

Fickland

The Anglo-Indian

BY

JOHN WEDGE FLETCHER

ALLAHABAD:

LIDDELL'S PRINTING WORKS.

ACKLAND THE ANGLO-INDIAN

A TALE OF INDIA

BY

JOHN WEDGE FLETCHER

ALLAHABAD :

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WILLIAM J. H. J. H. J. H.

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This
story in
which an endeavor
our has been made to
reveal the inner difficulties
inherent in the Anglo-Indian Problem
in the life-history of a typical
Anglo-Indian is respectfully
dedicated
to the
Anglo-Indian Community.

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The Call of the Anglo-Indian.

Hark! the clarion call is ringing
Clearly o'er our Indian earth
Daily to the standard bringing
Men of self-same blood and birth!

From the mountain and the valley,
From the lowland to the sea;
Anglo-Indians, rally, rally,
With the watchword Unity!

Unity, ay, unity,
As we to the forefront press,
Binding our community
Is the secret of success!

Bear the banner with the name
Onward—vanward—floating high
On to fortune and to fame:
We will follow till we die!

Scatter'd—sever'd—disunited,
Let us mourn, no more, the past;
But that now our troth is plighted
Hold the Union firm and fast!

Let us waken from our slumbers,
Not, like sluggards, one by one,
But like warriors in their numbers,
At the signal of the gun!

Let the fiercest fray but fire us,
Ne'er a recreant terror move us,
But our might and right inspire us,
And our union victors prove us.

O let's arm us and begin,
From this very day and hour;
For there's many a fight to win,
Ere we think of self or power.

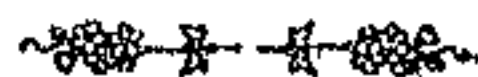
Let us brave, uncounting cost,
Both "the battle and the breeze;"
Courage—honour can't be lost
Tho' a hundred victories!

Plant the banner, rally round,
Every foothold firmly fought;
Turn not back till laurel-crown'd
Or upon your own shield brought!

Anglo-Indians, hark the call
Summoning from far and wide;
Hark and hasten one and all
All as one e'er unified.

Grave the Union on your hearts,
Consecrate to it your lives;
Manly play your proper parts
For your children and your wives!

O be link'd in brother-love,
For each good and worthy thing,
Fearing none but God above,
Honouring your Land and King!



Ackland, the Anglo-Indian.

INTRODUCTION.

VERY few people in the British Isles have any exact knowledge of India, and the few who have, either do not care about, or will not interest themselves in, the many problems arising there, not the least of which is the Anglo-Indian Question.

The number of Anglo-Indians in India, according to the Census of 1911, was nearly 300,000, the able-bodied men numbering about 70,000. There is every reason to believe that the number will increase greatly in the next 25 or 30 years, despite the general poverty of the people.

Many attempts by members of their own community and sympathetic and far-seeing Europeans have from time to time been made to elevate this class, but with little or no success. The Anglo-Indian Press has also expended gallons of ink in bringing the subject into prominence, but it has done but little good. On the other hand, practical help has been given, lakhs of rupees being spent annually for the benefit of Muhammadans, Hindus and Parsis, the last of whom do not claim to be or wish to be recognized as natives of India.

The Hindus and Muhammadans, however, it must be admitted, have substantial claims to recognition and Government recognize their claims, and help them in every way. They permit them to serve in the Army and are careful to treat both breeds equally well.

But in the case of Anglo-Indians—in whose interest this book has been written—very little has been done to ameliorate their condition, although their claims for recognition are equally substantial. Isolated cases of “wasters” are brought forward, to the great detriment of the mass, and the Anglo-Indian, being of mixed descent, is often looked down upon, and generally regarded by Europeans as a lazy, useless good-for-nothing fellow; the old saw about the Anglo-Indian being descended from the peoples of the East and West, thus acquiring the vices of both is applied by unsympathetic Europeans in decrying the community—bear in mind, never their “virtues”! If such be the case, then the wise-aces themselves would be to blame, for, as is the mould, so the cast. The Anglo-Indian is certainly more like the European than the Indian, and it must be admitted that, though the Anglo-Indian may “imitate” the European, he never does the Indian. His faults are due chiefly to environment and lack of opportunity rather than to race-disability.

The constant repetition of the tale of the “waster,” however, has left its mark and will take generations to obliterate. The present European population of India is a migratory one, there being few European settlers in India; thus with the constant change of officials, the Anglo-Indian question is usually shelved. Little sympathy is offered or is expected from Indian Rulers and Chiefs, for the Anglo-Indian and the Indian have very little in common, so the former finds himself looked down upon and disowned by Europeans and disowned and looked down upon by Indians.

The origin of the Anglo-Indian community in India can be traced chiefly to the European occupation of India. When the Portuguese occupied Goa, and the surrounding territory, intermarriages were common, there being at that period scarcely any European women in India. The voyage then *via* the Cape of Good Hope was a long and venturesome one, and once the Portuguese soldier said “good-bye” to his native land, he seldom or never returned.

These intermarriages were also encouraged by the Portuguese authorities, for political reasons, as they believed that the offspring of these marriages would be loyal to Portugal, and, in course of time, her Colonial Army could be kept up to strength, without reinforcements from home. The mortality also among Europeans in India in those days was appalling, though people of mixed descent were almost immune from the diseases which decimated the ranks of the Portuguese soldiers. And Portugal was wise in her generation, in this regard at least, whatever other causes may have brought about her defeat and downfall.

As time wore on the East India Company was granted a Charter, and a small Factory started at Madras. The Company grew to such proportions that an Army had to be maintained to safeguard its interests. Later on, as is well known, Robert Clive joined the Army, which practically conquered India.

The men for the Company's Army were enlisted in England just as were those for the British Army. The Recruiting Sergeant in the Company's uniform, with gaily-coloured streamers flowing from his shako, was a familiar figure in London and Woolwich, where the dépôt once was. A past master in the arts of blandishment, he cast his spell of Eastern glamour over the minds of likely recruits and thus quite eclipsed his rival Recruiting Sergeant for the British Army.

After a little preliminary drill, drafts were sent out to join the Company's forces in India, where they fought in many engagements, some scarcely heard of, others long since forgotten. Not only did this little Army begin the conquest of India but they drove the French, who also had possessions in India, out of the country.

The Company's Army, by repeated successes against Indian troops, inspired terror in the hearts of the Indians, who thought them invincible; and such was the reputation of its prowess that no enemy could be found to face John Company's stalwart warriors.

Service in the Company's Army became life-long, and men scarcely ever returned to England. The troops probably never numbered over 20,000 men at their greatest strength, and were as a rule only half that number.

This Army was maintained for nearly 200 years, until the territory owned by the Company became too unwieldy ; and after the great Mutiny of 1857 was quelled, the Crown assumed the responsibilities of the Company ; their Army was made over to the Crown, the regiments were renamed and soon scattered over the British Empire.

The soldiers of John Company were mostly rough and uncultured, though many of a better class and even cultured adventurers here and there joined the ranks for the sake of loot, the chances of getting which were pretty frequent in the conditions of warfare then prevailing.

The soldiers almost in every case married native women—some no doubt married more than one, for at that time this was considered quite the proper thing. Discipline was very slack, and parades were held generally only once a month. Strong drink formed part of their daily ration, it being considered necessary in those days to take a daily dose of rum or *arrack* (a native liquor).

Thus the "Anglo-Indian" came into being. The girls of such marriages being of a lighter complexion than the ordinary Indian girls, decidedly pretty and adopting as they did the European style, were in great demand as soldiers' wives, though there were still many "black and white" marriages.

In these two ways, namely by marriages between native women and soldiers, and, later on, by marriages between the daughters of such marriages and European soldiers, merchants and traders, the Anglo-Indian community grew for nearly 200 years until 1858, when John Company ceased to exist.

The soldiers of the British Army also found great difficulty in obtaining wives, as their discipline was very strict in such matters, no soldier being permitted to marry without the consent

of his Commanding Officer. Many, however, were granted permission and married "Anglo-Indian" girls, and brought them on the strength of the regiment. To this day such a privilege may be obtained, but the children of these marriages are as a rule not allowed to join the Army, and the practice of marrying "Anglo-Indian" girls is generally being discouraged. With the advent of steamships, and the opening of the Suez Canal, the soldier has been encouraged, in the event of obtaining permission to marry, to get his bride out from England. Still, there are difficulties, and considerable expense is incurred, and this is probably the chief reason why many soldiers still marry Anglo-Indian girls, though many do so in preference. We find scores of ex-military men holding lucrative positions on the great Indian Railways who could easily marry in England but prefer Anglo-Indian brides.

Nor are the soldiers who wed Anglo-Indian girls all poor privates. Men of the Indian Ordnance Department, the Supply and Transport Corps and many other Indian departments, the members of which are all of the rank of Staff Sergeant or above it, and a few even honorary Commissioned Officers, who must necessarily serve all their time in India, but may take furlough to England on certain conditions, marry Anglo-Indians and are quite proud of their wives.

It is quite general and, the author considers, quite ideal, for Anglo-Indians to marry Anglo-Indians, though nowadays many Anglo-Indians, not to talk of Indian Christians and even pure Indians, go to England, and have little or no difficulty in finding wives there.

The Anglo-Indian community is increasing at a rapid rate, and little or no outlet can be found for their energies, excepting that Godsend to them—the Railway.

Almost, without exception, descended from a fighting stock, they have no means of bearing arms in a serious fashion. They may be volunteers—a force in which discipline is as slack as it is possible for British officers to allow it to be.

In putting this work before the public, the author wishes it to be known that he has no particular axe of his own to grind. While trying to draw attention to the supposed danger of the projected Trans-Persian Railway, the chief object of this book is the elevation of the Anglo-Indian community. Having come into personal contact with many cases, similar to that in the narrative, and deeply sympathising with the community, the author believes that were their energy turned into the proper channels not only would the Empire gain materially and financially but the struggling community would at last find an outlet for those good qualities which are present in abundance.

The writer further contends that the time has come for the community to be recognized by the British Government, which has always stood as the Champion of Freedom and Fair Play ; he further maintains that Anglo-Indians should have all the advantages given to Indians ; for India is the land of the Anglo-Indian and must always be.



CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING BRIAN.

BRIAN was a bright and intelligent boy ; the pride of his mother ; in bearing manly, honest, truthful, and straightforward. He was of fine physique, being tall for his age and well built in proportion, with a straight back ; his breadth of shoulder being in fact quite noticeable. His features were like those of most boys of his class ; a well-shaped nose, firm mouth displaying (his face being continually lighted up with a smile) two rows of pearly teeth, perfect as any that ever looked out of a dentifrice advertisement. The chin though firm inclined to sharpness, the eyebrows were well-defined, beneath which sparkled a pair of large, luminous, dark-brown eyes, which generally wore a peculiarly wistful look. His features were of perfect Aryan cast, alertness being written plainly thereon.

Brian's dress was neither smart nor expensive, being of khaki drill similar to that worn by the British soldier in India. It was obviously home made, yet neat and clean ; the knickers cut just above the knee, displaying a stout pair of legs, with stockings fastened just below the knee. His serviceable boots were evidently made for sport, as studs and bars were fixed on the soles. His schoolbag stuffed with books was slung across his shoulder, as he walked briskly along the dusty Indian road, whistling a military air, to which he kept step. Probably Brian was going home, as school hours were over, and it was getting dusk, for the time between daylight and dark, which in England is called twilight, is very short in India. He had just said "good-night" to his little girl-companion and confidante—Annette Scott—whom he daily escorted to her home from school.

Though as proud of Brian as his mother was, the father regarded his son with mixed feelings. One of a family of six, Brian had two brothers and three sisters : he was the eldest son, and, as his father would facetiously remark, heir to the

"Ackland Estates," which estates, of course, were purely imaginary. The father, James Ackland, was a retired Sergeant-Major of a British Infantry regiment. He had served his full 21 years, during which period he had four times been on active service, leaving the Army with six medals on his manly breast, or, to be precise, five medals and a small bronze cross with the words "For Valour" inscribed thereon : and not a few scars on his body, one of which at certain seasons unpleasantly reminded him of its presence. This, together with his V. C., was his only reward for saving the life of his Commanding Officer, at great risk of losing his own, during the South African War, through which he had served as a Corporal. But his modesty forbade him to talk of these things except on very rare occasions.

The greater portion of the 21 years' service had been spent in India, and there were few places of note that James Ackland had not visited. He had not seen his "dear ould Oireland" for nearly 30 years, nor was he ever likely to see it, for he had contracted what was considered a *mésalliance*, which was regarded by his friends in his old regiment as having brought disgrace upon himself, and which was the cause of his leaving the Corps as soon as his pension became due, and also to his enjoying his meagre pension in India, instead of, as he had often fondly hoped, in his native land.

What, then, was this great sin that Sergeant-Major Ackland had committed—the sin that had lost him his friends, that had cut him off from the society of his own flesh and blood, alienated his very relatives, and was a stigma now and, as far as could be seen, would be, as James Ackland himself said, to the end of the chapter?

Many others, in similar circumstances had done the same ; some to their personal benefit, though unfortunately most of them to their everlasting regret.

James Ackland had married an Anglo-Indian girl. That was his sin ; and his six children, of light-brown complexions, were obviously not of pure European origin.* In his quiet

CONCERNING BRIAN.

musings, with his favourite briar charged, the gallant veteran often grieved over this, for he knew how prejudice regarded this as a stigma which would militate against his children's chances in life's struggle; how the doors would be closed and bolted against them; and their conscious shame as they grew up—all this made James Ackland think of times gone by, of what might have been, and of what would be.

He had never mentioned the subject to Brian's mother. She was a devoted wife and mother, proud of her stalwart husband; in fact she secretly worshipped him; and in justice to James Ackland himself, it must be admitted he was a true and devoted husband, who adored his wife, and often said "Dora's been a good gel to me." Men sneered at him, pointed the finger of scorn at him, and sometimes openly insulted him—many to their regret, for he was a strong man, and a blow from him was generally sufficient to silence his tormentors; but these scenes occurred only when he was serving; for, when his pension became due, he left the Army, with all haste, with his wife and family, obtaining a poorly-paid billet on the railway, which, with his pension, enabled him to live quite respectably, and in a fair degree of comfort, and yet with sufficient money to educate his children. Mrs. Ackland was of great assistance to her children in their studies. Having received a very fair education in the local Convent she took the children's lessons daily and paid particular attention to their spiritual education, being of a very religious turn of mind herself. In time when her husband had succeeded to a better-paid billet they purchased a piano, on which the three eldest children practised daily, and on which instrument Brian, who was now 14 years old, was quite clever. But the salary that the father drew was quite as much as ever he expected to get, for he was not a trained railway man, and the higher-paid billets were not for the class that James Ackland belonged to, as, very naturally, he could not compete with young men imported from Ireland, who had received special training, and had worked on many of the great British railways. But he conscientiously did his daily task, often in scorching heat, returning after his day's work to the

haven and heaven of his happy little home, where the affectionate greeting and glee of his wife and children ever awaited him and afforded him the sweetest of consolations. Brian would sit and wait patiently until, finding his father at leisure, he would seize the opportunity of asking him a string of questions, some of which were turned aside and others answered, evincing great delight when he got his father to speak of the wars in which he had fought. Brian's chief interest centred in the doings of the Drummer Boys, for his great ambition was to be one himself. Brian's father knew this only too well, but when Brian's usual questions were daily asked, "When are you going to let me be a Drummer Boy, dad?" and "Shall I have medals and a Victoria Cross too, dad?" they caused the veteran much pain; and as he looked at his stalwart child, his heart grieved; for, however big and strong physically his children might be, he knew that on account of their light-brown complexions the doors would be shut and securely bolted against them, so far as a soldier's career was concerned, for they were *Anglo-Indians* and no *Anglo-Indian* can enlist in any British regiment. To join the Indian Army was entirely out of the question, so the gallant old soldier would stroke his boy's head and say the only thing possible: "My son, you must not be a soldier; I want you to work on the railway, and in time you will be able to earn enough to keep your old dad in his old age." But Brian's mind was filled with misgivings, knowing how poorly paid the majority of railway men were.

Alas! for James Ackland was aware when he said these words to his son that the prejudice against "*Anglo-Indians*" pervaded India from the Himalayas to Cape Commorin; he knew that however clever his son might be, he was almost certain to be kept down in a poorly paid billet all his life. On the other hand, he was certain that no Commanding Officer of a British regiment would entertain the idea of enlisting Brian in his regiment, although it was common knowledge that a few cases had occurred of *Anglo-Indians* of very light complexion having contrived to pass for and enlisting as Europeans, some even going to Great Britain for the very purpose.

These men had been a credit to the Army, and in many cases had risen to positions of trust, but they had wisely kept their birth a secret. James Ackland knew this, but he was also quite sure that his son was not likely to succeed by resorting to any of the methods alluded to; so he endeavoured to turn his boy's mind away from the Army, though the wish that lay nearest his heart was that all his three sons might be soldiers, serve their King and Country, and follow in their father's footsteps, so that he might say, with a true soldier's pride, "My sons are all serving their King and Country." But, alas! he knew it was not to be; and as time wore on, his grief became a torment, for Brian had his soldier-father's blood in his veins. He came of his father's fighting stock, for James Ackland's father had been a soldier, and had served in several European campaigns, as had also his grandfather. James Ackland took great pride in declaring that his grandfather had left a leg at Waterloo, ending his days, minus this useful member, in Chelsea Hospital, that institution in London where many a gallant, fearless soul has found a haven of refuge. Brian had heard all these stories many times over, and they had the natural effect of making his resolve to be a soldier all the more determined, which resolve he daily confided to his little friend Annette. As the veteran listened to his son's daily demand he would say to himself, "What's bred in the bone must come out in the flesh," and, as Brian got older he became more insistent in his demand to be allowed to become a Drummer Boy. His chief delight was to march beside the Band of the British regiment quartered in the station, looking with awe on the gorgeous habiliments of the Drum Major, or he would watch from some coign of vantage the regiment drilling on the *maidan*. On these occasions he generally took Annette with him and seized a chance of entering into conversation with the soldiers, putting them all manner of questions, "Are you going to war?" or "Have you all been to war?" to which he would receive a variety of answers. Some replied, but others would snarl surlily "*Jao orf* home you little half-caste brat." But poor Brian, at this period, knew nothing of the colour ques-

tion,—indeed, he did not know he was an Anglo-Indian and he would confidently inform the Drummer Boys that he too was going to be a Drummer Boy soon, as he was now just 14 years old, and his father, who had won the Victoria Cross, was sure to allow him to enlist before he was 15. On hearing this, a Drummer who posed as a wit remarked that Brian would join as a “Coloured Sawgint.”

These conversations were generally of short duration, and after the soldiers had marched into barracks, Brian would return home and when he got the opportunity further question his father as to the sharpness of the soldiers’ bayonets, and many other boyish questions, always ending up with the inevitable one, “*When* will you let me go and be a soldier, dad?” at the same time reminding his father that he was a bigger boy than most of the drummers and would be 15 years old next birthday. The old warrior’s grief would but increase on hearing Brian’s persistent requests and he would repeat his wishes to his son regarding his joining the railway, or some other employment, knowing full well the boy’s hopes were in vain.

Brian was kept to his studies at the local High School, conducted by the Irish Christian Brothers and proved a very apt pupil, paying great attention to all he was taught, standing at the top of his class and excelling at the school sports, the boy being the chief factor in his school’s success in winning several trophies at football and hockey. Many were the prizes he brought home from time to time for excellence in study as well as in sport, to the great joy of his parents. Naturally they were proud of his exploits, his father especially of his athletic ability; but still these things could not solve the daily question, and the father found greater difficulty than ever in evading the persistent interrogation of his inquisitive son, and realized only too plainly that these questions would soon have to be answered truly, for Brian would be sure to find out, and the best source of information was where the boy looked for it, namely his own father. After much thought and grief for the pain he was causing James Ack-

land explained to his son that it was impossible for him ever to serve his King and Country, as he belonged to an outcast community called Anglo Indians, and he was not of the same race as his friends, the Drummer Boys. In fact no Government owned him and his lot would be a hard one. The only thing to do would be to make the best of matters, get employment as soon as possible, and help to keep the house going, as he was a big boy now and his parents could not afford to keep him at school very much longer.

Brian listened to all this patiently and at first hardly realized its import. His hopes of a military career were rudely dashed to the ground, and a stream of questions followed, which ended by Brian asking "Why dad?" and truly his father was at a loss to explain "why?" except that such was the case, and that there was practically no hope of a soldier's life for Brian, for James Ackland felt sure that the controversy in the Press dealing with the question of an "Eurasian" or "Anglo-Indian" regiment for the British Army, which was now appearing in almost every Anglo-Indian newspaper in India, not to speak of many papers in England dealing with Anglo Indian questions, would result in nothing practical, for he had seen so many similar controversies that had brought forth no results. The Anglo-Indian community, he was certain, were loyal to the backbone, and a great longing was showing itself among them to share the burden of empire by deeds of arms and to prove that they *were* a loyal and valuable asset of the British Empire. They were growing daily conscious of their proper place in the sun; a race alive and throbbing with hope and aspiration; a race awaiting but the magic word and touch of the leader or statesman who would reunite their serried lines, their sovered and scattered units and weld the mass into one solid phalanx ready to march with the "Soldiers of the King" in the van; for were they not an integral part of an Empire on which the sun never sets? But the day of the Anglo-Indian regiment had not yet come; the 300 000 Anglo Indians in India had no powerful leader to support their cause. They were scarcely ever mentioned in the Viceroy's Council, where the claims to preferential treatment of

both Muhammadans and Hindus is constantly being urged by their respective representatives.

The Anglo-Indian community as a body were desperately poor, but on the whole literate, while not a few were distinctly well educated, as far as education was obtainable up to the age of 15 or 16. Without exception all of this age could read and write, the great majority being able to read and write more than one of the many Indian languages, as well as English, and most could speak at least one or more of them, besides English, their mother-tongue, and they could also boast of other accomplishments. Unfortunately, however, many Anglo-Indians who might have been of invaluable assistance as leaders of light and learning, and an everlasting tower of strength, on attaining a position of influence, disclaimed all connection with the community, calling themselves Europeans and adopting Italian or Spanish names. This was a distinct loss to the community, for men of great intellect were scarce among them. Nor had they any leaders, such as he to whom Anglo-Indians still point with pride—that great soldier, James Skinner, the virtual conqueror of the Mahratta country, who was in his time a very terror to this warlike race, and whose regiment, named after him “Skinner’s Horse” is one of the most famous and loyal of Cavalry regiments in the British Indian Army. Colonel Skinner, C. B., was an Anglo-Indian, and was proud to be known as one.

Thus, without light and leading, the mass of the community struggled on. But the time was coming, the clouds were slowly lifting and the Star of Anglo-India would soon be seen gloriously ascending. Men of action—not men of speech only—were soon to arise, whose names would be venerated from generation to generation: men of wealth and influence would be proud of their race: great deeds would be performed: but the time was not yet—not yet!

Brian now thoroughly understood the bitter tale, and confided his woes to his constant friend and companion Annette, who, like himself, was an Anglo-Indian. Her father, like Brian’s father, was a retired soldier, and also worked on the railway. Her complexion, like Brian’s, was light brown and.

like most girls of her race, she was extremely pretty. She adored Brian in her childish way, and did her utmost to cheer him, saying she was sure that he would yet be a soldier. But Brian was not to be comforted. He pondered over his father's words and felt a vague resentment against his parents. Indeed, so strong was the tension, that one day he asked his father: "Why was I born? Surely God was the cause of my creation. If He thought fit to create me, why am I to suffer for what God has been pleased to bring about?" Brian's father was too staggered to answer this; no more could Brian, who the longer he pondered over it the further he got from the answer.

James Ackland was now getting desperate, for Brian was taking to heart his father's words, so he determined to enlist his son in the Army, either as a European or as an Anglo-Indian. With this object in view Brian was taken by his father to Colonel Lucas, the Officer Commanding the British Infantry regiment quartered in the town. On presenting himself before the Colonel in the Orderly Room Sergeant-Major Ackland produced his Army discharge certificates and after a short conversation regarding the gallant veteran's medals, and Victoria Cross (which he had pinned on his waistcoat for the occasion) he disclosed the purpose of his visit and begged that his son Brian might be enlisted as a Drummer, as he could pass all physical and educational tests, watching the while the Commanding Officer's face. Colonel Lucas turned purple in the face and fairly exploded in wrath at the very idea of such a request. Regaining his composure somewhat and after carefully wiping and adjusting his monocle, he closed the other optic and glared at the lad a moment or two.

Then looking Brian up and down contemptuously Colonel Lucas, as James Ackland had quite expected, ridiculed the idea, saying as he drummed on his boot with his cane "Haw, Sergeant-Majaw, Haw! Y'know we can't have—haw—Anglo-Indians in the Regiment y'know. Preposterous, Bai Jove don't y'know. Why not—haw—enlist him in the Native Army Sergeant-Majaw, or why not—haw—wait until this controversy regarding the Anglo-Indian Battalion—haw, haw—ends?"

Perhaps an Anglo-Indian regiment may eventually be formed y'know?—not that I am—haw—in favour of it, by Gad—oh no! If a regiment is raised, then y'know you would have no difficulty in enlisting the boy. But I will not have the beggah in my regiment—understand *that* Sergeant-Majaw. Wait until the regiment—haw—faces the bally hill beggahs in Afghanistan—haw, haw—they will jolly well soon wish themselves back at home!

“In fact—haw—Sergeant-Majaw—I don't believe they have the backbone to y'know, face an enemy—haw, haw, haw,” and with this effort he concluded. Little did he think that the very youth before him would, later on, be the means of saving the lives of hundreds of his men, probably his own as well, facing the “bally hill beggahs” as he termed them.

It must, of course, be premised that the Lucas-type of British officer is fortunately at the present day as extinct as the dodo.

The gallant old Sergeant-Major's blood boiled at these stinging remarks, and as he led his son away the stern discipline of years all but forsook him; and as he turned to leave, he retorted: “Let the regiment be raised, Sir, and I assure you my son will face the foes of the dear Mother-land, even as I, his father, have many times done; aye Sir, and am ready to do again, even as my father and grandfather have done before me.” On hearing this the now bristling Commanding Officer turned away abruptly, muttering something about “The bally beggahs should be seen out of barracks,” while Brian and his father, the tears of anger now trickling down the old warrior's cheeks, left the barracks.

Brian tried to console his father; but with difficulty restrained his own tears, lest the soldiers should consider him childish. So, together, father and son walked home in silence, and conveyed the news to Brian's mother, who, truth to tell, was not sorry, for she loved her child, as mothers of all races and colours love their children, and was loath to part with him though quite willing, as a daughter of the Empire, to sacrifice

her son in the service and for the glorification of his, and her, King and Country. Brian, sad and despondent, told Annette what had taken place in the morning, and she cheered him a little by declaring again and again that he would yet be a soldier.

Colonel Lucas, on leaving his Orderly Room, in an excitable frame of mind, mounted his horse and galloped to his quarters, where his wife, who knew her husband's irascible temperament, saw immediately that something had disturbed him. Allowing him to cool down, as he generally did after his morning peg, she inquired what had happened.

In his wife's presence the gallant Colonel was a lamb. He explained that he had been put out by an old Sergeant-Major who wanted to enlist his boy in the Centresex Regiment, but as the boy was obviously an Anglo-Indian he could not hear of such a thing, and on his telling the old soldier so, he had received what to him amounted almost to an insult. It seemed to Mrs. Lucas that her husband's choler was again rising at the mere thought of the interview, but she pacified him, and then suggested that perhaps the boy might be given a trial.

"Alitia, my dear, what *do* you women know of such things?" "Did *any* good yet come out of Anglo-Indians?" "Some day, Robert," replied the good lady, "we may have cause to think more highly of them."

"Rats!" thundered the Colonel, starting from his chair and pacing the room in his annoyance. But Mrs. Lucas wisely then withdrew.



CHAPTER II.

THE BRITISH ARMY OF INDIA.

THE British Army in India is in many respects quite unique, compared with the armies of European countries. In any proportionate estimate with the population of India, and taking into account the vast dimensions of the country, its numbers seem absurdly small. The Native Army, however, is much larger than the British, but in the opinion of Continental Generals of repute both together, or, as the latest Army Orders have it, the "Indian" Army and the British Army are numerically inadequate to cope with a serious invasion of India. Most British Generals hold that a successful invasion must necessarily come from the north-west, in which case the "Pamirs" (that group of mountain ranges called the Roof of the World) would have to be crossed, and in the opinion of experts, occupy some considerable time, judging by Napoleon's great feat in crossing the Alps, and the difficulties encountered and overcome. Nor is this all: the buffer-state of Afghanistan would have to be conquered and subdued before the invasion of India itself could be contemplated. The Khyber Pass once in the hands of the invaders, the first battle in India would take place around about Peshawar. The battlefield is indeed at this very moment, and has been for years marked out there—before even the Trans-Persian Railway was dreamed of, or, as a matter of fact, before man evolved schemes of aerial ascension (the terminology is growing) for his material benefit. The nation most likely to invade India has also its *habitat* in a north-westerly direction. An invasion of India by sea the writer considers outside the scope of this book; but from the little he has seen of the coast defences, he would prefer to be elsewhere when modern guns try conclusions with the antiquated lumps of iron that the Coast Defence Artillery are armed with to defend the shores.

The great lesson of 1857 has not been lost on the British Government. They well know that in the event of an invasion, even while the invader was yet in Afghanistan, a large army would be necessary to safeguard British interests, of vital importance, all over the country, as the country is held only by the sword. On the departure of the 75,000 British soldiers to repel the invader, who is going to replace them? Who will safeguard British interests?

The British Army in India can boast that it is as efficient as any Army in the world. It is therefore ready to take the field at a moment's notice; and *ex hypothesi* that it is next to impossible to invade India by land, it is quite large enough for internal security or defence. Should however trouble come from outside, how would it fare with the large European population of India, not large indeed in proportion to the Indian (the comparison, in fact, makes their numbers microscopic) and how would it fare with the Anglo-Indian population, who number more than the European? Would 300,000,000 Indian people, seething with insurrection, spare Anglo-Indians? Would the rebels, as has the British Government, forget the existence of Anglo-Indians? Or would the latter throw in their lot with India's millions? No—a thousand times no. The Anglo-Indian is British at heart, and, should necessity arise, would fight shoulder to shoulder with his British kinsman.

Let the fact be heralded, if perhaps it has been forgotten, that the Anglo-Indians, who, with the European civilians who attached themselves to British regiments during the Mutiny, fought like heroes, and one Anglo-Indian at least in the operations around and during the siege of Lucknow performed a deed worthy of the Victoria Cross—a deed that is even now spoken of.

The aged veteran who shows visitors around Lucknow's ruined Residency is an Anglo-Indian, who proudly wears the Mutiny Medal. He has lived in or near the Residency ever since the day he was beleaguered in that place with Sir Henry Lawrence. The writer in 1910 was shown round the Residency by him and heard tales that have never yet been published.

The Anglo-Indian community, much smaller in Mutiny times than now, suffered terribly, the Indians' hatred of them being as intense as their hatred of the European; and in the Mutiny, as is well known, the Anglo-Indian fought well. The hardest heart must melt with pity as the aged warrior takes one round the famous ruins, pointing out—"This is where 40 Fusiliers were killed one night." "On that road, the mutineers' guns were posted, and fired at the Residency; you will observe that General Lawrence's room faces that way; in that room he was killed by a cannon shot." "That is the room where the Scotch lassie, Jessie, dreamed she heard the bagpipes, and in which several children were born during the siege." Then the visitor comes to the cemetery, where he reads "Here lie 185 officers and men of the 5th Fusiliers who died during the siege of the Residency" and mechanically you raise your hat when the tomb with the inscription "Here lies Sir Henry Lawrence, who did his duty" comes into view. Many are the soldiers' graves to be found in the cemetery; many tombstones bearing a hundred or more soldiers' names; and near by graves whose tombstones indicate that those lying beneath were "civilians." What civilians? the reader asks; the answer being "Anglo-Indians" who fought and died for their country.

But to resume our subject. The Anglo-Indian does not in any way regret the existing feeling between his community and the native of India; he is ever ready, as a loyal subject of the King, to fight, to his last gasp, for the Flag, King, and Empire. But both, so far, have only called upon him in times of stress, which do not often occur. And since, if trouble arose, the Anglo-Indian would be called upon to take up arms in his country's cause, would it be fair to expect him to successfully cope with a well-trained army, without previous training or experience in warfare?

Here again I must digress. Let not the English reader confound the term Anglo-Indian with what in England is connoted by "half-caste." This term is absolutely incorrect in this case. Half-castes may be found in every country where a black and a white population exists; but in nowhere has the result as

yet of intermarriages among such populations attained the proportions or the importance it has as in India. Here the comingling of blood, by marriage and intermarriage, has evolved a distinctly new type of human being—the Anglo-Indian—with an undeniably distinct place in the economy of Nature. What is more, he is a good and useful type, and the British Government will one day find it out. He should be developed; he is trying to journey forward though the journey so far has been painfully slow. Probably he would have been much nearer his goal to-day had he been better educated, and had there been a general and proud recognition of the truths just enunciated.

Let any casual visitor to India make an investigation and he will discover that the Anglo-Indian community is enthusiastically loyal, and that their children are brought up exactly as are British children. Their schools are not so large, elaborate or numerous as in England, but the teachers are imbued with precisely the same ideas and the teaching is exactly on the same lines.

The soldier's barrack life in India is a tolerably fair replica of that in England. The soldier is kept busy in these days. Only menials absolutely necessary are now employed in barracks, such as the *punkha-wallah* and the sweeper; the former is gradually being displaced by the introduction of far more effective mechanical contrivances, and sweepers are not allowed inside barracks, every soldier having to sweep the space he occupies.

Nor are scores of sleeping bearers, with their families, relatives and dependants seen on the verandahs now, as was once the case. When a British Battalion is ordered out from England the restrictions in regard to marriage are relaxed, with the result that the married establishment of any Battalion, on its arrival in India, is generally larger than at any other period of its foreign service.

Many however do not marry immediately, intending, after seeing the country first, to send for their brides-elect by troopship as is permissible. But once in India, and with plenty

of spare time, Tommy Atkins finds many pleasant recreations not to be had on the same scale in England. It is at these—social gatherings, Rechabite meetings, "At homes," dances, church meetings, choir practices, &c. that Tommy meets with his Anglo-Indian *inamorata*.

The young lady is only too pleased to take him into the bosom of her family. Here he speedily becomes a prime favourite, his stories of English life, of London especially, being a fascinating topic. In return he is given many a good meal, tasting dishes he has never heard of before. Tommy thus finds a very congenial method of whiling away long evenings; appreciates a home, where he receives true hospitality, and a cordial welcome from the whole family, among whom probably will be found two or more of the gentler sex, who sing and play on the piano. After years of rough barrack room life, cut off from female society, this seems a very paradise to him. His Platonic friendship disappears, love taking its place and the soldier, forgetting all his old ties -- if ever remembered -- and not caring whether he obtains permission or not to bring his wife on the strength of his regiment, marries, and to his credit be it said, remains true to his wife, though, by so doing, he suffers personally more than a casual observer would believe.

The writer is aware of a case in which everything possible was done, including his Commanding Officer's refusal, to prevent a certain soldier from marrying an Anglo-Indian girl; but in spite of all he married, hired a room in the Indian bazar, or near it, his Commanding Officer afterwards giving him permission to sleep out of barracks. His wife actually saved up enough money, by the period his time expired, to pay her passage home, the husband of course going by troopship. When last heard of the couple were doing well in a suburb of London. Some on becoming time-expired take their wives to England, and settle there permanently. Of those, however, who marry in India, the majority prefer to stay in the country after their marriage for various reasons. To this majority belonged James Ackland, and in spite of sneers and gibes, true man that he was, clung to his wife. "Why?" one

need scarcely ask, for the obvious reason that the marriage was founded on true love.

