, fears being entertained that it was their design to attack the camp, a general parade of the troops was ordered for the purpose of repelling them. The 44th Foot at this time was found to muster one hundred files, and the native infantry regiments, on an average, about sixty files each. Of the Irregular Horse not above one hundred effective troopers remained, and the 5th Light Cavalry, though more faithful to their salt, had been reduced by casualties to about seventy fighting-men. On the arrival of Muhammad Akbar's answer to the General's

message, the opportunity was taken of the troops being paraded, to explain to them its purport, and to warn them that every man who might be discovered deserting would be shot. At this very time, a chuprassí of the Mission, being caught in the act, was instantly shot, as an example to the rest, by order of the General, and the crime thus received a salutary check. Captain Mackay, having been chosen to convey to General Sale a fresh order for the evacuation of Jallálábád, was sent over in the evening to the Sirdár with that view. The promises of Muhammad Akbar to provide food and fuel were unfulfilled, and another night of starvation and cold consigned more victims to a miserable death.

January 10*th*.—At break of day all was again confusion, the troops and camp-followers crowding promiscuously to the front so soon as the orders for a march were given, every one dreading, above all things, to be left in the rear. The European soldiers were now almost the only efficient men left, the Hindústánís having all suffered more or less from the effects of frost in their hands and feet; few were able even to hold a musket, much less to pull a trigger; in fact, the prolonged delay in the snow had paralysed the mental and bodily powers of the strongest men, rendering them incapable of any useful exertion. Hope seemed to have died in every breast.

The advanced guard (consisting of Her Majesty's

44th Foot, the sole remaining Horse Artillery gun, and about fifty troopers of the 5th Cavalry) having managed with much difficulty to push their way to the front, proceeded a couple of miles without molestation, as far as a narrow gorge between the precipitous spurs of two hills, through which flowed a small stream. Towards this point numbers of Afghán foot had been observed hurrying, with the evident intention of opposing the passage of the troops, and were now found to occupy the height on the right in considerable force. No sooner did the advance approach within shot, than the enemy, securely perched on their post of vantage, commenced the attack, pouring a destructive fire upon the crowded column, as it slowly drew nigh to the fatal spot. Fresh numbers fell at every volley, and the gorge was soon choked with the dead and dying: the unfortunate Sepoys, seeing no means of escape, and driven to utter desperation, cast away their arms and accoutrements, which only clogged their movements without contributing to their defence, and along with the camp-followers fled for their lives. The Afgháns now rushed down upon their helpless and unresisting victims, sword in hand, and a general massacre took place. The last small remnant of the Native Infantry regiments were here scattered and destroyed; and the public treasure, with all the remaining baggage, fell into the hands of the enemy. Meanwhile, the advance, after pushing through the

Tangí with great loss, had reached Kabar-i-Jabár, about five miles ahead, without more opposition. Here they halted to enable the rear to join, but, from the few stragglers who from time to time came up, the astounding truth was brought to light, that, of all who had that morning marched from Khurd-Kábul, they were almost the sole survivors, nearly the whole of the main and rear columns having been cut off and destroyed. About fifty Horse Artillery men, with one 12-pounder howitzer, seventy files Her Majesty's 44th, and one hundred and fifty cavalry troopers, now composed the whole Kábul force; but, notwithstanding the slaughter and dispersion that had taken place, the camp-followers still formed a considerable body.

The approach of a party of Afghán horse induced the General to draw up his little force in line, preparatory to an expected attack; but on its being ascertained to be Muhammad Akbar Khán and his followers, Captain Skinner was despatched to remonstrate with him on the attack on our troops after a treaty had been entered into and their safety guaranteed.

In reply, he expressed his regret at what had occurred, but said that, notwithstanding all his endeavours, he found it impossible to restrain the Ghalzís, who were in such a state of excitement as to be beyond the control even of their own chiefs. As a last resource, he recommended that the few remaining troops should lay down their arms, and place themselves entirely under

his safe-guard, in which case he could ensure their safe escort to Jallálábád; but that as the camp-followers still amounted to some thousands, and far out-numbered his own people, there was no alternative but to leave them to their fate. To these terms the General could not bring himself to consent, and the desperate march was resumed. Here Captain Mackay rejoined the troops, as the Sirdár considered it impossible for him at present to make his way safe to Jallálábád.

About five more miles led down the steep descents of the Haft Kotal, into a narrow defile, or confined bed of a mountain stream.

A ghastly sight here met the eye, the ground being strewn with the bodies of a number of camp-followers, with whom were several wounded officers and soldiers, who, having gone on ahead of the column, were attacked on reaching the foot of the hill, and massacred. The heights commanding the defile (which was about three miles long) were found crowned with the enemy. Muhammad Akbar and his train had taken a short cut over the hills to Tizín, and were followed by the few remaining troopers of the Irregular Cavalry. Dr. Magrath, seeing them take, as he thought, a wrong direction, hastened to recall them, and was taken prisoner by a Ghalzí chief. In their passage down the defile, a destructive fire was maintained on the troops from the heights on either side, and fresh numbers of dead and wounded lined the course of the stream. Brigadier

Shelton commanded the rear with a few Europeans, and but for his persevering energy and unflinching fortitude in repelling the assailants, it is probable the whole would have been there sacrificed.

The diminished remnant reached the encamping-ground in the Tizín valley at about 4 P.M., having lost since starting from Kábul, inclusive of camp-followers, about twelve thousand men; no less than fifteen officers were killed and wounded in this day's disastrous march.

Although it was now sufficiently plain that Muhammad Akbar either could not or would not act up to his friendly professions, the General endeavoured to renew his worse than useless negotiation with that chief, in the faint hope that something might still be done to better the situation of the troops; but Captain Skinner, who was deputed on the occasion, returned with precisely the same answer as before; and as the General could not in honour accede to his proposal, all hope of aid from that quarter was at an end.

It was now determined to make an effort, under cover of darkness, to reach Jagdalak, a distance of twenty-two miles, by an early hour on the following morning, the principal object being to get through the strong and dangerous pass of that place before the enemy should have sufficient notice of their intention, to occupy it in any force. As there existed a short cut from Tizín to Jagdalak over the hills, the success of

the attempt was very doubtful; but the lives of all depended on the issue; and at 7 P.M. the little band renewed its forlorn and dismal march, word having been previously sent to Muhammad Akbar that it was the General's intention to move only as far as Seh Bábá, distant seven miles. On moving off, the last gun was abandoned, and with it Dr. Cardew, who had been lashed to it in the hope of saving him. This gentleman had rendered himself conspicuous from the commencement of the siege for his zeal and gallantry, and had become a great favourite with the soldiery in consequence, by whom his hapless fate was sincerely lamented. Dr. Duff, the superintending surgeon of the force, experienced no better fortune, being left in a state of utter exhaustion on the road midway to Seh Bábá. Little or no molestation was experienced by the force until reaching Seh Bábá, when a few shots being fired at the rear, there was an immediate rush of camp-followers to the front, and the main body of the 44th European soldiers, who had hitherto been well in advance, getting mixed up in the crowd, could not be extricated by withdrawing them to the rear, owing to the narrowness of the road, which now traversed the hills to Barik-áb. Bodies of the neighbouring tribes were by this time on the alert, and fired at random from the heights, it being fortunately too dark for them to aim with precision; but the panic-stricken camp-followers now resembled a herd of startled deer,

and fluctuated backwards and forwards, *en masse*, at every shot, blocking up the entire road, and fatally retarding the progress of the little body of soldiers who, under Brigadier Shelton, brought up the rear.

At Barik-áb a heavy fire was encountered by the hindmost from some caves near the road-side, occasioning fresh disorder, which continued all the way to Kattar-Sang, where the advance arrived at dawn of day, and awaited the junction of the rear, which did not take place till 8 A.M.

January 11*th*.—The distance from Jagdalak was still ten miles; the enemy already began to crowd the surrounding heights, and it was now evident that the delay occasioned by the camp-followers had cut off the last chance of escape.

