

the wise say : that is, if good books can be got, but they are seldom worth reading. The real study is the ground. Look at the grand features which a thousand years cannot change, not at small matters which a dozen years would alter. I observe that Hyderabad is built on a mass of rocks, which, with some high ground near Meeanee, must always have split the river and formed the basin of the Delta. Burnes, Del Hoste, and Wilson, make conjectures upon ruins, and on channels through a flat alluvial soil, every part of which changes annually. From a boat I have seen 20 acres go under the river in an hour's time ! But Schwan and Hyderabad are fixtures, and if the river split at the last, as it must because of the rocks, it would run one branch down at the foot of the hills to Kurachee ; the other would frisk at pleasure through the flat land to the East, changing its channels a thousand times since Alexander's day. Now we trace Alexander below Aloré, and evidently at Roree ; and even below Sehwan, and near Hyderabad, he must have been. At the time he was here we must suppose the Fullaillee was, as it is now, a great river, and my intent is to trace its course, of which we know nothing ; to examine also the point above Meeanee where it branches off ; and I think ere the cold season passes, to form a good guess where Patala stood, taking rocks as my guides.

"Mismanaging the waters is one cause of poverty. The Persian wheel is their great resource, but being expensive and a fixture, does not do for the poor. Rathborne was going to send for a newly-invented hydraulic machine ; but it struck me that the Archimedean screw is the thing, and I am trying to make them of pottery, in which the Scindians are very expert. It can be carried by a man and laid down where necessary, and thus little rills, so much wanted, can be spread. When going to Emaum Ghur we crossed a fine ridge of rich hills in the desert, with wood and control of the Narra river, on the west bank, where it has water. Lord E. has, at my request, given a corps of engineers to survey this line ; and my hope is, if I remain, to make this dry bed a canal full of water without injury to the Indus. Then for a

desperate fight with the desert; for I am sure, except where the great sand-track rises, which no mortal can deal with, a great strip of what is now desert may be made like Kent. I shall never see the result, but if it is shown that this fertile land, 10 or 12 miles broad and 400 or 500 miles long, can be cultivated; that it is rich and has healthy hills for retreat in the heat; I shall do much for the people of this grand country, to which I have done no injury, no wrong.

"The frontier is not yet settled, the heat will not let me go there at once in my weak state; but the moment it abates I will examine the range of hills running from Soonomeeanee to Shikarpoor. That will be a job, for I must take a strong escort, as all on that side are wild Beloochees, quite up to 'taking a dirty advantage.' Meanwhile I am forming a fighting camel corps, and I have long since proposed to form the army baggage also into a regular corps, able to manœuvre as well as the army, and if necessary defend itself. At Meeanee the camels were made to squat down in a circle with their heads inwards, having the men between their necks; it was a living redoubt, impenetrable for cavalry. My arrangements for the baggage corps are very minute and require time, but my fighting corps will soon be formed."

It is a remarkable proof of Napier's fertility and freshness of mind, that at the age of sixty, when most men have stiffened in military and all other notions, with only a short experience of Indian warfare, and with such a burden of military and civil business laid upon him, he should have conceived and carried into effect two such valuable ideas as those of the fighting and baggage camel corps. It was a curious coincidence that the letters of Napier asking leave to form a camel corps and of Ellenborough suggesting that he should do so, crossed one another. Both had it probably in their minds to imitate Napoleon's dromedary corps in Egypt; but the organisation of the Scinde camel corps was entirely Napier's own.¹ The

¹ Napier has had long to wait for a public recognition of the value

following description of the fighting camel corps is taken from a memorandum by General Sir M. M'Murdo, published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18th June 1884 :—