James Ackland was by this time in easy circumstances, for though lacking in high educational qualifications, his qualities of sterling honesty and capacity for hard work had been duly recognized and rewarded. Yet he was not quite happy; for he knew that his son Brian was brooding over the humiliating treatment he had received from Colonel Lucas, and that he was unable to help his son to attain his heart's desire.

Anglo-Indians, however, were now rousing themselves from their apathy: they were putting aside their jealousies and uniting together, and with that end in view forming Associations and Leagues in every important town in India. Their demand for representation on the Imperial Council was acceded to. They were given here two seats besides those already secured on the Provincial Councils. An agitation for Anglo-Indian regiments was started and kept up with such spirit and insistence that the matter came before Parliament. His Majesty the King himself, it was rumoured, had used his personal influence in favour of raising an Anglo-Indian Battalion, and it was said that all opposition to its formation had been overcome. The news that the formation of an Anglo-Indian Battalion had been sanctioned was soon flashed to India and all Anglo-India went delirious with joy and emotion. And well they might, for it was an act of grace on the part of the King himself. Whether the wisdom of the King's act was justified or not the story as it unfolds itself will prove.

Brian had at last realized his greatest wish; for he was one of the first hundred to be enlisted. His proud father gave him advice as to his future behaviour, exhorted him to remember that his father and his father's father battled and bled for England, and he was to do the same. The father's last words were: "On this regiment's behaviour, in peace and in war depends the future of all such as you. Brian, my lad, my message to you and to all your comrades is this:—'Place your honour before everything; be men in the best sense of the

word ; regard woman's honour, as, sacred ; when you make a promise, stick to it, as I have stuck to the promise I made to your mother before you were born. Let your battlecry be 'No surrender'; what you have 'hold' and never say 'die.' "Do you understand my words, Brian?" "Yes, I understand them perfectly, dear father," answered Brian, his eyes glistening with tears, "I will endeavour to remember them and act up to your advice." "That's right, that's right, my dear boy," said the gallant warrior. But let a veil be drawn over the tender parting. Ex-Sergeant-Major Ackland left his son much more affected of the two ; he could not restrain his warm Irish feelings ; so amidst the blare of bugles, hurrying of feet and sharp words of command, he hurriedly stole out of the barracks, hieing homewards sadly, yet at heart thankful that his son was enabled to serve his King, and that the community to which his son belonged had been afforded an opportunity of proving whether or not they could be trusted to fight under the common flag. On his arrival home he found his wife and children in tears at Brian's departure, this being the first time any of the children had slept under other than the parental roof. That night there was no sleep for the mother ; she completely broke down at the thought of the parting for, needless to say, she loved Brian dearly. The door of the Acklands' bungalow was not locked that night, nor for any night after that was the eldest son ever locked out of his humble home ; his loving mother in after years taking a pride in saying "I have never locked my boy out!" How many mothers in the dear old land do exactly the same, thinking only and always of the absent one? But time brings changes, and so did it in this case ; for after he had been over a year a soldier, he joyfully wrote to his father saying that he was coming home on furlough, after the Manœuvres.

The ex-Sergeant-Major, hugely delighted at the news, handed the letter to his wife : but we will leave them in their bliss and follow Brian's adventures and the fortunes of the 1st Battalion of the Anglo-Indian Regiment.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXPERIMENTAL BATTALION.

COPY of Army Order No. 10001, dated April 1st, 19—
Order of General Sir James Millocks, Bart., v.o.,
K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief of His
Majesty's Forces in India.

WHEREAS His Most Gracious Majesty, GEORGE, King,
by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Ireland and of the Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor
of India, after careful consideration, deeming it expedient to
train to arms for the service of their King, has commanded me
to raise one Battalion of Eurasians or Anglo-Indians for
service, I hereby order that immediate steps be taken to raise
one experimental Battalion, the terms and conditions of service
to be similar to those regulating the British Army. Further
instructions and orders will be conveyed later.

J. MILLOCKS, GENERAL,

Comdr.-in-Chief, H. M.'s Forces in India.

The first members of the Anglo-Indian community to
receive this startling piece of news were the Assistant Surgeons
of the Indian Subordinate Medical Department. This Depart-
ment, composed chiefly of Anglo-Indians, is the only one in
which an Anglo-Indian can wear the King's uniform. Ani-
mated discussion immediately took place in every Duty-room
of the military hospitals, it being well known that when Lord
Kitchener was Commander-in-Chief in India, he and the Army
Department did not consider the scheme practicable; though
Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, was known to be in sympathy
with it. The matter, however, being adjudged to be one in
which military considerations were paramount, the scheme was
shelved for the time being.

Telegrams and letters passed among members of the I. S. M. D., and many young Assistant Surgeons declared that they were for leaving the Medical Service at once, foregoing all their prospects to enlist in the new regiment. Mass meetings were held all over India by the Anglo-Indian community and the Government of India were asked to convey their respectful and loyal feelings of gratitude to the King-Emperor. Great resolutions were made, leaders exhorting the young men, who were now to become soldiers ever to remember the gracious act of their King and the Sacred Cause, telling them of the avenues of employment that would eventually be opened to them and impressing upon them, above all, to remember that as their community was on its trial, the paramount duty of acquitting themselves worthily, that therefore none should think of enlisting who was not ready to die for his King and Country. Great joy prevailed among all classes of Anglo-Indians and all eagerly waited for final orders to be issued. As however only one Battalion of Infantry was to be raised for the present, many applications would obviously have to be refused. In the course of a month orders for enlisting the numbers required for the Battalion were forthcoming, and recruiting officers were duly overwhelmed with applications, personal and written, many giving up highly remunerative posts for the privilege of serving. Preference was given to the sons of living ex-soldiers, and recruits from this class were so numerous that the 1st Battalion was composed entirely of them ; but as the number who offered themselves so greatly exceeded that required, the standard of height was raised to a minimum of 5' 7", this being the standard obtaining in His Majesty's Foot Guards ; chest measurement, &c. being necessarily in proportion. Every man enlisting was required to undergo a strict medical and stiff educational test, and to produce a record of his character from the date of his leaving school : also a birth certificate, as none were to be enlisted under the age of 18 or over 21, excepting of course the drummers. Further, a certificate, signed by the Hon'ble Mr. Elgdam, President of the United Anglo-Indian League, had to be produced, to

the effect that the would-be soldier was unmarried, and a bonafide Anglo-Indian. Thus the *matériel* was the best that Anglo-India could produce, and despite the restrictions as to recruitment, the Battalion very soon attained its maximum strength.

The necessary drill instructors had been requisitioned from His Majesty's Foot Guards in London and the most severe and efficient Sergeant-Major that could be spared took over his responsible charge as Sergeant-Major, non-commissioned officers being selected from the British regiments serving in India. The officers were selected by ballot, a mode rendered necessary owing to the large number eager to have themselves transferred from British and Indian regiments into the new force, and commissions were divided equally between British and Indian Infantry regiments serving in India. It was thought at first that there would be some difficulty in selecting a *dépôt* and quarters, but the Nicholson Committee speedily solved the difficulty, selecting Seringapatam in South India as the most suitable place. Thus did King George, by the mere fiat of his Royal Will, galvanize into action the lumbering machinery that had found, when the scheme for an Anglo-Indian Battalion had been first mooted and discussed, in previous years, insurmountable difficulties in its formation.

Seringapatam, when a large garrison was stationed there, was a flourishing town, in spite of its malarious climate, particularly inimical to the health of Europeans. When the yet undisciplined 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, with our young hero, Drummer Brian Ackland, took over the Fort and Barracks, even the very Indians were gradually abandoning the place. The Indian population was now scarcely 10,000, whereas at the height of its prosperity the population of Seringapatam numbered nearly 800,000. The town is of great historic interest. It was here that Tippoo, the Tiger of Mysore, met his death, on his defeat by the British Army, composed chiefly of John Company's soldiers. Little concern, however, had the new recruits for the reputation for unhealthiness of the place. They hailed from all parts of India, and were almost immune from tropical diseases. Naturally, therefore, such an unhealthy place would have less ill effect on

them than on a British Battalion. In fact a better or more suitable station could hardly have been selected. Its past proud history, well known to many of the men, who recounted tales of daring and glorious deeds performed by the Honourable Company's soldiers on the assault on that once-great stronghold, was well calculated to fire every bosom with martial and emulative ardour.

But the new recruits were not out for a picnic, as they very soon found out. They were divided into small squads, each squad having two instructors, and as much individual instruction as possible was given under the stern and critical eye of the Sergeant-Major, and the officers to fit them for inspection. Discipline was very strict, the work and drill hard, but the instructors found the men obedient, tractable and very willing to learn: two months saw a great change. Reveillé at daybreak, light refreshment, gymnastics for an hour (as stiff as the instructors could render it), breakfast, a drill-parade in squads, instruction in putting together equipment, knotting, bridging, &c. were the first preliminaries. The second month the squads were made larger, and as time went on the movements became a little more complicated. Men were posted to companies according to their height, on which basis four companies were formed, in the last of which were men 5' 7" in height.

The formation of the Band and Drums was on similar lines to those of British regiments, and under a young and ambitious Bandmaster from Kneller Hall made great progress, to the delight of the officers who contributed to its support. On the expiry of six months the Commanding Officer considered the Battalion quite fit for a "march past," and forthwith ordered one to take place, the Regimental March having arrived. This was found to be the old, old English song:—

If at first you don't succeed,
Try, Try, Try Again *

which was considered most appropriate, the regimental band soon acquiring mastery over this simple but, to the Battalion, highly-inspiring tune.

The reports concerning the Battalion were excellent. The Canteen Sergeant often declared with disgust that he might as well close his doors for all the trade he did. No cases of crime ever occurred, accounted for, no doubt, by the fact that there was not a single individual in the Battalion without an educational certificate of some sort. This for a British unit constituted quite a record, the average British Battalion having about 10 per cent without a certificate of any kind. Of the Regimental Institutes, the Gymnasium and Library received the greatest amount of patronage. Sports of all kinds were encouraged. There were Football, Hockey, Rifle, Cricket and Boxing Clubs, practically the whole Battalion contributing from their own pay to them. But no competitions had as yet been arranged, excepting between individuals and companies of the Battalion, for no other troops were stationed in or near Seringapatam.

Just six months from the date of its inception the Battalion formed up, to march past its Commanding Officer. The Union Jack was hoisted on this special occasion, and each company, as it marched past, received the order "Eyes Right," many devoted eyes being fixed earnestly on the brave Old Flag, which all loved so well.

After the "march past" the Battalion was formed up in quarter column, facing the saluting base, and the Commanding Officer for the first time addressed the Battalion, saying how glad he was that the realization had exceeded all expectations. He confessed he had been at first dubious of success and was ready to face the hardest task of his career; but the devotion to duty and the enthusiasm of all ranks was beyond praise; he was proud of them, and never wished to command a finer body of men. He was certain their enthusiasm for soldiering would continue; his report to the Commander-in-Chief could not possibly be otherwise than most favourable to the regiment. And it was a credit to their community. They must not, however, let their ardour cool, for the honour of their name. Orders had been received that the Battalion, during the coming winter, would take part in the Grand Manœuvres.

They would be placed side by side with British and Indian regiments, when their soldierly qualities would be put to a very severe test. "I again repeat," continued the Commanding Officer, "that I am proud of you." The six months of stern discipline now moderated somewhat, the whole Battalion, led by the stern old Sergeant-Major himself, giving three hearty cheers, after which the order "Column of route from the right" was given, and the Battalion, now highly elated, marched back to barracks. Much satisfaction was expressed by all the privates,—every individual so far was a private,—no promotions having yet been made. The more influential men, however, impressed the remainder with the fact that they had made a decidedly good first impression, and first impressions went a long way; their enthusiasm must be sustained. Each one was to keep the aim steadily in view, viz. making himself an efficient soldier and a good rifle shot; and each man should keep himself physically fit as more serious work was before them, in preparation for the forthcoming Manœuvres, when notes would be taken of their powers of endurance, and all eyes would be on them.

The Sergeant-Major had been all this time on the *qui vive* for likely N.C.O's. He had many names docketed in the Orderly Room for courses of instruction which were to take place at various schools of instruction in different parts of India, before the Manœuvres. The men selected were eventually sent to the Headquarters for Instruction, and the Sergeant-Major proved to be a shrewd judge of men, as every man sent up succeeded in passing his examination, and favourable reports followed. The Battalion continued steadily to train, and month followed month, until at last orders issued for the Manœuvres. Brian during the first year had been far from idle; he had assiduously attended to his music, as well as taken part in all the athletic sports held in the regiment, and was the Battalion footer team's centre forward. The Band and Drums also were successful the first year in winning the Battalion Cup, presented by the Commanding Officer for inter-company competition. At boxing Brian proved himself to be an adept in the noble art, as under

the careful training of the Gymnastic Instructor he won the belt in the Battalion light-weight competition.

Brian wrote home a long letter to his father, relating his success. This greatly pleased James Ackland, who in his younger days had been no mean exponent of the Fistic Art. All sports were still encouraged in the Regiment, though the Battalion training was as severe as ever. A week before the time for its departure to the rendezvous of the Grand Army of India, the Commanding Officer expressed himself thoroughly satisfied as to his Battalion doing him credit, not the smallest detail in their training having been overlooked. The hospital returns showed that the standard of health was excellent, being slightly above that of the best British regiment in India, which was not surprising, considering the fact that all the men were born and bred in India. "Dock service," as Tommy terms admittance to hospital, was looked upon with great disfavour. Everyone in the Battalion had submitted to inoculation against enteric fever, as they were convinced of its value. Tommy Atkins, however, is sceptical in the matter, and wild horses cannot drag the majority of his class, even in these enlightened times, to face the needle. So that in the 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, thanks to inoculation, there were few serious cases, and none fatal from the scourge of enteric. During the last week the Battalion packed up, and on receiving definite orders, paraded in marching order, and marched out of barracks to the strains of their now most inspiring Regimental March "Try, Try, Try Again," Brian, as "First Drummer" rattling his drum to the great danger of the skin stretched across that instrument. All were in high feather and the British N. C. O's. remarked on the general willingness of the men, and their cheerful performance of duty. These N.C.O's. were now not a little proud of their pupils: their opinion of Anglo-Indians underwent a complete change, recognizing as they did what fine material every man in the Battalion was made of and had no doubt at all that a good report would be forwarded by the Commander-in-Chief to the Indian and British Governments. As a consequence not a few expected promotion to follow for them-

selves and as a matter of fact for the privates. The Instructors from His Majesty's Foot Guards were going home on completion of the Manœuvres, their *raison d'être* now being removed, the work of perfecting the Battalion in drill having been accomplished. They would be replaced by British Infantry N. C. O's. and this was a change longed for by the privates as, for some of them, it would mean the first step in promotion. The gallant and stern Sergeant-Major was still staying on, for he had begged to be allowed to remain at the head of his now beloved Battalion. He had been chiefly instrumental in getting them into shape ; he had moreover no further desire to take part in the glorious ceremonial displays of His Majesty's Foot Guards, such as the daily changing of the guard at Buckingham and St. James's Palaces, and the Trooping of the Colours on the Horse Guards' Parade. The glamour of the East may possibly have dulled these memories ; but, be that as it may, he determined to complete his service in India. The Battalion soon reached the railway station. Amid much bustle and excitement all entrained. Then, like some fabled dragon of the wild Arabian imagination, fed with live coal, breathing smoke and shrieking shrill, the engine with its long load of wagons-full of the happy men of the Battalion, sped over the long, dry and arid plains of Central India and arrived at its destination—the Jalalpur Rendezvous.



CHAPTER IV. ON MANOEUVRES.

KNOWLEDGE of the Anglo-Indian community in Great Britain is limited to ex-soldiers, retired officers, and members of the various Indian Services, so that no general interest was evinced in the new Battalion. In fact it is doubtful if most of the people in the British Isles know anything concerning their own Army, let alone the Indian Army. Indeed, it would not be surprising to learn that the vast majority can scarcely distinguish one regiment from another. They may know a cavalryman by his spurs, but that is about the extent of their knowledge. An Anglo-Indian, on the other hand, can tell one soldier of a British regiment from that of another by his facings, and even if the facings of two regiments are alike, he will soon distinguish them by the cap-badges. Many schoolboys take a great delight in collecting these, while Anglo-Indian girls may be seen wearing them as brooches. When a youth enlists at home, he rarely knows what regiment to elect to serve in and lets the enlisting sergeant decide for him. He is spoken of by his friends as having "gone for a soldier," the idea being that he has gone to some place where all soldiers are sent on enlisting.

In military circles, however, in the British Isles, the new Anglo-Indian Battalion afforded much matter for comment. It was especially much discussed at their Clubs and argued over by officers of the Indian Army on leave in England, as well as by those on the Retired List, who found the topic one of intense interest. The great majority however ridiculed the idea of forming an Anglo-Indian Battalion, but this was only to be expected. Much correspondence passed between officers in India and England concerning the Battalion, and the subject was taken up in the Press. The *London Daily Mail*, ever on the side of the weak and down-trodden, interested itself on behalf of the Anglo-Indian community, even sending special correspondents to India to report how the Battalion was faring and to provide

first-hand information in the matter for its readers. It was pointed out that in the improbable event of the loss of India, the thousands of retired Anglo-Indians drawing a Government pension of any kind would be left destitute, as all pensions drawn by Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indians would cease in such a contingency. Europeans resident in India could return to Europe; not so the Anglo-Indians, and therefore this was a further reason justifying their right to defend their homes. Other papers, London and Provincial, took up the subject, until eventually the "Anglo-Indian community" was the general topic of conversation all over the country, and people were asking themselves why had the Anglo-Indians been excluded from bearing arms? Were not soldiers of every creed serving England? —Rock Scorpions, Maltese, Egyptians, Indians of countless castes and tribes, Chinamen in the Wei Hai Wei regiment, Maoris, Dutchmen, East and West African Negroes, Jamaican Negroes, British Guianans, Hondurasians and Canadians. And yet the Anglo-Indian was excluded! Writers of repute in discussing the question said there were great possibilities to the Empire bound up in the question of raising Anglo-Indian Battalions, and suggested also that cavalry and artillery too might be formed. The reports from the Commander-in-Chief in India were eagerly awaited, the Manœuvres having now commenced. In the British Army in India the keenest interest was displayed from the time the now-famous Army Order issued. Tommy Atkins, ever the severest of critics, who saves not, neither spares, talked of little else. The idea of raising an Anglo-Indian Battalion distinctly amused him, and many were the rude remarks he made about it.

However, curiosity to see the new Battalion was keen in the British Army, and most of the troops were eagerly looking forward to the Manœuvres, as none had yet seen the Battalion, and all reports said that they were an exceptionally smart and tall body of men.

Even Private Daniel Dodger, the grouser-in-chief of the Centresex Regiment, who boasted that he had been three bloomin' years in the bloomin' rotten country, adding, with a knowing

wink "they had only got him on Manœuvres one year out of the three" gave up his contemplated visit to hospital, which for several weeks he had been planning, in his curiosity to see the "Darkies" as he termed them, as he was going home next trooper; for after mature consideration he came to the conclusion that the treat he anticipated would be well worth the great sacrifice he was making.

The Anglo-Indian Battalion was among the last to arrive at the rendezvous, having had to cover twenty miles from the railway to the scene of operations by route march. There were three days yet for the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief on the scene, and for the commencement of the Manœuvres. The twenty miles could easily have been spread over two days, but the Commanding Officer decided to make one long march of it to test the endurance of his men. Starting at daybreak, the regiment swung out of the station, on its march across country—the route by the metalled road being much longer. The Drums were heard long before noon by the troops already in camp, and the rattle was put down at first to some other British regiment marching in, and little interest was evinced; but as the Anglo-Indian Battalion topped the last rise, and the camp came into view, they were soon recognized, even in the distance, as none other than the new Battalion. Officers and men in their curiosity hurried out to see them and quite a large crowd collected, lining both sides of the road through which the regiment would have to pass.

Within a few hundred yards of their camping ground, the Commanding Officer gave the command "march to attention," and simultaneously ordered the Drum Major to play the regimental march. The strains of the Band playing their simple but inspiring march "Try, Try, Try Again" infused new life into the now tired and dusty men, each man marching to attention as if he had just come on parade; and as the Battalion drew near their comrades-in-arms, the silence was most noticeable. All the troops lining the road were gazing with astonishment at the men, for instead of seeing a bedraggled body of men, in all manner of uniforms (as their previous experience of the local

volunteers of their various stations had led them to expect) quite a different picture was presented. The men though dog tired marched in exactly as would any British regiment. The silence was however soon broken, a Tommy remarking, "Aint they long devils," and "my gord they've come in dashed well."

The Battalion, arriving at the camping ground, formed quarter-column and piled arms, and the now thoroughly tired soldiers being dismissed laid down to rest. The general impression created among the onlookers was a good one, both officers and men being of opinion that the Battalion were physically a fine set of men, and as far as at present could be judged, very smart—in fact Private Daniel Dodger clinched the argument in their favour by declaring with emphasis that they had come in "cricky." That night the Officers dined with the Officers of the Centresex Regiment and all drank to the success of the 1st Battalion, Anglo-India Regiment. The Indian regiments absolutely took no notice of the Battalion, squatting around their curry-pots as usual as the regiment marched in; there they remained, stolid, indifferent, immovable! "Surely," said they, "the cooking of food and cleaning of utensils is far more interesting and important than looking at a new "Peela Paltan" coming in. The *soldier-log* are surely mad to run a mile for nothing."

The Manœuvres were soon in full swing, and the new Battalion quickly learned the rudiments of field tactics. They marched well, and showed plenty of enthusiasm. They were out on trial and knew it, so every man determined to do his best for the sake of the future of the Battalion.

General Sir James Millcocks' reputation for night alarms was not belied, as the new Battalion discovered but they proved equal to the test. They were given especially hard tasks, but came out of it with a greatly enhanced reputation. The opportunity was also seized upon for inter-regimental footer and hockey matches, and open-air boxing competitions, in which the Battalion more than held its own.

Correspondents with the troops sent glowing reports to the Press, and it was quite evident that the Battalion "had

made good" and had come to stay. Even Tommy Atkins, sceptical as he always is of the value of any other fighting man, was loud in praise, and friendships were struck up between Britisher and Anglo-Indian as they marched side by side. Many "general ideas" were carried out during the six weeks of the Manœuvres and many valuable lessons learned. The new Battalion excelled in scouting and reconnoitring (by night especially), for they all not only thoroughly understood the Indians but spoke their language as fluently as they did English. The information gained, therefore, as regards the lay of the country and its supplies of forage and food, was most accurate. It was also noticed that the Indians in general stood in greater awe of the Anglo-Indian than of the British soldiers, as they knew that the former understood their every word; and also had an intimate knowledge of their habits and thus succeeded in getting much more work out of the gangs employed on temporary works.

The resourcefulness exhibited in foraging and living on the country, on meagre rations of fruits and lintels alone, was also noted in their favour, and it was common opinion that the Battalion could live in places where a British one would starve. But their best achievement was reconnoitring by night. They could venture out confident in their knowledge, where British soldiers could not. On one occasion two privates were permitted to disguise themselves as Indian fruit-sellers, actually spending two days in the native lines of the opposing forces. Gaining all the information possible, they speedily returned to their own lines, and revealed the whole plan of the enemy's attack to the General Officer Commanding the Red or Defending forces, who acted upon the information received and was thus able to checkmate every move made by the "enemy" and thus turned certain defeat into decisive victory. Later on the two Generals were seated comfortably in Headquarters discussing the operations, when the defeated General asked his friend how he had managed to anticipate his scheme, which he said he had carefully planned out months before, and was confident of its utility in the ordinary course of events.

He was naturally surprised to hear the whole story, expressed great satisfaction at the resourcefulness of the two Anglo-Indians, and said that this should be noted in favour of the two men and also of the Battalion. On the cessation of hostilities, the two armies assembled in one large camp, and after a few days rest a grand review was held, the whole army marching past the Commander-in-Chief. The soldierly bearing and excellent physique of the new Battalion attracted general attention and was favourably commented upon by the large number of Europeans present at the review. As the Anglo-Indian Battalion approached the saluting base the massed bands struck up its regimental march "Try, Try, Try Again": the very music seemed to speak the words and carry calm assurance. However, there was every reason to believe that at least, in this, their first venture, the Battalion had succeeded beyond all expectations. There was no doubt that by its quiet, manly and martial bearing the Battalion had captured all hearts; its modesty was all the more noticeable as it was the only regiment present without colours.

Thus finished the great Manœuvres, and as is usual there was a camp fire lighted that night. Quantities of timber were collected during the afternoon out of which a huge bonfire was made, the British troops and the Anglo-Indian Battalion sitting around, the Indian troops of course not taking part, preferring to sleep in their tents. From the neighbouring town a piano was procured at which, by special request, our young friend Brian Ackland presided. Songs, recitations, dialogues, &c. were given during the evening, an enjoyable open-air concert concluding at midnight with the singing of the National Anthem. Many fine songs had been contributed, but the hit of the evening was undoubtedly made by a stentorian-voiced Sergeant, who sang the now old song, "The Sons of India," substituting however the words "Anglo-India." The chorus ran:

England asked the question,
When danger's nigh
Will the Anglo-Indian the foe defy?
Yes! we'll fight for England, fight
 until we die;
Fight for our King and Country
Was Anglo-India's reply.

The concert over, all repaired to their tents, with many hearty handshakes and declarations of life-long friendship, and next day all were busy with preparations for returning to their respective stations.

Cheers were given for the new Battalion as they marched out of camp to their now beloved tune: "Try, Try, Try Again," which had "caught on" in the Army, being whistled and sung everywhere. On arrival at Seringapatam, the regiment settled down to comparatively easy work for a few months. Most of the men took advantage of the furlough now offered them, and Brian, just one year after his enlistment, in His Majesty's uniform, proudly strode into his father's bungalow, where he was gladly welcomed. Many were the adventures related by Brian at home, and eagerly listened to. Brian's little friend Annette, now regarded as almost one of the family, was present also. She sat close to her hero drinking in every word that fell from his lips. "Say, Brian dear," she whispered, as he paused after relating a highly-exciting adventure, "Were not my words you would yet be a soldier?" "Yes, Annette," replied the Drummer Boy, "and I often thought of you and your words?" "I love you now, Brian," said the girl in her artlessness. "You will be a brave soldier, won't you, Brian?" "Yes, Annette dear, I will be a brave soldier" was Brian's reply.

During his visit home, orders issued for the raising of another Battalion of Anglo-Indians. This second Battalion was raised quite as quickly as the first, and as many were drafted from the 1st to the 2nd Battalion, both Battalions were about equal in trained men, and the task of preparing them for next year's Manœuvres was tackled with vigour. Many were now given the first step in promotion, while the work of training proceeded. Brian's furlough had now expired—all too soon as the family thought—and with fond good-byes he returned "a-soldiering." The Manœuvres again drew nigh, and this time two battalions of Anglo-Indian Infantry were present, and having acquitted themselves creditably were now looked upon as quite an essential part of the

Army. These two successful Anglo-Indian Battalions naturally paved the way for the raising of a regiment of Cavalry, and a battery of Artillery. These were raised, and ex-Sergeant-Major Ackland, V.C., with unbounded joy placed his two other sons, Hugh and Felix, in the new units as Trumpeters. The new units soon attained popularity, and three years from the date of raising the 1st Battalion an Anglo-Indian Brigade appeared on the Manœuvres, consisting of two battalions of Infantry, one regiment of Cavalry and a battery of Artillery. The Manœuvres were carried out as usual, the four units proving a great success. The Anglo-Indian forces now numbered nearly 3,000 men and had gained quite a military reputation.

Brian, on attaining the age of 18, acted on his father's advice in joining the ranks, but did not remain long a private. He soon attracted attention, and received his first stripe. Henceforward his progress was rapid, and by strict attention to his duties and sheer merit Brian, at the age of 24, attained after 6 years' service to the rank of Sergeant. When Brian next went on furlough, with three stripes on the arms of his coat, his father was overjoyed; he could scarcely recognize his little boy in the stalwart 6-foot soldier who now stood proudly before him.

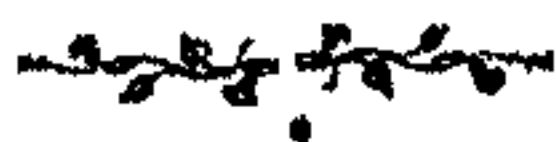
Brian's mother was now anxious that he should marry and hinted slyly that his dear friend and childhood's companion Annette had grown up to be a fine woman, likely ere long to have all the men at her feet. But she would not however be averse from a proposal of marriage from him. Brian replied that though he was very fond of Annette, he did not love her and that he had resolved never to marry. On the day he was leaving for his regiment Annette called to say "good-bye," and after wishing him a pleasant journey and reminding him of the happy days they had passed as children, she asked him for his cap-badge as a keepsake, which Brian willingly gave.

"I too have a keepsake to give you, Brian," said Annette. "I asked your father what it should be and he suggested a jack-knife with combination tools, so here it is; it will not cut

our love as we are not lovers." Saying which she handed Brian a large and well-turned-out jack-knife, which comprised a tin-opener, wire cutter, &c.

The Anglo-Indian community now felt proud of their young men, and not without reason, for they had proved their worth, and the King's wisdom in raising Anglo-Indian regiments was admitted on all sides ; the soldiers of the community were welcomed everywhere ; and though they were occasionally sneered at, the sneers had lost all their sting. The Indian Press were also less bitter in their remarks regarding the Anglo-Indian regiments, for it was noted the following trooping season that there was one battalion of British Infantry, one regiment of Cavalry and one battery of Artillery less in India than had been for a generation. These units had gone home in their turn, but had not been replaced from England. Indeed, one troopship was cancelled from the regular list of sailings, thus effecting a considerable annual saving, in addition to freeing 2,000 men for service elsewhere.

Thus the supporters of the Anglo-Indian regiments had reason to point to the financial side of the question. Moreover, the Anglo-Indian units were now considered quite efficient to take the place of a corresponding number of British units, the Anglo-Indian being known to be as loyal to his King and Country as the Britisher, for the very simple reason that he is a Britisher in religion, home-life, feeling, and everything else except complexion. The British Army in India, though often called upon to fight on the frontier, is chiefly maintained for the policing of India, and only a very small portion of it is required at one and the same time for Frontier wars. The Anglo-Indian regiments were certainly equal to the policing of India, but had yet to prove their worth in the field.



CHAPTER V.

INTERNATIONAL COMPLICATIONS.

AT this stage it is desirable to digress somewhat, which of course the kind reader may well pardon, since it will enable him, apart from the interest of the matter, to have a livelier appreciation of the events and incidents to follow in connection with the due development of this story.

Let us glance round the political horizon. First let us, so to say, waft the reader to Europe—at once the head, heart, and centre of the civilized world. What do we see there? Truly a strange, a marvellous and, as some, not without reason, it must be admitted, think a malignant or terrible spectacle never perhaps before witnessed in the history of the peoples in question; one of those rare events which the Germans rightly designate as epoch-making. What first attracts and rivets the eye is yonder red and lurid blaze of light on many a weird, weather-worn, and wondrous Balkan height. Anon is heard the furious echoing “shout in the sulph’rous canopy.” It is perchance the feast and the song of the free, unfearing mountaineer. It is perhaps to scare away the wild beasts that prowl around the holy homes and habitations of man and all he holds dear! It is not all this and yet, in a sense it is. It is the feast and the song, the “*Io triumphe*” of the conqueror—it is the shout, rather the cry, the wail, of baffled impotence, of mingled rage and despair of the conquered hurled headlong down those wild and rugged precipices—defeated, disordered, demoralised—a mangled, mingled mass, no more a proud invading army, less than a fearing, fugitive mob!

Let us unroll the next film. The scene is quieter; nay ’tis silence all. The war-flag is furled; the war-drum throbs no longer. But the silence here is more eloquent than words; a silence that is ominous, when men look at one another and ask with bated breath, “What next?”

The scene is across and round the Balkans. There, behold the double-headed Eagles of Austria and Russia poised to pounce on spoil or prey ! Higher still, behold the black Imperial Eagle, wing-folded, talon-sheathed, it is true, but with eye unlidded, unsleeping, glittering like a sword unsheathed ! Yonder, farther to the west, behold the Tricolor unfurled and floating fair or bravely enough, but above it is perched the Gallic Eagle rather disconsolately, its face, its eye, water-ward, England-ward !

The imaginative reader will, no doubt, find this pictorial presentation significant and therefore sufficient, instinctively filling in, as he will, the outlines or interpreting the symbolism. Nevertheless as a writer is bound to suit, if possible, the tastes of all his readers, more especially when the appeal is made to a wide circle, the necessity of a more matter of fact statement becomes imperative. Such a statement, however, from the nature of the case, must necessarily be the briefest possible ; indeed permissible only in so far as it naturally leads to the theatre of action in each of those countries with which the story is more intimately connected, viz. India, Afghanistan, Persia, and Russia.

It may be stated at the outset and will help the reader to understand, which otherwise would be obscure or unintelligible, that he should consistently bear in mind throughout what are the dominating features of any period under contemplation that determine the trend of events or shape its policy. Without a due, even if general, recognition of this co-ordinating principle, all is mist and mystery, a phantasmagory, a scenic display if you will, but from which, obviously, no definite or practical issues could possibly be evolved. The caution becomes all the more necessary, since in comparatively brief spaces of time so rapid and so radical have been the changes distinguishing one another, that the mind pausing to recall the last, where of course such changes have been the most culminative, is struck with something akin to wonder, awe, and admiration, and terror withal. In a word, so vast and varied have been

the changes as to induce the belief that a revolution rather than an evolution has taken place. There have, as a matter of fact been both, the choice of terms being decided merely as the mind is impressed. Adopting as we do the revolution point of view, as being more germane to the nature of this story, the revolution, happily bloodless, has been mainly due, thanks to the peaceful and persistent labours of a noble body of silent, patient workers in every department of literature and, more especially, in the fruitful fields of science. In a word, look where we will "from China to Peru" everywhere we see the effects or benefits of the progress that has been achieved. The diffusion has been as rapid as that of light, when first the peaks have caught the golden glow and spread the smiling, rosy radiance round, waking the nations, many of them long bound in slumber, to the labours of the day, of the world. For has not Japan awakened—wakeful enough now—is not China awakening too, casting off her swaddling bed-clothes and, at the other extreme is not the light penetrating into the very wilds and recesses of "Darkest Africa?" The result of it all is nothing short of magical. Science and Progress, like Napoleons of the modern economic world have given the word to the nations, as armies, "Forward!" "March!" while the nations are in fact now at the "double." Where, when, will be the cry "Halt!"

But while it is true that the majority of the nations, at least those of Europe, have advanced, or are progressing daily, it is equally true that they are not all in the very forefront. One there is among the many nations that stands out, indisputably if in "splendid isolation" pre-eminent among them all, first in empire, sway, and sovereignty, inexhaustible in riches, in resources, one that holds in fee all the waters and half the lands of the globe, one to whom many nations bow, an Empire on which the sun never sets—"the cynosure of all eyes"—need we say that that Empire is the British Empire! But need we also say that such greatness is inseparable from commensurate responsibilities, or exempt from the penalties,

so to say, attendant on such a position; for as long as nations are but men and men what they are, so long will it be impossible for them not to glance at that glowing and glorious Empire and yet repress the rising sigh of envy or not to be thrilled with desire, or fired by emulation. When further they have ascertained, as assuredly they have, how that Empire has thriven having striven for proud pre-eminence of place, how often, as they feel and allege, at their expense, then their feelings are not likely to be unruffled. "*Ces Anglais !*" exclaims the Gaul, with a world of meaning, much as Milton meant, though of course in a different sense, by his famous phrase "God's Englishman!" It is a glorious destiny no doubt; but we repeat, an awful, a terrible responsibility as well.