From Kattar-Sang to Jagdalak it was one continued conflict; Brigadier Shelton with his brave little band, in the rear, holding overwhelming numbers in check, and literally performing wonders. But no efforts could avail to ward off the withering fire of jazails, which from all sides assailed the crowded column, lining the road with bleeding carcasses. About 3 P.M. the advance reached Jagdalak, and took up its position behind some ruined walls that crowned a height by the road-side. To show an imposing front, the officers extended themselves in line, and Captain Grant, Assistant Adjutant-General, at the same moment received a wound in the face. From this eminence they cheered their comrades

under Brigadier Shelton in the rear, as they still struggled their way gallantly along every foot of ground, perseveringly followed up by their merciless enemy, until they arrived at their ground. But even here rest was denied them; for the Afgháns, immediately occupying two hills which commanded the position, kept up a fire from which the walls of the inclosure afforded but a partial shelter.

["It may interest the reader to peruse the following utterance of General Shelton himself, at Gosport, in January 1844, on the presentation of new colours to the 44th Regiment:—

["When the Europeans were left to their own resources, the men of the 44th showed their sterling worth;—from that moment I assumed the command of the rear-guard, and in going through the Tizín pass, annoyed by a galling and destructive fire from the heights on both flanks, and when crowds of savage Ghalzís rushed like a torrent upon the rear, this brave little band, obedient to my voice, halted, faced about, and repelled the appalling numbers of the enemy under a tremendous fire, with a boldness and determined courage that might have extracted admiration from the very stones under their feet; and though they had been now four days and four nights on the snow, these noble fellows performed a forced march of two days and one night, without halting—repelling the incessant attacks of the enemy, under a destructive fire that

strewed the whole line of road with the dead bodies of their comrades, with a constancy and unyielding courage that will command my admiration and respect so long as I live; and what I now state, was under my own personal observation. No man ever thought of surrender, but all fell gloriously with their arms in their hands, fighting to the last, and only sixteen remained of the number that marched from Kábul."]

The exhausted troops and followers now began to suffer greatly from thirst, which they were unable to satisfy. A tempting stream trickled near the foot of the hill, but to venture down to it was certain death. Some snow that covered the ground was eagerly devoured, but increased, instead of alleviating, their sufferings. The raw flesh of three bullocks, which had fortunately been saved, was served out to the soldiers, and ravenously swallowed. At about half-past 3 a message having been brought from Muhammad Akbar to Captain Skinner requesting his presence, that officer promptly obeyed the call, hoping thereby, even at the eleventh hour, to effect some arrangement for the preservation of those who survived. The harassed and worn-out troops, in the expectation of a temporary truce during his absence, threw themselves down to snatch a brief repose; but even this much-needed luxury was denied them by their vigilant foes, who now, from their commanding position, poured into the crowded inclosure death-dealing volleys in rapid suc-

cession, causing the utmost consternation among the terrified followers who rushed wildly out in the vain hope of finding shelter from the fire. At this perilous juncture Captain Bygrave, with about fifteen brave Europeans, sallied forth in the full determination to drive the enemy from the heights, or perish in the attempt. Unflinchingly they charged up the hill, the enemy retreating before them in the greatest trepidation. The respite, however, thus signally gained was of but short duration, for the heroic little band had no sooner returned than the enemy re-occupied their posts of vantage, and resumed their fatal fire. Thus passed the time until 5 P.M., when Captain Skinner returned from his interview with Muhammad Akbar, bringing a message to the General from that chief, who requested his presence at a conference, and demanded Brigadier Shelton and Captain Johnson as hostages for the evacuation of Jallálábád. The General, seeing no alternative, made over temporary command to Brigadier Anquetil, and departed with the two above-named officers under the escort of Muhammad Sháh Khán. The troops witnessed their departure with despair, having seen enough of Afghán treachery to convince them that these repeated negotiations were mere hollow artifices designed to engender confidence in their victims, preparatory to a fresh sacrifice of blood. The General and his companions were received by the Sirdár with every outward token of kindness,

and no time was lost in supplying them with the bodily sustenance they so greatly needed; they were likewise assured that immediate arrangements should be made for the supply of food to the famishing troops, and for their safe escort to Jallálábád, after which they were shown into a small tent, to enjoy, for the first time since leaving Khurd-Kábul, a quiet and refreshing sleep.

January 12*th*.—Numerous Ghalzí chiefs, with their attendant clansmen, flocked in from the neighbouring parts to pay their homage to Muhammad Akbar; and about 9 A.M. a conference was held, at which the three British officers and all the influential chiefs were present. All the latter were loud and profuse in their expressions of bitter hatred against the English, and for a long time the Sirdár's efforts to conciliate them seemed to be unsuccessful; but the offer of two lakhs of rúpís appeared at last in some measure to appease them, of which sum Muhammad Akbar promised to advance one lakh himself, and to be security for the other. The day nevertheless wore on without anything decisive having been agreed upon. The General became impatient to rejoin his force, and repeatedly urged the Sirdár to furnish him with the necessary escort, informing him at the same time that it was contrary to British notions of military honour that a general should be separated from his troops in the hour of danger; and that he would infinitely prefer death to such a disgrace. The Sirdár

put him off with promises, and at 7 P.M., firing being heard in the direction of the pass, it was ascertained that the troops, impatient of further delay, had actually moved off. From the time of the General's departure the situation of the troops had been in truth one of dark and cruel suspense, unenlightened by one solitary ray of hope. At an early hour in the morning, before the enemy had yet made their appearance on the hills, Major Thain, accompanied by Captain Skinner, rode out a few hundred paces in the direction of Muhammad Akbar's camp, in expectation of meeting a messenger from the Sirdár to the last-named officer; a Ghalzí soldier suddenly made his appearance, and, passing Major Thain, who was several yards in advance, went close up to Captain Skinner, and shot him with a pistol through the face. Major Thain instantly returned to camp, and announced this act of treachery. The unfortunate officer was carried inside the inclosure, and lingered in great pain till 3 P.M. In him the State lost an officer of whose varied merits as a soldier and a man it is difficult to speak too highly. A deep feeling of anguish and despair now pervaded the whole assemblage. The extremes of hunger, thirst, and fatigue were suffered alike by all; added to which, the Afgháns again crowned the heights and recommenced hostilities, keeping up a galling fire the whole day with scarcely half an hour's intermission. Sally after sally was made by the Europeans, bravely

led on by Major Thain, Captain Bygrave, and Lieutenants Wade and Macartney; but again and again the enemy returned to worry and destroy. Night came, and all further delay in such a place being useless, the whole sallied forth, determined to pursue the route to Jallálábád at all risks.

The sick and wounded were necessarily abandoned to their fate. Descending into the valley of Jagdalak, they pursued their way along the bed of the stream for about a mile and a half, encountering a desultory fire from the Ghalzís encamped in the vicinity, who were evidently not quite prepared to see them at such an hour, but were soon fully on the alert, some following up the rear, others pressing forward to occupy the pass. This formidable defile is about two miles long, exceedingly narrow, and closed in by lofty precipitous heights. The road has a considerable slope upwards, and, on nearing the summit, further progress was found to be obstructed by two strong barriers formed of branches of the prickly holly-oak, stretching completely across the defile. Immense delay and confusion took place in the general struggle to force a passage through these unexpected obstacles, which gave ample time for the Ghalzís to collect in force.

A terrible fire was now poured in from all quarters, and a massacre even worse than that of Tangá Táríkí commenced, the Afgháns rushing in furiously upon the pent-up crowd of troops and followers, and com-

mitting wholesale slaughter. A miserably small remnant managed to clear the barriers. Twelve officers,* amongst whom was Brigadier Anquetil, were killed. Upwards of forty † others succeeded in pushing through, about twelve‡ of whom, being pretty well mounted, rode on ahead of the rest with the few remaining cavalry, intending to make the best of their way to Jallálábád. Small straggling parties of the Europeans marched on under different officers; the country became more open, and they suffered little molestation for several miles, most of the Ghalzís being too busily engaged in the plundering of the dead to pursue the living. But much delay was occasioned by the anxiety of the men to bring on their wounded comrades, and the rear was much harassed by sudden onsets from parties stationed on the heights, under which the road occasionally wound. On reaching the Súrkáb river, they found the enemy in possession of the bridge, and a hot fire was encountered in crossing the ford below it, by which Lieutenant Cadet, Her Majesty's 44th, was killed, together with several privates.