“The unit composed of a camel and his two riders is arranged thus: a double-seated saddle-frame of light wood-work rests upon a wadded leather pad, and is held in its place by the hump. The sirwan or camel-driver occupies the front seat, his arm being a carbine; the hind rider is the infantry soldier, armed with rifle and bayonet. The seat of

of this invention. If its organisation had not been first interfered with and then destroyed altogether by the Indian Government, the late history of England in the Soudan might have been very different. To the Scinde camel corps the march from Suakin to Berber after General Graham's victories would have been a simple affair. Since then Lord Wolseley has recognised its value, though he has departed from Sir Charles Napier's plan in some important respects. The Scinde camel corps was composed entirely of infantry soldiers; in Egypt, two-thirds were cavalry. Another variation, the reason for which is hard to conceive, consists in the selection of two-thirds of the force from heavy regiments—the Guards and heavy cavalry. The Scinde camel corps could never have ridden 70 miles in one night, seized a robber chief in bed and surrounded by his tribe, and have been back again with their prisoner by the following evening, if the men had not been picked for their light wiry figures. But the most important variation lay in putting only one man on the camel instead of two. The essence of Napier's organisation was that every camel should carry a driver and a fighter; that the driver should be armed in order to defend the camels when the fighters were detached, but that his primary duty was to manage his camel in the field or in camp. This division of labour is essential for two reasons. A single man on a camel, if attacked, can manage neither his beast nor his arms. Again, camels have a strangely delicate constitution, requiring the most constant and careful attention. This the British soldier has not time or knowledge to give. He doesn't know that his camel feels a sore back more than a horse does, or that if it once gets ill it never recovers. Nor has he time, at the end of a long march, to let it browse in its own way off the desert shrubs, which are almost its natural food. And the result will always be, as it was in the case of the Heavy Brigade on the Nile, that the poor camels die by scores or by hundreds, leaving their riders to find some other carriage, or walk home as they can.

the saddle is arranged with a small camel-hair saddle-bag (procurable everywhere in Eastern countries) for carrying food, and over it is laid the rider's quilt or blanket. The greatcoats when not worn were, I think, laid across the hump. Then a flat leathern water-bottle is hooked to the hind part of the saddle, while the 'massallah' (balls of pounded spice, etc.), by which the camel is sustained on long 'daurs' (forays) or journeys, is carried in the same manner in front. The pace is an easy shuffle, not at all tiring to the rider.

"The method of fighting is very simple. When the enemy is found, the commander selects the ground where the camels are to remain with the reserve during the action, sheltered from fire, yet chosen with a view to defence, and if in the vicinity of water, so as to command it. The corps then forms a square from column, or, if more convenient, from column of route, the camels facing outwards in single rank. The order is then given to dismount, when the camels sit down, and the drivers secure the thong of the nose-stud round the camel's knee, so that the animal cannot rise. The infantry soldiers, having in the meantime dismounted, form in quarter column of companies on their coverers within the square, when the commander makes his dispositions for fighting. Two or three of the camels are then made to rise to create an interval for the companies to pass out, when the living fort is reformed, the sirwans taking post behind their respective camels, with carbines unslung. No cavalry will charge such an obstacle. Horses recoil from seated camels. It is on record that in the early part of this century our cavalry, when in pursuit of a band of marauding Jutts, were repulsed on the Runn of Cutch in their attack on this formation. It should be borne in mind that neither baggage nor commissariat supplies accompanies a camel corps on its 'daur.' The principle of the corps is to cast itself loose and act on its own resources; and if the expedition should extend beyond ordinary limits—say 300 miles—or over three days, special arrangements must be planned for feeding both men and camels."

The Scinde camel corps was capable of marching 80 or

90 miles without a halt. It was placed under the command of Fitzgerald, a young man of heroic strength and daring, who soon became the terror of the robber tribes.¹ The baggage corps was only sanctioned by Government after two years of earnest solicitation, and will be noticed later on.

By the middle of August the troubles which were naturally to be expected from the continuation of the Ameers' kardars in office began to be felt, but the Journal shows in what spirit they were met.