And how did the British win world-wide empire and fame? A nation whose soldiers, at one time at least, could not even shoot, and who were the jest and by-word of Europe; a nation, again, slow of thought with action corresponding. Dismissing here, however, all the theories, philosophical and other, accounting nevertheless for the rise and growth of British power, we restrict ourselves to dwell awhile on what is generally allowed to be one of the chief, if not the chief contributory causes. Here we need not draw on imagination, confronted as we are with the sober facts of history transcending any that poor baffled imagination can offer. "Truth is stranger than fiction." So it is, for the secret of achievement in this case is no other than that which centres in the immortal personality of our humble and unassuming old friend—Tommy Atkins. But hear how Carlyle, the apostle of truth, the sternest foe to untruths and shams, speaks in rolling periods, as only he can, of Tommy Atkins:—

"Often, in these painfully decadent and painfully nascent times, with their distresses, inarticulate gaspings and 'impossibilities'; meeting a tall Lifeguardsman in his snow-white trousers, or seeing those two statuesque Lifeguardsmen in their frowning bearskins, nineclaved huckskins, on their coal-black sleek-

fiery quadrupeds, riding sentry at the Horse Guards,—it strikes one with a kind of mournful interest, how, in such universal down-rushing and wrecked impotence of almost all institutions, this oldest Fighting Institution is still so young ! Fresh-complexioned, firm-limbed, six feet by the standard, this fighting man has verily been got up and can fight. While so much has not yet got into being ; while so much has gone gradually out of it, and become an empty Semblance or Clothes-suit ; and highest kings-cloaks, mere chimeras parading under them so long, are getting unsightly to the earnest eye, unsightly, almost offensive, like a costlier kind of scarecrow's blanket,—here still is a reality ! ”

And again :—

“But he of the red coat, I say, is a success and no failure ! He will veritably, if he get orders, draw out a long sword and kill me. No mistake there. He is a fact and not a shadow. Alive in this year Forty-three, able and willing to do *his* work. In dim old centuries, with William Rufus, William of Ipres, or far earlier, he began ; and has come down safe so far. Catapult has given place to cannon, pike has given place to musket, iron mail-shirts to coat of red cloth, saltpetre ropematch to percussion cap ; equipments, circumstances have all changed, and again changed ; but the human battle engine in the inside of any or each of these, ready still to do battle, stands there, six feet in standard size. There are pay offices, Woolwich arsenals, there is a Horse Guards, War Office, Captain General, persuasive sergeants, with tap of drum, recruits in market towns and villages ;—and, on the whole, I say, here is your actual drilled fighting-man ; here are your actual ninety thousand of such, ready to go into any quarter of the world and fight.”

Such is Tommy Atkins as realised by the great Sage, in adequate though necessarily in general and indefinite terms, the more forcibly to impress the imagination with the idea of Tommy's powers, if of specific yet of indefinite achievement ; while the glorified multiplication of Tommy “ninety thousand”

times, which of course equals the British Army "ready to go into any quarter of the world and fight," is a touch of genius inevitable yet all the more admirable for being so. He who has read his Carlyle knows that "to fight," in Carlylese, is to win, though in his sublime ethics there is the "scorn of consequence"; to be real and earnest and not a sham is to be true, and to be true is to be eternal and immortal. Really this man was a heroic soul and knew a hero when he saw him !

But to resume. It is Tommy Atkins, then, many times multiplied, that is the British Army. That is demonstration or proof mathematical than which nothing can be exacter. Yes, it has been Tommy Atkins ; socially nowhere or in the background, martially, so to say, everywhere and in the foreground. If it is not he who has reared the splendid fabric of the Empire "broad-based upon the people's will," his, at any rate, has been the strong and sinewy arm with bayonet that has turned the first sod for the laying of the corner-stone ! But it would surprise Tommy, most of all men, were he to be told that he was guilty of any such eccentricities. He would "blush to find it fame." Such is, indeed, the modesty of your true hero. It would certainly fill volumes to tell you all that Tommy has done. And yet Tommy is neither versatile nor many-sided, and even as a man of action he possesses barely half-a-dozen qualities which, nevertheless, most foreigners hate and all hugely admire. His few qualities tempt enumeration. They are 1st—Colossal ignorance, in that he knows not when he is beaten. 2nd—Doubtful whether to advance or retreat, he stands his ground. 3rd—He permits himself to be fired at because he, too, can fire. 4th—He begins battle with the admirable conceit that the foe is already beaten. 5th—He makes matters worse by calling the foe "game." 6th—Last, but not least, he makes matters worse still by winning battles contrary to all the approved and orthodox rules, as laid down, and then calls it "fair" ! Such is the whole of Tommy's philosophy of fighting. Jomini has nothing better. Simple as it looks on paper, reduced to practice on the "tented field" it has the

effect of reducing the enemy terribly to vanishing point, to despair, or demoralization or annihilation, which means much the same to an army—*saute qui peut*. Nevertheless Tommy is a human being and, human beings are mortal, were they even so as Achilles was. These feats have not cost him nothing. Indeed, life and blood have been laid down and shed in no unstinted measure and in generous flow. That Army which is nothing more than himself many times multiplied, has marched North and South and East and West, beneath wintry skies, through tropic heats, fought, conquered and died, “for such a death who would not die?” And it is often with a mournful pride that the genius of the Nation turns to dwell awhile on many a distant lonely spot where lie the bones, bleaching or scantily covered by the wind-swept mound, of many a nameless hero. Yet, ’tis well:—

“How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country’s wishes blest,” &c

Thoughts such as these must waken every man’s pardonable, patriotic and proper pride. They fill the imagination. They fire the enthusiasm. They fuse all the activities, in times of national peril, of all true patriots in one common and glorious aim. But this is not sufficient under modern conditions. It is one thing to recount deeds that won empire, or derive stimulation from them, and another to maintain the conditions that rendered such deeds possible. This last postulates a state of sleepless vigilance and unceasing effort. *Si vis pacem para bellum*. Such, no doubt, have been the laudable motives of all those patriots who have appealed to the whole nation to arm, at least to increase the Army considerably. The rulers of the realm point proudly to the Navy, saying “There lies England’s best and only defence.” True, but the expansion of foreign navies is not the only factor; but even here what of a possible union of them, or a combination of the most powerful? Such a policy actively pursued by some strong and astute statesmen, founded on the basis of a common interest and gain is surely not quite inconceivable.

It is needless to do more here than refer to what would be the train of thought suggested naturally by these considerations. Diplomacy, like legislation, can effect but little more than what the general conditions of the times warrant. But it is a hopeful sign that in many quarters or respects the national Conscience is surely, if slowly, awakening to its duties and responsibilities. Strangely enough the warnings are being emphasized by the actions of different foreign nations, those the most powerful in particular. We have for instance, a cheap contempt for things "made in Germany." But to the thinker, the soldier, the statesman, there is not the shadow of a reason for contempt—quite the other way. Guarded as Germany is in every way alike in her policy and pronouncements, there are nevertheless things, hints, words "light as air" that drop out, so to say, now and then, that reveal much, just as a "straw shows how the wind blows." There is, for example, the occupation of Holland by Germany, veiled by the undeniable fact that her economic expansion necessitates her securing every port available. There is the assurance given, and confidently received, that six months' notice will be given prior to the outbreak of hostilities—the ponderous German joke, the point of which not seen, broke even the stolid German in roars of laughter and "Hochs," as did, too, the toast of "To the Day." There is again the German's return of contempt, with interest, in his reply to the question "What would you do if a British army landed at Schleswig-Holstein?" "Call out the Police!"

But more strangely still at the present moment have the warnings been emphasized by events transpiring on and around the North-West Frontier of India. No wild raid, or frolicsome foray, is it this time, of one or two of the many lively tribes on our frontier. No ferment, no outbreak of hostilities, no actual war—something darker, deeper, more dangerous still: the calm before the storm. We shall attempt to piece together the information received, bit by bit, gather up the rumours, hoard up the hints dropped here and there, so as to afford our readers a clear, concise and connected view of the state of affairs in the localities in question.

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While England was busy with her problems nearer home, Russia availed herself of the opportunity to render her occupation of Persia a profitable thing. Availing herself, too, of the profound peace that reigned amidst her conquered Khanates and possessions in Central Asia—thanks to her stern and rigid rule of repression—she had plenty of time and labour to push forward her Trans-Persian Railway which now, at the time we are considering, was completed, and certainly constituted no mean monument of her constructive skill, untiring energy, and strategic engineering. Guarded and girdling as it did no inconsiderable portion of Afghanistan, the Amir viewed it with no small share of distrust and misgiving; indeed it filled him with alarm, as we may gather from a report of an interview he accorded the Russian General Bloisedofsky. “Mistake me not,” said the Amir, “I like not this railway: you see I have no railways in my realm.” Mollified somewhat by the sugary words of the Russian military diplomat, still the Amir retorted: “It may be so and it may not. Doubt is bad. But this I know, that railways, like the fingers of an iron hand, squeeze out the substance of every land where they are permitted to have a hold. They bring the grain to my barn you say; but they also bring the *Giaour*, the Infidel under my roof; the foeman at my gate; they bring the juice of the grape, that the Prophet—blest be his name!—hath forbidden.” Thus the Amir went on much to the same effect and in a strain of rising hyperbole as is usual with Orientals under the stimulus of passion or excitement. But to sooth and soften the Amir was an easy matter for Russian diplomacy. An epigrammatic genius has recorded the interesting fact that “It takes three Jews to deceive a Russian,” while Napoleon has added to our stock of Slavonic knowledgo by his emphatic statement, the result probably of some unfortunate experience, “Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar beneath.” Moreover, the fact that Russian influence was in the ascendant at Kabul, the Amir’s capital, was also helpful in dispelling any fears the Amir may have entertained. And the occasion was further improved by representing to him the decadent

and helpless condition of England ; that they (the Russians) were practically the rulers of Asia, *ergo* of India as well ; under the circumstances the wisest policy of the Amir would be to frankly throw in his lot with Russia. Indeed Holy Scripture said Russia would one day rule the world and when that day arrived Russia would remember Afghanistan ! The Amir, however, remained unshaken in his avowed loyalty to England, and was shrewd enough to see that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush ; but he was not shrewd enough to see or to fathom the deeper plot veiled by the flowers of diplomatic oratory. Briefly, that plot was to depose the Amir, in favour of his relative and Grand Vizier as well. This worthy relative was in secret league with the Russians. Possessing far more than the usual share of cupidity common to his countrymen, he listened with avidity to all the gorgeous tales that the Russian imagination wove for his delectation, and gazed greedily and gloating over the glittering baits that the Russian took good care to ever dangle before his glistening eyes.

It is true that the British representative at Kabul, not only suspected plotting, but actually managed to come by certain information, from time to time, all of which he duly reported to the Viceroy of India, who in turn apprised the Home Government. But what could be done in a case like this of subtly veiled violation of treaty rights with no open violation of the same, such as would justify action and altogether free such action from the aspersion of acting on suspicion ? Where would even come in the necessity of expostulation which would probably only have the effect of inducing greater caution, and resort to darker, deeper disguises—a course that would be diametrically opposed to all that prudence would dictate. The occupation of Persia was agreed to—an irremediable blunder—while alleged attacks on her troops by Kurd and Persian brigands furnished Russia with a perennially plausible plea whenever she found it convenient to strengthen her garrisons or establish new ones. Meanwhile the plot is thickening. The clasp or rather grasp of the Russian Bear is tightening.

There are some countries the internal state of which, in wild and chronic disorder seem naturally to invite the roving, restless spirits of the world ; more particularly all such in whom the predominant passion has been grasping ambition and love of overmastering power. Where there are one or more or many such the result is a state of things terrible and unfortunate in the extreme. There arise rival and contending factions, gathering or diminishing with a phenomenal rapidity indicating the brief and bloody success or defeat of their respective leaders, a state of internecine warfare only terminated by the inability of the hapless country to bear it longer, or by the exceptional talent or good fortune of some one leader whose struggles having been more uniformly successful, have naturally won over the greatest number of adherents and thereby enabled him to impose his will on the rest. But the peace purchased at such a price is that of an armistice, a period of recovery or recuperation, the conclusion of which is the beginning of another such time as we have just described. Such a country is Afghanistan. Its history "no cold medium knows." At one moment the most supine and unenergetic possible to be imagined, at another alive as the very earthquake. The post held by the British representative in Kabul was a difficult one. Certainly it was not enviable ; while what with the planning and plotting going on around it was positively dangerous. But his British determination to do his duty never for a moment wavered, cost what it may. Yet as a matter of common prudence the British representative kept his revolver ready, wrote and sent his despatch, committed himself to the care of Heaven, and calmly awaited the march of events. It was, as we have said, a post of difficulty, danger, even of death. He did, as in duty bound, disclose the situation as being one untenable and hopeless. Under the circumstances he awaited either help or orders for recall, with personally however no choice in the matter at all. He was there for duty and "England expects that every man will do his duty."

Little did he know that orders for recall had duly issued ; but the faithful bosom that bore them concealed was cloven at his very door that night. It seemed to be the preconcerted signal. Shouts, shots, yells rising of a sudden higher, louder, and more prolonged, betokened unmistakably that the whole city was in open revolt. The loyal Amir and his following were then and there massacred, his son, narrowly escaping the same fate, fled, a royal fugitive, to India where he sought and obtained the protection of the Viceroy. The Grand Vizier was proclaimed Amir. Then came the climax of the tragedy in so far as the British were concerned. Like an Alpine avalanche, masses of men stole, as befitting their nefarious purpose, stern, stealthy and silent, towards the doomed British Legation whereon its flag, as if in melancholy foreboding, hung heavy and drooping, wet, as if with unavailing tears, with the wintry winds of night. Anon a wild shout, an indescribable yell such as only fanatics and demons can raise, reverberating among the rocks, responded to by others afar, as like the final crash of the avalanche, the entire mass of men, nay fiends, burst in overwhelming rush on the British Legation, rocking its very foundations. It was the work of an instant, as all that is diabolic and venomous is, and those serried swords and spears that in one moment gleamed cruel and cold "beneath the struggling moonbeams' misty light," are now dull, damp, and dripping with the life-blood of the heroic hearts they have pierced and ever stilled ! Rise and rage awhile, ye ragged ruffians and scoundrels—your reckoning shall be kept in red and readily and speedily done too !

But now the state of affairs in India demands our close attention. Russia, as has been said already, had given covert, but not overt, provocation ; in a word nothing had been done by her as yet that would justify England declaring war, nor were any preparations made, beyond those of concentrating on the Indian frontier of Afghanistan. British and Indian troops were hurried northward ; so too were Anglo-Indian regiments, in one of them our hero, Sergeant Ackland, in Peshawar and Nowshera.

These regiments were considered a most valuable and useful part of the Army. In Seringapatam, however, there was yet another Battalion of Anglo-Indian Infantry, the 5th Battalion having now been raised, though still recruits were to be had for the asking. This 5th Battalion being but a year old was not sent to the Frontier, past experience having taught it best to keep recruits away from the Frontier for their first year or two. The war scare had already lasted for several months, and Germany's action in sending troops to Holland had put a terrible strain on politicians and statesmen, who endeavoured to explain away matters and prevent trouble. The British Army, however, took quite another view of the situation. Their hopes of a fight rose, and as each succeeding day's telegrams in the papers contradicted the preceding much "grousing" at this unnecessary raising of hopes could be heard, good-humoured chaff being exchanged with the Anglo-Indian regiments about the coming fight. Tommy Atkins, with his usual facetiousness, remarked "You'll all get a medal *peachy*, you *bighto thora*. We ain't here for nothink, Darky, me boy. Don't yer forgit it." Nor did they, either, and ere many months passed the British Army was likely to remember it for many a long year. Neither did the General Officer commanding the Anglo-Indian Brigade forget it. He read the political situation, and the disciplinary screw was tightened even more. Field training, long route marches, and physical drill were the order of the day. Each Commanding Officer of an Anglo-Indian regiment determined that his particular regiment at least should go to the front efficient, if to the front they were sent. Every man secretly hoped a "scrap" would take place, so that they might prove their worth and their regiment make history.

We must now advert to things of neither land nor sea. Start not, gentle reader, the reference is simply to what the breathless progress of our times is rendering us daily more familiar with—viz. the air-machine, the aeroplane or whatever a future committee of experts convened for the purpose may

decide to call it, which (and to remove any lingering sense of mystification our opening sentence may have induced in the mind of the reader) may not inaptly be termed the ship of the aerial ocean spread or "hung up on high," as Byron, in a moment of "fine frenzy" hath it. The exigencies of our story, fortunately or unfortunately (let the wise reader determine) preclude us from indulging in any of the more or less ingenious speculations so rife at present as to the magnificent results, in the future, of these aerial or aviatory attempts of man; suffice it to say that these "flights of fancy" as the cynic with a fine scorn would call them, were as will be seen in the sequel, serious matters to the *personae* of our story.

For several months past vague rumours, brought by Afghan runners, reached the British lines. They told of having seen, by night, the sombre shadows of many monstrous things moving mysteriously amid the moonless skies. Anon they flapped what seemed to be their gigantic wings, as they flitted and sped over and across the cloud-capped peaks, the mountains, and smiling valleys of their land. And what was stranger still, these monsters seemed to be half-human, or bore human beings, they were not quite certain. These rumours, at first discredited and smiled at good-naturedly, as having probably their origin only in the credulity, superstitious fears, and fantastic, if fertile, imagination of the Oriental, were dismissed as idle. Later on, however, as these rumours still came, and for many months together, as we have said; when, further, all these rumours appeared to be, as they really were, despite the rambling relation of them, in substantial agreement with one another they had then their desired and natural effect in gaining a certain amount of credence. For the British, it must be remembered, are a slow-thinking people, have a huge admiration for the tangible and, according to Matthew Arnold, a great "respect for fact" as befits a wisely-practical people, all which furnishes them with in the phraseology of Lamb no "inferior spring of action." And what lent colour to the story was the due admixture of fact and the high degree

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of probability in and attaching to it. The huge human or semi-human monsters were observed in localities that were far beyond those where the British could reasonably be supposed to be in any way, this and the fact that the Russians, too, had an air fleet, large and well equipped, made it clear that it was theirs that had been observed and reported. The knowledge, however, was little more than useless, indeed mortifying, as no action could be taken, nor even protest made. For the movements of the Russian Air-Fleet, over Kabul, and even so far south as Khash and Kaleh-i-fath, involved no breach of treaty obligations, while any representation that could be made, based on ultimate designs or effects would surely, it was felt, be regarded or rather scouted, as highly problematical; besides it suggested a line of conduct that the English instinctively shrink from. And thus it came about that the British Army lay in quiet occupation of the country round Peshawar for months, nothing in the interval more disquieting than these rumours having disturbed their peaceful tenure. But now it was the unexpected that happened—a phenomenon of general experience. News was received of the insurrection in Kabul, of the tragedy that not only terminated in the murder of the Amir, with the flight of his son, but, crown and climax of it all, the foul murder of all the members of the British Legation, the blackness and horror of the deed relieved only by the heroism these last displayed that thrilled the pulse and woke the pride of every British breast. It would however be futile to describe the state of feeling evoked, better imagined than described. To add to the tale of horrors arrived, simultaneously, reports to the effect that the Russians had seized the Trans-Persian Railway and about 15,000 of them had concentrated at Shah Godar, a locality some 300 and odd miles only from Quetta in Baluchistan. This last piece of news, strange enough as it may seem for the nonce, was received with much gratification. But little reflection will explain the feeling. This last piece of news revealed the possibility or rather necessity of taking prompt action, of avenging diabolic murder, misdeed, treachery; of putting

an end to doubt, suspense, and the scarcely less tortures of enforced inaction, of in a word ending the strain engendered under such circumstances, while incidentally it afforded the soldier a fitting and almost the only opportunity he has of showing his mettle or of distinguishing himself. But the chief result of the news coming as it did like a thunderclap and followed by other news as startling, even as the storm follows the thunder, had much the same effect, (to continue the simile) of the thunderstorm that purifies the atmosphere, in that it now, for the first time made all clear, and explained the trend of events towards the present position. Here was the explanation of those multitudinous, mysterious, shadowy, and sombre visitants that flitted across the moonless, midnight skies of Afghanistan! Theirs were the mighty outstretched wings, the flapping of which falling on the simple peasant's startled ear sent a thrill of fear through his very heart and frame. This, in plain prose, in sober fact, meant the movement of the Russian Air-Fleet towards its objective! Here was the explanation, in the dulness and dearth of all incident, of the sepulchral silence and stillness that, for so many months, bound the existence of the British Army as it lay in and about the Peshawar country, as mentioned above. This was the time when all the plotting and planning progressed, favoured in infinitely less measure by circumstances than by those cunning creations of the conditions of silence and secrecy requisite for their nefarious execution. Yes, it was all plain enough now, as everything is, when due or the mere efflux of time, like a searchlight, thus makes it.

The astounding news spread like wildfire that the Amir and the members of the British Legation at Kabul had been foully murdered; the Amir's son was a fugitive in India. More serious still 15,000 Russians had seized the Trans-Persian Railway at Shah Godar, only 300 miles from Quetta, within marching distance of both Quetta and the Khyber Pass, near which the British Army was concentrated. Secretly too, for no one had seen them apparently. The army had then made

forced marches and seized the railway at Shah Godar, and procured all the horses required, on the way, and at Shah Godar. Once the railway was seized, parties were sent along the line, towards the far off Russian bases at Kars in the south of Russia and Merv, and Askabad in Turkoman territory by train, as lines now branched in both directions. From these bases, other parties had entrained to meet them, and thus the whole line had been seized, and guards had been posted. The Russian armies at Merv, Askabad, Kars, and nearer Russia were even now entrained and on their way to Shah Godar, where earthworks were hastily thrown up, while awaiting the influx of troops and orders from Russia, and also for information of the movements of the British Army, which was the only bar now to the long-conceived Russian dream—the invasion and occupation of India. The Pamirs and Hindu Kush, which experts years before had declared would take three years to cross had been by England's own assistance in building a railway, and by the advent of the aeroplane crossed in less than four months, and India was face to face with the Russian Bear at its very gates. The blow was not going to be delivered at Peshawar, as had always been expected. Thus the elaborate arrangements made there were useless against the Russians. And Russia was not the only enemy. The new Afghan Ruler, a mere Russian puppet, was helping her. But no definite news as to a great concentration of Afghans had yet been received. The news indeed was quite bad enough so far. It was however quite certain that the Russians could not possibly advance upon Baluchistan for at least several weeks. It would take some time to gather a force strong enough to defeat the British Army, but that army was not yet anywhere near them, and had to cross Afghanistan and defeat the Afghans throughout that country, for the British forces were concentrated at Peshawar in the north, and the Russians concentrating at Shah Godar in the south, with a wild and mountainous country in between them, its people in arms against England. The direction of Shah Godar was W. S. W. from Peshawar.

CHAPTER VI.

WAR AT LAST.

MEANWHILE "Russians concentrating at Shah Godar" or variants, as suggested by journalistic ingenuity, to that effect, appeared as big and bold headlines in every paper in India.

Of course the possibility of war was very much in evidence, and its problems bulked very large in the public eye. But Sir James Millicocks, the Commander-in-Chief, it was trusted, would act with decision. News was soon received that the Afghan Army and levies had not yet joined to assist Russia, but the Russians cared little for that. If the Afghans assisted England, so much the worse for them. Sir James Millicocks considered that his best plan would be to assume the aggressive and attack. But 700 miles of all but inaccessible country separated the two European armies. Entraining the Army, and proceeding southward to Quetta, thence by the Trans-Persian Railway, or rather, what the Russians had left of it, to Shah Godar (W. S. W. from Peshawar) and attacking the Russians before they had time to concentrate would have been an ideal movement. The alternative that offered would be to march into the heart of Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass and attack the Russians on their left flank. It must be remembered that the Trans-Persian-Railway ended at Quetta, where it was linked up with the Indian system. Peshawar being at a great distance from Quetta, much valuable time would necessarily be lost entraining and detraining and the transport of such an army would be a stupendous task. Russia's well conceived and audacious plan, admirably carried out, had however upset all previous calculations. Under the circumstances an entirely new plan of campaign would be necessary, as the Khyber Pass had always been considered India's ~~vulnerable~~ vulnerable point and the disposition of the British Army

made accordingly. It was therefore plain that the Khyber Pass could not be abandoned, without advancing through it into Afghanistan, and driving all resistance before it on to the Russian lines. If however avoiding the Khyber Pass and railing to Quetta, the Russians were attacked in front, the Afghans, it was certain, would advance rapidly through the undefended pass.

The Afghans were not bound to fight side by side with Russia; this would necessitate marching to Shah Godar, where the Russians were entrenching themselves. Indeed, that contingency was very remote, as it was very unlikely they would place themselves under the orders of the Russians, who doubted their ability to control the wild and unruly clans. They would be far better employed in impeding and harassing the British forces. What was more important, the British Army would be obliged to advance on Shah Godar *via* Afghanistan, and thus invaluable time would be gained for entrenching and concentrating more troops. The presence also of 50,000 or more Afghans, fully armed and with all their inborn lust and greed for carnage and gain, was most undesirable at Shah Godar. Sir James Millcocks's premonitions were identical, so the Afghans and Afridis, though ever ready to fight, for little or no cause, especially against the hated *Peringhees*, did not gather into one compact body. As a matter of fact, Sir James Millcocks's measures rendered this impossible. It also became known that the Afghans in three comparatively small armies were advancing from different directions. The majority were unaware of the Amir's death and of the flight of his son to India, or the real reason why they were going to fight. It was quite sufficient for them to know that into their mountain fastnesses were advancing the *Peringhee* soldiers. These they deemed their hereditary foe and had heard, over and over again, their fathers recount their great and glorious deeds, especially those of 1842, when out of the 16,000 *Peringhee soldier-log* invading their country, only one, Doctor Bryden sahib, had managed to escape and return to India. They were

all therefore filled with the wildest fanatical joy at the prospect of emulating and achieving the feats and repeating the glorious victory of their fathers.

The British striking force—50,000 men of all arms, European, Anglo-Indian and Indian, including the Anglo-Indian regiment of Cavalry, the Battery of Artillery and the 1st Battalion of Infantry—left Peshawar within two days of receiving the news of the Russian occupation of Shah Godar. Part of the Aeroplane Squadron also accompanied the force. It was doubtful, however, whether it could render much material help, except for scouting purposes, and perhaps for an aerial bomb or two, as a “bolt from the blue.” Its services might also probably be utilized in discovering the enemy’s batteries (known to be very few), strategical and tactical reconnaissances, and to serve as a means of communication between the three columns invading Afghanistan. It was unnecessary to obtain information as regards the enemy’s reserves, for the Afghans never had any, all the effective strength being in the fighting line and they took little trouble to conceal their position. General Milcock’s idea was to march straight upon his objective without considering the number of the Afghans, the vague information conveyed by aerial scouts proving in this case of small value. The Aeroplane Squadron threw a terrible strain upon the Transport Department. It had already thousands of tons of materials to deal with and this further burden was one it could hardly bear, and already Sir James was seriously thinking of abandoning the flying section. In any case he concluded that it would be impossible to get more than one machine to Shah Godar.

The Anglo-Indian regiments were naturally most grateful for the opportunity accorded them of showing their prowess in the field. The 2nd Division being mobilized, marched out of Peshawar in ten days, following the 1st Division, but taking a more south-westerly direction. It numbered 60,000, which included the 2nd Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment; but the proportion of Indian troops was much greater than in the first. The reason

for this was very important and the reader will no doubt be able to discover it later.

On the departure of the 2nd Division the 3rd Army was rapidly got together, being drawn from all parts of India. It was 100,000 strong, its destination Shah Godar, by the quickest possible route, in order to effect a junction with the 1st and 2nd Divisions, which had to defeat the Afghans in detail before Shah Godar, held by the Russian Army, whose numbers could not be accurately ascertained, could be invested. On the three Divisions successfully effecting a junction, the Russian position could be attacked. In the 3rd Division were the 3rd and 4th Battalions of Anglo Indian Infantry.

The Afghans and Afridis were known to be out in full strength and spoiling for a fight. According to aeroplane scouts, and runners, Sir James Millicocks would probably meet one Afghan Division in a few days.

While these three armies were *en route* to face the foe, India was of course practically depleted of troops, only about 50,000 being left, and these almost entirely composed of Indians, excepting the details of the Anglo-Indian Dépôt and three British Battalions. Troops could not be spared from England, as the state of European affairs was such that not a man could be moved; in fact more men were wanted badly in England. But the Indians knew that England was defending their cause, and Britain's rule was much to be preferred to Russia's. No apprehensions were therefore entertained as to an uprising similar to that of 1857, as nearly all the Indian regiments were at the front, going to fight the Russians—and the British Army was with them. It was thought, and rightly too, that the few Indian troops left in India were too scattered to cause danger or give rise to anxiety; besides it was felt that they would be quite loyal.

However, Europeans and Anglo-Indians other than volunteers to a man were organized into regiments, and received arms, thus helping the volunteers to police the country. The newly-raised 5th Battalion, Anglo-Indians was sent to hold Peshawar,

now the base of operations and possibly to reinforce the other Battalions. The idea of reinforcing any part of the armies was practically impossible: all that Britain had was at the front, and the fate of Britain would depend on the fate of the three Divisions.

The loyalty of the Indian Princes and noblemen took tangible shape. They not only offered to equip regiments at their own expense but asked to be allowed to lead them against the common enemy. This permission was granted in several cases, and all shared the great responsibility of fighting the foe. The principal trouble was the putting down of *bandushes*. These formed themselves into large bands, and were even bold enough to attack towns. It was extremely fortunate that they were but ill-armed. *The seventy or eighty thousand Europeans and Anglo-Indians, however, were effective in preventing them from damaging the railway, and supplies were well kept up for the armies in the field. The majority of the Indian population were not in sympathy with the *bandushes*, well knowing that they were out simply for plunder. Whoever ruled India was immaterial to them. But in spite of the European and Anglo-Indian, chiefly Anglo-Indian, armed police, much damage was done by them. There was absolutely no means of filling the gaps that would doubtless be made in British ranks, but Indians were recruited in large numbers. These were hastily drilled, and kept ready to reinforce the Indian regiments and to hold the 700 miles of communications.

Why, it may be asked, were not the Australian and New Zealand armies commandeered? The answer is that whatever men could be spared were being mobilized, and troopships were waiting in the harbours to convey them to Europe to fight there in case of a British defeat at Shah Godar, for the situation was critical indeed. It appeared as if Europe would be plunged into war if Russia succeeded in overthrowing British rule in India.

While Sir James Millock was within three days' march of Peshawar, his scouts brought in the information that a large

body of Afghans were advancing from a north-westerly direction. The number was estimated at about 15,000, but they were without artillery. It was also reported that they were receiving reinforcements as they advanced. They were making for Jugluk Hill, near the village of Jugluk, where a force of about 1,000 or more had been posted with six guns in position. Sir James Millcocks finding it impossible to get there before the main body of the enemy, made a forced march and advanced before nightfall to within gun-range of the enemy. After the Artillery had been entrenched in gun-pits, three Cavalry regiments, two British and one Anglo-Indian, and a Battery of Royal Horse Artillery, were ordered to take up a position four miles to the south-west, to cut off the enemy's retreat in the direction of Shah Godar, and turn them back. The 1st Division bivouacked well within sight of the enemy, but out of rifle range. In this position the force waited for daylight. Sniping was kept up all night by the Afghans, but hardly any damage done. There was little likelihood of attack from the hillmen, too amazed at the strength of the British Army. They had been led to believe that it would be much smaller, as about 10,000 men had usually been the number they had encountered in years previous, so there was no chance of a repetition of 1842 as they had been promised. Indeed, the Mullahs had the greatest difficulty in keeping the hillmen from retiring without fighting. Some few did steal away during the night—to fight another day perhaps! As for the men of the British Army, they slept as soundly that night as if they were in barracks or as the Seven Sleepers. Such trifles as sniping disturbed only those unused to hill warfare. Many thought it might be their last night, and made preparations accordingly.

But among those unaffected by these or any other consideration was Private Daniel Dodger. He was the first to go to sleep, remarking as he pulled his blanket over him "Go to blazes: ye cannt 'it a' ayrick: garn! tike yer gaspipes 'ome wit' yer *jaldi* or we'll tike 'em from yer termorrer." Little did he think that the hillmen had long ago discarded "gaspipes," and were now armed with modern weapons of precision, and knew

how to use them, as every Afghan village has its rifle butt, and the target is in constant use. An Afghan would rather any day have a rifle than a wife. Private Daniel Dodger however had no knowledge of this or a sublime indifference to such knowledge and went to sleep serenely, jubilant at the thought of having extended his period of service and thus getting an opportunity of seeing active service. But alas! he was destined never again to see his beloved Bloomsbury, for on the bugle sounding the advance he was one of the first to fall. A Mauser bullet laid him low and he fell forward without a word. A comrade thinking he had been only slightly wounded remarked callously "'Sai Dodger, what price gaspipes now?" but he received no reply—poor Dodger was no more! As may well be imagined the 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, slept little. This 'was their first' *expérience* of real war and all seemed naturally somewhat uneasy, not that they were by any means afraid, but all were anxious that they should render a good account of themselves on the morrow. They sat whispering together in little groups, reminding each other that the honour of their community lay in their hands. All resolved to die a thousand deaths rather than display any weakness in the coming fight. Individual Anglo-Indians hoped their Battalion would be selected to take part in the assault, every man resolving to do his best; mortals could no more; they knew too that they had more at stake than the British soldier as a rule imagined. The conversation in the Officers' Lines was high-spirited, all hoping that the "savages" would make a fight of it. The older officers gave the younger ones the benefit of their experiences of previous frontier wars. The possible duration of the war, the fate of the other two divisions and the European situation were all discussed. One of the youngest subalterns present, taking a nip at his flask, drank the subalterns' callous toast "'To a bloody war and quick promotion," to which those officers who were within hearing cried "Hear, Hear." Gradually however talking ceased, as all prepared to sleep.

General Millocks in a small tent sat planning the operations to follow the coming engagement. He had issued all orders, and was confident of dislodging the enemy. His numbers preponderated and he knew the fight would only be a hill skirmish compared with what was to follow. He was anxious however to prevent the hillmen retiring in the direction of Shah Godar, where Russian troop trains were bringing up reinforcements as fast as the single line of rail permitted, and every day lost meant gain to the foe. That night our hero, Sergeant Ackland, sat alone cleaning his rifle thoroughly and satisfying himself that his ammunition was in good condition. While stowing away in his haversack his few personal belongings he came across and drew out the large jack-knife—Annette's present to him. The sight of it evoked a train of sad-sweet memories and reflections—Annette—home—his father's advice, "what you have hold, and never say die." He also remembered it was on that very ground his father had won two medals, and thought how often he must have been placed in similar circumstances. Poor Annette! Brian hoped she would love and marry some good man. The Anglo-Indian community were as yet far from having attained the position he and they had willed and would work to attain, and pending that consummation he vowed never to marry. He was however confident of himself and all his comrades, and that the regiment would give a very good account of itself. The idea of being killed or even wounded never entered his mind: he had in fact that very morning posted at the Field Post Office a letter to his father laconically worded: Won great victory, Hugh, Felix, and myself all right." He had not seen his brothers that day, for one had accompanied his regiment with the Cavalry Brigade, sent to cut off the enemy's retreat, the other was with his battery, quite a mile away, busy probably digging gun-pits. Brian now thought it time to rest, but before doing so strapped the jack-knife at his waist.