January 13*th*.—The morning dawned as they approached Gandámak, revealing to the enemy, who had by this time increased considerably in their front and rear, the insignificance of their numerical strength. To avoid the vigorous assaults that were now made by

* Appendix. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

their confident foe, they were compelled to leave the road, and take up a defensive position on a height to the left of it, where they made a resolute stand, determined to sell their lives at the dearest possible price. At this time they could only muster about twenty muskets.

Some Afghán horsemen, approaching from the direction of Gandámak, were now beckoned to, and an attempt was made by Lieutenant Hay to enter upon some pacific arrangement. Hostilities were for a few minutes suspended, and, at the invitation of a chief, Major Griffiths, the senior officer, accompanied by Mr. Blewitt to act as interpreter, descended the hill to a conference.

Several Afgháns now ascended the height, and assumed a friendly tone towards the little party there stationed; but the calm was of short duration, for the soldiers, getting provoked at several attempts being made to snatch away their arms, resumed a hostile attitude, and drove the intruders fiercely down. The die was now cast, and their fate sealed; for the enemy, taking up their post on an opposite hill, marked off man after man, officer after officer, with unerring aim. Parties of Afgháns rushed up at intervals to complete the work of extermination, but were as often driven back by the still dauntless handful of invincibles. At length, nearly all being wounded more or less, a final onset of the enemy, sword in hand,

terminated the unequal struggle, and completed the dismal tragedy. Major Griffiths and Mr. Blewitt had been previously led off to a neighbouring fort, and were thus saved. Of those whom they left behind, Captain Souter alone, with three or four privates, was spared, and carried off captive, having received a severe wound in the shoulder; he had tied round his waist before leaving Jagdalak the colours of his regiment, which were thus miraculously preserved.

It only remains to relate the fate of those few officers and men, who rode on ahead of the rest after passing the barriers. Six of the twelve officers, Captains Bellew, Collier, Hopkins, Lieutenant Bird, Drs. Harpur and Brydon, reached Futhábád in safety, the other six having dropped gradually off by the way and been destroyed. Deceived by the friendly professions of some peasants near the above-named town, who brought them bread to eat, they unwisely delayed a few moments to satisfy the cravings of hunger; the inhabitants meanwhile armed themselves, and, suddenly sallying forth, cut down Captain Bellew and Lieutenant Bird; Captains Collyer and Hopkins, and Drs. Harpur and Brydon, rode off, and were pursued; the three former were overtaken and slain within four miles of Jallálábád; Dr. Brydon by a miracle escaped, and was the only officer of the whole Kábul force who reached that garrison in safety.

Such was the memorable retreat of the British army

from Kábul, which, viewed in all its circumstances,—in the political and military conduct which preceded and brought about such a consummation, the treachery, disaster, and suffering which accompanied it,—is, perhaps, without a parallel in modern history.*

* A most remarkable historical parallel may, however, be found in Book V. of Cæsar's Commentaries, in the description there given of the insurrection of the Gauls under Ambiorix, wherein the Roman general, Sabinus, figures as an exact prototype of Elphinstone, with an almost identical result in the details of unavailing valour, ending in a hollow treaty with treacherous chieftains, a disorderly retreat of the Roman army, and its final annihilation.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTIVITY OF THE HOSTAGES.

[In the early editions of this work the account of the military operations which ended in the retreat and destruction of the British army was followed by rough notes made by the author, descriptive of the life in captivity of himself and his comrades. After the lapse of so many years it has not appeared advisable to the author to encumber the work with details, many of them trivial, the interest attaching to which has long since passed away. The chief incidents of a public nature which followed the captivity of the ladies and soldiers referred to in the foregoing narrative will be found related in the following pages extracted from a memoir of the career of Sir Vincent Eyre, published by the editor in the "Calcutta Review" some twelve years ago. The reader will observe that the extract begins with the incidents immediately preceding the surrender of Eyre, his wife, and thirty-seven others as hostages to Muhammad Akbar.]

Then came the retreat, with its attendant horrors, rivalling those experienced by the French in their

winter march from Moscow. Eyre's wound was still intensely painful, and incapacitated him from mounting a horse without assistance. To quote his own words: "Deep snow covered every inch of mountain and plain with one unspotted sheet of dazzling white, and so intensely bitter was the cold as to penetrate and defy the defences of the warmest clothing." The thermometer stood at several degrees below zero; and men's beards were coated with icicles. There was a mingled multitude of four thousand five hundred fighting men (including seven hundred European soldiers) and twelve thousand native camp-followers, with their women and children. Their route lay through the Khurd-Kábul pass, "a truly formidable defile, about five miles from end to end, shut in by lofty hills, between whose precipitous sides the sun, at this season, could dart but a momentary ray." There, half concealed behind rocks and bushes, eager hordes of armed Ghalzís lay in ambush for their prey. The scene that ensued may be more easily imagined than described. The treachery of the chiefs was but too evident. Perched securely on high, the foe defied all attempts to silence or dislodge them. It was necessary to run the gauntlet of their fire; and not less than three thousand souls perished in the attempt.

Eyre and his family, consisting of wife and a little boy, emerged safely from the gorge; the latter, being strapped to the back of a faithful Afghán servant on

horseback, had a very narrow escape, owing to the horse falling and throwing them both off when in the very middle of the pass. To crown the misfortunes of the day, snow began to fall, and thousands had to pass the night without shelter, food, or fire. Only four small tents were saved, under which some of the women, children, and wounded found refuge. Eyre and Lieutenant Mein sat up all night in attendance on their dying friend Sturt, of the Engineers, who had been mortally wounded in the pass. At her husband's side his youthful bride also kept watch with them. She was the daughter of the gallant Sale, and well worthy of such a sire. To assuage Sturt's burning thirst, Eyre and Mein were obliged to wander, alternately, through the camp in search of fire to melt a cupful of snow, and often before they could regain the tent the contents had frozen again into a hard mass. Sturt did not survive the night, and was buried at early dawn. Mein's disinterested devotion to his wounded friend in hurrying back to save him at the risk of his own life, and dragging him through the pass under the enemy's fire, was justly extolled by Sir Robert Peel in Parliament, who quoted the scene *verbatim* from Eyre's book.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Akbar, like a vulture watching his prey, scanned every movement of the force from the neighbouring heights. Shortly after the retreat commenced, he had demanded that Pottinger

and two other officers should be given up as hostages, and prompt compliance had been yielded. But still he was not satisfied. The ladies, married families, and wounded officers were next required to be made over to his care, an assurance being given to the General that by such a mark of confidence alone could the chiefs be induced to provide for the wants of the force, and to restrain their followers from acts of hostility.

The General himself, in a memorandum which he subsequently drew up, thus explains his own motives: "I complied with his wish, hoping that, as from the very commencement of negotiations the Sirdar had shown the greatest anxiety to have the married people as hostages, this mark of trust might elicit a corresponding feeling in him."

Eyre, on receiving a verbal order to prepare for the departure of himself and family, sought the General, in order to hear it from his own lips. The poor General was greatly distressed, but, warmly pressing his hand, urged him to mount and be off, as the escort sent by Muhammad Akbar was impatient to start; so there seemed to be no alternative. Muhammad Akbar, although suspected of treachery, was then professedly our ally, with whom a treaty existed. Hostilities were therefore at an end, so far as he was concerned. It was pretended, on his behalf, that the Ghalzí chiefs on the previous day exerted themselves in vain to restrain their followers. Captain Nicholl

now commanded the artillery in person, and Eyre felt that his own presence could no longer be of any service to the force. His obvious duty was to obey the General's wishes at all hazards; he therefore departed with the new batch of hostages, consisting of seven officers, ten ladies, and twenty-two children. Among them were Ladies Macnaghten and Sale. Counting, then, seven officers left behind at Kábul, and three made over on the march, the chiefs had now gained possession of seventeen British officers, nominally as hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty.

Eyre and his associates in misfortune remained as captives in the hands of Muhammad Akbar during eight and a half months, Eyre occupying his leisure in recording, on such scraps of paper as he could collect, the strange and stirring incidents which he had witnessed, while yet they were fresh in his own memory and in the minds of his fellow-captives, from whom, as well as from such public and private documents as had been saved and were within his reach, he industriously gleaned many important and interesting particulars. His chief object in these labours was to place, as far as in him lay, the whole unvarnished truth before the British public at the earliest practicable opportunity. He thus wrote to a friend: "I feel well assured that the more my statements are sifted, the more clearly will their truth be established in all essential points. Heaven knows I would give my

right hand that such events as I have described had never occurred; but, having occurred, why should I conceal them? Is the loss of an army nothing? Can our national interests be advanced by glossing over such unheard-of calamities and disgrace?" In another letter he thus expresses himself: "I wrote my narrative because it was at the time very doubtful whether any of the chief actors would survive, and I felt an anxious desire that, should we perish in captivity, the public might be able to judge properly of the respective merits of all concerned. I can boldly assert that there is not a sentence which I do not believe to be strictly true."

Perhaps few narratives written under such circumstances have so well stood the test of time,* or have met more general and lasting approval. We have little doubt that honest old Gascoignes the poet, who underwent some similar experiences in his youth during the wars in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century, very accurately expresses Eyre's feelings in regard to his volume on Kábul in the following stanza from the poem entitled "The Fruites of War":

> Go, little booke! God graunt thou none offende,
> For so meant he who sought to set thee forth,
> And when thou commest where soldiers seem to wend,
> Submit thyselfe as writte but little worth.

* On one occasion, during his visit to Europe in 1855–56, Eyre happened to be looking over the book-shelves of a bookseller's shop in Paris, when he suddenly came upon his own work, translated into French. It is impossible to imagine a more pleasing surprise to an author than such a discovery.

Confesse withal that thou hast bene too bolde
To speak so plaine of haughtie hartes in place,
And say that he which wrote thee coulde have tolde
Full many a tale of blouds that were not base.

The story of the captivity was appended to Eyre's narrative in the form of a journal, and may still be read with interest. We must content ourselves with a few of the more prominent episodes. On the fourth day after their surrender to Muhammad Akbar they were joined by the General himself, with Brigadier Shelton and Captain Hugh Johnson, and learned with profound dismay and grief that the remainder of the force had been gradually shot down in the passes, the chiefs having played them false even to the end, notwithstanding all the concessions that had been made. It was evidently Muhammad Akbar's game to hold his captives as trump cards wherewith to extort from the British Government better terms for himself and country than he could well hope to obtain by any other means at his disposal. Hence they found themselves, on the whole, well treated, although their anxieties were kept alive by the fact that a small, though influential, section existed among the Ghalzí chiefs who made no secret of their inclination to put the whole party to death; and whose debates on this momentous subject were often carried on in tones sufficiently loud to be overheard by their intended victims.

Their first place of confinement was the fort of Badíábád, in the district of Lughmán, a stronghold of one of these same Ghalzí chieftains, having walls twenty-five feet high, and lofty flanking towers, surrounded by a faussebraye and deep ditch. Here they remained three months, during which they were allowed to exchange letters with their friends in Jallálábád, where Sale still maintained his defensive position. On February 19th they were alarmed by a violent rocking of the earth, accompanied by a loud subterranean rumbling sound; the lofty parapets around them fell in with a thundering crash; the dwelling-house waved and tottered like a ship at sea, and all within it simultaneously rushed out into the central court-yard, to find their terror-stricken Afghán keepers upon their knees, ejaculating loud prayers to Allah for protection. It seemed as though the last day had arrived. Eyre had a narrow escape from being crushed to death by a mass of the wall, under which he chanced to be standing while tending his horse, which he had been permitted to retain.

The same earthquake levelled in a few seconds the walls of defence which Sale's force had, with continuous labour, repaired and strengthened at Jallálábád. But the Afgháns were unprepared to take advantage of the chance thus offered. On April 9th tidings reached the captives that Muhammad Akbar's camp had been surprised by Sale, and his force completely routed,

and on the following day they were hurried off towards the mountains, after a sharp debate among the chiefs on the expediency of destroying them at once.

Poor General Elphinstone, in his already shattered state of health, could ill bear up under the fatigues and privations he had to undergo, and died at Tizín on April 23rd, "a happy release for him," says Eyre, "from suffering of mind and body. Deeply he felt his humiliation, and bitterly regretted the day when he resigned the home-borne pleasures of his native land to hazard the reputation of a proud name in a climate and station for which he was physically unfit."

The body was forthwith forwarded by Muhammad Akbar to General Pollock (by that time at Jallálábád) for honourable interment—a tribute of respect to a fallen foe highly creditable to the Afghán chief.

On the following day Captain Colin Mackenzie was despatched on a mission to General Pollock, taking with him the first portion of Eyre's narrative. After perusal by General Pollock, it was forwarded by the latter to Lord Ellenborough's private secretary, and eventually to England for publication. Colin Mackenzie's journeys to and fro proved full of peril, for, although disguised as an Afghán and escorted by a well-known and popular sort of Rob Roy, or freebooter, named Buttí, in the pay of Muhammad Akbar, whose knowledge of that wild mountainous country and its still wilder inhabitants stood him in good stead, he was

in frequent and imminent danger of discovery and consequent death from parties of wandering Ghalzís, whom they unexpectedly encountered, and who persisted in being unpleasantly inquisitive regarding the suspicious-looking traveller, with his face and form so closely muffled up in the folds of his turban and large sheepskin cloak, leaving his eyes scarcely as visible as those of the roughest Skye terrier, and whom it was necessary to palm off as a sick chief of Peshawur sent by Muhammad Akbar under Buttí's escort o his native place. One glimpse of the white skin beneath his wide Afghán trousers (which he found it next to impossible to prevent from rising above his knee) would have been his death-warrant. But Heaven protected him.

The propositions whereof he was the bearer were, that the British general should treat with Muhammad Akbar as the acknowledged head of the Afghán nation; that there should be an exchange of prisoners, including all on each side; that the British should retire from Afghánistán; and that General Pollock should pay down a handsome *douceur* in money. In case of these arrangements being effected, Muhammad Akbar would be glad to enter into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the British. This, however, was only his public message, but, in secret, Mackenzie had been desired to ascertain if a private arrangement could not be made, to the effect that General Pollock

should ensure an amnesty to Muhammad Akbar and his followers for the past, and that the British Government should bestow on him a large jagír. In this case he would willingly assist Pollock in reconquering Afghánistán.

Mackenzie returned from his mission on May 3rd without having opened any prospect of release for the captives, although the negotiation, as far as it went, had been of a friendly nature. He was immediately despatched a second time with more moderate proposals, but again returned with an equally ineffectual result. On May 23rd Muhammad Akbar removed all his captives from the Zaudak valley to a fort in the vicinity of Kábul. Here Mackenzie had nearly died of typhus fever, the result of his recent fatigues and exposure. Muhammad Akbar selected Major Colin Troup as his next envoy, and he was absent in that capacity from the 10th to the 27th of July, but brought back no definite reply. Pollock was, in fact, busy in preparing for an advance on Kábul, with stringent instructions from Lord Ellenborough to proceed with his military preparations without reference to any negotiations. Meanwhile, typhus fever and dysentery spread alarmingly among the captives, and, on August 7th, Captain John Conolly breathed his last. His brother, the celebrated Arthur Conolly, had but recently been decapitated at Bukhára, after having been confined at the bottom of a dry well, in company

with Colonel Stoddart, for eighty days, without change of raiment.

On August 23rd nine officers of the Ghazní garrison joined the Kábul captives. Among them was the brave young Nicholson, destined to a brilliant career in the Panjáb, and a hero's death sixteen years later in the moment of victory at Delhi. He now became Eyre's messmate, and beguiled the hours with animated details of the scenes he had witnessed during the ineffectual defence of that fortress; with him, too, was Dr. Thomas Thomson, since risen to eminence as a botanist and a traveller. On August 25th all were hurried off towards Bámián, *en route* to Kulum in Usbeg Tátary, with a threat held out that they would be sold into bondage on arrival. Eyre and Mackenzie were both at this time to ill to travel on horseback, and were packed into a pair of panniers to balance each other on each side of a camel, a mode of travelling for invalids which their miserable experience on that memorable journey did not enable them to recommend for general adoption, except in cases where the penalty of torture has been incurred.

They had a strong escort, consisting of some four hundred Afghán soldiers, deserters from the British service, under one Sálah Muhammad, their former subadar. Their route lay over the steep mountain-passes of Sufaid Kúh, Unai, Hájígak and Kálu, the

latter attaining an altitude of thirteen thousand four hundred feet, whence Eyre describes the view as "presenting a boundless chaos of barren mountains, probably unequalled in wild terrific grandeur." The valley of Bámíán, beyond the Indian Caucasus, was reached on September 3rd.