James Ackland was of course overjoyed on receiving his son's letter; he proudly showed it to his wife and friends, who discovered that it was dated the 7th and the battle was reported

to have taken place on the 8th. But this the fond parent accounted for satisfactorily enough. Brian would probably not have been able to write until the 9th, so he put it down to a mistake on his part, for on active service he himself told his wife a soldier often loses count of the dates, and even days of the week. But in this case Brian had not. In his supreme confidence of the invincibility of British arms, he was sanguine of victory and hoped that he and his brothers would emerge unscathed, to fight for England again and again.

The Indian Army, which never mixes with the British in peace or war, squatted round their curry-pots as usual, some of them quietly joyful at the prospect of getting at their hereditary foes, the Afghans. Others there were who looked upon the Afghans as their brothers, and determined that when they were ordered to fire every shot should be a miss, and the Afghans themselves knew this. However that may be, the general feeling that probably pervaded the Moslem in the Indian Army was the usual one of "Kismet." They were however not so supine in their fatalism as to be destitute of the confidence that the "Sarkar" would as usual be victorious; and no doubt quietly estimated the amount of "batta" money that would be forthcoming, this being their principal consideration when on active service.



CHAPTER VII.

BLOODED.

DAY broke at last, to the great and welcome relief of every soldier in the 1st Division. It had been a bitterly cold night, such as only a night in December on the North-West Frontier can be. But now the sun (which Tommy Atkins facetiously calls "the old Bengal blanket") was soon high up in the heavens. Its genial glow infused the much-needed warmth, circulation, and high spirits into the regiments marching to their allotted positions. The guns now roared out their first grim messages of death; for the range had been taken overnight, daylight only being awaited to open fire. The first shot—"a plus"—was apparently well over the hill. The second shot "a minus" or one of shorter range; the third was fired between the two. The cloud of dust which rose from the summit of the hill proved that the proper range had been found, being verified by another shot at a similar range. The echelon was also obtained and the shells could soon be seen bursting beautifully, almost in a line, just above the brow of the hill.

The Afghan gunners were not slow in replying. That they had European artillerists with them was evident, as they soon got a direct hit, which placed a British gun temporarily out of action. Luckily the shell did not explode, and in less than an hour the gun was rendered serviceable again. The Anglo-Indian Battery was in the centre of the three British batteries. The Afghan guns, though breech-loaders, were not quickfirers, and as opposed to them were 18 guns all of larger calibre, they were easily out-gunned, and in consequence soon silenced one by one.

Under cover of Artillery fire, kept up after the Afghan guns were put out of action, the British Infantry moved forward. The first portion toward the enemy's position was steadily marched, but as the Battalions got closer, men began to fall. When well under fire orders were given to extend three

paces, lie down and return the rifle fire. The Anglo-Indian Battalion was now fairly in the thick of it, the excitement of battle animating all the troops, as the enemy were firing steadily and fairly accurately. Groans were soon heard on all sides, as one or another unfortunate was hit; moreover the many casualties at this stage in the Anglo-Indian Battalion speedily suggested the expediency or rather necessity of the Battalion as well as the British regiments taking advantage of all cover available. A blade of grass even, so to say, in such circumstances was not to be despised. And to give effect to the experience gained their officers issued an order to extend to five paces in the next 100 yards' rush. The fight waxed hot, and men fell fast.

The Artillery still kept up their fire, but the hillmen were so well scattered or dispersed and under such good cover in their *sangars* that so far not a vestige of them had been seen: it was only the flashes from their heavy rifle fire which made their presence known and unpleasantly felt. A series of rushes now made by the Infantry brought them within 300 yards of the crest of the hill, the Artillery meanwhile pouring in a perfect hail of shrapnel on the enemy, abating the Afghan fire considerably. Suddenly the British guns ceased firing, to permit of the Infantry getting closer still; then, at the command "charge," the troops, with ringing British cheers, rushed the position.

The Anglo-Indian Battalion was among the first to engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Sergeant Brian Ackland, being an exceptionally good runner, was the first man to engage an Afghan; but no special regiment could reach the top or give the enemy the first taste of cold steel, though officers and men of all regiments vied with each other to claim that honour. Sergeant Ackland's temerity, however, nearly cost him his life, for scores of rifles were pointed at his tall form no sooner he topped the rise; and he must have borne a charmed life in the charge. On reaching the summit of the hill he thrust at a gigantic Afghan with such force as to actually embed the bayonet over the foresight of his rifle, and, try as he might, he could not withdraw it.

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Frenzied soldiers were shouting and striking on all sides, and not twenty yards away an Afghan was taking deliberate aim at the gallant Sergeant, and a moment later it would have been all over with him when the Afghan threw up his arms—reeled—and fell, shot dead by Brian's own Commanding Officer, who was just in time to save his Sergeant's life. To Brian's grateful "Thank you, Sir," he replied "Bravo, my lad! Have at 'em again, Colour Sergeant" and plunged into the fray.

The Afghans totally unable to stand cold and shining steel, needed no further persuasion to make them fly precipitately down the other side of the hill, their turbans streaming behind them in the breeze. As was expected they fled in a south-westerly direction. Meanwhile orders for rapid rifle fire were as rapidly and readily obeyed, with such unerring certainty as to lay low considerable numbers of the enemy.

The Horse Artillery that lay awaiting all night under cover no sooner had they discovered the direction in which the Afghans fled than they opened fire on them, and turned them in another and north-westerly direction. The three Field Batteries had by this time limbered up, and moving round to the north-west side of the hill had the Afghans under a deadly cross-fire. The three Cavalry regiments also moved forward to charge and complete the rout; and as the Cavalry Brigade (the Anglo-Indian Cavalry in the centre) from rear of the hill clattered out at a canter, the guns again ceased firing. Increasing their speed, first to a gallop and then a charge, the cavalrymen were soon among the enemy. For a moment the Afghans and Afri-dis endeavoured to rally and many a British saddle was emptied, but in the next the horsemen rode simply right through them, and ere they could wheel and renew the charge the now thoroughly demoralized enemy laid down their rifles, folded their hands and begged for quarter. Scarcely a hillman escaped; nearly all were either killed, wounded or taken prisoners. No fewer than 5,000 Afghans were killed outright, and more than that number wounded. The British casualties were heavy: 800 killed; 2,000 wounded. The loss in the Indian regiments was

very small, only 100 killed and about 800 or thereabouts wounded, as they took no prominent part in the assault. The rather heavy losses sustained by the British were due in great measure to the wholly unexpected accuracy of the Afghan fire; nevertheless the battle was won and over before midday.

The first victory of the campaign had been won and the Anglo-Indians had more than justified the trust reposed in them. Competent opinion declared they had fought well and were henceforward quite worthy to take their place in or beside Britannia's army. After the engagement Sergeant Ackland was summoned before his Commanding Officer and by him highly complimented on his achievement, he being, as we have seen, the first man to come to grips with the enemy. "I made you Colour Sergeant during the battle," said the Commanding Officer, "I am now very pleased to confirm the appointment," adding, with an encouragingly familiar smile, "You only beat me in the race by a short head; my legs are not so good as they once were"! The newly-created modest Colour Sergeant blushed, too confused to reply. He saluted and returned to his company, who added to our hero's confusion and joy by cheering him to the echo.

Brian wrote a hurried letter to his father giving him the joyful news. The account of the engagement had already appeared in the papers. The *Advancer's* Special War Correspondent, Mr. Anderson, who had made quite a brilliant reputation for himself in the last Kabul War, gave a most realistic description of the fight, and was loud in his praises of the fighting qualities of the Anglo-Indian Battalion. Anglo-Indians were of course overjoyed at hearing of the martial spirit displayed by their community and gave thanks to God for having given them the strength and opportunity to fight for their Flag.

Attention was drawn to Colour Sergeant Ackland's feat in the British papers, the *Times* and *Daily Mail* especially giving prominence to it. The splendid behaviour and steadiness under fire of the 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, their dash, their cool courage were all favourably commented on. The

Anglo-Indian Cavalry and Artillery, it was also mentioned, did very well, though Sergeant Ackland's exploit brought the Infantry Battalion further to the fore. Ex-Sergeant-Major Ackland was delighted when he read the *Advances* that evening in the Institute; more so when he received the hearty congratulations of his many friends. "Yes, indeed," exclaimed the war-worn veteran, "I'm proud of my Brian, indeed, I am, and of his brothers, my brave boys, Hugh and Felix. The two last, it might be said, were now N. C. O.'s. They had emerged from the engagement quite unharmed. Naturally they were quite proud of their elder brother.

After the sad task of burying the dead, the Division rested that night on the field it had won. Early next day the march was resumed in the direction of Kabul, to meet the 2nd Division, who were in touch with another large body of Afghans. The march continued till nightfall, with a short midday halt and by daybreak again resumed, despatches arriving meanwhile from General Sir John Joon, Commanding the 2nd Division, intimating that he was about to engage the enemy, who were in a strongly fortified position at Sadopur. About midday, when a halt was about to be made, the booming of guns was heard. Sir James Millicocks thereupon decided to push on immediately so as to render any help that might be necessary. This however was not likely, as the Afghans were outnumbered, though they had 40,000 levies available including the Afghan Army, trained by Turkish and other European instructors. Nevertheless General Millicocks decided to push on and defeat the Afghans without loss of time. Every minute gained was invaluable as the Russian Army at Shah Godar was increasing daily. Not that the Afghan force at Sadopur was by any means to be despised. They were besides quite near Kabul, where was the Afghan arsenal; were no doubt well supplied with guns and ammunition and commanded by Nadir Khan, the most brilliant of the Afghan Generals.

The forced march made by Sir James Millicocks was most trying to the troops, the heat proving too much for many of

the British soldiers, although it was December. Not a single case of heat-stroke occurred, however, among the Anglo-Indians; a few fell out, it is true, but owing to other causes. This afforded the Officer Commanding the Anglo-Indian Battalion an opportunity of delivering a panegyric on the vigour and constitution of his men. It may however be said that a December day is really cool for an Anglo-Indian. The Indian regiments also were immune but were unable to keep up with the British and the Anglo-Indian Battalions.

When the 1st Division approached Sadopur, the battle was already half won, the key to the Afghan position—the village of Sadopur—being captured, though only after a severe struggle. The Afghans then moved off, in the direction of Shah Godar, where they took up other positions, which they obstinately held. Night was now fast approaching, and it was deemed advisable to rest and await daylight, it being evident that although the Afghans had retired, they were far from being beaten. A severer struggle would therefore be necessary to complete their final rout. It was at this juncture that the 1st Division arrived when General Sir James Millicocks and General Sir John Joon met in conference.

It was decided as a result that the 1st Division should continue its march and, effecting a slight detour, pass just in rear of the 2nd Division, so as to take up a position, under cover of the night, directly across the enemy's line of retreat. This was accomplished by about 11 p. m., after a record march from Jugluk. A halt was now called, in fact sorely needed, to enable the now thoroughly exhausted troops to refresh themselves. Tired as they were the men were still cheerful, and soon recovered sufficiently enough to indulge in their usual badinage, such as a thirsty soul asking an Anglo-Indian private "Sai Ducky: stand a drink?" of course not a pint of beer being obtainable within 100 miles! Another calling out his chum Bill asked "Anyone seen Bill?" was answered "Yes! Bill's just gorn to the corfee shop" all which sallies greeted with laughter, long, loud or subdued.

It was realized that the difficulties in connection with the transport of the aeroplanes of the 2nd Division were as great as were those experienced in the case of the 1st. The Russian machines, far superior to those of the British, carried a score of men a journey of 500 miles ; whether with or without a stop could be but mere conjecture ; but it was most probable they could, as though the achievement was during night, and over some of the most mountainous country in the world no landings had been reported. The British machines were comparatively nearly useless, though one Humber machine was doing fairly good work in aerial scouting. It was known that the 3rd Division was entirely without aeroplanes, while it was imperative that at least one should be available at Shah Godar. The Russians had batteries and reserves ; it was essential that their position should be discovered, as probably the British forces would be outnumbered—a European force could not be attacked like an Afghan one ! There were only two monoplanes of small size with the two British Divisions. These were splendid machines, capable of carrying a pilot and a passenger, and on these the Commander-in-Chief would have to rely for information regarding the Russian positions at Shah Godar.

General Millicocks having arrived at night, found himself in a far from pleasant position. He had, to begin with, the utmost difficulty in keeping his men on the alert, for they were utterly exhausted ; then, there was not a drop of water, the men's water bottles having long ago been drunk dry. Indeed, having had no water from the previous day, the whole Division had to endure the agonies of thirst. Water might be near ; probably in plenty towards the Afghan position, as it was unlikely that otherwise the Afghans would take up the position they did. If therefore it were near, the troops might endeavour obtain it ; but if not there was nothing to do but wait for daylight, and then search for it.

Sir James Millicocks discussed this question of water supply with some of his senior officers. The Colonel Commanding the

1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, suggested that a small party from the Anglo-Indian Regiment, preferably those who had been long resident in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, might be detailed for the purpose of searching for water as, knowing the country, they were the most likely to succeed. The suggestion being adopted volunteers were called for. Fifty men and more immediately stepped forward, but as only a few were required, the Commanding Officer made his own selection. He placed Colour Sergeant Ackland in charge of the party sent out on their dangerous mission. They were six all told, disguised as Afghans, and gripping their rifles, they silently stole out of the camp in the direction of the enemy. Why, it may be asked, was not a party of Indian soldiers sent out? By discarding their uniforms, they could easily pass off as Afghans. The answer to such a question is simply this: Sir James Millecks had gauged the intelligence of both Anglo-Indians and Indians and concluded that the Anglo-Indian soldiers were more likely to be successful in a quest of this nature. *

But to follow those six men. Like shadows they moved through the jungle grass, communicating with each other by the chirp of a cricket. They had been moving silently forward for quite an hour but had found no water. Suddenly to their right the whisper of hushed voices reached their ears. Moving cautiously, in Indian file, nearer and nearer the direction of the sound they heard the voices quite distinctly. The sounds seemed but a few yards away and crawling *ventre-à-terre* they were surprised to discover a body of over 100 Afghans filling their water bottles at a fair-sized jungle pool. Having replenished their water bottles they made way for the others, who quickly repeating the same process made way for the remainder in the same manner. This manoeuvre set Colour Sergeant Ackland a-thinking. Why were they filling their water bottles at such a time, and so secretly? At least a thousand had already done so, and yet more were arriving. Darkness however prevented the other side of the

pool from being seen. Approaching still nearer and listening intently, Colour Sergeant Ackland, who, as well as his comrades, knew Pushto perfectly, realized the import of the conversation. What he heard made him start visibly, and it was only by a mighty effort that he repressed the cry that nearly escaped his lips. What he had gathered was that the whole Afghan army evidently knew of Sir James Millicocks' position, and was preparing to break through the British lines, during the next few hours, in order to join the Russian army at Shah Godar. This was news enough in all conscience, and he had nearly decided on returning when the water before him reminded him most forcefully that he had not quenched his thirst for the past 24 hours. He therefore resolved that, come what may, he would obtain a drink of the life-giving fluid. Whispering his resolve to his comrades, he crawled in among the fierce Afghans who were bending over the water, in doing so dislodging a portion of the soil, which fell into the water—in fact he nearly fell into the pool—the Afghans on either side of him cursing him for a clumsy fool and saying the *Feringhees* would surely hear the noise. Brian's heart fairly thumped against his ribs, so near detection had he come; he succeeded, however, in getting a good drink, and also filling his water bottle, allowing the Afghans next to him to rise and move away before he attempted to return to his comrades. As the Afghans were moving in all directions, he succeeded in stepping out of sight, wriggling back to his companions, who were anxiously awaiting him, their fingers on the triggers of their rifles. On seeing his comparatively easy success, they could not resist the temptation of doing likewise, and within ten minutes one after the other had quenched their thirst and filled their water bottles.

General Nadir Khan had realized the futility of remaining in his position until the next day. He was certain that his force would either be annihilated or captured. He therefore gave orders for the tribesmen to get water first, and then break through the British lines. The attempt was to be made at 2 a. m.

Colour Sergeant Ackland heading his party now silently withdrew, retracing his way to the British position. On consulting his watch, which showed him it was 1 a. m., and estimating the distance from the British lines to be nearly an hour's march, the party increased their pace. It was well within the hour when Brian guiding his five companions at last led them to their own lines, where they waited until their leader should make his report. Colour Sergeant Ackland was ushered by his Colonel into the presence of Sir James Millicocks and to him disclosed Nadir Khan's scheme, Sir James listening attentively. Any doubt which the General might have had about the matter was dispelled by the well-filled water bottle which the Colour Sergeant exhibited. The General highly complimented Colour Sergeant Ackland, the leader of the little band on his shrewdness and pluck and promised that all should receive promotion and reward.

Dismissing Ackland, Sir James Millicocks hastily summoned his senior officers and explained the position to them, and also told them that water would be obtainable immediately the order to advance was given at daylight; until then the troops must endure thirst. He then issued instructions as how best to meet the Afghan attack. The troops were deployed in a single line for a good distance to the left, and orders were issued that all who had matches were to distribute them among their comrades. On the signal of a rifle shot all were to set fire to the grass immediately in front of them; and as the wind was blowing in the direction of the enemy, the fire would not injure them. Volunteers for scouts among the British regiments were called for. These were posted about 200 yards ahead to keep a watchful eye for the enemy. The first man who discovered them was to fire immediately. The fire was to be taken up by the other scouts and all were to return to the British lines as quickly as possible. Very few, however, of the brave men ever returned from their dangerous posts. The contingency that they were as likely to be shot down by their own comrades as well as by the enemy was one not taken into account. If it

was, it was never mentioned. Neither too the fact that they would have to return through the flames. At 2.30 a. m. a long line of these scouts was posted. The Afghans were now half an hour on the way, and only four miles separated the two forces. Arrangements were only just completed. Every man was on the alert. His rifle and matches were ready. All was silent. Suddenly a short, sharp rifle shot rang out. Immediately as ordered the grass, as dry as tinder, was ignited. The shot turned out afterwards to have been fired by an Afghan and not by a scout. He had come across a British soldier and had shot him dead. The shot however served the purpose, for many shots immediately followed, though most of the unfortunate scouts were stabbed to death before they could fire. Quite three-fourths of these volunteers lost their lives, as the Afghans immediately opened a galling fire, which however was returned with interest by the 1st Division. By whom the brave scouts were actually killed was never fully ascertained; but the risk they stood of losing their lives was far greater than had first been imagined, and a braver deed was scarcely conceivable. None of the survivors got the V. C., but all received the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Realizing the peril of their position, the Afghans made a fierce dash through the flames. They were met, however, by a terrific fire from the troops ready for them, and fled, panic-stricken, in wild confusion, followed by a perfect hail of bullets. As the night was lit up by the flames fairly good aim was possible for some minutes, numbers of the enemy being accounted for. In far less time than they had taken to come out, the Afghans returned to the security of their *sangars*, to await the inevitable defeat of the morrow. They determined to fight to a finish, after such a terrible lesson and, as they considered, unfair tactics, of the hated *Feringhees*. *Bismillah!* How had the *kaffirs*, sons of dogs, managed to get *khubbur* of the sortie, and prepare such a trap for them? Truly these swine fight unfairly, and *Shaitan* was on their side!

The troops now snatched a short rest, secure in the knowledge that the Afghans would not return to disturb them that night. Sir James Millcocks was mightily pleased at the success of his stratagem and considered that the party under Colour Sergeant Ackland as well as the brave line of scouts who gave the alarm of the enemy's approach had well earned the Distinguished Conduct Medal. There was a bright prospect of plenty of water by daylight. It was now 4 a. m. and dawn would soon break. Our hero, thoroughly tired out, flung himself down on the hard ground to snatch a few moments of sleep—proud of his achievement—full of hope of the Commander-in-Chief's promise of recognition!



CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE OF SADOPUR—BRIAN ACKLAND, V.C.

THE two British Generals though unable to meet during the night, yet managed to maintain constant communication with each other. They first decided to bombard the enemy's position at daybreak, and later on discuss the details of the battle. The Afghans were known to possess quite a respectable complement of mountain artillery, which it was deemed necessary to silence in the event of an assault being subsequently decided upon. It was however thought quite feasible that the numerically superior British force could surround the enemy. Part of the 1st Division was therefore ordered to make a detour, in order to take the enemy in rear, though it was considered unlikely that Major-General Lucas, who was in command here, would be able to effect this on the side of the hill known to be precipitous. His orders were to find means of gaining if possible the Afghan position. The manœuvre carried out to give effect to those orders were watched by the Afghans without alarm, for they considered the rear of their position impregnable. They had secretly laid down barbed wire entanglements, which the aeroplane of the 2nd Division in its high flight could not detect. As a matter of fact the information obtained by the aeroplane was practically nil. The Afghans directing a heavy fire against it, several shots had penetrated and rent its canvas wings, and it just managed to land a quarter of a mile from the British lines, where it was a special mark for the Afghan gunners, who entirely destroyed it, the pilot only saving his life by running. This left but one machine for scouting purposes at Shah Godar.

At day dawn the *tom-toms* and other weird sounds of Afghan musical instruments could be distinctly heard. Through glasses the Mullahs could be observed bearing shattered rags fastened to poles as standards, and gesticulating as if exhorting

the Faithful, promising them no doubt as glorious a victory as had been achieved in 1842, and recounting tales of victories won against the hated *Peringhees*. These tales it was known the *shingaries* or greybeards did not believe, though the younger men, each thirsting for a *Peringhee's* life, which would ensure him Paradise, firmly believed. The Afghans were in a strong defensive position, and knew that the *soldier-log*, including the *Ghagra-paltan* of Inglistan, would rush up the hill to them. Those who had never fought the *Peringhees* were evidently most amusingly scandalized at the prospect of seeing the *Lal-koortees*, wearing no trousers as did the ordinary *soldier-log* but attired in the garb of women. Many were the stirring tales they had heard of these women-soldiers, as they called the soldiers of Highland regiments, from the old men of the village when sitting in the *chaupal*. But many young bloods asked one another: "Where were the *Lal-koortees*? So far, none had been seen. All they had seen the previous night were fierce red faces, lit up by the jungle fire, behind shining bayonets; these *soldier-log* wore dirty *kharki lapra*, not red. They also fought quite differently to what their *shingaries* had led them to believe. Indeed, instead of the *Peringhees* all being killed, as they were told would happen, they themselves would be lucky if they escaped at all. But probably, as their Mullahs had said, the *Lal-koortees* were coming later. In truth the young bloods ardently wished that the *Kharki-koortees* would give place to a closely-packed body of *Lal-koortees*, whom they could shoot down jubilantly from the security of their *sangars*. But the day had now dawned, yet not a single *Lal-koortee* was in view; in fact very few of the *Kharki-koortees* had so far shown themselves.

During the night a huge, wild, whirling, whirring thing had been hovering over their position. What a noise it made! Just like the furious galloping of a horse. Their *shingaries* said it was the spirit of the Kumpsioner Sahib of the Nath Wess Prainces, Genral Sinjaj Kilin Sahib Bahadar, riding in the mountains. But they knew better now, for they could see it. It

was a huge bird brought from Inglistan. It was now flying over their heads, but they had soon turned it back, and it had not returned. Presently their attention was drawn to flashes of fire in front of them, and a moment later shells began to burst in their midst, when it was felt to be more prudent to get one's whole body behind something. Their own guns now began to return the fire. The *tom-toms* also recommenced playing and Mullahs moved restlessly about, hurling maledictions on the hated *kuffirs*. Still there was no sign of the *Lal-koortees*, and they grew a trifle impatient over it, as several hours went by. With rifles loaded since dawn, they wanted to use them but dared not without orders from Nadir Khan, their great Chief, whom they much feared, punishing as he did disobedience with death.

After a few hours the boom of guns announced a new danger and shells soon ploughed up the earth in their rear. At the same time their own guns began to ease up, for ammunition was running short, and several guns were also put out of action. Scores of their dead lay around, and it seemed now that instead of slaughtering the hated dogs of *Peringhees*, the sons of pigs—children of *Shaitan*—had got round to their rear. It was plain that they were caught in a trap, with no visible means of escape. And the cowardly dogs would not come and rush up to them either! Their *shingaries* had not told them of this sort of fighting.

"I think they are safe now, Sir James," said General Sir John Joon to his Chief at about 10 a. m. "Yes," replied the Commander-in-Chief. "Will you be so good as to order a truce party to be in readiness? The beggars haven't a dog's chance now, and I quite think that Nadir Khan will agree to our terms, as he must see that his position is helpless, as his guns are apparently useless now." Sir John promptly gave an order to his galloper, who as promptly returned, with a party of six, well mounted on Arab chargers. It comprised a Lieutenant, a sergeant and four troopers of the Dragoons, one of whom bore a large white flag. This was the truce party, whose

duty it was to carry a message to the enemy. Sir James Millicocks handed the Subaltern a sealed envelope, ordering him curtly to deliver it in person to Nadir Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan Army ; failing him to the next in command, and fetch a reply. The young officer immediately saluted and, wheeling his horse, headed his party towards the enemy. Orders were now given for the firing to cease. The six gallant riders, it turned out, rode to their death, as the Flag of Truce is not sacred to the fanatical and treacherous Afghan or Afridi.

The hillmen in an instant were on their feet on the cessation of firing, looking eagerly over their *sangars* in the direction of the British lines. Presently a small cloud of dust arising many pointed to it, gleefully seized their rifles, and adjusted the sight to the range. So the *Peringhees* were coming at last ! Now they would all see heaven—it was only necessary to kill one *Peringhee*. So they joyfully got into position, ready for the expected order to open fire, but none was given. The Afghans noticed presently, as the *Peringhees* approached, that they were only a small party of six. Why did they not all come on and have a fair fight ? The Chiefs and Mullahs issued orders hurriedly that no one was to fire on pain of instant death, as the sahib sowars brought a message only, and would not attack. A party of Afghan sowars rode out to meet them, and blindfolding them, as a precautionary measure, led their horses by a winding path into their stronghold. Here the bandages were removed, when the young officer addressing an elderly cruel-looking Afghan seated in the centre of a group of fierce-looking men, whom he took to be a Chief, demanded to be led to Nadir Khan, as his message was only for their General. The Chief, for such indeed he was, without rising, turned to an Afghan officer, armed to the teeth, addressing him in low tones. The officer caught the word "*laiyar*" which meant ready, as also the answer "*ho*" meaning yes. He felt at once that he and his men were in a dangerous position, but again demanded to be led to Nadir Khan. This time the old Afghan rose, and much to the surprise of the

whole party, replied in excellent English: "Yes, *Peringhee*, I will take you to Nadir Khan; follow me." His threatening looks aroused the suspicion that all was not well and the little party feared treachery. Their fears were only too well founded, for on being led to the General's tent, there, on the ensanguined sword, lay General Nadir Khan, with a dagger through his heart!

The Chief, his beard and moustachious bristling with anger, pointing to the corpse and spitting at it contemptuously, exclaimed in English: "*Peringhee*, behold Nadir Khan! deliver your message." Then, raising his voice, he continued: "Nadir Khan—curses on his soul!—was a *nimak-haram*! He wanted to surrender to the *Peringhees*. But Allah has dealt with him. He died the death of a traitor: so die all traitors and *Peringhees*!" Then in frenzied rage, snatching a dagger from his waistband, he stabbed the Lieutenant to the heart. As he fell the envelope was torn from his grasp, while the surrounding Afghans at a signal pinioned the Dragoons, who, realizing only too well that their very lives were at stake, fought as desperately and stubbornly as men will under such circumstances. They were overpowered and led outside the tent where stood a squad of ten ununiformed Afghan soldiers with loaded rifles ready. This was significant to the hapless troopers, but they faced their treacherous captors bravely, even defiantly. Truly the bloodthirsty old Chief's orders had been implicitly obeyed: everything was *taiqar*. The Dragoons were hustled against a mud wall, and murmured sad goodbyes and "God bless you" to one another, the sergeant assuring them, as also the cruel old Chief, that their deaths would surely be avenged, on hearing which the Afghan smiled grimly. In a few minutes all was over. Ten shots rang out simultaneously. Five gallant fellows fell. Their horses were brought up and the bodies of all six lashed to the saddles. The animals were led to within a convenient distance of the British lines where they were lashed and driven off in the direction of their own lines.

Neighing shrilly the horses galloped off with their ghastly burdens, and in a few moments reached the British lines. Here the men were unbound from their saddles. The news of the Afghan treachery spread like wild fire throughout the British ranks. Fierce oaths of vengeance were taken to give the enemy no quarter. General Millicoeks was immediately informed of the terrible fate of the mission. He ordered the artillery to re-open fire forthwith and rode towards the spot where the men lay. He found the surgeons busy trying to restore to vitality two apparently dead men. Sir James sprang from his horse, and as he did so one of the two men, suddenly regaining consciousness, raised his hand feebly to the salute, which the General perceiving returned with sympathetic promptitude.

It appeared that two of the gallant band were still alive when taken down from their horses, though the Medical Officer was sorry to inform the General no hopes could be entertained that they would outlive the hour. Sir James looked sadly at the two men; then sternly towards the enemy's position. He stood thus for some moments. Meanwhile one of the two men expired, and as the body was borne past the General he held his hand up to the salute. The other man, the same who had saluted the General on his arrival, was now moving his hands convulsively and appeared to be trying to speak. Life returned to him, as it were, and with blood occasionally gushing from his mouth he narrated, in broken sentences, the terrible tale of trust repaid by treachery. Having ended he again attempted to raise a feeble hand to the salute, but expired in the effort.

Sir James Millicoeks, kneeling beside the dying Dragoon, listened, all ear, to the story. He was much affected, but, like a true soldier, betrayed little or no emotion. He decided to deliver an assault, as the gunners had been unable to dislodge the enemy, and as his terms of surrender had been rejected. As he thought of the brave and fearless soldiers who had been so treacherously dealt with, and of their gallant leader, whose

father was an intimate friend of his, thoughts of retribution filled his mind, but he put them aside for he had other than personal feelings to think of. His first duty now was to dislodge the hillmen, and the sooner the better. Siege operations were out of the question. Too much valuable time had been already wasted in treating with the perfidious enemy. They must be driven out at any cost. This would enable the 1st and 2nd Divisions to push on, and effect the desired junction with the 3rd Division, now well on its way. Orders were accordingly issued for an immediate assault, as the dispositions of all the troops had by this time been made and the Afghans were surrounded.

Generally the same strategy was adopted as at the battle at Jugluk. To their great joy the Afghans observed the hated *Feringhees* advancing, even as their *shingaries* had predicted, but with the slight difference that instead of marching in compact bodies, the *Feringhees* advanced by rushes, with wide spaces between units. They also laid down and hid themselves completely between each rush. It was therefore almost impossible to hit any of them; the colour of their clothes too was indistinguishable from that of the ground. The guns of the *Feringhees*, although well out of range of their own rifle fire, were continually sending shells shrieking over the heads of the *soldier-log*, and they made things very uncomfortable, even in a *sangar*. This important fact the *shingaries* had not even mentioned, and the young bloods found it impossible to raise their heads above the *sungars* and get a shot. And where was the *Ghayra-paltan*? Why didn't it come? "Truly the *Feringhees* were getting as cunning as themselves." But the *Feringhees* were ever getting nearer, more distinct, and every rush finished with less *Feringhees* than it started, each Afghan claiming that his every bullet found its billet. Soon, no doubt, they would be quite close, when it would be easy to kill every one of them. All would raise the cry of *Jehad! Jehad! Din! Din!* when the Indian troops were near enough to hear. Who could tell what would happen then!

But the *Feringhees* for some time now remained lying low, nearly half a mile distant, while the Afghan force collected at the front to stop them patiently awaited an advance.

The booming of the big guns ceasing suddenly, the Afghans rose to look over their boulders, and have a few "pot" shots at long range. Allah be praised ! the *Feringhees* now all stood up. They were preparing to come up at a run ! They are running up ! Here they come. Now they had them !

Gurr ! Gurr ! Sh-sh, bang, boom. What was that ? Shouts, shots, shells and cheers behind ! Some engaged the attackers in front, but the majority of the Afghans turned to face several thousand British soldiers rushing from the rear at a run barely 1,000 yards away. A Maxim—the Afghans had never yet seen one—was at its deadly work mowing them down with fearful and fatal facility. Staggered a moment they quickly recovered however, and returned the fire as fast as they could. *Bismillah* ! Allah be praised ! The *Feringhees* stopped—stumbled—struggled. They were caught in the barbed wire and were a good mark. They were now retiring running, and were soon lying down out of sight. The attackers in front had also laid down, about a quarter of a mile away, and were behind boulders. There was to be a great victory, after all, for the Faithful ! Firing was heavy now from the *Feringhees*, but the fire returned quite as hot.

Sir James Millicocks had ordered the advance, under the impression that the Afghan guns had long since been silenced, though of course he was not certain. As a matter of fact the Afghans had been reduced to but one available gun which they held in reserve, their intention being to use it the moment the assault was delivered, when the British guns would have to cease fire through fear of hitting their own Infantry. This gun, loaded with shrapnel, was so placed as not only to command the path by which the attackers must come, but if desired it could command any point of the compass. No sooner were the Afghans attacked in rear than the gun was hastily slowed round and run forward a little to meet this new danger, and as the

Battalions advanced, three in number, and approached within 1,000 yards, fire was opened on them with terrible and deadly effect. The casualty list was very heavy, the troops getting entangled in the barbed wire, and the position becoming untenable, Major-General Lucas was compelled to order an immediate retirement to about 300 yards in rear of the barbed wire, and the men instructed to lie down and take every advantage of the good cover that abounded.

The barbed wire, which the aeroplane had failed to discover, was staked out very skilfully above ground level, and proved to be an almost insuperable obstacle, the more so as there were over 10,000 Afghans all well and fully armed and with a gun, too, in their possession.

For the present, however, the three Battalions, including the 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, were fairly safe under cover. The latter regiment had lost over 200 men in and near the wire, the other two regiments also about the same number. It was a distressing and embarrassing predicament which they were in ; they could neither advance nor retire. The frontal attack too was retarded till the rear attack could be delivered or develope and Major-General Lucas felt that he and his men were in a very unenviable position, a feeling that did little to improve the asperity natural to his temper. The Afghan gun was firing every minute or two, and as the General looked over a boulder through his glasses, and noted the disparity in numbers between the attackers and the Afghans, he concluded and rightly that it would be madness to charge yet.

Probably in half an hour or so a force sufficiently strong would have clambered up the cliff in rear to permit of a successful charge being made, but the barbed wire would still remain. How were they to cut the wire? If a charge were ordered every man would need a pair of wire cutters to ensure the wires being rapidly cut, or disaster would surely result. As far as he knew, there was not a single wire-cutting implement among

his troops. Who would have imagined that such an implement would be necessary? He observed the wire was stretched taut on either flank, probably to the slopes of the hill. How to get out of the difficulty was a question that perplexed him. The only way out would be to advance and this would necessitate the cutting of the wire, or waiting helplessly for eight or ten hours for darkness. To make matters worse General Millicocks was waiting for him to take the initiative, his own frontal attack depending on that. He had about half an hour's time only in which to decide on the course of action to be taken, having already sent word to the Commander-in-Chief that he was in occupation, and he would be expected to act with decision. It will thus be seen that Major-General Lucas was indeed placed in a position of extreme difficulty and imminent danger demanding in no inconsiderable degree caution as well as prompt decision.