And now, at the very time when hope began to yield to despair in all their breasts, and a life of wretched slavery seemed their inevitable lot, aid came from an unexpected quarter, and their speedy deliverance was at hand. Eyre thus tells the story in a letter to a friend in Calcutta:—

"On Sunday, September 11th, Sálah Muhammad, having received a positive order from Muhammad Akbar for our immediate march to Kulum, our desperate condition induced Pottinger to tempt him with the offer of a bribe for our release. Captain Johnson volunteered to be agent in the matter, and found him more accessible than was expected. This man had hitherto kept aloof from any attempt at friendly intercourse with the prisoners, towards whom his manner had been invariably haughty and his language harsh. Great, therefore, was our astonishment to learn that he had been seduced from his allegiance to Muhammad Akbar and bought over to our side.

"Meanwhile, the rapid advance of the two English

armies upon Kábul, and the probable defeat of Muhammad Akbar, led us to expect that chief's arrival among us as likely to happen at any moment. It was, therefore, necessary to be prepared against any sudden surprise. The Hazarah chiefs in the valley were sounded and found favourable to our scheme. The men composing our guard were gained over by a promise of four months' pay. A new governor was set up over the Hazarah province by Major Pottinger, the existing governor being too much in Muhammad Akbar's interests to be trusted.

"On September 16th the country was considered sufficiently safe to admit of our setting out on our return towards Kábul. We had only proceeded a few miles when a messenger met us with the news of General Pollock's victory over Akbar, which cheering intelligence was shortly afterwards confirmed by a note from Sir Richmond Shakespear, who was hastening to our assistance with six hundred Kazilbásh horsemen. On the 17th we recrossed the Kálu pass, and encamped about three miles from its base. We had been here about two hours, when horsemen were descried descending the pass of Hájígak. Instantly Sálah Muhammad's men were on the alert and formed up in line. Judge of our joy when the banner of the Kazilbásh was distinguished streaming in the air, and imagine, if you can, with what emotions of delight

and gratitude we eagerly pressed forward to greet our gallant countryman, Sir Richmond Shakespear, who soon came galloping up to where we stood. For the first time after nine miserable months of thraldom we felt the blessedness of freedom. To God be all the glory, for He alone could bring it to pass!"

There was still some danger that Muhammad Akbar might intercept their flight, but at Shakespear's suggestion Pollock despatched Sale's brigade to meet them at Kot-Ashrú. All doubt was then at an end; they were once more under the safe-guard of British troops, who lined the heights of Sufaid Khák and who raised hearty cheers of welcome as the procession threaded the pass; among them most conspicuous rode the gallant Sale, with his long-lost wife and daughter by his side.

On the 21st Pollock's camp at Kábul was reached, where the Horse Artillery guns fired a salute in honour of the event, and thus happily terminated the tragedy of the Kábul insurrection.

The events of those days have still such a thrilling interest for British readers that we have been tempted to linger perhaps too long over that portion of Eyre's career in connection with which his name first became familiarly known. It was his strange destiny to witness the "Alpha" and "Omega" of the downfall of the old Sepoy army; for it is now generally admitted that the first seeds of the mutiny of 1857 were

sown in the Kábul campaign. In allusion to this, Kaye, in his "Sepoy War," declares: "The charm of a century of conquest was then broken. The Sepoy regiments, no longer assured and fortified by the sight of that ascendant star of fortune which once had shone with so bright and steady a light, shrunk from entering the passes which had been the grave of so many of their comrades. It was too true; the Sikhs were tampering with their fidelity. Bráhman emissaries were endeavouring to swear them with holy water not to advance at the word of the English commander. Nightly meetings of delegates from the different regiments were held, and perhaps we do not even now know how great was the danger."

Before leaving Kábul, Eyre, through a strange accident, recovered his friend Maule's Bible, on the fly-leaf of which the owner had thus written, as if prophetically, two days before his murder: "In case of my death I wish this book to be sent to my mother, or nearest living relative." No Muhammadan will knowingly destroy the Word of God, and it is remarkable that Arthur Conolly's prayer-book, [wherein he had entered a touching record of his sufferings and aspirations in the well at Bukhára, was, after the lapse of many years, left at the door of his sister's house in London by a mysterious foreigner, who simply left word that he came from Russia, but

of whom no trace could be discovered after a most diligent search.

Returning with Pollock's force to India, Eyre was posted to the new troop of Horse Artillery, raised to replace the old first troop, first brigade, which had perished in the Afghán passes, and with whose services at Kábul he had been so intimately associated. In his public report to the commandant of the Artillery regiment, Eyre, speaking of the siege, thus writes: "The gunners, from first to last, never once partook of a full meal or obtained their natural rest: of the hardships and privations undergone it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea. Throughout the last struggle all eye-witnesses concur in testifying to their stubborn valour."

[The Editor may be pardoned for concluding this brief sketch of the captivity, by here extracting from the regimental orders of the commandant of the artillery the opinion expressed by that officer of the conduct of the men of that corps employed in Kábul.]

Extract from Regimental Orders by Brigadier W. H. L. Frith, Commandant of Artillery, dated 10th March 1843.

The total absence of official details on the subject has hitherto prevented the Commandant from noticing the conduct of the late 1st Troop, 1st Brigade, Horse Ar-

tillery during the insurrection at and disastrous retreat from Kábul; he now publishes extracts from a letter received yesterday from Lieutenant V. Eyre, late Commissary of Ordnance. as a public record of the high state of discipline and determined bravery exhibited by this gallant and devoted troop on all occasions.

It will always be a subject of sincere gratification to reflect on the noble manner in which they sustained the character of the corps under the severest trials, and in a climate that multiplied an hundred-fold the difficulties with which they had to contend, whilst their fate in the unequal struggle demands the deepest sympathy.

Extract from a letter from Lieutenant V. Eyre, late Commissary of Ordnance in Kábul, to Captain E. Buckle, Assistant Adjutant-General, Artillery:—

"It is necessary to premise, that at the commencement of the rebellion on the 2nd November 1841, a portion of General Elphinstone's force was sent to occupy the Bala Hissar, and the remainder was concentrated in the cantonment; to the former, Captain Nichol and Lieutenant Stewart were attached with four guns, and to the latter Brevet-Captain Waller, with two guns. On the 9th of November, Captain Nichol, by order of the General, strengthened Captain Waller's detachment with an additional gun, and the troop thus became equally divided.

"The first active service performed in the field by the Horse Artillery was on the afternoon of the 3rd of November, when a sally was made under Major Swayne,

5th Native Infantry, and a body of the enemy was defeated principally by the fire of the guns. On this occasion Captain Waller was severely wounded, and from that date up to the 22nd of November, when I was myself disabled, the virtual command of the Horse Artillery detachment in the cantonment devolved upon me; during this period several severe actions took place with the enemy, in all of which our arms were more or less successful. One fort was breached and taken by assault, another was taken by a *coup de main*, and, besides several sorties of minor importance, two great actions were fought on the 10th and 13th of November against the collective forces of the enemy, amounting on each occasion to several thousands of horse and foot, in which our side was completely triumphant, and two of their guns were captured.

"Provisions, of which there had been from the beginning an alarming scarcity, soon began entirely to fail. The cold of winter set in with unusual rigour, the defence of our long line of low ramparts grievously harassed the troops, the guns placed in battery at the several angles of the cantonment required the constant attendance of the Artillerymen by day and night.

"The gunners, from first to last, never once partook of a full meal, or obtained their natural rest; of the hardships and privations undergone it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea.

"During the whole of this most trying period, the behaviour of the Horse Artillerymen was distinguished by a degree of patience, cheerfulness, zeal, and forti-

tude, that excited the unbounded admiration of every eye-witness, and filled the heart of every artillery officer with pride and delight.

"On the 23rd November, Brigadier Shelton sallied forth with about seven hundred bayonets and one gun, which (there being no artillery officer available) was commanded by Sergeant Mulhall. An immense army of Afghans poured forth to battle, and a terrible conflict ensued. Sergeant Mulhall and his brave gun's crew committed great havoc amid the dense masses of the enemy, exhibiting a very high degree of professional skill; but their efforts, though partially successful, were ineffectual to repel the overwhelming hosts of assailants. Galled by the fatal fire of Afghan rifles, the infantry lost heart and fled, abandoning our gun to its fate; staunch to the last, the Artillerymen stood by their charge until they were nearly all exterminated, Sergeant Mulhall himself escaping by a miracle, with his clothes perforated with bullets in divers places.

"In the public report of this day's operations in the field, Brigadier Shelton did ample justice to the Artillery Sergeant and his devoted little detachment, but the document has, I fear, been lost.

"On the 14th December, a treaty having been entered upon, our troops were withdrawn from the Bala Hissar, and Captain Nichol, on arriving in cantonments, requested me to send in a report of the conduct of his men, which I did, but that also was subsequently lost on the retreat.

"That the Horse Artillery sustained their high fame

to the last is well known. On the retreat of the army from Kábul, owing to the starved condition of the horses, which disabled them from pulling the guns through the deep snow and rugged mountain-passes, the guns were, one by one, spiked and abandoned. In the Khurd-Kábul pass a whole gun's crew perished rather than desert their charge. On nearing Jagdallak some Horse Artillerymen, headed by Captain Nichol, acting as Dragoons, charged and routed a party of the enemy's cavalry.

"Throughout the last struggle up to Gandámak all eye-witnesses concur in testifying to their stubborn valour. They died like true soldiers, selling their lives dearly.

"Only three men escaped with life, being taken prisoners. Two others, who were left behind with the detachment of wounded at Kábul, also survived.

(True Copy.) "E. Buckle, A.A.G.A."

A handsome Monument has been erected by the Artillery Corps at Dum Dum to the memory of all those of the Service who fell in Afghanistan, with the inscription which appears on the next page:—

Sacred to the Memory
of
CAPTAIN THOMAS NICHOL,
LIEUTENANT CHARLES STEWART,
SERGEANT MULHALL,
and the
Non-commissioned Officers and Men of the
1st Troop, 1st Brigade, Bengal Horse Artillery,
who fell in the performance of their duty
during the insurrection at, and retreat from, Cabul,
in the Months of
November and December 1841,
and
January 1842,
on which occasion of unprecedented trial
22 Officers and Men
upheld
in the most noble manner
the character of the Regiment to which they belonged.
This gallant band formed the oldest Troop in the
BENGAL ARTILLERY.
It had previously been distinguished
on numerous occasions,
having served
in Egypt, in the Maratta and Nepaul Wars,
and in Ava.

Sacred
also to the Memory of
LIEUT. CHARLES ALEXANDER GREEN, B.A.,
who perished
in command of a detail of Shah Shooja's mountain train,
and whose gallant conduct emulated that
of his comrades.

Also
to the Memory of
LIEUTENANT RICHARD MAULE,
Artillery,
who was killed at the outbreak of the
Affghan insurrection,
November 1841,
and likewise of
LIEUTENANT A. CHRISTIE, of the same Regiment,
killed in the Kyber Pass,
on the return of the victorious army
under the command of
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE POLLOCK, G.C.B., &c.
of the
BENGAL ARTILLERY.
As a Tribute of
Admiration, Regard, and Respect,
This Monument
is erected by the
ARTILLERY REGIMENT.

Fortis cadere cedere non potest.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

Letter from Captain Colin Mackenzie to Lieutenant V. Eyre.

(*Referred to at page* 83.)

My dear Eyre,

As you wish for an account of the manner in which I was besieged in the Kela-i-Nishan Khan, in the breaking out of the Cabul insurrection, I comply, although unwilling to appear so often in the first person, as I necessarily must, in order to give you a clear idea of the fatal nature of the blunder committed, in not sending me assistance from cantonments. I have by me a copy of some notes, which I made at the request of the late Major Thain, then Aide-de-Camp to our lamented chief, General Elphinstone. You are aware that the fort, in which I chanced to be living, contained the godowns of the Shah's commissariat; and that in one part the quarters of Brigadier Anquetil were situated. For the defence of these, a guard of one havildar, two naicks, and eighteen

sepoys had been assigned. The fort itself lies between that quarter of Cabul called the Moorad Khanah and its most western suburb, the Deh-i-Affghan. The Cabul river flows between the fort and the Kuzzilbash quarter (the Chundoul), to the south. Close to it, to the north, divided by a narrow road and a high wall, is a large grove of mulberry trees, known by the name of the Yaboo Khanah, in which the Yaboos of the Shah's commissariat used to be kept; but from which towards the end of October, 1841, they had fortunately been removed into camp at Seeah Sung. In this Yaboo Khanah was a guard of six suwars; and, by chance, a detachment of a jemadar and ninety-five men of Captain Ferris's Juzailchees; as also another of the Shah's sappers, consisting of one jemadar and fifty-nine men, including havildars and naicks. These last were encumbered with a host of women and children, brought up from their native country with them by the express orders of the Supreme Government. The house of Captain Troup, late Brigade-Major of the Shah's force, built so as to be capable of a tolerable defence, is about forty yards to the east of the fort, across a narrow canal; and the large tower, occupied by the late Captain Trevor and his family, lies across the river to the south-east, distant about seven hundred yards. This also, at the time, was perfectly defensible. You will easily perceive that, with these posts in our possession, and commanding, as we did, the open space between us, it was a point of importance to maintain our ground until the arrival of what we hourly expected, a regiment from the cantonment,

whose presence would have immediately decided the wavering Kuzzilbashes in our favour, and would have cut off all communication between the insurgent population of Deh-i-Affghan and their rascally brethren in the Moorad Khanah. Spreading far beyond the Yaboo Khanah, in the direction of cantonments, and circling round the west of the fort down to the river's edge, are walled gardens and groves, which afford excellent cover to a lurking enemy, who were enabled to come, without much danger, to within a few yards of my defences.

Early on the morning of the 2nd of November, 1841, as I was preparing to go into cantonments with my baggage, intending to accompany the Envoy on the following day down to Peshawur, it was reported to me that an alarming riot had taken place in the town. Brigadier Anquetil and Captain Troup had gone out on their usual morning ride, not supposing the disturbance was of the importance it has since proved to be. I waited for the return of the above two officers for about an hour, previous to adopting decided measures, either for defence or retreat,—at the same time causing all the guards to stand to their arms. Suddenly a naked man stood before me, covered with blood, from two deep sabre-cuts in the head, and five musket-shots in the arm and body. He proved to be a suwar of Sir W. Macnaghten, who had been sent with a message to Captain Trevor, but who had been intercepted by the insurgents. This being rather a strong hint as to how matters were going on, I immediately gave orders for all the gates to be secured, and

personally superintended the removal of the detachments in the Yaboo Khanah, with their wives and families, into the fort. At the same time I caused loop-holes to be bored in the upper walls of Captain Troup's house, in which were a naick and ten sepoys. Whilst so employed, the armed population of Deh-i-Affghan came pouring down through the gardens, and commenced firing on us. I threw out skirmishers; but, in order to save the helpless followers, we were obliged to abandon the tents and baggage. In covering the retreat, one of my men was killed, and one badly wounded; while about five of the enemy were killed. The whole of the gardens were then occupied by the Affghans, from which, in spite of repeated sallies made during the day, we were unable to dislodge them; on the contrary, whenever we returned into the fort, they approached so near as to be able, themselves unseen, to kill and wound my men through the loop-holes of my own defences. The canal was during the day cut off, and so closely watched, that one of my followers was shot, while trying to fetch some water; but we fortunately found an old well in Brigadier Anquetil's quarters, the water of which was drinkable. Towards the afternoon, having no ammunition but what was contained in the soldiers' pouches, I communicated with Captain Trevor, who still held his tower, apparently unmolested. Even *then,* Khan Shereen Khan, the chief of the Kuzzilbashes, and four or five other Khans of consequence, among them the leaders of the Hazirbash regiments, were with poor Trevor, *earnestly expecting that some decided measures*

*on the part of the British would justify them in openly taking our part.**

Trevor despatched my requisition, for ammunition *at least*, if not for more effectual assistance, into cantonments, where it arrived safely, the distance not being more than one mile and a half. Shortly after, our spirits were raised by the apparent approach of a heavy cannonade, and volleys of musketry from the direction of the Moorad Khanah, and by the flight through the gardens of the multitudes who were assailing me, towards Deh-i-Affghan, from which quarter crowds of women and children began to ascend the hill, evidently in expectation of an assault from our soldiery. But these cheering sounds died away, and it was in vain that we strained our eyes, looking for the glittering bayonets through the trees, and round the corners of the principal street leading from cantonments. My besiegers swarmed back with shouts, and it required much exertion on my part to prevent despondency