Colour Sergeant Ackland was so far unscathed, and seizing the opportunity the security of a boulder afforded him took out to gaze on Annette's present to him—the jack-knife-cum-wire cutter, &c. He was thinking too whether the implement would be of any use in the present circumstances. It seemed strong enough, but how could it be used, and how under the heavy fire directed toward the barbed wire? An idea suddenly flashed across his ever-active brain. It made his blood tingle. Yes, he would try it. The very, only thing in the present state of affairs! If he did not succeed he could but die in the attempt, but he hoped he would not die in vain, or before he had fulfilled his self-imposed task. He disclosed his plan to his Captain, which was nothing less than to cut the barbed wire entanglements, displaying at the same time his wire-cutters—probably the only pair among the troops present. The officer gave the matter swift consideration. The idea was good, but it was highly probable that he would lose his life. The wire was fully three hundred yards distant and only seven hundred yards from the Afghans. He however would ascertain the General's opinion. So both Captain and Colour Sergeant crawled from boulder to

boulder to where Major-General Lucas sat absorbed over the problem of escaping from his perilous position. On the Captain making known the Colour Sergeant's proposal Major-General Lucas, carefully adjusting his monocle, said "Haw! y'know Colour Sergeant, don't think it possible y'know. Not a bad idea—haw—from an Anglo-Indian. I'm rather surprised y'know, at that—haw. What might your—haw—name be?" "Colour Sergeant Brian Ackland, Sir," replied our hero. "Haw—Ackland—Ackland—haw, seem to—haw—remember the name somehow. Fancy I've seen the beggar before," muttered the General. "Ackland, did you say? Haw! Remarkable y'know. Do you know me?" "Yes, Sir, I have the honour," replied the Colour Sergeant. "You are Major-General Lucas." "Quite right—haw—Colour Sergeant. Quite right. This wish of yours—haw—requires more accomplishing than you—haw—imagine." But as we are—haw—rather in a—haw—fix, y'know, I am inclined, though you are only an Anglo-Indian—haw—to allow you to try it. After all the—haw—wire cutters are yours." "Thank you, Sir, I will try. May I start at once?" "Yes you may, Colour Sergeant," replied the General. By the way—haw—I seem to know you. May I ask—haw—where you previously saw me?" "Sir," replied our hero, "you were Colonel Commanding the British Infantry Regiment at Allahabad, when my father, who is a retired Sergeant-Major, and a V. O., brought me as a boy of fifteen to enlist me in your regiment as a Drummer. You refused to have me, Sir, and I recollect you remarked that Anglo-Indians would not face hillmen. I hope, Sir, that your opinion has changed?" Then saluting, the Colour Sergeant asked, "May I go, Sir?" "Yes, yes," replied the Major-General—not a little nettled at this rejoinder, "Go." As the Colour Sergeant turned to crawl back to his boulder, the Major-General recalled the long-forgotten interview, when this man's father had spoken somewhat similarly. He however found excuse for the freedom of this speech in the thought that probably Brian was about to immolate

himself. Still ruminating over the interview the General anxiously waited for the moment when the fearless soldier leaving the security of his boulder would make his apparently impossible attempt to cut that terrible wire. He reflected that it was permissible to employ even an Anglo-Indian when necessary—the end justified the means! But as even with his glasses the Major-General failed to see our hero leaving his shelter and, as his prejudice against Anglo-Indians was as strong as ever, he thought the Colour Sergeant had changed his mind. He was indeed growing impatient, when a Staff Officer, near by, pointed excitedly to the barbed wire, and there, sure enough, a hand was discernible fumbling among the wires. Perceiving this, then, and then only, was the dangerous nature of our hero's task realized in some degree and watched with intense interest. For our hero had soon made himself ready. Divesting his helmet of its *pagri* he improvised a turban for his head. In addition to his rifle, he was armed with a six-chambered revolver which his Captain pressed upon him when wishing him success in his undertaking. Thus disguised and prepared for eventualities he crawled to the right and, then towards the barbed wire, *ventre-à-terre* in zig-zag fashion. He had proceeded thus unobserved about half way now, never however for a moment relaxing his vigilance, as the chances of discovery and death were as great as ever.

As he got nearer the wire, bullets, he noticed, fell somewhat less thickly. This was due no doubt, he surmised, to the fact that the Afghans were aiming over him. Still, the bullets whistled past, and hissed unpleasantly over his head, while the noise of the Afghan gun firing every minute almost deafened him. But not a hair of his head was harmed and at last he was directly under the first wire. The men lying near it were probably dead, as the Afghans had doubtless continued to fire at both wounded and dead. At any rate there was no sign of life. Without wasting time, however, he set about his task. How great was his joy as his cutters severed

the first wire. Then after a moment's pause he crawled to the next wire and cut that too, noticing with satisfaction that the severed ends of the wires being taut sprang well apart, thus leaving a path clear twenty yards wide. But there were about twenty wires to be cut. Emboldened, however, by success, he redoubled his efforts and soon every wire was cut, with such good results as to afford ample space for the march of the troops under Major-General Lucas. This officer too considerably facilitated our hero's task by attracting the enemy's attention to the left by a feint attack. The Afghan gun was now turned in that direction, and if only one British gun could have been brought to bear on it this would have proved effectual. It was a difficult task however. It meant climbing up the face of a precipice and dragging a gun after. In spite of the difficulties and with almost incredible labour a Maxim had eventually been drawn up, but this proved useless, otherwise than in an Afghan attack, and this was not likely, as the barbed wire was an obstacle to the enemy also. Looking in the direction of the Afghan gun, Colour Sergeant Ackland was surprised at having a full view of it from where he was lying, though probably this might not be the case with the troops in rear. He could also distinctly see the breech of the gun opening and closing, as the Afghan gunners were serving it. A brilliant idea now struck him. He would disable that gun by firing a round into its breech. On considering the facts of the matter, however, that he was too far away to be absolutely certain of hitting it, good shot though he was ; that it was open for a few seconds only, while the gun was loaded, he decided, first, to crawl much nearer. Putting his plan into execution, in ten minutes he was within two hundred yards of the gun, when he took up his position behind a very opportune boulder. To get any closer was impossible. From this coign of vantage he could hear the Afghans conversing, though he could not quite catch their words. He was assured that the cutting of the wire had not been detected, and as scarcely a shot came near him he rightly concluded that he was not seen.

Getting into a convenient position for firing, he brought his rifle to the "present" and taking careful aim at the breech-block waited for it to be opened again, feeling that his very life depended on his marksmanship, since the shot would most certainly reveal his presence. In less than a minute as the breech-block was re-opened, he pulled trigger. His aim proved true. The delicate mechanism of the gun was all but shattered. To close that breech-block again would now need the assistance of a skilled artificer. His shot, as he expected, drew the immediate attention of the Afghan riflemen. Realizing that his safety now lay in flight and speed, he seized his rifle and bounding low sped, swift as the mountain deer, towards the expectant British troops. But who could escape the storm of lead that howled as it followed him? He had run some two hundred yards when, struck by a bullet he fell, rose the next instant, and staggered on, and, to the utter amazement of the Afghans, went right through their carefully laid barbed wire! A few yards farther another bullet struck him and this time he fell, face forwards.

Major-General Lucas, who had been carefully watching every incident in the exploit through his glasses, now closed them, exclaiming enthusiastically: "As brave an act as ever won the Victoria Cross! If I live through this day that man, if he lives, will get it, Anglo-Indian though ten times he be!" Those words of our hero's father were now ringing in his ears—"My son will face the foes of his Motherland even as I, his father, have many times done!" and the General hearing them again, as he seemed to, thought remorsefully that his own words had been rather hasty. But now, he who had all along ridiculed the Anglo-Indian Regiments, passed to the other extreme, prepared to laud them to the skies.

The General had by this time got his men well in hand. His force had also increased to nearly 10,000 men, owing to the continued arrival of small groups. The Afghans now learned with dismay that they had been deluded: they had considered their rear impregnable, the cliff being unscalable,

the barbed wire laid, all attention centred on the frontal attack. Yet even such obstacles had been overcome by the abhorred *Peringhees*. Here they were between two fires. Truly these dogs of *Peringhees* were learning to fight !

Major-General Lucas considering he had every chance of success, gave the order to prepare for the charge. He generously allowed that its practicability had now become possible, through the bravery and resource of one man, and he—he would never before have believed it—an Anglo-Indian ! He reflected also how his name as a leader had, or would shortly be, considerably enhanced, instead of, as he had feared only a short while before, besmirched by a highly regrettable incident. Above all he was glad that that terrible gun was done for !

After a few minutes the bugles sounded the “charge” when nearly 10,000 British and Anglo-Indian soldiers, with wild cheers, dashed forward. Though met by a withering fire, nothing could stop them. On they ran and rushed through the lane in the barbed wire, past the prone form of our hero. The troops, as might be expected, were not a little surprised and puzzled at no Afghan gun firing on them as, of course, they were unaware of the damage done to it. Soon they were upon the dispirited Afghans, who unable to face for long the glittering steel still maintained a desperate struggle, their blood flowing in streams.

The frontal attack synchronised, General Millcocks having waited in vain for Major-General Lucas’s signal. Thus the Afghans had to sustain an assault at once in front and rear. The struggle was over in less than a quarter of an hour, the Afghans, throwing away their arms, flying wildly, seeking safety or escape where was none. The troops were really in a frenzy and no quarter was given, remembering as they did their comrades butchered by Afghan treachery only that morning. Even after the Afghans were fully subdued, the officers found the greatest difficulty in restraining their men from wreaking vengeance. The treacherous old Chief died

fighting. He got his due, being bayoneted by the brother of one of the Dragoons he had so foully murdered.

Though Colour Sergeant Ackland fell, it was soon ascertained that fortunately he was only slightly wounded. The Field Ambulance had now found him, the Surgeon promptly stopping the flow of blood and dressing the two wounds, after which he was able to rise with assistance. But his magnificent constitution too stood him in good stead, enabling him in a little while to walk without assistance, while a small stimulant administered infused life into him. Then looking round for a rifle he soon discovered his own very reliable weapon. Seizing it and putting on one of the many spare helmets lying about over his bandaged forehead, he set off to rejoin his regiment, now busily engaged collecting arms. The same day preparations were made for the prosecution of the march to the junction and Shah Godar.

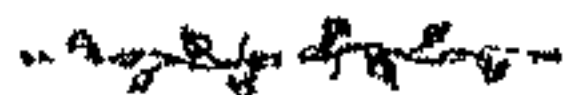
The dead were all duly buried, the Afghan prisoners were disarmed first and then set off in the direction of their homes, only too glad to escape with their lives. By 9 p. m. the transport was formed up and the regiments bivouacked, ready for the march to Shah Godar on the morrow.

The news soon spread that Colour Sergeant Ackland was to be recommended for the V. C. Indeed, Major-General Lucas calling for him even shook hands with him, and expressed his utmost satisfaction at the splendid deed. And before nightfall his Commanding Officer highly gratified him with the information that he was to be promoted to the rank of Sergeant-Major of the 1st Anglo-Indian Battalion, as their Sergeant-Major, the identical man to whom, on its first formation, the Battalion owed its efficiency, had been killed in the charge.

Sergeant-Major Brian Ackland, his heart too full for words saluted and withdrew from his Commanding Officer's presence, feeling now, as Sergeant-Major of the 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, a world of responsibility placed on

his shoulders. He thought himself most fortunate, indeed, for had he not an oral promise of recommendation for and therefore the assurance of the Victoria Cross, from Major-General Lucas himself—that same officer who only a few years back had despised him and his community. His thoughts now wandered and fondly dwelt on his home—his father, his mother. How glad would they be to hear of his success. And Annette—his dear little friend Annette—no doubt she would be very proud of him! How much he owed to her! And her keepsake—rather was it not a Godsend! enabling him to accomplish his task. Sweet, dear, brave little Annette! It is thus your *true* hero exhibits the generosity of his nature in giving all the honour of achievement, in fact attributing it all to the least help rendered. And in this case where this was *neither given nor intended*, the generosity of our hero appears all the more remarkable.

The 1st Battalion had suffered very severely, but no one would have thought it hearing them singing chorally around their camp fire that night “Try, Try, Try, Again,” pausing only to repeatedly cheer the new Sergeant-Major—the latest V. C. [The whole Army was now proud of the Anglo-Indian regiments and especially so of Sergeant-Major Ackland, V.C.]



CHAPTER IX.

THE JUNCTION EFFECTED.

TEARS of joy actually rolled down the cheeks of ex-Sergeant-Major Ackland on reading his son's long letter, which he read again and again, describing the successful operations of the 1st Battalion, Anglo-Indian Regiment, which culminated in the Battle of Sadopur. But his cup of joy filled to overflowing when he read the news of his son's promotion to Sergeant-Major and his recommendation for the Victoria Cross. He explained to his wife Dora that it took *him* seventeen years to attain to the rank of Sergeant-Major with its very responsible duties: Brian was indeed very fortunate in obtaining such a distinction after only nine years' service. Next day on reading the *Advancer* he found much news that his son had omitted, e.g. the story of the battle, the steadiness of the two Anglo-Indian Battalions (the 2nd Battalion having taken part in the frontal attack being noticed), the brilliant achievements of his brave boy, namely the information he brought to Sir James Millecocks, enabling that officer to successfully overcome the attempt of the Afghans to reach Shah Godar; the cutting of the barbed wire, and putting the Afghan gun out of action. All this made his heart glad. But on minutely porusing the long list of casualties, he was startled to find his son's name among those mentioned as dangerously wounded. Oh! why had the boy not mentioned this? He might for aught he knew even now be dead, and James Ackland, racked with dread and doubt, offered up a fervent prayer for his boy's safety. And it seemed his prayer was answered, for a later edition of the *Advancer* announced the glad tidings that the gallant hero's wound had proved to be of so slight a nature as to permit of a speedy resumption of duty. This news was indeed comforting and the whole household, Annette being also present, thanked God for protecting Brian.

The exceptional circumstances in which the V. C. was won in the present instance led to most favourable comments in all the papers, both Indian and English. It was cited as a deed worthy of the Victoria Cross twice over. It had not been performed in the heat and excitement of battle, when men neither can control their actions nor realize danger. But here the deed was calmly, even coolly, planned, the chances of death being well weighed. By the bravery of one man many valuable lives had been saved and much valuable time gained. By the cutting of the barbed wire the action also had certainly been terminated sooner than otherwise would have been the case, the Afghan position being a particularly strong one. No one asked nor enquired how the wire cutters had been obtained. They were on the spot that was enough. They had effected the object. But Annette Scott of course knew. She was proud that she, an Anglo-Indian girl, was indirectly responsible for the victory. And while dwelling on the thought of her proud participation in it, which lent a glow and heightened the beauty of her fair young face, she unfastened Brian's keepsake - the cap-badge, which she had ever treasured and worn as a brooch and kissed it. She told no one however of her present to Brian.

The Anglo-Indian community in India now sought little else in the papers than news of their hero. His name became a household word, ever on their lips. He was hailed as a deliverer—a Gideon that would one day lead them to victory. The attitude of Europeans became decidedly more friendly towards the community as the success of the Anglo-Indian Battalions being generally admitted their worth and valour followed as the corollary.

In England though the Anglo-Indian Battalions were perhaps less in the limelight, yet Brian Ackland's deed that had won him the V. C. naturally directed much attention. The *Daily Mail* which had been the first to bring the community

before the public had columns daily drawing the attention of the British public to the state and status of the Anglo-Indian community.

All the British regiments had behaved with the greatest bravery. This was only to be expected. But the fact that so few Indian regiments had taken a prominent part in the assault and the very slight casualties among them were facts freely criticised.

But in particular the deed of one Anglo-Indian drew all eyes to the Anglo-Indian Battalions, and their heavy casualty list told its own tale. They had indeed fought well as became the lineal descendants of fighting stalwart stock.

The task of burying the honoured dead, who were as numerous as at Juglук, having been completed, a small portion of the victorious army was left at Kabul. The news of the British victories soon reached the ears of the Afghan usurper. This and the fact that his very subjects attributed their defeats to divine anger, as a just punishment for murdering their king, induced him to save his own life by flight into Russian territory. This afforded the British an opportunity of recalling the late Amir's son from India and placing him on his father's throne, the Afghans swearing loyalty to him, as they had suffered much during the short reign of the Grand Vizier. As the new Amir was loyal, and very grateful to the British Government for restoring his kingdom, a large garrison was scarcely necessary. He wished to join the British in fighting the Russians, and to effect this purpose sent numerous emissaries to the Viceroy, praying that he might be permitted to re-arm.

Prior to permission being granted, the Amir was instructed to ascertain the views of his Chiefs, their consent in the matter being known to be essential. The Amir therefore explained the situation to them, telling them it was the *Russ* and not the *Peringhees* who were invading their country ; the *Peringhees* in

fact were actually going to fight the *Russ* for them. Thereupon the Afghans gathered together again in thousands and let their feuds stand aside. Meanwhile the Afridis had already crossed the Durand Line and were making for Kabul, confident that no unpleasant reminder for trafficking with the Amir would, as so often before, be sent them by the British Indian Government. Afghans also mustered in and around Kabul in such numbers and demanded arms and ammunition with such insistence that the very existence of the small garrison in Kabul seemed imperilled.

The tribesmen were re-armed, a measure considered necessary and expedient, while further a critical situation was thus averted by immediate permission being telegraphed over the newly laid wire to Kabul.

The Afghans went wild with joy when told that arms would be given them. The *Lal-koortees* were but five days on the march to Shah Godar. It was easy to do twice the distance in one day as the *Lal-koortees*, so they would very soon be caught up, as the journey was long and it would take the *Lal-koortees* at least three weeks to march so far. They submitted to being parcelled out into "thousands," each under its own respective Chief, the Amir at their head. All were rapidly armed, and soon bore some slight semblance to a regular army. They clamoured, even demanded to be led at once against the *Russ*. They handled their old rifles again with affectionate glee, in fact some had brand new ones of the same pattern as the *Lal-koortees* themselves! Many were the heated arguments on the effective range of the new rifles, and comparisons made with the "Gorman" arm, for which they had been paying gun runners a thousand rupees apiece, the usual price each of these inferior weapons fetch in Afghanistan, a flourishing trade notwithstanding being maintained. Many who so fortunately had received new rifles on going to rest, with their rifles placed beside them, woke

up to find the prize gone, an old "Germany" rifle to their extreme anger being substituted. Experience soon teaches, however, so after this those who had new rifles took the necessary precaution before venturing to sleep to bind them to their persons. Soon all were practising firing at distant objects, the danger to others not being considered in the least; in fact so heavy did the firing become that one would reasonably have supposed that an action was taking place.

But in good truth there was a prospect of an early fight, the reasons for which, were not, as was usual, unknown to them all. Their numbers were now quite 40,000 and there were daily accessions. There were some 20,000 Afghans on the side of Russia. These having probably heard of the two Afghan disasters were retreating to Shah Godar. They knew nothing of course of the re-arming of the fighting men by the British Government, much less of the rapid and radical changes following on the battles of Jugluk and Sadopur.

The very morning following the victory of Sadopur Sir James Millocks had proceeded on his long march to Shah Godar. He was still several days' march from Kabul when all these events were taking place; but from the second day's march he was daily kept pretty well informed of the progress of events. At first with still vivid recollections of the two battles he felt that a fatal mistake had been made. There was however no help for it now. On the other hand there was the ever-present probability of the Afghans proving loyal, in which case they would be invaluable. There was again the further consideration that as the Amir himself was at their head, the re-arming could scarcely miscarry. He hoped sincerely they would prove loyal.

The general plan of operations was already drawn up. The Afghans under the Amir should have the special task of cutting the Trans-Persian Railway, north-west of Shah Godar and holding the line, since it would accord with and be congenial

to the predatory and nomadic instincts of this race. No single British soldier would be needed for this task. Considering the matter in all its bearings re-arming might prove to be quite a master-stroke. He hoped that the very serious measure of disarming them would not recur. The Amir himself assured the Commander in Chief of his goodwill. All the tribesmen he said, too, were enthusiastically loyal and could be depended on. They ardently desired to fight the *Russ* as well as aid the *Peringhees*, objects that would be better effected if his request to be supplied with artillery could be acceded to. This last however Sir James politely declined. The Amir received the refusal with good grace, and placed himself entirely under the orders of Sir James Millicocks. The two British Commanders, later, when marching together, had a hearty laugh on talking over the Amir's request.

The Commander in Chief's instructions to the Amir were to march in a direction ensuring no possible contact with the British force, straight to a point north-west of Shah Godar, in rear of the position taken up by the Russians, harass them, and endeavour to destroy the railway, as far as possible. These orders the Amir duly carried out. British officers accompanied him, and following their advice the Afghan force moved daily nearer the Trans-Persian Railway.

The British and Indian armies were now ten days *en route* to Shah Godar, the feelings of exultation at victories just won and to win or come powerfully counteracting any influence the rough nature of the march might otherwise have had on their minds or spirits. And that the Afghans had joined hands with them was another source of very great satisfaction.

Small bodies of Afghans were observed, but these always fled in the direction of Shah Godar, no doubt reporting fully the progress and strength of the British forces to the Russian General Boltoff. Several huge aeroplanes were now daily discerned flying to and from Shah Godar. These maintaining

in their flight a great altitude, some thousands of feet, looked mere specks. By the aid of powerful glasses no doubt the strength of the British forces could be estimated. It was not possible to hit the aeroplanes at such a height so they were left to their own devices. After a time however as they grew bolder they descended lower and dropped bombs, which fortunately proved harmless. The bombs dropped anywhere but among the troops; some that apparently were dropped from immediately overhead missed their mark by a mile, the air currents being largely responsible for these erratic directions. A Howitzer battery at intervals trying a shot, soon sent the machines up to a height, thus teaching them that the danger was not quite one-sided, as they thought. Beyond filling the minds of the Indian troops with some measure of awe at first, no damage was done, the British troops subsequently taking no more notice of them than they would of flies. The powerful machines however had done their work, viz. that of transport of men over and across a region of high mountains. For any use beyond obtaining information they proved useless.

The little British machine was taken to pieces and carried on the backs of mules in sections. Perhaps it might be of some use yet. Up to now it had been a complete failure. But another opportunity was now afforded to test it again in the Commander-in-Chief's determination to discover the Russians at Shah Godar. Up to now he could only arrive at rough approximations as to their strength by the number of days they had held the railway from Batum on the Black Sea to Shah Godar, and from Merv to the north of Afghanistan to Shah Godar.

General Sir James Millicocks' force was now only two days' march from the rendezvous, where the 3rd Division had already arrived awaiting there the 1st and 2nd Divisions, who were now reduced by disease and death to 85,000 men of

all arms. The march had been a long, laborious and trying one, and through a desolate region over mountains, through tortuous defiles, and wind-swept plateaux. The troops, though suffering greatly from scarcity of water, and worn-out boots, pressed ever on, with heads erect, cheerful as ever, except for occasional murmur or the usual oath at the Russians for selecting an absurdly distant and inconvenient position.

What a contrast this to the soldier in the piping time of peace! Then, behold him in all his scarlet glory, strutting Strand- or river-ward, the girl he loves or left behind beside, whistling or twirling his cane or incipient moustache, *sans* thought or care in this wide, weary world. There is no doubt that it is under these aspects that the soldier presents himself to the view and mind of a certain class of stay-at-home, arm-chair critics, thus affording them opportunity for their diatribes, their easy, placid, and commonplace assumptions. But it would effect a real, radical, and lasting conversion in the views of such narrow, partial and one-sided critics if they could have but a glimpse of the soldier as presented in the above conditions of active service with his whole frame gaunt and way-worn, his raiment road-rent, in fluttering rags, or dangling ribbons, his feet unshod or foot-wear gone, his beard unkempt and shaggy, of many days' growth, his face dust-stained, his form mire-besprent—yet resolute and indomitable—fighting, marching, halting, death-devoted to duty—truly a grandly heroic, pathetic, pitiable figure!

The 1st and 2nd Battalions, Anglo-Indian Regiment had now been marching together since the Battle of Sadopur. The now famous 1st Battalion with the still more famous Anglo-Indian Sergeant-Major ever at its head aroused considerable curiosity and comment. This Battalion the original strength of which was 1,000 men now numbered only 600. Four hundred lay in the huge graves at Jugluk and Sadopur, besides their comrades of the British Army. One hundred and

fifty of the 2nd Battalion lay buried at Sadopur. The two Battalions, despite their depletion, were a most serviceable-looking body of men. Ever together they marched side by side. All were yet on their first attestation averaging 8 years' service.

They marched along light-hearted and erect, naturally not a little proud of themselves. Their Drums and Fifes occasionally cheered them on their weary, dreary way with the strains of their beloved march "Try Again" and the now very popular tune "Anglo-India's reply."

England need no longer ask the question

"When danger's nigh,
Will the Anglo-Indian the foe defy?"

Had they not defied the Afghan foe, and proved themselves capable of holding their own? The army they formed part of felt that they were an asset, and thought very highly of them. 'Tommy' not only now ceased sneering, but if perchance any ventured to offer an insult to their colour, he or his comrades soon resented it or gave him a tangible expression of their displeasure.

Not that the dry humour of the British soldier could be altogether quenched, though he quite accepted the fact that the "Anglo-Indians" had now attained his own level, for the simple reason that they had passed their test, and "Tommy" only accepts proofs. Only seeing is believing in his case. Witness the familiarity existing between the British and Gurkha Rifle Regiments. The Gurkha has always proved himself to be a true soldier ready to fight when ordered. Tommy accepts him as an equal, in fact, friend. He has passed the test. Seeing is believing!

Sergeant-Major Ackland was the first Anglo-Indian to attain warrant rank in the new force. The previous order had allowed promotion to Sergeant only. The exigencies of war however

rendered it absolutely necessary to promote several to Colour Sergeant, to replace many of that rank who had been killed in recent actions against the Afghans.

The young Sergeant-Major was received with great respect in every regiment. He was congratulated, too, by his brother Sergeant-Majors. One in particular secretly confided to him the fact that *he* also was an Anglo-Indian though no one even suspected it. His father had taken the precaution of sending him to England at the age of fifteen and three years later he had enlisted, entering on the roll the name of some town in Lancashire as his birthplace. Both had a hearty laugh at this. The "Lancashire" lad was certainly swarthy, as so many of the inhabitants of that shire are, and so in England he could easily pass for a pure European.

The 1st and 2nd Divisions were now approaching the rendezvous and only two days' march now separated them from the 3rd Division. The Russian flying machines were now much in evidence, but maintaining their usual respectful altitude were hardly taken seriously. In two days' time the bivouacks of the 3rd Division came into view, and the comparatively fresh men composing it turned out in thousands to see the now war-worn 1st and 2nd Divisions march in. Long, loud, and hearty were the cheers with which the troops of all Divisions greeted one another. But the two Anglo-Indian Battalions, whose fame had preceded them, with Sergeant-Major Ackland, his head still bandaged, leading them, received in greatest measure the most vociferous cheering and heartiest greeting. Their Drums and Fifes struck up their beloved tune "Try Again," to the inspiring strains of which the troops sang lustily as they marched to take up the positions allotted to them.

General Sir Walter McKinnon-Merdie, Commanding the 3rd Division, rode up to his superior officer and reported, at the same time congratulating Sir James Millocks and General Joon on their great victory. He seized the occasion

to dilate on the Commander-in-Chief's great good fortune of having the command of so fine an army, and of having two such splendid battalions as were those of the Anglo-Indians. The day waned and darkness soon set in. The usual precautions of guards, pickets, &c. having been taken, the weary 1st and 2nd Divisions now lay down to rest beside their comrades of the 3rd Division. No doubt General Millicocks who now assumed command of the whole army of nearly 200,000 men would not allow them more than a brief rest or respite. The Indian Army to a man remarked that the Sahib Sipsalah was a veritable "backacher." Never before had they been worked so hard for their *talab*. That being so their *batta* money they considered should be at least doubled? How much farther would the Sahib go! He must now be nearing the *Kali Pani* or blackwater, as they termed the sea. The religion of many forbade them crossing the *Kali Pani*. Nor would they cross it either.

After a few hours' rest, as darkness set in, Sir James Millicocks called a council of war. Among the officers present was Major-General Lucas, with eyeglass properly adjusted, although it was dark. It was decided to move forward immediately. At daybreak the order to fill water bottles and carry two days' rations per man was given, and the whole army prepared to march. This was thought decidedly unpleasant by Tommy, who expected at least two days rest, which no doubt all had thoroughly earned. The order produced as usual some humorous comments, a private remarking to his chum: "Say Bob, You ain't entitled to nothink in the Army, only what's granted, and don't you forgit it." Little did the great majority of the men know of the critical position of Britain as a nation and how the eyes of the world were for the moment fixed on Shah Godar, and that an immediate march was absolutely necessary to save the honour, nay perhaps even the existence, of the Old Country. Every minute was of the greatest

value. Thus even for the men individually, for their own benefit, for their own sakes no single minute could be lost. What were the Russians doing at Shah Godar? How were the Afghans setting about their work in carrying out their promise? What were the Germans planning or achieving in Europe? All these questions troubled Tommy Atkins but little. And it is as well; for it were a hard lot, this life of fighting and marching and countermarching, without the saving quality of humour, which while it blunts the edge of danger, offers an efficient barrier against the inroads of wear and worry more or less attendant on all work of a serious nature.

By nightfall the guns were parked, and the transport mules and commissariat ready to move again at break of day.



CHAPTER X.

TO SHAH GODAR.

THE day following the concentration of the three armies the whole moved off. Shah Godar was now but four days' march. The expression however conveys no adequate idea of its nature, resembling more an aerobicic feat, as the army had to clamber up heights, pass through gorges and defiles and over ruts rather than roads, progress being further retarded as it was often necessary to man-handle the guns.

Up to this time the Commander-in-Chief obtained no more than the most meagre information through reconnoitring parties, and only as he approached his objective did his chief scouts who had been able to get quite near the Russian position supply more definite and valuable intelligence. The substance of their reports was that the Russians were well posted in two strong positions, one slightly in rear of the other, but not over a wide area. Their estimates of the enemy's strength, however, ranging from 100,000 to 500,000, displayed more imagination than accuracy. To test the information Sir James Millecks determined to give the aeroplane a trial. One successful flight over the Russian position might elicit valuable information. The Russian batteries would be unmasked, as it was reported that they had heavy ordnance, though probably unable to mount their guns yet, being in occupation of Shah Godar but six weeks.

The prompt measures taken by the British Indian Government; the comparatively easy victories over the Afghans; and the wonderful march through Afghanistan (the Afghans at a later stage aiding and facilitating) had no doubt upset all Russian calculations, for they had counted on occupying Shah Godar for fully two months, and entrenching themselves there ere the British army arrived. But here was that army, within striking

distance of Shah Godar and fully two months before it was expected ! The British Infantry proved equal to the march or rather task set them, nowise deteriorating in a century when in the beginning of the last even the Great Napoleon himself admiringly remarked " that astounding British Infantry ! "

Sir James estimated the strength of the Russians at under 250,000. Six weeks since they were known to number 15,000. Estimating 5,000 men arriving daily at Shah Godar since he left Peshawar, there would be approximately 225,000 men. Indeed, 5,000 a day would be a liberal, rather than an underestimate, as the whole garrisons from Merv and Hissar must have been railed to Shah Godar. The next nearest Russian garrison would be Khiva, nearly 400 miles north of Merv. That town under the circumstances would by now be nearly depleted of Russian troops ; and postulating this, it would take some time to draw from anywhere nearer than European Russia.

The total garrisons of Merv and Khiva numbered about 100,000. Had all these troops been brought to Shah Godar the access of 125,000 men must have been effected by the main line of the Trans-Persian Railway. The nearest large Russian garrisons, probably 100,000, were in the three towns of Teheran, Astrabad and Tabriz in Persia. Supposing the concentration of all these at Shah Godar, the next nearest garrison in European Russia was Tiflis, and a smaller garrison at Baku or Batum on the shores of the Caspian Sea and on the Black Sea respectively. The transport of all these troops and of supplies and munitions would occupy from four to six days on a single line of railway, at the rate of 5,000 a day to make up the total of 225,000 at Shah Godar. The difficulties attending these operations through an intensely hostile country must have been considerable.

Sir James came to the conclusion after mature consideration that 250,000 men was quite a liberal estimate. His own

food supplies were now giving out, but he had no fear on that score, as he now had the advantage of the railway from Quetta to within three miles of Shah Godar. Quetta was therefore fixed upon as the new base, only 300 miles east, where were an arsenal and immense supplies. The first few trains running through the friendly country of Baluchistan had already reached the end of the line in safety. Their service accordingly would suffer no interruption.

Sir James Millicocks now felt assured of his ability to drive the Russians out of Shah Godar. His quick eye had discovered the flaw in their carefully laid plans. He was ready to fight at once not so the Russians. He had fought against time and won. His Infantry had done wonders indeed. The time too arrived for the Amir to cut the Trans-Persian Railway and thereby immediately prevent the Russians obtaining reinforcements. But it was necessary that the Amir should use all despatch possible.

The Commander-in-Chief weighed all these factors carefully. He issued orders as to the occupation of the points by the three Divisions before the Russian position. The result of his calculations was highly satisfactory. As he arose to go out in the open he descried a horseman riding furiously towards his tent, whose approach disclosed him to be a British officer. He was covered with dust and grime, his horse flecked with foam showing that it had been hard ridden. The horseman arriving, the General's Aide-de-Camp hastened to his side, receiving a bulky despatch for the Commander-in-Chief from the Amir.

The despatch, long and voluminous, intimated that, in spite of very great difficulties, the Amir had cut the Russian line of communications and that the Afghans had reached the railway about the same time that the junction had been effected.

Provisions had given out, but this only spurred them on to reach their objective all the quicker, where no doubt

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food was in plenty, the Russians being once overthrown. A *Jehad* against Russia had been proclaimed. By the time the objective was reached their numbers had increased to over 50,000. Their transport arrangements were practically nil. Every man carried his own provender—about 30 lb. of coarse *ata*, a rifle, ammunition, blanket, and water bottle. Thus equipped, the Amir had led his men, almost without halt, rest or respite, over mountain and through valley, over peak, point, and precipice—straight as the mountain eagle darts—to the point ordered. When the *ata* ran short every man shifted for himself. And they were in a wretched state by the end of the march. The task of tearing up several miles of the carefully laid railway had been successfully accomplished on arrival, though without implements.

The approach of the Afghans having been duly reported by the Russian aeroplanes, arrangements were made to meet any attack. The Afghans however entirely ignored the Russian position. They marched past it, straight on to the railway line. When the Russians divined the intentions of the hillmen they opposed them, an engagement taking place of course. The Russians being outnumbered, and suffering severe loss, though the Afghan casualties were by no means slight, eventually fell back in orderly retreat on their position, leaving the exultant Afghans in possession of their line and scores of truckloads of provisions, and yet more arriving. The troops who were on the way were also intercepted and slaughtered to a man. The Russians however were rapidly concentrating. Troop train after troop train discharged its load, about ten miles in rear of the Afghans. But a contingency which the British Commander-in-Chief had not overlooked now happened. This was the desertion of the 20,000 Afghans from the Russian forces. One can imagine what the feelings of General Boltoff the Russian Commander were, and how he must have burned to avenge the treachery, as he deemed it, with all the rigours of Russian discipline.

The Afghan allies of Russia had by this time learned that their own countrymen had united with the *P'eringhee*, and were even now marching in their thousands to attack the hated *Russ*. So the *P'eringhee* was now actually fighting *for* them! Would wonders never cease! was the universal exclamation at first, giving place to the fatalistic sentiment that surely this was the work of Allah himself! The idea also got abroad among the Afghans themselves that the *Lal-koortees* now numbered quite a million, which led to the natural conclusion that Allah would surely be with such a large number, just as we say that Heaven is on the side of big battalions. Treachery however being their heritage, the Afghans had not left the Russians immediately to join their clansmen, but at first had held secret consultations. They decided that they could play better into the hands of their countrymen by feigning loyalty until these, who were marching to attack the Russians, delivered their attack. Accordingly they quietly watched their countrymen tear up the railway and the Russian Army Corps marching out and attacking them. But at the critical moment, to their consternation, the Russians found themselves, literally and figuratively speaking, between two fires. This wholly unexpected treachery paralysed the activities of the Russians for several minutes, during which their casualties were terrific. But for the timely assistance of another Army Corps, they would probably have been annihilated. Rapidly recovering themselves, and aided as they were by a second Army Corps, the Afghans were held in check, thus enabling the Russians to retire in good order on their position. Elated at their success the combined Afghan force, numbering fully 80,000, now ventured to attack the Russian position, and against the advice and orders of the Amir. But even as they advanced and ere they could attack, they were driven back with fearful slaughter.