* During the expedition into Kohistan, under General M'Caskill, I accompanied it, having been placed by General Pollock in charge of Shahzadee Shapoor and the Kuzzilbash camp. In my frequent communications with Khan Shereen Khan, some of the late Kuzzilbash leaders, and with other chiefs of the Kuzzilbash faction, all the circumstances of the late insurrection were over and over again recapitulated, one and all declaring positively that the slightest exhibition of energy on our part in the first instance, more especially in reinforcing my post and that of Trevor, would at once have decided the Kuzzilbashes, and all over whom they possessed any influence, in our favour. Khan Shereen also confirmed the idea, that an offensive movement on the opposite side of the town by Brigadier Shelton, had it been made in the early part of the fatal 2nd of November, would at once have crushed the insurrection.

amongst my people, which feeling had been strongly excited by the confirmation of the rumour of the murder of Sir Alexander Burnes, his brother, and Captain Broadfoot; by the sight of the smoke from his burning house; and by the intelligence that the treasury of Captain Johnson, also in the town, had been sacked, and the guard slain. In the evening I served out provisions from the Government stores. The attacks continued at intervals during the night, and we had most disagreeable suspicions that the enemy were undermining our north-west tower, or bastion. At early dawn we sallied out to ascertain this, but were driven in again, after finding our apprehensions too well verified. There is much dead ground about all Affghan forts, on which it is impossible to bring musketry to bear; and the towers can always be undermined, in the absence of hand-grenades on the part of the besieged. To meet this attempt, we sunk a shaft inside the ground-floor of the tower, and I placed four resolute men on the brink, ready to shoot the first man who should enter. The extent of the fort required all my men to be on duty at the same time, and some now began to wax weary. The cheerfulness of the remainder was not improved by the incessant howling of the women over the dead and dying, As a trait indicative of the character of the Affghan juzailchees, I must mention, that whenever they could snatch five minutes to refresh themselves with a pipe, one or other of them would twang a sort of rude guitar, as an accompaniment to some martial song, which, mingling with the above notes of war, sounded very strangely.

In the middle of this day (3rd November), to my great grief, I saw the enemy enter Captain Trevor's tower; and a report was brought to us by two of his servants, who escaped across the river, that he and his family had all been killed, which, though it afterwards proved to be untrue, had a bad effect on my men, whose ammunition had now become very scarce, in spite of my having husbanded it with the greatest care. The scene of plunder now going on in Trevor's house was evident from our ramparts; and the enemy, taking possession of the top, which overlooked my defences, pitched their balls from their large juzails with such accuracy, as to clear my western face of defenders; and it was only by crawling on my hands and knees up a small flight of steps, and whisking suddenly through the door, that I could ever visit the tower that had been undermined. The guard from Captain Troup's house now clamoured for admittance into the fort; and as Mr. Fallon, that gentleman's writer, called out to me that they were ready to abandon their post, I let them in, barricading my own door with sacks of flour. Against the door and small wicket, on Brigadier Anquetil's side, I had already piled heaps of stones and large timbers.

In the afternoon the enemy brought down a large wall-piece against us, the balls from which shook the upper walls of one of our towers, alarming the juzailchees much, who dread the effect of any species of ordnance. This disposition to despair was increased by the utter failure of ammunition, and by the Affghans bringing down quantities of fire-wood and long poles

with combustible matter at the ends, which they deposited under the walls of the Yaboo Khanah, in readiness to burn down my door. Some suwars who were stationed on Brigadier Anquetil's side of the fort, now broke into a sort of half-mutiny, and began pulling down the barricade against his gate, to endeavour to save themselves by the speed of their horses. This I quelled, by going down amongst them with a double-barrelled gun, and threatening to shoot the first man who should disobey my orders. In the evening I was quite exhausted, as were my people; having by that time been fighting and working for nearly forty hours without rest. Indeed, on my part, it had been without refreshment, as eating was impossible from excitement and weariness; and my absence for five minutes at a time from any part of the works disheartened the fighting men. Added to this, my wounded were dying for want of medical aid. I therefore yielded to the representations of my juzailchee jemadar, and of Mr. Fallon, from both of whom I received valuable assistance during the whole affair, and prepared for a retreat to cantonments. This we determined should take place during the early part of the night, at which time, it being then the fast of the Ramazan, we calculated the enemy would be at their principal meal. I ordered the juzailchees to lead, and to answer all questions in case of encountering a post of the enemy. The wounded were placed on what yaboos I possessed, abandoning everything in the shape of baggage; these, with the women and children, followed next in order; and I myself proposed to bring up the rear with my

few regulars, who, I fondly imagined, would stick by me in case of a hot pursuit. We were to avoid the town, and to follow the course of the small canal above mentioned, and afterwards to strike off by lanes, and through some fields, in the direction of cantonments. A night retreat is generally disastrous, and this proved no exception to the general rule; but, notwithstanding my strict order that all baggage should be left behind, it being very dark, many of the poor women contrived to slip out with loads of their little property on their shoulders, making their children walk, whose cries added to the confusion and to the danger of discovery.

On going among the women to see that my orders for leaving all their property were obeyed, a young Ghoorka girl of 16 or 18, who had girded up her loins and stuck a sword into her kummerbund, came to me, and throwing all that she possessed at my feet, said, "Sahib! you are right; life is better than property." She was a beautiful creature, with fair complexion and large dark eyes, and, as she stood there with her garments swathed around her, leaving her limbs free, she was a picture full of life, spirit, and energy. I never saw her afterwards; and fear she was either killed or taken prisoner on the night march.

Before we had proceeded half a mile, the rear missed the advance, upon whom a post of the enemy had begun to fire. All my regulars had crept ahead with the juzailchees, and I found myself alone with a chuprassee and two suwars, in the midst of a helpless and wailing crowd of women and children. Riding on by myself along a narrow lane, to try and pick out

the road, I found myself suddenly surrounded by a party of Affghans, whom at first I took to be my own juzailchees, and spoke to them as such. They quickly undeceived me, however, by crying out, "Feringhee hust," "Here is an European," and attacking me with swords and knives. Spurring my horse violently, I wheeled round, cutting from right to left, for I, fortunately, had my own sword drawn previous to the surprise. My blows, by God's mercy, parried the greater part of theirs, and I was lucky enough to cut off the hand of my most outrageous assailant. In short, after a desperate struggle, during which I received two slight sabre-cuts, and a blow on the back of my head from a fellow, whose sword turned in his hand, which knocked me half off my horse, I escaped out of the crush, passing unhurt through two volleys of musketry from the whole picket, which, by that time, had become alarmed and had turned out. They pursued me; but I soon distanced them, crossing several fields at speed, and gaining a road which I perceived led round the western end of the Shah's garden. Proceeding cautiously along, to my horror, I perceived my path again blocked up by a dense body of Afghans. Retreat was impossible; so, putting my trust in God, I charged into the midst of them, hoping that the weight of my horse would clear my way for me, and reserving my sword-cut for the last struggle. It was well that I did so, for by the time I had knocked over some twenty fellows, I found that they were my own juzailchees. If you ever experienced sudden relief from a hideous nightmare,

you may imagine my feelings for the moment. With these worthies, after wandering about for some time, and passing unchallenged by a sleepy post of the enemy, I reached the cantonments. During the night many stragglers of my party, principally followers, dropped in. During the whole business, from first to last, including the retreat, I had under a dozen killed, and about half that amount wounded, nearly half the former being followers; whereas about thirty of the enemy had bitten the dust, and gone to their place.

I cannot close this letter to you without remarking that, amongst other lamentable errors which led to our heavy downfall, that of omitting in the first instance to strengthen my post was, next to Shelton's refusal to pour his brigade into the town, while the rioters yet amounted to barely two hundred men, the greatest. But the whole blame cannot, in this particular instance, be attributed to our poor friend General Elphinstone. He had not been sufficiently informed as to the importance of my position, nor as to the facility with which a strong reinforcement could have reached me. That he was specially anxious personally as to my safety there could be no doubt, as was shown by the warmth of his reception of me.

I need not remind you of the devoted heroism displayed throughout the siege by Hussain Khan, the juzailchee jemadar, and the handful of brave men who accompanied him, and who personally attaching themselves to me remained under my command to the last. Numbers of them fell; others were disabled; a few departed to their own homes on the day when

I was taken prisoner and Sir W. Macnaghten was murdered; and, I believe, nearly the sole survivors are some ten or fifteen men, who, with their brave leader, Hussain Khan, are now with us in camp. These proceed with the rest of the juzailchee corps under Captain Ferris to Ferozepore, where, we hear, they are to be disbanded, and sent back to their own country, to be destroyed by their blood-thirsty countrymen as a reward for their fidelity to us; and yet these were the men who, during the period I was beleaguered in the fort of Nishan Khan, at a time when I was quite unknown to them, not only refused to listen to the repeated propositions of the Affghans outside to deliver me up to their vengeance, their own safety being thereby insured, but who, during the siege of cantonments, laughed to scorn the most tempting offers on the part of Ameenoolah Khan, Mahomed Akbar, and other Affghan chiefs, to induce them to join the general cause of Islam against the Kaffirs, invariably bringing the letters, in which they were conveyed, for my inspection and perusal.*

Yours very sincerely,

C. Mackenzie.

Camp, Rawul Pindee,
En route to Ferozepore, Nov. 19, 1842.

* They were disbanded at Jhelum, in the Punjab, each of the old soldiers receiving a donation of twelve months' pay, and the rest a gratuity in proportion to the length of their services, with which they all seemed very well satisfied.—V. E.

APPENDIX B.

No. 1.

Despatch from Major-General Elphinstone, addressed to the Secretary to the Government.

Buddeeabad.

Sir,—With the deepest regret, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, the annexed memorandum of occurrences preceding and during the insurrection at Cabul, up to this date.

The state of my health and mental sufferings previous to, and consequent on, the unfortunate occurrences, render me little competent to furnish such complete information as I might have done, had it not been for the total destruction of my entire staff and all official documents and memoranda; and I have only been able to remedy the deficiency through the kind assistance of Major Pottinger and Captain Lawrence, who having aided me with facts and dates, I trust, however meagre the account may be, that its tenor is, upon the whole, perfectly correct.

I beg to be allowed to express my sense of the

gallant manner in which the various detachments sent out were led by Brigadier Shelton, and of the invariably noble conduct of the officers on those occasions, particularly of those who fell leading their men; viz. Colonel Mackrell, Captains Swayne, Robinson, M'Crea, and Lieutenant Raban, Her Majesty's 44th Foot; Colonel Oliver and Captain Macintosh, 5th Native Infantry; Captain Westmacott and Lieutenant Gordon, 37th Native Infantry; Captain Walker, 4th Local Horse, and Lieutenant Laing, 27th Native Infantry.

I hope I may also be permitted to record my sense of the zeal and exertions of my lamented Aide-de-Camp Major Thain, and my acting Quartermaster-General Captain Paton, both of whom were severely wounded, as also Captain Grant, Assistant Adjutant-General, and my Aide-de-Camp Captain Airey. I had inadvertently omitted Captain Bellew, Assistant Quartermaster-General, who, at the storm of the Rika-bashee and Mahomed Sherreef's fort, evinced the greatest gallantry and volunteered to carry the powder-bags.

From Brigadier Anquetil, commanding the Shah's force, and Colonel Chambers, commanding the cavalry, I on all occasions received the most cordial assistance; and I take this opportunity to record the ever-ready zeal and gallant conduct of Captain Troup, Major of Brigade, Shah Shooja's force.

Throughout the whole siege the utmost zeal was manifested by Lieutenant Sturt, Engineers, and by Lieutenant V. Eyre, Commissary of Ordnance, who, in consequence of the paucity of artillery officers, on

all occasions volunteered his services, and was unfortunately wounded.

Captain Colin Mackenzie, Assistant Political Agent, Peshawur, volunteered to take charge of a body of Juzailchees, and was engaged in every affair, his and their conduct being most conspicuous.

The manner in which the soldiers, European and Native, bore up without a murmur against all privations and very harassing duty, at a most inclement season, was highly creditable to them, and more particularly the Horse Artillery, who on all occasions upheld the character of that distinguished corps.

Among the many valuable and promising officers who have fallen in the recent retreat, I would especially mention Captains Skinner and Hay, 61st and 35th Native Infantry; Lieutenant Le Geyt, Shah's 2nd Cavalry; and Lieutenant Bird, Shah's 6th Infantry; the latter officer distinguished himself in the assault and capture of the Rika-bashee Fort.

Of the surviving officers, my thanks are due to Major Eldred Pottinger, C.B., Political Agent, and Captain George St. P. Lawrence, Military Secretary to the late Envoy and Minister, for their cordial assistance and co-operation till the death of their lamented chief; and to Captain Anderson, Shah's 2nd Cavalry, and Captain Bygrave, Paymaster, for their zeal and alacrity in the performance of their duty, amid trials and difficulties almost unprecedented.

I have the honour, &c.

W. K. Elphinstone.

To the Secretary to Government.

No. 2.

The following extracts from a memorandum of Major-General Elphinstone deserve attention, both as supporting some of the Author's statements, and exhibiting in some degree the unfortunate General's disadvantages, as enumerated by himself.—EDITOR.

* * * * * *

"I was unlucky in the state of my health; as, during the whole siege, I was not able to move without difficulty, except on horseback, and then not easily. On the evening of the 2nd, going round the guards, I had a very severe fall, the horse falling on me. I was obliged to return home therefore. I then asked Captains Paton and Grant if they thought all had been done, and told them to see that Brigadier Anquetil made the arrangements in the Mission Compound; and it was a great loss to me that, shortly after his coming into cantonments, he was taken ill, by which I was deprived of his assistance, which he would cordially have afforded me. *The extent of the cantonment—the unfinished state of everything in it—its indefensible position, commanded as it was on every side—particularly the facilities afforded for the approach of matchlocks—added much to our difficulties.* The troops were on half rations, and the whole of them on duty every night, and often all day, from threatened attacks. The want of artillery officers, notwithstanding Captain (Lieutenant) Eyre's volunteering, Captain Waller being wounded early in the business.—On the 9th, not finding myself equal to the duties, particularly at night,

when I could not get about on horseback, I recalled Brigadier Shelton from the Bala Hissar. . . . . I was unlucky, also, in not understanding the state of things, and being wholly dependent on the Envoy and others for information." . . . .

No. 3.

The passage next quoted clearly shows that it was in obedience to the General's order that the married officers, as well as their wives and children, resigned themselves to Mahomed Akbar. This is, of course, a point of peculiar interest to those officers, especially as misrepresentation upon it has gone forth.—EDITOR.

Extract from a Memorandum by Major-General W. K. Elphinstone, C.B., of the Events preceding and during the Insurrection at Cabul.

"On the 9th (January) the march was ordered at 10 A.M., but, consequent on a message from the Sirdar, requesting us to halt till he could organize an escort for us, and promising supplies and fire-wood, it was countermanded. But a similar scene of confusion to that of the day before had taken place, and it was past mid-day before anything like order was restored.

"Captain Skinner returned to the Sirdar, by whom he was again sent back with a proposal that the married people and their families should be made over to him, promising honourable treatment to the ladies. *I complied with his wish,* being desirous to remove the ladies

and children, after the horrors they had already witnessed, from the further dangers of a camp, and hoping that, *as from the very commencement of negotiations the Sirdar had shown the greatest anxiety to have the married people as hostages, this mark of trust might elicit a corresponding feeling in him.*

"(Signed) W. K. ELPHINSTONE,
" Major-General."

APPENDIX C.

MEMORANDUM of Released Captives who joined General Pollock's camp at Kábul in September 1842.

Officers	35
Soldiers	51
Civilians	2
Officers' Wives	10
Soldiers' Wives	2
Children	22
Total	122

Among the present survivors (besides the author) are Lieutenant-General Sir George Lawrence, K.C.S.I., C.B., Lieutenant-General Colin Mackenzie, C.B., Lieutenant-General Sir I. Talbot Airey, K.C.B., Major-General J. Haughton, C.S.I., Colonel G. Mein.

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4

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