The body of Afghans who deserted estimated the Russian strength at 300,000 men. They had many guns, big, bigger,

and the biggest that they had ever seen. Some of them were mounted not on wheels as is usual, but on huge round tables, and many more which the Russians had not yet had time to mount lay on the ground.

The Commander-in-Chief read the long report carefully, a gleam of satisfaction evident in the glint of his keen eye. Everything was greatly in his favour. The big guns the Afghans reported were probably 6" wire guns, possibly 7.5 wire guns. The Russians would be unable to get anything bigger than a 7.5 into position. Even those in position could not be perfectly mounted, as the content of their platforms would not have had time enough for consolidation to permit of accurate shooting. Nevertheless it was necessary to be apprised of details in this connection. The Russians doubtless had 4.7 or 5" guns on travelling carriages, commanding any point of the compass. They had besides their smaller armament of Field Artillery probably equalling or outnumbering his own. The aeroplane "Swallow" might ascertain the Russians gun-power, and accordingly orders were issued to the Flying Captain to be ready before daybreak for an aerial reconnoitre of the Russian position.

Sir James' plans so far had been practically successful. If the Russians numbered 300,000 he felt confident that his own force of 200,000, acting in concert with the 80,000 Afghans, in rear of the Russian position, could force the Russian right or at least capture the first position next day. These considerations, together with the probability that the Russians would underestimate the fighting power of the Afghans, led to his issuing further orders to his Commanders and sending written instructions to the Amir, bearing on the above plans for the coming day.

The three British Divisions were now approaching the Russian position—the first Division from the north-west, to threaten the Russian right; the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, widely

separated, from west and south-west, respectively, to threaten the Russian main position. The Russian heavy artillery soon opened fire, but these might be test shots only. Several shells which did not burst proved them to be all 6" wire guns. Sir James had ordered three Batteries of 6" Howitzers from Quetta. They would probably arrive within a few hours, and would be the heaviest ordnance he could oppose to the Russians, but they would be invaluable. The Russian fire was not replied to that day, the British gunners being busy with digging gun-pits under cover, preparing for the artillery duel inevitable the following day.

The Commander-in-Chief though by no means under-estimating the fighting power of the great and famous enemy, had every confidence in his own men. Still the uncertainty of his knowledge as to the position of the enemy's guns, which however did not extend to those that would be screened, enabling them to deal death and damage among the British forces, naturally induced anxiety as to some means for counteracting this. To obtain guns from India suitable for siege operations was out of the question. The reserves of ordnance in Indian arsenals would take far too much time to transport and mount, as these were necessarily in distant parts of India. Moreover, the critical political situation in Europe necessitated a speedy victory being gained at any sacrifice. The three Batteries of 6" Howitzers must therefore suffice; these together with the Artillery he had dragged all the way from Peshawar.

Sir James Millicocks decided that the best plan for drawing the enemy would be effected by a reconnaissance in-force by night and issued orders to Major-General Lucas to take command. The force comprised 15,000 British and Anglo-Indian Infantry, the three Anglo-Indian Battalions being included. The force was to start at 8 p.m. If Major-General Lucas succeeded in getting close enough to the Russian redoubts, he was to attack with vigour and hold any position he might win.

If that was not feasible, he was to draw the enemy's fire and retire in order. Signals of red and blue rockets were to be sent up indicating developments : red if an attack was taking place, blue if a retirement was necessary. The Amir, who had been apprised of these arrangements, would immediately attack the Russians in rear on the signal of a red rocket being sent up. At the same moment the remainder of the British Army would draw the enemy's attention to an attack on their main position. The reconnaissance would be supported by the remainder of the 1st Division and six batteries of Artillery about a mile in their immediate rear. The Anglo-Indian Battery was included in the six batteries. The main objects of the reconnaissance were to find the number of guns the Russians had mounted, and if possible the enemy's strength.

If fortune favoured them they would seize a portion of the Russian right and try and hold it until daybreak, when the attack would be general. If that failed and when the blue rocket went up, then the whole army would withdraw for the time being, and another plan would have to be devised after the aeroplane "Swallow" had reconnoitred the Russian position.

By 8 p. m. all arrangements had been made and detailed instructions issued to all the troops composing the reconnaissance. It was quite dark though only nightfall. But in the Tropics "at one stride comes the dark." The clouds, too, had gathered and unfurled, not only deepening fourfold the shades of night but blotting the beauty of the moon and extinguishing the countless lights of the stars that in their scattered splendour begem and beautify the ebon vault of night. The silence and the stillness and the dark unfathomable depths of yonder sky above, the solemnity of the occasion below may not appeal generally to rough, uncultured soldiers, yet even among them there are, there must be, such whose hearts cannot resist the influences to which they are subtly sensible. To many a heart that silence and stillness might have betokened their own fate

on the morrow ; to many a ear might be borne messages of home, whispers of love, and hope and aspiration ; while some, perhaps a few, might have been filled with anxious, boding fears.

But all were cheerful and even in high spirits. The fight was more acceptable than days of marching and manœuvring before the Russian position. All were ready to do and dare. All were eager to be on the way—to meet what ? God only knew, but it was all for their beloved country. And all, needless to say, were ready to die if need be. The three Anglo-Indian Battalions felt that the inclusion of their Battalions was a signal mark of honour conferred upon them. They felt extremely proud of the implicit trust placed in them. They knew that none but absolutely loyal troops, and reliable beyond the slightest doubt, would be included in a force charged with the duty of undertaking a task which involved issues of the greatest moment and magnitude.

The loyalty of the Anglo-Indians was then fully recognized. What greater compliment could be paid them ? Major-General Lucas had not a word to say against their inclusion. Indeed, he was delighted that they were to form part of the forces under his command.



CHAPTER XI.

FIFTEEN DEATHLESS BATTALIONS.

ORDERS being given, fifteen Battalions quietly marched toward their objective, some four miles distant. It was intensely dark and progress was necessarily slow until the men got accustomed to the darkness. Some jostling and stumbling at first of course took place, causing low ripples of laughter, which were sternly repressed. By 9.30 p. m. the force was well on its way. No outlying Russian pickets had so far been encountered, though expected. Orders were given not to return any Russian fire. Little did it dream that its approach had already been observed by a Russian picket. It had given no alarm as the officer in charge decided to retire as far as possible towards the Russian trenches so as to draw the British force nearer. Thinking it to be a reconnaissance-in-force he determined when the British force retired to its own position to follow it at a safe distance right into the British lines. In this manner he might doubtless gather invaluable information regarding the intended British attack on the morrow. But the Russian officer made a grievous mistake. He estimated the British force at less than a thousand men. The idea of a premeditated attack on the strong Russian position never struck him. He kept in the distance in front for some time, collecting other pickets on the way, and communicating his idea to them. Thus the force under Major-General Lucas encountered no opposition. But the absence of Russian pickets puzzled it greatly. The whole force was kept together as much as possible, while the distance to the Russian position was slowly lessened. Every man was on the alert expecting momentarily to hear a rifle ring out, but it did not come. What were the Russians doing ?

It was now nearly midnight and the force in support had dropped back considerably. Major-General Lucas determined to push on, as no information whatever had yet been obtained, and nothing had been done. The only indication of the presence of the Russians was the boom of a gun every five minutes in the direction of the Afghans. Some of the earthworks of the Russian position could be seen distinctly, contrasting strangely in their dark and deep outline with the starry sky. They were scarcely more than 500 yards away. The ground apparently rose gently right up to the Russian trenches. No ditches or *nullahs* were visible and the declivity seemed altogether free from obstacles. The Russians in the trenches must be on the alert. The puzzle was how had such a force contrived to come so near. Was it a trap? Major-General Lucas mentally *pooch-pooched* the idea, attributing it to chance merely; either that or gross negligence on the part of the Russians.

In any case he had approached much nearer than he thought possible, and that, too, without a shot in his direction. The five-minute gun boomed still. Should he hazard a charge? Did the circumstances justify it? Major-General Lucas was certainly an ambitious man, if impulsive. Here was an opportunity for distinction. He felt that he held victory within his grasp for Sir James Millicocks, should the charge prove successful. The General revolved the situation quickly, finally deciding to take the fullest advantage of his good fortune of war and hazard the charge. The charge was to be swift and silent as possible. There was to be no cheering. The signal for the dash forward to be the firing of the next gun by the Russians. The red rocket would flare up immediately the Russian riflemen opened fire, when the British troops had gained the trenches. The success of the charge depended entirely upon the individual exertions of the men. Every man's life would be safe once the trenches were gained. The Russians

driven out and the position once captured, it was to be held until help from the reserves and Sir James Millecks arrived.

To the force, its nerves strung and tense, waiting for the signal-gun to fire the minutes lagged leaden-footed like hours. Major-General Lucas during this positively painful period of expectancy believed that he was doing no more than he had been ordered. Under the circumstances, he conceived, Sir James himself would have done likewise, seeing that he had come thus far without loss of a single man. He begged God's help in holding the position. He was confident his brave troops would gain it. His brave Anglo-Indians would now show the British Government that they were as brave as they were loyal. They would dare, do or die, even as their fathers had done. O, if only he had 10,000 more men, every doubt would vanish, replaced by victory! But such a force was not near enough, and valuable time would be lost calling them up. The supports were distant three miles in rear by now, probably expecting his return, but he had despatched several messenges to General Joon and Sir James Millecks commanding it, informing them of his position and plans.

The Generals just mentioned would no doubt act on his information, with of course such modifications as the circumstances present demanded. The whole force now clearly realised the nature of the terrible task set them. Many were the silent handshakes and whispered good byes that were exchanged. Many were the fond messages to be conveyed to friends and relations. The men instinctively felt that many among them now would then never more behold the light of day: but like British soldiers they murmured not, nor criticised the resolve of their tried and trusted General. This was one of the rare occasions when the British soldier never "grouses." Well has Britain reason to be proud of such. The subdued excitement was intense the while these heroes waited for the next gun-fire—the signal for the charge. The Russian officer in

command of the pickets waited patiently, about two hundred yards in advance, expecting momentarily to see the British force retire, when he would follow it right to its lines. How he must have rejoiced exceedingly and inwardly that he had given no alarm, as the circumstance promised him a record of a splendid feat of reconnoitring. Fatal folly, bungling blunder of a vain man! Splendid fortune of war for Britain's brave sons! But fortune ever favours the brave. Unfortunate General Boltoff!

The moment for the gun to fire—the signal—was now drawing apace. The three Anglo-Indian Battalions drew closer together, firmly resolved to dare, to do or die. All knew that many must die. Leave-takings had now ceased. Brian before setting out with his Battalion, bade his youngest brother Felix a sad and affectionate farewell. He told him to remember his father's words, and, if needs be, die like a soldier and a man in his country's cause. Felix, struggling with emotion, solemnly promised ever to remember his father's words and never to disgrace his father's name. Each Anglo-Indian also exhorted his comrade to behave as did the British soldier. Would that gun never fire? Hark!

Boom! the gun at last! And the thrilling order "charge"! The whole force started and darted forward as one man! They had gone scarce a hundred yards when a huge vulture flew up and away into the night with a hoarse cry, followed by another and yet another, the whole place echoing with their harsh, discordant cries, a very pandemonium above the silent, charging soldiers. In a moment a rifle shot rang out—a prelude to several others. These were from the Russian picket, now rushing for safety towards the Russian position, shouting at the same time to their comrades to cease firing for a few moments until they reached the safety of the trenches. But they were either not heard or were misunderstood, for the sentry on the Russian works fired his rifle and gave the alarm.

The cries of the vultures fell ominously upon his ear; as well the hurried tramp of thousands of armed men. The Russian pickets were thus shot down by their own comrades.

The gallant British troops redoubling their efforts to reach the brow of the hill, were met by a sheet of flame which burst from the trenches, and a thickening hail of bullets scattering their ranks like chaff and temporarily stopping them. And three large guns now joining in, sent shells into their ranks ploughing veritable lanes through them.

At this critical juncture, when all but honour seemed lost, a bugler of one of the Anglo-Indian regiments, whose name was never ascertained, without orders sounded the "charge," which on the instant was taken up by other gallant lads. The set-back in a moment was over, the troops gave a loud cheer, and scorning the raking fire pouring in on them rushed upon the trenches. A terrible hand-to-hand conflict followed, with such grim and earnest resolve that in half an hour's time the Russians gave ground. Their numbers, too, were so large, so closely-packed as to hamper and impede all manœuvres or movements either to re-form or rally. The conflict thus became a carnage, the Russians for the time being demoralized. The British troops fought with almost diabolic fury. They stabbed and shot and stabbed again without mercy, without fatigue. The Anglo-Indian Battalions who were in the *malée* seemed to be no whit behind the example set them by their British comrades, though in the dark, save when lit up by flashes of fire, Anglo-Indian and Briton were indistinguishable, though a Russian was easily discernible by his headgear, and the fact that nearly all wore greatcoats, which the British units carried rolled on their backs. The Russian rifles and bayonets were longer and of an entirely different pattern to that of the British, and in the excitement of the conflict many British soldiers seized Russian weapons, using them with apparently more effect than their own, which had the very great disadvantage in a hand-to-hand fight of being too short.

The Russians being at last forced to give way and fleeing down the other side of the hill, the force was with difficulty restrained from pursuing them. It was controlled, however, and ordered to lie down and maintain rapid firing at the retreating Russians.

The Amir having observed the red-rocket signal soar into the sky was now feigning an attack in rear of the Russian main position, as instructed by Sir James Millicocks. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions were pursuing the same line of action. These two attacks synchronising deterred General Boltoff from sending even a single man to aid the real attack on the first position, as he now thought that an attack from all sides was intended. In this he was wholly mistaken, for the two attacks never developed, though they fully served the purpose of keeping him in his main position, whence he could not help the now half-defeated Army Corps holding the first position.

The British force was now in possession of the hill, but it was far from secure, as the Russians rapidly re-formed their ranks and returned to the assault immediately with true Russian stubbornness. Major-General Lucas alternately prayed and raved for his supports to come. They could not now be far away. Over half an hour had elapsed since the red rocket was fired. Would they come in time? Carried away by his intense excitement, he rushed everywhere, waving his sword above his head, calling upon his troops to stop the infernal Russians, his vocabulary growing very vivid, vehement, and violent indeed. He even broke into Hindustani, which even in such a terrible time was not without its humour. He did not forget that he had three Anglo-Indian Battalions either, for he repeatedly called upon them to prove their capabilities.

The three big guns mounted on the Russian position, which had dealt death among the ranks of the British force, and around which such a fearful carnage had taken place for their possession, the dead lying heaped around, were now turned on

the advancing Russians, with disastrous almost decimating results. Nevertheless, the Russians, far superior in numbers, pressed forward in spite of their fearful losses, right to the top of the hill, where hand to-hand fighting was renewed, with appalling effect to both sides. But the Russians again gave way to the formidable bayonets of the British force, and retreated again, followed by volleys and cheers from the British force, while the big guns did great execution, fairly mowing them down. Yet a third time they re-formed and charged again with fierce yells. This time with several brass bands cheering them on.

Major-General Lucas was now fairly demented. He rushed everywhere, most where the fight was thickest, cursing the Russians and imploring his now sadly diminished troops to chase the Russians to Hades. "Bravo! Excellent Sergeant," he shouted as a corporal of the Centresex Regiment transixed a herculean Russian with his bayonet. Shabash! Shabash! he howled as a swarthy Anglo-Indian private displayed a replica of the bayonet feat. And he himself set a splendid example by snatching up a rifle with bayonet attached and charging a Russian officer, piercing him through the heart. He followed this up by rushing into a compact mass of Russian soldiers, fighting like a tiger, roaring, too, like one as he shouted at the top of his voice all the time. He thus got separated from his men, and was in imminent danger of losing his life; indeed it was a miracle that he had escaped so far.

Sergeant-Major Ackland perceiving his Chief's perilous position called to two of his Anglo-Indian comrades to follow him to the rescue, and the three dashed forward to the General now fighting for his life, beset by Russians, when they saw him fall. The three gallant Anglo-Indians, however, were now at hand, and after a brief and bloody struggle, the gallant Sergeant-Major standing astride the General's body (he himself having accounted for no fewer than three of the enemy) the

Russians fled and followed their now retreating comrades down the hill. The General lay prone as if dead, but on examination Sergeant-Major Ackland found he was still alive, though bleeding profusely from a bayonet thrust in the side. He knelt down and staunched the wound, also pouring some water down the General's throat. This revived the officer who opening his eyes questioned "Where are they?" If you mean the Russians, Sir," replied our hero, "they have again retired. Allow me to help you into safety, or another assault may be delivered." The gallant officer instead of repeating General Wolfe's last words: "Thank God, I die happy," jumped up, and fumbling for his eyeglass, which he hastily adjusted, shouted "No! I'll be hanged if I take any assistance" and shook his fist in the direction of the Russians. Then he shouted, "Have the—supports arrived yet? Where are they?" But he had no need to ask, for they were arriving at last, first in hundreds, then in thousands, to the inexpressible joy of the survivors who heartily cheered them. The Russians were too heavily hit, if not discouraged, to repeat the assault. They marvelled at the bulldog tenacity of the British troops, who simply could not give way. And for the third and last time the Russians retired in great disorder, losing thousands in the rout.

It was nearly 2 a. m. when General Joon himself arrived on the scene. Over 40,000 reinforcements had now taken the places of the brave dead. Major-General Lucas now completely broke down. He welcomed General Joon with tears of joy. The General calmed him, and soothed his shattered nerves with a stiff drink of brandy. After a rest Major-General Lucas was able to give a clear and concise account of the night's work. He was assured by General Joon that he had done well, and his great achievement quite justified the fearful losses, which could not yet be fully ascertained.

Major-General Lucas now sent for Sergeant Major Ackland, thanking him most profusely for having saved his

life. He shook him heartily by the hand, and presented him to General Joon, telling the latter that this was the man about whom he was just speaking. The General not only highly complimented Brian, but promised him a commission before daylight. Sergeant-Major Ackland modestly said that he had merely done his duty as had every man of the reconnaissance. Indeed, continued Brian, General Lucas owed his life to his two Anglo-Indian comrades as were it not for them he himself would have been killed. At which the General, who had heard the story, smiled approvingly and dismissed Brian, who saluted and rejoined his comrades in the trenches, now filled with dead and wounded. Major-General Lucas informed General Joon that he had known the Sergeant-Major nearly ten years. He first made his acquaintance in a most unusual manner ; he then recounted the incident of his refusal to enlist him when he was Colonel Commanding the Infantry Battalion quartered in Allahabad ; the raising of the first Anglo-Indian Battalion ; the conspicuous conduct of the brave young Sergeant-Major during the campaign ; and also the remarkable good behaviour of the Anglo-Indian troops. All these facts Major-General Lucas impressed upon General Joon, who however was well aware of them already. But the high praise from Major-General Lucas himself was indeed worth having, coming as it did from one who was by no means prodigal of praise.

By 4 a. m. a fair estimate of the losses of the reconnaissance-in-force had been made. The losses were very serious : barely five thousand men left fit for duty. * The wounded were removed carefully to the rear, for conveyance later to the Field Hospital. The three Anglo-Indian Battalions had suffered quite as severely as any British Battalion. The losses too among their officers were heavy. Two of the Battalions were now commanded by senior Captains. Promotions therefore were to follow as a matter of course, and accordingly several commissions were given to warrant officers, subject to

the approval later and sanction by Sir James Millicocks, and confirmation by His Majesty the King himself. Among those given commissions was our hero, Sergeant-Major Ackland. Any hesitation or misgivings that there might have been at first in giving an Anglo-Indian a commission were finally overcome by a soldier's generous appreciation of the wit and worth of an humbler *confrère*. And last, not least, there was the overriding factor that the Sergeant-Major had earned the V. C. times over. Why, it was a bright and brilliant record for a dozen men!

The two Generals having completed their promotions and report, surveyed the scene of the hard won conflict. The dead were piled everywhere in veritable hills, the coated Russians numbering double the khaki-clad warriors. All were massed and mingled together, while in the direction of the Russian retreat lay thousands of dead and wounded. These last were in their turn being treated quite equally with the British wounded. The Anglo-Indian Battalions had lost nearly half their strength. There were about six hundred and fifty in each Battalion. They were yet very short of officers.

Our hero was the only one so far promoted to a lieutenancy, many British officers being drafted to the Anglo-Indian Battalions however. Several Anglo-Indians were highly recommended to await Sir James Millicocks's sanction, which given after two days resulted in four senior *Colour Sergeants being promoted, our hero still remaining the senior Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Ackland had passed through the terrible ordeal all but unscathed, the wound on the head alone causing any trouble and needing medication. He had been a very tower of strength to his comrades, true in more senses than one, who had ever seen his tall form swayed to and fro "like the mast of some tall amiral," yet ever and anon erect and firm, beating all off in the forefront of the battle, raging round, at

the same time shouting out words of encouragement. The Russians everywhere made way for him and his terrible bayonet. They could not bear to see the point. Many had selected him for a mark, all the more conspicuous for the bandage round his head, but their thrusts were cleverly parried and returned. Indeed he was deemed invincible.

He was certainly noticed by many officers, including Major-General Lucas, who, when the necessary promotions were being made, had a vivid mental picture of the fearless Sergeant-Major before him. He was indeed Major-General Lucas's ideal warrior.

The two Generals had much reason for sorrow when they reached the hill top. Among the dead officers they recognised many friends. In fact every regiment was represented. Several young Subalterns found themselves Majors before dawn, Captains Colonels commanding regiments. Probationary Lieutenant Ackland found himself in command of a company, which however was a sadly depleted one. He now made enquiries for his brother Felix, but no one had seen him. Later he was discovered dead, about a hundred yards from the trenches. Poor Brian, battling, bleeding with the foe felt no greater, bitterer blow than this, and well might, in the moment of realisation of this irrevocable loss the bitter, hot tears rush to his eyes as he mourned over his dead brother.

"Talk not of grief

Till thou hast seen the tears of warlike men."

Never, never more would those gray-blue eyes, lit with love and light and laughter look into his own in dancing mirth. Oh! how he loved the boy. They had ever been together since childhood. Memories arose at this one thought—a thought, again, too deep for words and tears and he could only murmur Poor Felix! dear, dear Felix! The brave boy was no more! And he thought of his father. What a blow to the poor

good old man! How he would feel the loss! His youngest son, too. But Brian brushed aside these unavailing tears as he proudly recalled and found a soldier's solace in the fact that, after all, the boy had borne in mind his father's advice. He had died like a man. He had died for his King and Country. For such a death who would not die!"

General Joon in command of the captured position after duly sending in a detailed report to the Commander-in-Chief, asking also for urgent artillery reinforcements, issued orders for the burial of the dead. Trenches were dug on the side of the hill facing the present Russian main position. Right up to dawn the troops toiled, British, Anglo-Indian, and Indian (the majority of the reinforcements were Indian troops) to get these trenches finished, and well made, for the Russian main position was only a mile off and no doubt would be more strongly fortified during the remainder of the night. A bombardment was expected at dawn. The number of big guns in the Russian main position was still unknown. Their calibre might probably be the same as that of the three in possession of the British force, but mounted later as the first position would be the expected point of first contact. If this was so, the Artillery officers still doubted whether the platforms of the Russian big guns would be firm enough to fire from. As regards the three captured guns artificers were kept busy testing the sights as far as was possible even in the dark, and they were well cleaned and oiled ready to be well tested next day. Much depended on their accuracy of fire. There was a plentiful of supply ammunition.

On receiving General Joon's despatches, the Commander-in-Chief determined to hold the hard-won position at any cost, and, to that end, hurried off the reinforcement of artillery, including two of his three batteries of 6" Howitzers which had now arrived from Quetta. The aeroplane "Swallow" would endeavour at dawn to discover the number and position of the

Russian heavy ordnance, in the event of the expected bombardment not disclosing it. Perhaps the Russian air-craft would try and assist in the bombardment, though Sir James Millecocks hardly thought these would much favour the Russians, for the reason that these air-craft carried no guns apparently, and bomb-throwing had never yet proved a factor in war, owing mainly to the necessarily high altitudes of the air-craft.

Sir James Millecocks would reciprocate the Russian bombardment and trust to the science of British gunners to overcome the Russian numerical superiority in guns, and even if they were otherwise superior. He determined to give the Russians no rest, and therefore despatched orders to the Amir to attack the Russians vigorously one and a half hours after dawn. He also issued orders to General McKinnon-Morlie, Commanding the 3rd Division, to attack the Russian right at the same time, while he himself took command of the 2nd Division which was to attack the Russians in front. The dash of the Commander-in-Chief, and his pushful determination had been the means of enabling the British Army to march to victory since leaving Peshawar. A General who remained undecided and who weighed chances would not have achieved so much. The mere celerity of operations since the Russians occupied Shah Godar had quite astounded them. They discovered now that their plans, indeed, had a flaw. Their forces were however quite equal to the British, but they were not ready. The earliest attack expected from the British had been reckoned at least a month ahead. Further, the Afghans had completely failed and foiled them. In the first place they had been easily brushed aside by the British troops; and, in the next, what was worse, they had acted with the blackest treachery and actually joined the British. All this had been unexpected and the Afghans had rendered entirely negative the important part assigned them.

General Boltoff reflected ruefully that he had been ill informed and badly served. Why had the British force been

allowed to approach within charging distance of his first position without being observed by the pickets, or fired upon? He clenched his teeth and fists in anger, and determined that the officer in charge of those pickets should suffer death for his negligence. He had no idea that that unfortunate officer, shot by his own countrymen in the darkness, already lay fatally wounded in the British hospital, where he was even then explaining to the British surgeon how he had failed in his task, and how he longed for death. He had made a fatal mistake in under-estimating the British reconnaissance-in-force. He cursed himself for not having alarmed the sleeping Russians, whether the danger was real or fancied. Personal ambition had been, alas ! the cause of the British success.

General Boltoff however did not give up hope. He determined to re-take at any cost the hill which he named "The Hill of Ivan." His main position he called "Boltoff's Defences." The town of Shah Godar lay about two miles to the south near the borders of a huge tract of swampy country

It was now but an hour to dawn. The two opposing Generals really, little as they knew it, stood in the darkness that precedes dawn, facing each other. Both had completed their plans and issued all orders. Both waited for the break of day. One gazing toward the mighty land of India now perhaps within the talons of the Russian Bear, to be added to already mighty Russia, the dream of a century, an outlet for the vast resources of that mighty Empire. The other, gazing toward the north-west in the direction of the dear Old Country felt, aye knew, that the result of that day's battle would make or break the mightiest Empire the world had ever seen. He thought of his own old country home, of his dear wife and family, perhaps peacefully sleeping in their beds. It would now be midnight in England. All were sleeping, but the city of London alone never sleeps. He pictured the lights of the now-emptying theatres ; he heard, as it were, the hoot of

motor horns ; saw the streams of conveyances of all descriptions ; the gently-flowing river, the lights along the Thames Embankment—all passed like a living panorama before his eyes. And the thought that all this splendour and magnificence should be the spoil of the enemy ! Oh ! God forbid it. If the Russians were victorious this day, a German fleet would ride at anchor at the Nore, their torpedo craft would penetrate to the very Houses of Parliament—the German Eagle would triumph over the British Lion. Little did Sir James Millecocks know that at that very moment the leaders of the dear Old Country sat, waiting for the news of victory, fearful, yet hopeful. Yes, they were sitting there, waiting all day, and the following night, hoping, praying, that the leader of the armies of India would send news of a Russian defeat, and save the Nation from humiliation. Another group of anxious politicians, across the water, also awaited the news, in the German Reichstag. A German army was ready on the instant to march into Belgium, as one had previously marched into Holland. London was not indifferent. Anxious crowds besieged the newspaper offices, eager for news of further victory. They had already massicked over Jugluk and Sadopur. They cried for more victories. The news of the capture of the “ Hill of Ivan ” however was already on the way. That perhaps would in some measure satisfy them, as well as relieve the anxiety of the politicians, sitting up all night. Anon his thoughts recurred fondly to his dear wife and children sleeping peacefully. Not so : all night long they were praying earnestly, chiefly though for victory over the Russian invader and for the safety of England, yet none the less, too, for the honour and safe return of the loved one so far away. Many a mother in England, too, was similarly praying for the boy long absent, far, far from the family home and hearth, now facing the Russians, fight, to save his dear country or die. Oh ! many a mother will mourn her son, perhaps her only son and support, marked out by inexorable fate. In the course of a few hours how many would be killed by Russian bullets,

fighting against their country's foes. Yet some of these now probably sleeping, after arduous tasks, were dreaming of their parents and their dear old homes.

The prayers of other mothers too in India, as fond and fervent as of those in Britain rose to Heaven on behalf of their sons, as they more and more realised the horrors and risks of war. Some also of these sons were the sole supports of aged and feeble parents. There remained the only comfort or consolation that these sons had ungrudgingly given up their all in the service of King and Country.

Yes, these other Anglo-Indian mothers loved their soldier-sons equally well as the British mother. Nor did the community of feeling rest here, but was extended to those conditions under which their own sons toiled and fought precisely identical with those of the sons of British mothers. And to carry the parallelism further, in many instances the same blood that coursed along the British mother's veins welled up in, and warmed an Anglo-Indian mother's heart. Many a bonnie lass in Britain, probably ignorant of her sweetheart's actual whereabouts, waited patiently, counting the days and years and months when her wilful, wild, and wayward boy should be home again, time-expired, and fulfil his promise his plighted troth and marry her. Little did she know he was within a few hours of death. So, too, was it for many an Anglo-Indian lass in India whose lover had donned the King's uniform and was "off to the wars and awa."

Annette Scott, however, was not in the position of a love-lorn lass. Had not the only man whom she had ever loved on earth, whom she ever would love, for whom her heart cleaved, declared he would never marry. She accepted the truth from his own lips and so her love grew to be spiritual and sisterly and deep withal. She would never cease loving and praying for him, her own dear hero, *her* hero long before he became the hero of thousands of others.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BATTLE OF SHAH GODAR.

DAWN was breaking in the Orient sky. Even then the troops were arisen from slumber. To the quiet following the fearful fight for the Hill of Ivan succeeded the buzz and bustle of business, as hurrying feet rushed to and fro and active hands adjusted equipment. Many were already equipped for the battle. Orders would issue promptly to take up positions, preferably behind cover, for the troops were within rifle range of the Russians, and in the identical position they were in since the feigned attack. The orders issued. Each man selected suitable cover and improved upon it, while there was yet time. All were exhorted to keep cool, and bear in mind the adjustment of the sights of the rifle. Such precautionary minutiae were not forgotten nor were they deemed superfluous. Nothing would be left to chance. All previous training was to be taken the fullest advantage of. In modern warfare bravery counts for far less than coolness and science as armies fight with a distance of 1,500 to 2,000 yards or more between them. The sun now rose "rejoicing in the East" and, like some Oriental potentate, shone in all its splendour and majesty. And as its ruddy, radiant rays deepened and flashed athwart the burnished sky, the very clouds reflected back the beautifully brilliant hues even as the prism!

Boom from a gun, fired from the Russian position. The first shot of the battle, probably a sighter at the Hill of Ivan. But it was the first of a series in swift succession. All the shells were apparently directed at the Hill. So far, however, Sir James Millocks could not judge the number of guns in the enemy's possession. The aeroplane "Swallow" with the officer piloting it soon soared aloft on its perilous mission. The Commander-in-Chief followed its flight keenly through his

glasses. Rather low, he thought. A Russian aeroplane was now observed in chase, then another and yet another, till in a few minutes the sky seemed full of them. Was the tiny "Swallow" doomed? Would the Russian machines harm it ere it made a flight round Boltoff's defences? One successful trip was only necessary. It appeared that the Russian machines surrounded it. Yes! they were following it and, what was more, rifles were pointed at its pilot. As the falcon chased its prey so seemed it as the larger machines chased the tiny "Swallow." It had now nearly completed the circle, but apparently encountered difficulties. It swerved and swayed in a most unstable manner, the larger and more clumsy Russian machines following nevertheless in its wake. Many rifles were now evidently being discharged at it from the Russian aircraft, though no fire was directed at it from below, which was strange since it was only some three hundred feet above the Russian position. Probably the reason why the Russians desisted was the possibility of hitting their own machines. Would the "Swallow" fall? Was the pilot disabled? The plucky British airman had now headed his machine towards the British General and was leaving the Russian position, still followed by the airships, eight in number, their crews firing still at the "Swallow," which was now descending lower and lower as the British lines were approached. The buzzing of the propeller could now be heard. One by one the Russian airships fell back and turned retreating towards Boltoff's defences. The "Swallow" was now only a few feet above the ground. It seemed as if it would collapse at any moment. Even as it neared the British lines the pilot appeared suddenly to have lost all control. It slid sideward, straightened itself a minute and fell with a crash in the centre of the British position. The Commander-in-Chief, within a hundred yards of whom it fell, ran towards it. Was the pilot yet alive! Even as he asked Sir James Millocks, with a sigh of relief, saw the gallant officer being

dragged unconscious from amidst a tangled web of wires and wreckage. He flew to his side.

The Medical Officer who was summoned forthwith made an examination. He informed General Millecks that the young officer was terribly injured. Not only were many bones broken by the fall but there were several bullet wounds. In short the condition of the unfortunate officer was such as to absolutely preclude any hope of saving his life. The doctor had scarcely finished when the airman opened his eyes, making an effort to speak, but not even a sound issued from his lips, blood only gushed from his mouth. A stimulant was forced between the now clenched teeth, when, drawing a sigh, the wounded man with an effort barely articulated the words "six" and "plan," endeavouring at the same time to raise himself and turn to the now tangled wreck. The unconquered spirit wrestled bravely awhile to rise superior to the shivered, shattered frame—only for a moment—the next—the head fell forward heavily and the gallant spirit fled!

Sir James saluted the corpse and ejaculated "bravo man." He was puzzling over the last words of the officer "six" and "plan." Six, he thought, must mean six guns. But plan? Surely the officer had not been able to prepare a plan while he piloted the machine? The thought suggested a thorough examination of the wreckage which being made resulted in the discovery of a rough chart drawn on a section of the stretched canvas within easy reach of the officer's hand. It was in indelible pencil, and consisted simply of an irregular line with strokes resembling the figure 1 at intervals along it. Also a line, possibly meant for the Hill of Ivan. There were similar strokes on the shorter line, six, on the longer and three on the shorter. These lines perhaps indicated the two positions. The strokes for the big guns and the sign X indicated that the Russian big guns were in size similar to the three in position on the Hill of Ivan. The airman had said "six," so now

Sir James Millecks felt confident that the Russians had only six big guns mounted in position. But even that number was double his own. However the three on the Hill of Ivan might deal effectively with an equal number of Russian guns.

Sir James Millecks could tell by the firing that only three Russian guns were bombarding the Hill of Ivan. These were being replied to by the British gunners. He consulted again the rough plan but could not for some minutes gather anything more than he already had, viz. that the Russians had six heavy guns mounted. He consulted the plan again and again, then studied the two positions, noting the places where the guns were marked. A thought suddenly flashed across his mind. Was there in the sketch more than he had at first noticed? He gave the matter deep consideration. A very good explanation now occurred to him as to the reason why three Russian guns were silent. Nothing was plainer. It was important that General Joon should be informed immediately of the discovery. The reason why these three great Russian guns were silent was that they could not be fired at the Hill of Ivan, owing to the capture of the British of a number of them which necessitated an entire modification or rather change from originally most advantageous positions. Until these three guns therefore were silenced or recaptured, of what use were the other six on Boltoff's defences. But this was not only all. These six guns could not all fire at the Hill of Ivan at the same time, as the three now bombarding the hill were decidedly in the danger angle of the three silent guns, which were nearer the British 2nd and 3rd Divisions. These last three guns would have to fire practically over the heads of the Russian gunners now bombarding the Hill of Ivan, as the guns were not of high-angle fire, as were Howitzers. To fire them at the Hill of Ivan was absolutely impossible. Their trajectory when firing at a distance of under 2,000 yards would be practically flat, hence their silence until the British force advanced, when they could be used. But until then they

could not in any way help to silence the big guns on the Hill of Ivan. General Sir James Millicocks was indeed gratified. So the "Swallow" had after all been of invaluable service. Her brave pilot had not given his life in vain. This no doubt was the important news he had wished to communicate to his Chief before he expired. It was most fortunate—this rough sketch—under the circumstances.

The precious document was at once despatched to General Joon, who on receipt of it consulted the Artillery Commander. This latter immediately grasped its importance. Already one Russian gun had been put out of action, but to the surprise of General Joon three Russian guns were still firing. The reason for this became apparent on consulting the rough sketch now in his hand, which showed how though gun no. 3 was disabled, it was still possible to fire no. 4 over it.

Accordingly the Artillery Commander ordered his no. 3 gun to fire at and disable only the Russian nos. 5 and 6 which were unable to reply. His nos. 1 and 2 he ordered to engage the Russian guns of similar numbers. Immediately one or both were placed out of action then to engage the Russian no. 4. Meanwhile the lighter Artillery were engaged in a fierce artillery duel. In half an hour the Hill of Ivan was converted into a perfect shambles. The casualties were terrific. Probably no less with the Russians. The shells of the big guns bursting on impact, made holes large enough to receive a field gun. It was soon clear that the Russians were superior in siege guns only. The three in possession of the British were ordered solely to direct aim at their special targets. The Russian fire, on the other hand, was either very inaccurate or was directed at no particular part of the Hill of Ivan, or merely at the hill itself, as their shells dropped anywhere but near the three heavy guns. Nevertheless causing as they did execution among the troops, and, in spite of it, with the three heavies intact, the Russian might well be silenced. Coolly and surely

the exact range and elevation were calculated to a nicety and in less than half an hour the big guns of the Russians were one by one entirely put out of action. Before the last however ceased to fire, one of the three in possession of the British force had its turntable shattered by a shell, which unfortunately killed the entire gun crew. It was but an hour past dawn and the battle itself so far had been restricted to Artillery, with the advantage preponderatingly British. Several field guns were also rendered useless. The Artillery of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, however, had not yet been engaged, Sir James Millcocks wisely reserving their fire, on receiving information that there were three heavy Russian guns to reckon first with. But now under changed and more favourable conditions he ordered the whole of his Artillery to advance and briskly and boldly bombard the Russian position. Orders to the same effect were issued to General Joon, the bombardment to be for another half an hour and at the highest possible rate and to watch as well for the Afghan attack which was imminent. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions would also attack on the cessation of fire.

The bombardment was now general. The remaining two heavy guns in possession of the British proved to be very well mounted and fairly accurate; and as the range was close they speedily silenced gun after gun. The Russian gunners had all the morning been erratic or endeavouring perhaps only to hit the top of the Hill of Ivan. Although many of the smaller British guns were disabled, the number was insignificant, considering the fire they withstood. The British 6" Howitzers fired lyddite shells, which fell fast and furious into the Russian centre, the object being to strike a panic among the Russian Infantry. When the bombardment had progressed half an hour or so, Sir James Millcocks considered the Amir and his Afghans might attack. He also issued orders for the Infantry to prepare for an assault though he did not overlook the contingency of General Boltoff capitulating, which indeed seemed likely.

The advance commenced. General Joon signalled that the Amir was advancing to the attack, and a large force of Russian Cavalry following. But in spite of swift and sudden shot and shell the Russian Cavalry cleft and carved their way through the Afghans. Theroupon General Millicocks ordered the whole of his Cavalry, which so far had little chance of distinguishing itself, to advance between the Hill of Ivan and Boltoff's defences, and in doing so to keep close to the first-named hill.

The scene was inspiring. The Cavalry galloping onward swiftly ; the British bombarding over their heads, the Russians replying by a roaring, ringing rain of shell into the closely packed Cavalry who however got through, charging impetuously straight into the rear of the Russian Cavalry, who quite caught at a disadvantage, lost heavily. On swept the British, Anglo-Indian and Indian horsemen, right through the Russians, turning, charging again and again, wheeling and yet again slashing their way through and riddling the ranks of Russia's once-famous Sotnias of Cossacks. Within twenty minutes the Russian horsemen were flying far and wide. The Afghans soon re-formed and, heartened and animated by the presence of British troops, again advanced to the attack. Sir James Millicocks' Infantry, now well under fire, were advancing by a series of rushes. A frontal attack was only possible, as the rear of the Russian position was secure by reason of an extensive swamp nearby. The Amir reported to General Scannol, the Cavalry Commander, that a force of Russians which might be some 10,000 were advancing from his rear, having arrived since the railway was captured. The British Cavalry Commander chafing under continued inaction decided to attack this new force and apprised General Joon thereof. Forming up his brigades he moved off at a trot. The Russians, numbering about one-third of the British force, were advancing across the desert plain. Dividing his force into three sections General Scannol dashed triangularly, so to say, into the enemy. This fight which did not

materially affect the main issue developed into a hand-to-hand *melee*, terminating in the Russians surrendering unconditionally. The redoubtable Cavalry leader next directed his attention to the main battle, leaving part of his force guarding the Russians taken prisoners. Of course he had no desire to be left out of the battle. It was the unexpected that now happened. The Russians disregarding the general rule to defend issued from their strong position. They were even half way to the Hill of Ivan, though the British Artillery was mowing them down. Still they advanced cheered and charmed as they seemed to be by the strains of their martial music.

General Scannol seized the golden opportunity ; and before the British Artillery could quite realize it, swept onward his now battle-lusted horsemen right into the luckless but stout and stubborn Russians. The impact staggered them. They wavered—wondered—and, before an effective front could be formed the Lancers and swordsmen were through and through them : ere they wheeled for another charge the Russians fled panic-stricken in great disorder back to their defences. General Scannol pursued the Russians as far as possible ; indeed deterred only by the fact that he could not charge up a hill. He therefore withdrew and re-formed his brigade, ready for eventualities.

Sir James Millocks had observed these operations through his glasses, though not General Scannol's exploit, as it occurred a mile in the Afghan rear. A charge was now ordered, the troops being sufficiently near to admit of it.

General Joon had also been a spectator and decided, contrary to general rule, to evacuate his position and charge the enemy in front before they would have time for manœuvring. The 1st Division, much to their relief (for they had been subject to heavy artillery fire) was now ordered to advance and clambered over their trenches and rushed down the hill. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions had already gained possession of that part of the Russian position assigned them and were engaging

in a hand-to-hand fight with the Russians, who were gradually being forced back.

While the 1st Division was gaining foothold the Russians were flying from the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. The 1st Division and the Afghans thus met practically the whole of the Russian army, and a short, sharp but unequal struggle ensued. The Russians were caught in a trap! They fought with such a "fine frenzy" that the 1st Division were gradually giving ground to them and the Afghans had fallen back, a contingency that might have been averted if they had bayonets. Still the 1st Division held the Russians, thus enabling the Afghans to return and pour in a destructive fire into them.

The three Anglo-Indian Battalions in the front of the Division suffered severely. They fought with great bravery. Lieutenant Ackland, armed with rifle and bayonet, encouraged his men by his own splendid example. Major-General Lucas was ever in the van, his indomitable courage ever urging him into the thickest of the fight. How he escaped death was a marvel. Again he got separated from his men, and was, shortly after, seen to fall. Heavy rifle fire was now being poured into the compact masses of the Russians distant only some four hundred yards. But they returned the fire, fighting to the last, and Sir James Millocks could hardly wonder why General Boltoff would not surrender. Now the British were in possession of the whole hill and the fight, so far as the Russians were concerned, a carnage, yet with bulldog tenacity they kept on firing on the British who had surrounded them. The firing was now red hot on both sides. Would the Russians ever surrender?

When Major-General Lucas was seen to fall many in the 1st Division thought him killed. But, as it turned out, he was wounded only. He soon recovered consciousness, raised himself on and supported by his elbow gazed, dazed awhile, then struggling to his feet essayed to walk.

No sooner was he observed than half a dozen men rushed out of the British ranks to his succour. Two paid with their lives for their loyal alacrity, for they were killed before they had gone far. The remainder however, nothing daunted, pressed on, but ere they could reach the wounded General a third fell. The three survivors now raised the General, bearing him towards the British firing line, there being, alas! another victim before this was reached.

The surviving two brave bearers were now within ten yards of safety, when the bugles sounded "Cease fire!" the enemy having hoisted the white flag. The silence following the bray of the battle was most impressive. Willing arms soon gently placed the brave General on a stretcher, his mind completely unhinged by the terrible events of the day.

The Russian General surrendered unconditionally. He now approached Sir James Millicocks, who met him half-way. General Boltoff saluted and surrendered his sword by the hilt, which the British General lightly touched and bid the brave man retain.

General Joon had observed the six heroes rush to rescue Major-General Lucas. Also that four out of the six fell. He now was near the stretcher and himself helped to place the General on it, after which he congratulated the two heroes. To his utter amazement one of them was no other than the newly created Lieutenant Ackland! The other was a private in the Centresex Regiment, Major-General Lucas's old regiment, a veteran who had served under Major-General Lucas ever since that officer had been a Captain commanding the company.

He heartily commended both the brave soldiers, and since the Lieutenant was already promised the V.C., the private received every assurance of his being recommended for the coveted distinction. Of the other four heroes two were killed, one a British officer, the other an Anglo Indian private. The

remaining two men—a British and Anglo-Indian non-commissioned officer—were severely wounded. Both also received the V. C.

Several other V. C's. were won that day: an Anglo Indian gunner assisted by two British gunners performed a brave act in man-handling a gun out of a position where it was likely to fall into Russian hands, the Anglo-Indian Battery being almost annihilated.

The great battle was now won, but mainly by the most terrible determined fighting the British Army had experienced for over a century. The casualties were in consequence appalling. The dead lay heaped on both hills. Indeed a great part of the cone of the hill that formed General Boltoff's defence had been demolished by the artillery. The Afghans had played no insignificant part in the victory. When the white flag was hoisted these wild men were for disregarding it, and were actually moving forward with diabolic yells to charge the Russians and General Joon even found it necessary to fire on them. Blood alone would apparently quench their war-thirst! The situation was likely to have become critical, and it was only with extreme difficulty and at the risk of his life that the Amir at last prevailed with his fierce and fanatical countrymen.

But still it was deemed expedient to at once disarm the Afghans, to which the Amir was reluctantly reconciled, as he stipulated that their arms should be returned later. The process of disarming them again having been gone through, they were all "kralled" for the time being.

It was now 3 p.m., the battle having lasted since sunrise. Russians and British were now united busy burying the numerous dead, which operation was not completed until next day. On its completion the Russians were marched directly to the railway station, where numerous trains stood ready for their conveyance back to Russia, in accordance with telegraphic orders.

Messages were meanwhile despatched to the Kabul garrison, ordering the immediate evacuation of that town, fighting their way to Peshawar if necessary. On receipt of the orders the garrison concluded that a defeat had been sustained by the British Army, but later on they heard that this precaution was deemed necessary to guard against the possible approach of about 50,000 Afghans who had been disarmed.

The Afghans having been victualled were sent upon their way home the day following the battle. Although relieved of their rifles, it was considered expedient to withdraw the Kabul garrison before the news spread over Afghanistan. The Afghans reached their villages swearing revenge on the *Peringhee*. By Allah, he had deluded them yet again!

The fallen General Boltoff was treated by General Sir James Millicocks with every mark of respect due to his high rank. He congratulated Sir James on his great victory. General Boltoff was now in the constant company of Sir James Millicocks, and the remarkable sight of the two erstwhile enemies riding side by side, followed by their Aides, reviewing the British troops and inspecting the battlefield was witnessed next day. Their conversations however were of far greater import than was imagined. General Boltoff apprised General Sir James Millicocks of the existing state of affairs in Europe, of which the latter officer was entirely ignorant. To say the British General was surprised at the information would express his feelings very mildly. Among many other items, General Boltoff assured Sir James Millicocks that the Germans had now crossed the Belgian frontier. He admitted himself beaten fairly and said he would now spare no effort to have peace declared immediately between England and Russia. Indeed he would see that a Russian army would mobilize on Germany's eastern frontier without further delay. The result of the battle of Shah Godar, he was certain, would immediately recast the policy of Russia; she would unite in helping England and her

own old ally France in demanding the instant withdrawal of the German troops. General Boltoff also went as far as to assert that he already considered himself the ally of Sir James Millicocks. He anxiously awaited telegraphic instructions from Russia. Sir James Millicocks could scarce believe all that General Boltoff had told him. Was all this possible, he thought. Numerous telegrams arriving however soon testified as to the truth of the Russian General's statements.



CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER SHAH GODAR.

THE simple announcement of the Battle of Shah Godar came as a seismic shock in London with all that panic, perturbation, restlessness, anxiety, and suspense invariably attendant on such occasions happily of rare occurrence.

Distant echoes of the bray of battle, of the shouting of the legions, rarefied yet clear, seemed to be borne to the ears of startled multitudes. That characteristic note described by the late lamented Laureate as "streaming London's central roar," assumed a deeper, higher tone fittingly expressive of a great nation's anxious concern. For the moment a note was struck that vibrated throughout the mighty world of London, a note that, struck as it were by some wizard musician, was taken up by choral millions for apparently indefinite prolongation. While, on the one hand, all economy of language would be misplaced in describing the state of agitation produced, on the other, the circumstances baffled all description. Nowhere but in London are the terms so applicable. London, though in point of fact a mere spot in the land masses of the earth, yet by reason mainly of its intense life and concentration, its centralization, its teeming millions, its might, more powerfully impresses the imagination than the rest of the world, so much so that it seems to be the most natural thing to speak of the mighty world of London.

Panic-stricken and paralysed the mighty world of London can be but for a moment. Its life is too strong and deep and true and temperamentally fortified to experience more than a passing shock from any blow it might receive; and this was observed in the next moment and movement. Mighty multitudes massed, and moved, swelled and streamed, and surged through

street and square. These were all impelled by the same thought, the same doubt, and suspense and anxiety, mute in words, so eloquent in features, concentrating in the question of the hour—Defeat or Victory? Gaining momentum by their very mass, the growing and gathering rear impelled the front forward on and onward and ever onward seeking the specific sources of more and more information. These sources were of course principally the Houses of Parliament and the Newspaper offices. The newsboys had scarcely shouted the headlines—"Grite vicktry"—"No Spionkop," "Angler-Injuns wiped art!"—when all their stock-in-trade was sold out, transporting them into ecstasies of delight. All the avenues of approach to the Houses of Parliament—Westminster Bridge, Parliament Street, Westminster Broadway, Birdcage Walk, &c. were blocked and barred by thousands upon thousands, "in numbers numberless," thus affording the latest orators, impromptu, fledgling, and other, a golden opportunity of airing their rare and choice flowers of rhetoric in the sunshine of popular applause. It was not without its distinctive humour this scene of the people's orator, perched on the plinth of the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square, his arms going like those of a Dutch windmill with the velocity of his windy vocabulary, pausing only for a moment, highly and visibly gratified, when some verbal gymnastic feat evoked a burst or buzz of popular applause or admiration. He wiped the sweat of his manly brow, replaced his battered hat at the proper angle and began again, more impressively than ever.

Denser and denser grew the crowds at and about the newspaper offices, besieged to their very doors, for every paper had been snapped up in the streets, and the news daily doled out only emphasized the necessity for more, or mocked it. For was not the Battle of Shah Godar being, even now, fiercely fought far away, its fickle fortunes faithfully followed by the popular imagination? It was lost, it could not be—'twas won

again, lost and re-won, and so on throughout with the vicissitudes of the fateful day, with all the chances inseparable from a conflict between two giants so nicely balanced as to perplex the award of impartial Victory hovering ever nigh. The papers were equal to and even improved the occasion ; for when facts failed them, they had immediate recourse to the rich and ready resources of a naturally fertile yet highly cultivated imagination. It must not however be supposed that the statement of a general rule is all-embracing or does not permit of the exclusion of a very large and growing class, for the facts would be against it. It was an anxious day. There were few or none whose memories could travel back to recall such another. Indeed, so tense became the excitement that even the guarded and sacred precincts of Royalty were not secure from invasion by the crowds who hung around the railings of Buckingham Palace. The policeman did not lead a happy life : his place, power, pomp, potentiality, his very occupation was gone ; while the very sentries of His Majesty's Foot Guards at the Palace Gate fled ignominiously to the shelter of their sentry boxes, thus leaving the Goths, Huns, and Vandals of civic life in undisturbed and expanding possession. Knowing which state of affairs, soon Their Most Gracious Majesties, with the Royal Children, appeared on the Balcony, smiling assurance. Loyal London went up in a shout and cheering, such as only the lusty lungs of the British can give, and sang the National Anthem over and over again.

But as the day wore on, the tension became terrible. Parliament of course had been prorogued and had sat up early and late, amid the cries and clamours of excited crowds outside. We will dwell awhile on the solemn scene enacted there. All the members, their party principles and differences now laid aside, were met, no more agreeing to differ, but solidly united in questions far transcending those of party or sectional interests. And these uncrowned rulers of the realm were deep in deliberation, discussion, doubt, and dread they knew not what

of. Finally there was silence all, as the figure of Sir Minton Campbell, the Prime Minister, tall, calm, and dignified—"with Atlantean shoulders fitted to bear the weight of mightiest monarchies"—arose to address the august assembly. His speech was brief and to the point, his voice finely responsive to the sentiments expressed, now deep and low, weighted with thought, now clear and ringing like a bell, now quivering and vibrating with genuine and earnest emotion.

The speech served its purpose admirably, those portions especially, and with telling effect, where he reminded them that while Britain ever invoked the blessings of Heaven she never, through the whole course of her "rough island story," forgot for a moment how such blessings could best be obtained and in prodigal profusion, viz. by the exercise of those powers that a bountiful Providence had placed within the reach of even the humblest, viz. self-help, truth, and courage. The speech, duly reported in all the papers, had the effect of considerably relieving the tension and allaying anxiety. It was as oil thrown on the turbid and troubled waters of party politics through which the national barque was sailing.

Notwithstanding the courageous words of the Prime Minister, which, needless to say, found an immediate reponse in every British breast from John o'Groats to Land's End and from Lincoln to Leinster, the outlook was not altogether reassuring, even to the stoutest-hearted patriot.

Germany was in occupation of the Low Countries, where in the port of Amsterdam her fleet was landlocked by what was practically a blockade by the British Fleet outside. Yet, the Python lay coiled, ready for its deadly dart at any moment. The Eastern Eagles, sharp-taloned and keen-eyed, with wings outstretched darkened the air, while a very flight of lesser ignoble fowl "scented the prey afar." And under these and the other circumstances detailed above the ultimatum that was ready could not be sent to Germany.

But at the very moment that the national depression sank to its lowest, when the proverbial straw was about to be placed on the nation's back that had so long and bravely borne all the burdens placed on it—at the very moment when hope deferred was about to pass to the other extreme—the joyous news was flashed across the seas—"Victory at Shah Godar." Loyal London went into a wild tumult of delirious joy. She shouted back the glad tidings to her scattered Colonies, who took up the shout of joy till it "rang and reigned from sea to sea."

The news of the Battle and Victory of Shah Godar created a profound impression throughout Britain, an outburst or wave of patriotism and enthusiasm which for the moment raised the people to the highest pinnacle of pride and power. Not a man but bore within his bosom the *civis-Romanus-sum* feeling, with a corresponding contempt for the external foreigner, much as we might have imagined the Romans to have been in the most palmy days of the Imperial City with the Seven Hills for her footstool. The papers could write of nothing else but the victory from day to day. Though there was, apparently, not the least cessation of the vast and varied activities of a living, throbbing World-City, in that the railway ran, the ship sailed, the anvil rang, the loom whirled and whirled, the mill buzzed—yet there was somehow a perceptible decided divergence from the normal course of things—a touch, a tint, a gorgeous flash may be—in the gloom or grey drab of life, a gladsome pause, a holiday break in "the daily round, the common task." There are few levellers like joy following on a national victory. — Social and other distinctions suffer universal eclipse for a while absorbed in the general topic of interest. "Cook's son, duke's son," all, like moths, were attracted to and hovered round the brilliant lustre shed once again on British arms.

When, however, the wave of enthusiasm had reached its culminating point, there followed, with its subsidence, as is usual in such cases, a period of reaction. In other words, the corporate life of the country resumed its natural or normal

course. Nevertheless, there was no abatement of the interest in the matter in certain quarters, an interest which though submerged at first in the wide and vast enthusiasm just described now revealed itself in the sentiments and opinions of two contending classes or sections. Briefly, the one class maintained that never before in the national history was there a prouder moment; never before was victory so crushing and complete, and glorious alike in its character and far-reaching results, compared with which the victories even of a Marlboro' seemed but gladiatorial fests. The other class, pointing to the appalling casualty list or carnage declared that this told its own tale of incredible muddling or blundering; in any case did not justify the objects achieved; "it was like raising a volcano, if one had the power, to boil an egg!" The cartoonist of *Punch* gained fame and fortune by clever caricatures of the two sets of opinions; and the National Humourist was not far wrong. The truth, no doubt, lies midway between extremes: but as the roseate view is more flattering to national pride and vanity and, moreover, more acceptable to our poor weak human nature, it was no wonder that the first or former class of critics had an overwhelming majority and that, in consequence, their views and opinions come to be general and representative although at the same time it was not denied that they were less judicial than partisan.

Accordingly, then, to this view, and for the very substantial reasons just assigned, Sir James Millcocks had at a bound attained a permanent place among the world's foremost captains—Hannibal, Hamilcar, Cæsar, Scipio, Saxe, Marlboro', Frederick, Napoleon, &c, &c. This may have been the language of exaggeration natural in a moment of grateful exultation and exaltation; be that as it may, the services of Sir James Millcocks were deemed worthy of the highest recognition possible: the bestowal of a peerage on him by creating him Earl was strongly recommended to His Majesty, as was also a gift of £50,000 from the nation. He was henceforward known under the style and title of the Earl of Shah Godar.

Major-General Lucas who, too, had emerged triumphant from the fray and was now in England and had the K. C. B. conferred on him, also received a generous share of public attention and honour. Indeed, there were those conditions, viz. where he even rashly risked life and limb in the service of King and Country, present in the public mind, deemed essential to constitute the popular hero; while his bold, bluff, and brusque manner told immensely and was decidedly quite a factor in the affectionate estimation in which he was held by the people. But Major-General Lucas, with the generosity innate in all gallant officers, disclaimed anything exceptional as regards his services, in fact quite forgot them, when he held forth on the worth, wit, and valour of the Anglo-Indians—his favourite theme—whom he now lauded to the skies as he once more than once consigned to the other extreme. But of this more anon.

The fortunate turn of events necessitated a complete recasting of the political programme of operations, but more especially, and immediately, putting into execution such of its items as were held in abeyance pending the issue of events just briefly summarised. But we can do no more here than restrict ourselves to referring in general terms to the kaleidoscopic changes in the state of international affairs.

The Teuton unfurled his sails and sped, and the winds that bellied the sails were those of sighs for no more worlds to conquer: and his legion legions rolled back for the watch on the Rhine, for the gladdened Gaul was gathering at the Western Gate. But the Teuton is nothing if not thorough and systematic, and with true Teutonic tenacity he did not give in in the struggle. Austria was awakened to a sense or reminded of her dubious friendship. But that Power contrived to veil alike its weakness and its indisposition with some of the choice pearls of political wisdom and garlanded the Teutonic Ambassador with the fairest flowers of diplomatic oratory: they were, however, senseless and scentless to the astute Teuton, who, in return

offering the same ineffective cordialities retired swearing *Donner und Blitzen!* Efforts in other directions were equally happy!

France was of course jubilant: America *marconied* her unalloyed delight and gratitude in that she was having Edison's latest thing out in booming the glorious campaign all over creation!

A few days after the glorious victory news was received in London to the effect that the conquering army had passed through Persia and Turkey in Asia and had arrived at the port of Antioch. Here, however, many of the Indian regiments, overtaken by religious scruples, refused to embark. It was, accordingly, deemed expedient that they should be railed back to India rather than that a difficult question should be raised, or a thankless task tackled. The remainder of the army the object of which as it now became known, was to support or aid France, proceeded *via* Marseilles to its destination—Lille, one of the strongest of fortresses, in the north of France. This Army, or rather Advance Guard, as it might be called, consisting of some 100,000 men, on arrival bivouacked at Lille, pending the result of the British ultimatum to Germany.

The relations of the French and British soldiers were extremely cordial; indeed, they fraternized almost immediately. French and British strutted and strided arm in arm, exchanging caps with one another; and the effusive Frenchman would have proceeded further if not checked by his British brother with—"Look 'ere matey yer can do as yer likes, but I'm blowed ef I'm goin' to let yer kiss me!" The Irish soldiers more than cemented the alliance with their irrepressible, if boisterous, jollity, and joviality, while the wit among them undertook to explain to the mystified yet delighted Frenchmen all about the "*intintcorjale*," and that b' Saint Pathrick the Frenchies were mates "*be raison of foine internayshunal relayshuns*." But it was the Anglo Indian regiments that almost monopolised attention. Being neither Indian nor British nor

Continental but of a distinct and, to them unknown, nationality they were subjected to curious, but ever courteous and even, flattering attention; while as the fame of their prowess spread, they were almost overwhelmed with the numberless ovations of *La Belle France*.

The withdrawal of so large a body of troops from India was followed by more or less disorder, though the country in the main proved loyal, through the machinations of the *bad-mashes*. But the services of 10,000 Australian troops which were requisitioned co-operating with those of British and Anglo-Indian civilians quite met and dealt effectively with the situation.

Meanwhile came the joyful tidings that Germany agreed entirely to the British demands, not only putting an end to painful suspense and torturing tension, but also removing all the risks attendant upon it. It was a bloodless victory, in its way no less glorious than even Shah Godar. "Peace hath its victories no less renown'd than those of war." France was friendly, Russia won over; the lesser Great Powers harmless if indifferent. But as we are not concerned now with international relations it remains in concluding this chapter, to say how the Anglo-Indian regiments were affected.

Under the happy state of things now brought about there was more time to take note of the Anglo-Indian Army, though of course it is not meant that there would be any chance otherwise of their claims being obscured or overlooked. No, peace or war, England is ever generous and prompt in rewarding loyal military service, how much more when it is distinguished. How the Anglo-Indian Army had fought was now widely known; the surviving wrecks of their former strength remained to testify to the truth. This fact and the high encomiums of General Lucas here, there, and everywhere made Britain most anxious to see the famous Army. In General Lucas's opinion there was nothing finer in the world

to see. He told Lady Lucas, at home, that the Anglo-Indians had all but won the war, and had saved her the fate of becoming a widow, and outside, he told the country that he meant to move the nation for funds "to compile a—haw—account of the—haw—conduct and career—haw—of the—haw—Anglo-Indian Heroes!—the first place among them assigned to—haw—Ackland, who—haw—saved the strife, his country's life, and—haw—his (General Lucas's) and his wife's"—as the nation's tribute.

It was nothing surprising, therefore, when the Royal Mandate went forth summoning the Anglo-Indian Army, General Lucas, and, above all Captain Ackland, to the Royal Presence in Buckingham Palace. It was nothing surprising, therefore, that the Anglo-Indian warriors were overwhelmed with joy, honour, and awe and that the "bravest of the brave" Ackland and Lucas, "held their breath for a while"—for it is a curious phenomenon that some of the bravest men are far more natural in "action" than in the gilded chambers of the court where they become nervous, to say the least.

The Anglo Indian Force, however, prepared itself with joyful alacrity, much to the sorrow of the friendly French to lose their company, for the Royal Invitation and Inspection to be, and on the night previous to departing, speeches, toasts, and songs went round, particularly, accompanied by the band, the now popular Scotch Jacobite song—

"Soon we'll be in London Town, sing my lads yo-oh-o
See the King with a golden crown, sing, my lads, yo-oh-o !

CHAPTER XIV.

TO LONDON TOWN AND AFTER.

THE welcome morn dawned at last. Joyful were the hearts of the Anglo-Indians in anticipation of another journey—this time to London Town. The bugles were sounding the “fall in”; amid ringing cheers from the British, “*vivats*” from the French soldiers, the troops marched to the railway station of Lille, looking beautiful in its bunting, to entrain for the coast, where transports awaited them for their conveyance to Dover.

The embarkation effected with military precision, the short voyage across the silver streak began. All strained their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the famous “white walls of England.” As soon as the chalk cliffs came in sight cheer after cheer echoed over the waters.

Before reaching Dover a portion of the British Battle Fleet “hove to” in courteous compliment. The occasion led to a hearty exchange of cheering between the man-o’-war’s men and the Anglo-Indians; the latter naturally keenly interested in the impressive sight presented by the numerous 30,000-ton battleships, and innumerable smaller craft. The great breakwater of Dover which is quite a feature of the naval harbour, was soon approached and the transports with their highly excited human freights glided into the smooth water at the back of the breakwater to the jetties, where huge, enthusiastic crowds awaited them cheering, and waving wildly hats and handkerchiefs.

The troops immediately disembarked and entrained in the carriages ready for them. Within the half hour the trains had steamed one by one out of the great Dockyard, on through the green fields of fair Kent to London, where the last train arrived by midnight.

The Anglo-Indians, for it was yet early March and the wind swept round the magnificent Victoria Station, felt the bitter teeth-chattering cold and buttoned their greatcoats more closely round them. They had felt the cold at Lille, too, but not so much. Although the hour was late, London was fully awake, and one of its proverbial animated crowds almost blocked every one of the station exits as well as the locality to witness the troops march out, headed by their own Band and Drums, to Wellington Barracks, not far from Victoria Station.

The barracks were unoccupied, the Foot Guards remaining in France. The short march to Buckingham Palace Road and Birdcage Walk was soon accomplished, great cheering crowds following, until at last they wheeled into the Barrack Square. No time was lost in detailing the men to their quarters, the large barracks being sufficiently commodious for the whole present force. The next day was one of rest. After so much hard work, and bedless weeks the troops knew how to make the most of it.

Great preparations were being made for a round of fêtes and pleasures on a scale worthy of their fame for the Anglo-Indian Brigade during their month's sojourn in London. They first, were to be entertained to a banquet by the Lord Mayor and City of London in the historic Guildhall, and last, but not least, reviewed by His Majesty King George.

Birdcage Walk had been impassable since their arrival. Everyone seemed impatient for a glimpse of the Anglo-Indians even through the railings which enclosed the Barrack Square. Many had actually come great distances for the anxious chance of meeting possible relatives among the Anglo-Indian Brigade. These last clamoured for admittance within the railings. Many mentioning the names of men serving in the Anglo-Indian Battalion were admitted into the enclosure, where having discovered relatives they were further permitted to enter Barracks where of course conversation could be more conveniently carried on.

Captain Ackland, together with his brother officers stood on the step of the Officers' Mess greatly interested in the remarkable scenes taking place before them. They had just visited the Guards Chapel in the barracks, and were discussing the tattered Colours, bullet-riddled drums, and other relics of bygone campaigns, as also the tablets, &c. erected to the "Glory of God and in everlasting memory" of fearless souls who had fought in their country's cause.

Our hero was listening, but his memory recurred to stories told him by his father of his relatives in England. More before his very eyes many of his fellow-Anglo-Indians had found their relatives, and more and yet more were coming into barracks. He wondered, then, whether his father's relatives knew of his being in London; in any case he would certainly visit his father's old Irish home in Monaghan during the month. Still the barrack gate opened and admitted more relatives, mostly tearful women.

What did the Sergeant of the guard want? he mentally asked himself as that individual made straight for the Officers' Mess, his preoccupied air indicating some important errand. But as Captain Ackland was not Orderly Officer it did not particularly concern him to interrogate.

"Captain Ackland, Sorr," jerked out the Sergeant, saluting smartly and clicking his heels together. "Ackland!" chirrused several officers. Our hero, collecting his wandering thoughts on hearing his name answered "Yes."

His attention was now drawn to a very old lady in his vicinity who, on seeing him, gave a shriek. Pointing out our hero to a young lady by her side, apparently her granddaughter, she told her that that young man was the very image of her brother Thomas Biennen, who had died in India.

Our hero, who had now approached quite near and had overheard the remark, was too confused for the moment to say anything. He however endeavoured to calm the excited old lady, saying that his name was Ackland. Could he help her

in any way? If she would kindly enter the Mess where she could be comfortably seated, he would endeavour to give her any information she sought. The old lady readily assented and Captain Ackland, V.C., as he led the way, was not a little puzzled trying to discover what the sweet-faced old lady might want with him. Having seated herself in the luxurious Mess and rested awhile the now tearful old lady said her name was Mrs. O'Neill, which left our hero as much in the dark as ever.

"My first husband's name," continued the old lady, "was Ackland, Brian Ackland (Brian startled) Had our son lived, he would have been your counterpart. Your features, your smile are so like my boy's."

"My name too is Brian Ackland," promptly returned our hero, not a little embarrassed.

The old lady in turn started and scanned Brian's features closely and anxiously "Ah then," burst out the old lady, with a great sob, "then you are, you must be Jim's—my brother in law Jim's son;" he enlisted in the Queen's Irish Regiment, which was ordered to India

"Yes," said the soldier dazed, delighted, bewildered, "I am James Ackland's son; my father's regiment was the Queen's Irish. Father has long since retired from the Army and is now Loco. Foreman on the East Indian Railway, and is at present stationed in Allahabad." "Then I am indeed your aunt," exclaimed the old lady, "I'm quite proud of such a handsome nephew" and she flew to and fell upon him with true Irish warmth and demonstrativeness, holding him in her embrace.

The blood mounted to the young man's temples on hearing this flattering description and feeling this fond caress of his person.

"Ah!" she continued, as she recovered from her incoherent volubility, becoming calmer and reminiscent. "How fond your Uncle Brian was of your father, his younger brother Jim. They were inseparable. But alas! I think India spoilt your

father, for after a few years of fitful correspondence his letters entirely ceased. Perhaps he was ashamed to write home, for we heard that he had married an Indian lady, and had a large family. But Brian loved Jim to the end."

"Before your uncle died, his words to me were: 'Norah, if ever you come across poor Jim's children in England, be they black or white, take them to your bosom, for they are your own flesh and blood.'"

"But Brian,"—looking with loving and proud admiration at the stalwart warrior before her, "were those stories true which we heard? Forgive a foolish old woman's question. 'Did your father really marry a black wo—lady?'"

"No, indeed Aunt, nothing of the kind," replied Brian Ackland. "Why, my mother is quite as white as you. There is, I am aware, some 'dark' blood in her family, as one of her ancestors was an Indian. But, dear Aunt, let us talk of some else now. I will tell you our history some other time. Do you know anything of India, Aunt?"

"No, Brian," she answered, "I know next to nothing of that country, but I love to hear about it. Both my sons are there. On what railway did you say your father was working, and where did you say he was stationed?"

"At Allahabad, on the East Indian Railway" replied Brian.

"Why then," cried the old lady "surely you know my son Tom—a driver on the East Indian Railway? He lives in Kahnpoor. Don't you know him? He is the best banjo player in India. You *must* have heard of him? My other son Jim is a big man in the Central India Railway—a Colonel, I think he is in the Volunteers. You surely know *him*."

Captain Ackland smiling at the old lady's logical conclusions, answered "No, Aunt, I'm afraid I don't. I was but an humble Sergeant in India, so my acquaintance did not extend to Colonels. I have heard of Tom O'Neill and witnessed his banjo playing, as I was once on furlough at Allahabad, and I

well recollect seeing Tom O'Neill perform at a variety show given there, in the Railway Institute. I recollect too that he was advertised as the "Champion Banjo-player in India." I can scarcely forget it, as the genial Mr. Eibbor, of "The Pharmacy," Allahabad, where seats were being booked, had posters 6 feet square blazoning Tom's musical genius."

"Well Brian," went on the old lady. "My brother Thomas Brennen served in India. He too married in that country. Tom was one of "John Company's" soldiers, and he saw much fighting; in fact it seemed to me he was always fighting. It must be a terrible country, or was—there was always fighting going on somewhere or other. He fought in the Afghan War, and was severely wounded in the head, in the Sikh Campaign, and in the Burma War too. At the taking of Pegu, I think that's the name, he would have obtained the Victoria Cross for saving soldiers from drowning in the river Irrawady, only that in those days there was no Victoria Cross. He was rewarded with the rank of a "Queen's Sergeant" for what was considered "distinguished conduct in the field." He was a very expert swimmer. I was not surprised to hear of his exploit: he saved many people from drowning in the river that flows past our little estate in Belturbet in Monaghan.

My brother was Sergeant-Major of the 25th Native Infantry Regiment which mutinied in 1857. The mutineers killed all their officers. My brother escaped death somehow and fought throughout the Mutiny and was with Peel's Brigade during those terrible times. After the Mutiny he entered Staff employ, and in course of time received a commission. On his retirement from the Army in 1863, my brother took to coal mining and was Manager of several colliery companies. In 1875 Sir Charles Metcalfe appointed him Governor of the Calcutta Jail. This last post for which he was selected from a large number who offered themselves, was one requiring the constant exercise of tact and discretion; it also carried with it duties analogous to those of Personal Assistant to the Commissioner

of Police, Calcutta. He retired on pension from this post in 1901. I never saw poor Tom again as he died in India."

"And are you remaining permanently in London, Aunt?" asked her nephew, after a pause, absorbed in the interesting recital.

"Oh no, Brian," she returned, "I shall soon retire to my own little place at Belturbet, and you must visit me there very soon. It will be *Caed Millin Failtha* for you. I came to London on a visit, at the particular request of my grand-nephew Alick Brennen. He has been learning engineering some years in England and now has a good appointment at Croydon—Barton and Sons, Electrical Engineers. I do not think he will return to India. A further reason for my visiting London is that Alick's mother and father, your cousins Pauline and Charles—Charles is an Inspector of His Majesty's Imperial Customs, now on furlough—are residing with him. I was anxious to see them. I am sure, Brian, they would be very glad to see you. All London is now talking of your achievements; I think all your connexions will be proud to know you."

"Very well, Aunt," said Brian, simply, ignoring the last compliments, "no sooner opportunity offers I'll go and see my cousins, I shall be so happy to—but my time is so fully occupied for the next fortnight or so I cannot promise to visit them within that period, but I will, I will."

After a few more minutes conversation on generalities, the old lady prepared to take her departure. She was overjoyed to have found her nephew and of whom she had read so much. She felt that he was indeed like her lost son. He was of her own flesh and blood, the image of his father, whom she had last seen as a youth, little younger than herself. Brian accompanied his aunt to the Barrack gate, where on parting with tears she bade him *au revoir*, at the same time making him promise to cross over to Ireland and see her.

Many similar simultaneous conversations had taken place in the Barrack square. Many were the tears shed ; many were the promises made, despite the gaze of the crowds outside the railings, who though not entitled to come inside, appeared to be quite interested, as crowds usually are at everything lifted out of the ordinary. They seemed to be waiting patiently for the morrow, when the much-talked-of warriors would come forth publicly, when a better view of them would be obtained.

This opportunity arrived with the time for the march to the Guildhall. The troops paraded, and to the now usual loud and prolonged cheers and to the accompaniment of their regimental march, marched superbly out of barracks for the famous building.

Great crowds lined the way throughout, and when the Strand was reached progress became all but impeded, but at last the troops managed to enter the huge building where breakfast was served up for them.

Needless to say this was done full justice to, the City Fathers themselves attending to their guests : in fact to be able to help in any way seemed to be everyone's ambition.

Speeches eulogizing their bravery and steadiness in battle were duly made. Captain Ackland, V.C., much to that officer's discomfiture, was again and again referred to as the " bravest of the brave in the war," although several other V. C's. were present. After being overwhelmed with hospitality, which made them feel like new men, the force was with difficulty, owing to the immense crowds, drawn up outside. Amid the rousing cheers of the populace the march to Buckingham Palace commenced. The King himself would there present a set of Colours to each Battalion.

The march to the Palace proved to be almost as difficult as some of the marches through Afghanistan. The crowd breaking through simply would not let the men keep their ranks. The Loyal Londoners of both sexes insisted on carrying their now

war-worn rifles! Deafening cheers followed them, but at last the Palace was gained, and with the massed bands of His Majesty's Foot Guards, which had not accompanied their regiments to France, playing their now never-to-be-forgotten tune

“If at first you don't succeed,

Try, try, try, again,”

the now almost bewildered-happy men swung into the courtyard, through the Quadrangle, and right on to the beautiful and spacious lawn facing the Palace front.

The four Battalions averaged some four hundred men each. The Cavalry was nearly at full strength. Where was the Battery of Artillery? the ground was marked out for it. His Majesty King George, accompanied by Queen Mary, now emerged from the main entrance, through the large glass doors, crossed the terrace, and descended the steps on to the lawn. As Their Majesties approached the troops, helmets were placed on fixed bayonets, raised, and long and lusty cheers were given for the King and Queen, who even graciously deigned to walk down the whole length of the line inspecting the war-won troops.

The King and Staff had now traversed the front rank and had proceeded up the rear rank. Who were the score or so of men, evidently an unit, here on the right of the two lines of troops? Where was the Battery of Artillery?

His Majesty already knew. Alas! its gallant gunners, excepting the score or so present, were lying still and silent—far, far away—in one huge and common grave at Shah Godar! His Majesty halted here for a few moments, apparently absorbed in deep sad thought. No doubt His Majesty was mentally visualising that sanguinary battle, on the result of which hung in the balance the fate of the Empire over which His Majesty ruled. Here were some of the gallant men who had helped to save the Empire. These lived and were ready to lay down their lives again in his service as did their dead comrades. His Gracious Majesty was visibly affected as he slowly walked to

the front of the troops. He delivered a brief, pathetic, sympathetic speech, graciously acknowledging the gallant services of the Anglo-Indian troops. Nor was honourable and grateful mention of the services of the whole community omitted during the brief but terrible war. King George concluded by promising further recognition of the whole Anglo-Indian community, convinced as His Majesty was of their ever upholding the traditions of gallant British soldiers. The King now addressed one of his Equerries and Captain Ackland was presented to King George by the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Connaught. His Majesty, referring to the brave deed at Sadopur, heartily congratulated the Captain, and then the hand of Royalty pinned the Victoria Cross on his breast. It was a proud moment for the hero. Further, to our hero's utter surprise and delight the King was pleased to promote him Major from date.

The King and Queen now shook hands with Brian, and would wonders never cease—for at that moment General Lucas came up, leaning on his wife's arm. His Majesty addressed the General who recounted the gallant deeds of the young Major, the young Major himself feeling far more uncomfortable than he had ever felt under fire.

All this was listened to by many famous soldiers present, who on his rejoining them shook our hero cordially by the hand. Lady Lucas completely broke down. With the tears standing in her eyes she gratefully thanked Major Ackland for having saved her husband's life. "Dear Robert," she said, between her sobs "did I not tell you in India, when Major Ackland was a youth, that we may some day have cause to think more highly of the Anglo-Indians?"

"Yes, yes, my dear, Oh yes!" capitulated the now confused General, as he adjusted his eyeglass "you were—haw! as usual quite right, my dear—haw! quite right."

The King who had moved a little way now advanced and conversed with Lady Lucas, who explained to His Majesty

that she had once told her husband, whose views at the time were adverse, that many good qualities existed among the Anglo-Indian community.

Major Ackland, V.C., now rejoined his Battalion as its Second-in-Command, and hearty cheers were again raised for the King.

The Colours bright and brilliant, unfurled by a gentle wind that blew, were now brought forward: they were solemnly blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then each set was presented with due ceremony to the Battalions and Cavalry Regiment.

Inscribed within the laurel, in letters of gold, were the words "Jugluk" "Sadopur" and "Shah Godar." On marching past the "Soldiers of the King" received much cheering and clapping.

The bands now played the National Anthem, and with three more hearty cheers for Their Gracious Majesties, the ceremony ended.

With Colours flying, gleaming bayonets fixed, the band playing the regimental march, the Anglo-Indian Brigade now marched out of the Palace grounds and with great difficulty—for the crush outside the Palace was almost solid—reached Wellington Barracks, thankful for the time being to escape being spoiled by the patting, petting, and cheers of the enthusiastic populace.

The Battalion was granted a month's holiday. They never afterwards forgot the good time they enjoyed. What with fêtes, free conveyance, free theatres, visits to different parts of England, the month was only too short. Many spent the time with relatives whom they discovered.

Many a grandmother received her grandson joyfully, only too pleased to see again the son of the long, long lost one, who had years before left the parental roof a beardless youth to enlist as a soldier, and had gone to India, but for

some inexplicable reason had never returned home. But though given up for lost he was never forgotten. Many noted the swarthy complexions of their grandsons, but few could guess the reason. They knew India was a hot country and thought that the sun had tanned their skins.

Major Ackland now embraced the opportunity offered to visit Ireland, the home of his fathers. He spent a most happy time on his aunt's well kept and fair estate in Belturbet, hearing with the greatest interest the many stories of his father's boyhood, amid the changed and charming scenery of the Emerald Isle. He was much sought after by the County families, with whom his aunt was an especial favourite; and, though he did not desire it, was "lionized" everywhere, and even admitted to the most exclusive circles, a very great social honour indeed though he scarce deemed it such.

The doings of the Anglo-Indians were faithfully recorded by most of the English papers: the Anglo-Indians being referred to as "Britain's deliverers," which sounded better to Anglo-Indians than "Britain's last hope!" as Volunteers are sometimes sarcastically designated.

An influential paper declared that Major Ackland's gallant feat in cutting the barbed wire and putting the Afghan gun out of action at Sadopur, had mainly affected the final issue of the war. Brian on reading this took steps to qualify the statement. But this only heightened the effect, as the paper, which was the only one he had ever written to, published his letter *in extenso* and *verbatim*! It declared that Brian, with the true modesty of a hero had with a simple jack-knife, so to say, carved out a career "even at the cannon's mouth." Other papers reprinted his letter, which appeared under large headlines, "Remarkable statement by Major Ackland, V.O." until our hero heartily wished he had left journalism alone. He was besieged by reporters, and batteries of cameras were pointed at him and was often "taken" in every position, unused to this wholly-new strategy on their part.

Whether the statement that Major Ackland's deeds had affected the final issue of the war was strictly or literally correct or not, there is no doubt that it was materially helpful, as the cutting of the wire and disabling of the gun had allowed the British attack at Sadopur to be pushed home some hours earlier than it otherwise or ordinarily would have been. The 1st and the 2nd Divisions had thus gained valuable time, and were able to oust the Afghans that day, and immediately proceed to the position occupied by the 3rd Division. And the decisive victory at Shah Godar was won while the Russians were yet unready to meet the British Army. Time was an important factor in this British victory.

The whole campaign was discussed in detail and in all its bearings in the Press. The brilliant generalship of the Indian Commander-in-Chief, his complete mastery of "higher tactics," and the bravery and the wonderful stamina of Britain's soldiers added a new page in the history of the Greatest Empire the world has ever known.

The Anglo-Indians read the papers, smiling at some of the stories written of imaginary interviews. They were enjoying themselves immensely and London saw them everywhere daily, now wearing the two medals with the three bars given for the campaign.

London was now satiated. The people had muffled; their curiosity was appeased; and last, but not least, the situation was saved. That being so, the great world of London automatically resumed its accustomed course, and settled down to the established order of things.

The Anglo-Indian Brigade had the honour of being inspected by numerous great Generals, German and other, and a few days' manoeuvres were organised for their benefit in which the British Army, the whole of which had now returned from France, participated.

But, to their great regret, the end of the stay of the Anglo-Indian Brigade in England came all too soon, and when the

eventful day at last arrived, early morning found them on parade for the last time. They wore a new head-dress, namely the helmet worn by the British Army in India, seldom seen by Londoners. These had not been hitherto worn by the Anglo-Indians while in London. In this head-gear the Anglo-Indians presented quite a new and different aspect to the Londoners. They conjured up to their minds the sunny south and bloody battles.

As the Brigade was falling in, the Band and Drums played "Tolstoi's Good bye" and "Auld Lang Syne," the crowds in Birdcage Walk taking up the strains and singing. Many eyes were bedimmed with tears, ladies sobbing audibly.

The Band and Drums of the Foot Guards now formed up near the barrack gate and a few minutes after Sir Richard Hodson, the Commander of the Anglo-Indian Brigade, gave the order, "Slope arms to India; quick march!"

The Anglo-Indians swung out of the barrack gate and after a slow journey, for immense crowds lined the whole route, the crowds, especially the feminine element, carrying the men's rifles, joining the ranks and marching in step with the soldiers, on whose arms they hung, arrived at Nine Elms station, where the King and Queen were waiting on the platform, surrounded by hundreds of the highest personages in England to bid the Anglo-Indians God-speed.

After a short wait on the platform the trains with their living loads steamed off to Southampton amid waving of handkerchiefs and rounds of ringing cheers.

Here the trooper which was to convey them home awaited their embarkation. Soon all were aboard. Crowds lined the jetties and dockyard gates and gave them an enthusiastic farewell. There was however something almost unique in the present send-off. Many troopers annually leave Southampton with men for foreign service. These are bidden farewell and a safe return home. In this case, however, the voyagers would

never return.' They were going and not leaving home. This most of the Londoners could hardly understand. They believed that the Anglo Indians were Britons. They looked like Britons, though certainly they were swarthy. They had been treated as Britons. Indeed, an Anglo Indian always refers to Britain as "home," though the European in *India* is apt to smile and call this "eccentricity." But surely it is not "eccentric" for a man to call his father's country "home" and further when it is considered that he is bound to it by all the strongest ties of association viz. those of sympathy, education, religion, culture, &c., &c.

The little tug was now round the trooper and she soon cast her moorings and slowly left the landing stage, the Band and Drums again playing "Auld Lang Syne." The scene was one full of quiet deep pathos. Soon her head would be turned in mid-channel, the cheering of the crowds would grow fainter, and yet fainter; the tug, giving their usual hoots of farewell, would leave her to manage for herself; and yonder coast-line would be lost in the dim distance.

Now she had got into the Solent. The fortresses on either side fired salutes as the vessel majestically steamed out past the Needles Lighthouse and down the Channel into the famous bay, where the Anglo Indians had a thirty-six hours' experience never to be forgotten. The huge Atlantic rollers, as is often the case there, tossed and buffeted the ship about, but the brave vessel breasted them all and bore on, and soon the far-famed stormy bay was left behind.

The journey to India *via* the Suez Canal, though very interesting, proved uneventful. Bombay was reached in twenty days. Thousands of the friends and relatives of the units of the Anglo-Indian Brigade were present at Apollo Bunder to welcome them back to India. An Anglo-Indian deputation had been arranged to meet the veterans on landing, headed by Mr. Egdam, C.I.E., the ex-Anglo-Indian Member

of the Viceroy's Council, who had done so much and worked so hard in the interests of his community ; no more however than he always had done in the interests of India as a whole.

When Mr. Egdam first mooted the question of Anglo-Indian regiments he had to encounter much adverse criticism in the Press, and from the British ; the outcome, obviously, of racial prejudice and racial animosity, but he struggled and fought for the Cause so nobly and valiantly as to finally enlist the sympathy and aid of even His Majesty the King himself. His life-work, therefore, had not been in vain. Anglo-Indians more than justified his hopes.

Major Ackland, V.C., was the centre of attraction wherever he went ; his wonderfully rapid promotion was talked of everywhere, more especially of his resource and gallantry that had been so instrumental in bringing the Anglo Indian regiments prominently to notice.

The Europeans present cheered them ; the Indians maintained a sulky silence. The Hindu population however regarded Major Ackland as a reincarnation of the great "Sikander Sahib" himself, as they called the famous James Skinner.

Many Anglo-Indian mothers mourned their loved and lost ones, but their comfort lay in the thought that their sons had died for a noble cause.

Gallant old ex-Sergeant-Major Ackland, V.C., who had travelled to Bombay to meet his boy, received him with unbounded joy, love, pride, and admiration. With tears flowing down his rugged cheeks he kissed him. "My son, my only son", he cried, as he folded him in his arms. "Did your two brothers die like men ?" "Yes, dear father," replied the young Major completely overcome. "Both were killed in action." "Then God be praised," returned the war-worn veteran, dashing the tear-drop away from his eye, "they have not given their lives in vain. Had I a dozen sons I would place them all in the service of my King and Country !"

Annette Scott, now a nurse in a large hospital in Bombay, was an unseen spectator of this proud, pathetic scene. It cost her indeed an effort to refrain from flying to him her hero, but she contented herself with feasting her eyes on him, her own ever dear, noble hero. She wondered as the troops disembarked and marched from the docks, what had become of her present to Brian, the now famous jack-knife. As for herself she still wore his badge-brooch, which was a treasure to her. When the troops had marched away she sadly hied homewards. She wondered if Brian would now think of her and of that promise now that he had accomplished his aim in life—the raising of the Anglo-Indian community to which he belonged. She hoped at least he would write to her. He was ever dear to her, more than she could say, and she would cherish the memory of her hero, her first, her only love.



CHAPTER XV.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION SOLVED.

NOTHING succeeds like success. The amazing feats of the Anglo-Indian regiments cemented an eternal alliance with or, in plainer words, were now to form a permanent and integral part of the British Indian Army. One of the immediate consequences of this was that the status of the community now stood decidedly higher in public estimation, and every Anglo Indian considered it his greatest good fortune to be one. What a stir and excitement was there, contrasting strangely with its superior serenity at Simla when requests came pouring in from high placed civil officials and some military men from all over India to permit them to change the national nomenclature in their individual cases, from European to Anglo-Indian. Many members of the Civil Service and Imperial Departments—Police, Forests, Medical, Public Works, Education, Provincial Civil Service, Assistant Secretaries, Registrars and Superintendents of Imperial and Provincial Secretariats, Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents of Government Presses, &c., &c., who had hitherto styled themselves Europeans now not only admitted that they were Anglo-Indians but insisted on being known as such. Some even availed themselves of the services of the famous geneological expert Maguire, and that gentleman and his office were kept fully engaged for some time in tracing back the records of the ascendants of so-called Europeans,—in every instance with phenomenal success. And much surprise, naturally, was caused in high circles on discovering what high and honourable positions some of these held. Many wealthy merchants and tradesmen, too, who had for purely business reasons styled themselves European, now admitted that they were Anglo-Indians.

These last, be it said to their lasting credit, now expended their wealth and influence for the good of their community and the bolted doors were soon thrown open. The Indian Government now considered the matter of higher education for Anglo-Indians in right earnest. A scheme was duly formulated and speedily materialised in schools and colleges handsomely built and endowed for the community, thus, in the matter, falling into line with the other communities. Anglo-Indians were in consequence enabled to obtain higher education with fitting facility. The Indian railways, once their forlorn hope, made accessible their higher paid and responsible posts. Notices calling for Anglo-Indians as employes even stipulated that none need apply who had not served in the Anglo-Indian forces. It was ruled that Deputy Collectorships were to be divided among Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and Indians. Among the Anglo-Indian forces a certain percentage of non-commissioned officers could compete for admission to all the Indian Departments: they would also be given posts as Jailors, Inspectors, and Deputy Superintendents of Police and Presses. Thus by the wholesale and wholesome introduction of these long-delayed equally just and generous measures and by the displacement of a national or rather racial by a more rational rule of selection, many anomalies, much heart-burning, and even positive injustice were removed. For all these measures, by which though the Anglo-Indian only came to his own, the community was duly and deeply grateful. Many old Anglo-Indian names were raked up, true stories appeared in the Press about them, and books detailing the doughty deeds of dead and gone Anglo-Indians flooded the market. Europeans were surprised to learn how in times gone by many famous Anglo-Indians bearing European names had successfully served Britain in high positions.

The name of Warburton (Sir Henry), for one, was recalled. This officer actually had sole charge of the Khyber Pass, the only route deemed possible for an invasion of India,

ACKLAND, THE ANGLO-INDIAN.

There was an Anglo-Indian, a member of a community hitherto deemed useless, disgraced, despised, not thought good enough to be soldiers of the King, actually a British General and a Baronet as well, in charge for years of the historic Pass itself! Sir Henry's son also was in British service. The influence of General Warburton over the Afghans and Afridis in that it was marvellous and unique enabled him to use it most successfully in the policy of the British at that period. To give another instance: Colonel Skinner, C.B., who numbered among his wide circle of friends Governors General, a succession of Lieutenant-Governors, and Commanders-in-Chief and whose services to Britain are not only writ large in the annals of India but, what is more, had decidedly been a great factor in the conquest of India. Many similar instances of sterling service and devotion to duty were adduced of bygone Anglo-Indian worthies. Government were now decidedly well-disposed towards the community, even taking it beneath its protecting wing or fostering care. To the parents of every Anglo-Indian boy of a bona fide Anglo-Indian marriage it was proposed to bestow a bounty as the Government now recognised in the community a valuable asset in holding India. And in case of any attack on Britain herself Anglo-Indian soldiers could hold India and thousands of British soldiers would be available for Home defence. The policy approximated that prevailing in Australia. Who nowadays hears of a British regiment being stationed in Australia? Of course, many years must elapse before the services of the British Army could be entirely dispensed with in India. But when it came some of the chief results would be immense financial benefit and the maintenance in England of a much stronger army for political eventualities.

Major Ackland, V.C., was after an interval promoted to the command of his regiment, and Commissions as Second-Lieutenants were thrown open to Anglo-Indians of good family, a necessary preliminary being a thorough course of

instruction and training in the Quetta Staff College. A military career was thus rendered feasible to any bona fide Anglo-Indian who might elect such. Colonel Sir Brian Ackland, V.C., on whom a K. O. B. had been conferred in the Birthday Honours List rose to the command of the whole Anglo-Indian Brigade and in course of time all British officers gave place to Anglo-Indians. And nobly did they respond to the implicit trust now placed in them.

Sir Brian Ackland, V.C., K.O.B., who had now risen to the military rank of Brigadier-General purchased an estate for his father in Dehra Dun which the veteran named "Belturbet," and here the good old man lived to a ripe old age with his fond and faithful wife, the devoted partner in all his joys and sorrows, his constant companion throughout a somewhat changing and chequered career, and who could look back on the past with pride on a life unswerving from the path of duty. His daughters Vera, Kathleen, and Beryl had married Commissioned Officers in Anglo-Indian regiments and had families. Gratefully realising the encouragement and help of Government and by Europeans, members of the community assiduously qualified themselves for and speedily attained positions of trust and responsibility in Government and mercantile service. Mr. Egdam's services on behalf of the community were not forgotten by the Government. He was first of all made a C. I. E. and subsequently a Knight as were also his successors in office, notably Mr. Jock Chalmers and the Hon'ble Mr. Attobb, the Member of the Governor General's Council now in office. Many more would probably be the recipients of that honour on the King's approaching Birthday, for rumour had it that the Honours List contained the names of many prominent Anglo-Indians.

The last-named gentleman just mentioned, a wealthy and benevolent landowner, had rendered invaluable assistance to the Indian Government, by placing at their service 500 of his own Anglo-Indian employes, mounted, armed, and equipped,

most creditably, and all at his own personal trouble and expense. The offer was gladly and gratefully accepted. The men were known as "Attob's Patrols" and were detailed for duty as such in the United Provinces—striking terror into the hearts of evil-doers and appreciably eliminating the *badmash* element.

Brigadier-General Ackland had the further honour of leading his Anglo-Indian regiments on the occasion of the frequent frontier wars, where he and they added to their renown and incidentally the regiments to their yet meagre list of battle honours. Sir Brian now got his step as Major-General as well as the further high honour of a K. C. S. I. for his military services, and received the thanks of the Governor General in Council. Every Anglo-Indian private, to speak figuratively, carried his baton in his knapsack. Anglo-Indians were no longer sneered at, snubbed or scorned. And in various Government offices the little intrigues and currying-favour devices so dear to a certain class of the indigenous as well as the marvellous fecundity of obstruction of the Code, as utilised by the ubiquitous Babu with his—"This cannot, Sir, according § 000400," "that scratched out, Sir, by the clause (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)"—were quietly and commonly ignored or unmasked and rendered futile.

Major-General Ackland was still a bachelor. Many of his more intimate friends asked him why he did not marry and many were the rumours to the effect that he was engaged, but they came to nought. His views on marriage, so far as he was concerned personally, were well known and his particular friends humorously pointed out that as he had now no reason but the selfish one for remaining in single blessedness he should now share and double it. General Ackland quietly and smilingly listened to all these arguments but, truth to tell, he knew of no woman whom he would care to call wife.

He had entirely lost all trace of Annette Scott, his childhood's companion and confidante. She was however always

uppermost in his thoughts. Lady Lucas had heard from Brian the story of Annette's present to him of the jack-knife. Lady Lucas had further wormed out the secret from him of his love for Annette in a manner that led Brian to believe that Lady Lucas corresponded with Annette. He often wanted to write to Lady Lucas about Annette, but somehow had not been able to nerve himself for the ordeal, sensitive as he always was to even the least obtrusion of purely personal feelings. And yet Brian was certain he loved Annette and he determined to discover her whereabouts. His heart yearned for her. He had heard casually of her having joined the nursing staff of some hospital—but where? What would he not give to know—O for the touch of a vanished hand and those sweet lips and smiling eyes—Poor love-lorn, love-sick Brian; nought now to console, but these sweet and yearning memories and the unavailing solace of thoughts in his seclusion.

He caressed and kissed her present, *her* hand had touched it—the never-to-be-forgotten jack-knife. This, this alone accomplished the deed that won him the V. C. Him? It was Annette! But for Annette the Anglo-Indian community might never have been elevated to their present position. He now envied some of his friends, parents of stalwart children. He thought with some anxiety that unless he married the name of Ackland would die with him. He had no brothers surviving him.

While still thinking of Annette and Lady Lucas, his orderly brought him his Home mail, and a pleased smile of recognition illumined his face as he glanced at the writing of his old friend and Chief, General Sir Robert Lucas—retired. The letter said, simply, Sir Robert and Lady Lucas were contemplating a visit to India in the cold weather and would take up their residence in Meerut. Would Brian see them? Brian replied saying he would be only too delighted.

The time for their arrival soon approached and Brian lost no time in calling upon the gallant General and his

kind-hearted wife. Lady Lucas after the usual courteous commonplaces broached the subject of the General's marriage. Brian said, as he said always, that he loved but one woman and had lost her. Certainly he had no idea of her whereabouts. The statement, revealing as it did the sentiments of a lover's keen and sad regrets, awoke all the active sympathy of the kindly-disposed lady, who recalling too her own sweet memories of a similar interesting period, was anxious to do all she could to bring the two young people together.

Accordingly she plied and pressed him with skilful questions till he bared his bosom saying that his love was for Annette. He loved her still, with a love that grew daily stronger. Lady Lucas with a true woman's wit having extracted all she wanted to know, succeeded finally in making Brian promise that if Annette were found he would marry her immediately. This Brian readily enough promised, agreeably surprised at the lady's prompt and skilful matrimonial manoeuvres. General Lucas, who was listening to the conversation, was highly amused. He told Major-General Ackland that a man—haw—never knew the depths of woman's haw—guile or rather—haw—winning wile. He was sure that Lady Lucas had a pleasant surprise in store for him; but he found that it was always necessary to let Lady Lucas have her own way. "I feel—haw! I feel," said the gallant General in an oratorical mood, "that Lady Lucas has—haw! carried off the honours of war this—haw—evening."

A few days after this General Ackland received an invitation to a large Garden Party at the residence of General and Lady Lucas. He now received such invitations as a matter of course and had grown accustomed to such and similar gatherings. He cheerfully accepted the invitation. Lady Lucas received him in common with all her guests and he was soon in conversation with the other military officers present. Later on finding an opportunity Lady Lucas said she wished to speak

to him in private. Having led him to a seat and speaking first Lady Lucas almost immediately plunged into the subject of his marriage. She asked him if he still loved Annetto Scott. Receiving a reply in the affirmative Lady Lucas again extracted his promise of marriage, and skilfully turned the conversation into other channels. A few minutes after she asked him to walk into her arbour. Brian at once complied, little divining the plot about to be revealed for his benefit, but soon noticed that Lady Lucas seemed quietly jubilant. Brian scanned her face: it was inscrutable. As they neared the Conservatory Lady Lucas's face grew as inscrutable as that of the Sphynx, and she asked again "General Ackland you truly love Annetto Scott?" "Certainly, Lady Lucas," returned the now agitated General, "I would answer you a thousand times with 'Yes, I love her.' But, pray, do not distress yourself with my personal misfortunes." "Do you love her so much that you would call her wife?" persisted Lady Lucas. "Why, most certainly," cried Brian, "if she were free and would take me as her husband, with my rather belated love." Then tell Annetto herself again, for she has heard all you have said" and opening the door of the Conservatory Lady Lucas led the wondering lover into it and, straight—dumbfounded,—into the very presence of Annetto herself! Then kissing Annetto on both cheeks Lady Lucas beat a hasty retreat, leaving the love-lorn, long-lost lovers of childhood all to themselves. Brian was too surprised to speak for a few moments, but soon the whole situation and plot dawned upon him. He gazed at Annetto a spell, then opening his arms—Annetto flew into them with a bound, when he clasped them and her sweet and slender palpitating form in an embrace to his heart. The words he now poured out to her were the sweetest she ever heard; but sweeter still to him the whispered "Yes" as she hid her face, suffused with the rosiest of blushes deeper in his bosom. How sweet, too, to the General was the name "Brian" from those loving lips: it was years since anyone but his father had called him by that name, and it sounded doubly sweet from Annetto. A short explanation followed, both taking

the blame and each forgiving the other, to for ever forget the past, and to now live for the future which had every promise of being a happy one. Brian found Annette little changed. The two lovers plighted their troth. To the immense surprise of his friends, when General Sir Brian Ackland, V. C., returned to the assembled guests a young lady was leaning on his arm, whom he introduced to all and sundry as his intended wife. Lady Lucas affected as much surprise as the rest of the company, though she had, as we have seen, skilfully engineered the whole affair herself.

Preparations for the wedding ceremony were promptly undertaken. Years had already been wasted ; there was no need for further delay. General and Lady Lucas would also soon be leaving India for good, and the gallant General was highly pleased on being asked to act as " Bestman." In the course of a few weeks the ceremony took place with great *éclat* and abounding gaiety. The presents were as beautiful and varied as were ever made at a wedding in India. All classes contributed. The European Army in India made a present of magnificent plate ; the gift of the Princes of India took the form of jewellery, worth a king's ransom, that of the Anglo-Indians though less costly was more serviceable—a fine estate in Simla valued at £30,000. This was subscribed for by the various Anglo-Indian Associations in India through the parent Association, the Anglo-Indian Empire League, and the deed of gift was presented in person by Sir John Attobbb, the life President-in-Chief. The reception was held at Lady Lucas's bungalow. General Lucas made an elaborate speech, in which, for the hundredth time, he detailed General Ackland's career and declared that the gallant officer who was a second Colonel Skinner, C.B. in the flesh, had at last crowned himself with glory, this last act being the bravest act of his career ; but, growing serious, General Lucas finished his speech by asserting that the Bride and Bridegroom were the most famous married couple in India, the saviours of the Anglo-Indian Community ;

Lady Ackland having equally with her husband, in a most remarkable way, been a factor in the great reformation that had taken place in India during the last ten years. He finally fixed his inseparable monocle and added "Ladies and Gentlemen—What do us ordinary males know—haw! about Woman?" She wins all along the line. She takes the conqueror captive, even as she does this very moment our gallant hero and friend Ackland—haw. I have—haw—nothing more to say for—haw—did I say ever so much, Woman—haw—would have the last word!" General Ackland replied in a short happy speech attributing the cause of his great success and what followed it all to his dear wife. Sir Brian and Lady Ackland soon afterwards left to spend their honeymoon in Ireland. The carriage in which they left for the railway station was drawn by a gun team from the Anglo-Indian Battery of Artillery, three Anglo-Indian Officers acting as drivers.

The couple spent a happy honeymoon, this being the first time Lady Ackland had visited Europe. A few months after they returned home to India and settled down to a truly happy married life. Major-General Ackland continued in the service of his King, his famous Brigade ever being kept in a high state of efficiency. In the course of a few years he was the proud father of three stalwart boys, James, Brian, and Macgillapatrik, all of whom were most carefully trained and destined to follow in their father's footsteps, but of course with a far better start in life than their father had; and here we will leave them wishing them continued success in the service of their King and Country, health, wealth, happiness and prosperity; and thus conclude our Story of Ackland the Anglo-Indian.



EPILOGUE.

WE will not affront the intelligence of our readers by pointing to the moral that adorns this tale. Nevertheless, as the story has now become public property, there will be some, or rather the unsophisticated few, who are sure to ask themselves "What does it all mean: what does all this tell or teach us?" For the benefit of such questioners we hasten to add: the two outstanding features of the story are War and Love, even as those with their limitations of outlook will readily recognize it is in real everyday life. "The daily round, the common task," with its implied sense of the feeling of hopelessness and despair is only the common portion, the conditions under which most of us must work out the true purpose of life, which is not perfection, not even its prizes, but *progress*. That being so, Life is a ceaseless state of warfare, with all the forces of evil and wrong from without and within; even the brief cessation that there may be must be utilized in attaining some state better fitted to cope with the powers of darkness and evil, not only better means of resistance, but learning the lessons of defeat and failure, a determination to render ourselves immune from these last. O, happy is he who has learned the lessons betimes; happier still, if he has found the only and true incentive to all profitable action—which is Love!—love in its widest sense; love in the scholar for ambition and fame; in the statesman for his country; in the philanthropist for the race, in the philosopher for universal good; and love in the humblest of us for what is indisputably the highest, noblest, and most human, so marvellously summed up in the words of Burns:—

" To make a happy fireside clime
For weans and wife —
Is the true pathos and sublime
Of human life. "

And, coming to a communal, and still intimate, application of these wholesome truths, the lowlier and needier the community the greater the need for the sternest and stoutest struggle ; and in that struggle not so much the cant of union, brotherhood, and other counsels of perfection, as the force of example in individual members ; for human nature is more prone to follow than to be taught. The next thing is to make use of every, even the smallest, opportunity ; for real growth of or progress in life is not *per saltum* but the result of infinitesimal and continued increments, an almost imperceptible development. All this is typified in Ackland, in the incident of the jack-knife, &c. It is not possible for most of us to be heroes like Ackland, or even to snatch the prizes that he did, neither is that the lesson to be learned. The lesson is rather to war, war always with all that is mean, low, base, ignoble ; to cease only for the purpose not of rest but of recuperation ; to have ever at heart, as Ackland did, the near and dear, the undying love, defying and undaunted, the love, be it of fame, fortune, family or fatherland, which creates enthusiasm, which carries all before it ; for without an object in life, without struggle, without love, without enthusiasm, there can be no success, no progress, no happiness. Better, like Seneca, and in the words of Seneca, " retire from a world of slaves. "