"Roberts has come from the Delta, and brought up two scoundrel kardars who have been riding roughshod over the ryots. I will make such an example as shall show the poor people my resolution to protect them. Yes! I will make this land happy if life is left me for a year; nay, if only for six months they shall be sorry to lose the Bahadoor Jung (Lord of war). I shall then have no more Beloochees to kill. Battle! Victory! O spirit-stirring words in the bosom of society! but to me, O God! how my heart rejects them. That dreadful work of blood, sickening even to look on: not one feeling of joy or exultation entered my head at Meeanee or Dubba; all was agony, I can use no better word. I was glad we won, because better it was to have Beloochees slain than Englishmen, and I well knew not one of us would be spared if they succeeded: to win was my work for the day, and the least bloody thing to be done. But with it came anxiety, pain of heart, disgust, and a longing never to have quitted Celbridge, to have passed my life in the 'round field' and the 'devil's acre,' and under the dear yew trees on the terrace among the sparrows: these were the feelings which flushed in my head after the battles. Well, we are born for war in this good world, and will make it while men have

¹ His fame as a daring and skilful soldier was increased by his extraordinary feats as a sportsman. He killed fifty-three tigers in one year at Dera Ismail Khan, and thus cleared the jungle for his camels to browse in. The pulpit in St. Paul's Cathedral was erected to his memory.

teeth and women have tongues. But away with these feelings! Let me go to work, let me sink in harness, if so God pleases; he who flinches from work, in battle or out of it, is a coward.

"There is one great secret in the art of governing long since learned by me. People think, and justly sometimes, that to execute the law is the great thing: this they fancy to be justice! Cast away details, good man, and get a general view; take what the people call justice, not what the laws call justice, and execute that. Both legal and popular justice have their evils, but assuredly the people's justice is a thousand times nearer to God's justice. . . . My good friend — is full of protecting his kardars. They were only getting what was really due to Government. Yes! such dues, so collected, would soon show us the road to Hindostan out of Scinde, and cause half a dozen battles; I shall teach this sort of chaps, these kardars, to find a way of doing their duty without unpopularity; there is no smoke without fire; justice must go with the people, not against the people; that is the way to govern nations, and not by square and compass."

In the beginning of September he was warned that he must go to Kurachee and rest, if he wished to live. Rest he would not, but he left Hyderabad and went down the river on a steamer, where he "slept continuously for several days." So refreshed was he by the voyage and change, that in a fortnight he wrote to Lord Ellenborough: "I feel again equal to my own work, which really overwhelmed me in June, July, and August. I seemed to have lost all power to labour from overpowering weakness; I hope now to earn my pay more honestly, for I assure you I have not been satisfied with myself for the last three months. Had I not seen the youngest and most powerful men equally crushed, I should have thought my constitution broken, and that duty to the public and your lordship demanded my resignation."

His energies were at once devoted to laying the founda-

tions of, the commercial greatness of Kurachee. Much had been already done in the way of public works while the Government was at Hyderabad. He had paid attention at once to what was always uppermost in his mind—the welfare of the private soldier. Spacious barracks were built at Hyderabad, with rooms 25 feet in height, double roofs and upper ventilation. At Kurachee the Indian Government had already begun barracks on the old inferior models; these however were improved by the addition of verandahs, and in time barracks for the horse artillery were added, which were long a pattern of excellence. He had also, while at Hyderabad, repaired the fortress, strengthened his own entrenched camp, organised a station for river-steamers, and tried the experiment of controlling the ravages of the Indus by fixing long and heavy stakes backed with brushwood along the banks. The fortress of Aliar-katanda had been restored, and communication with Meerpoor secured by throwing bridges over the greater nullahs that intersected the country. Higher up the river docks and a commercial *dépôt* were projected at Sukkur; and preparations were made for a causeway to connect Sukkur and Shikarpoor, and for a dike to check the inundations which rendered the lands between those places so malarious. But the centre of his hopes and dreams was Kurachee. Writing to Sir George Arthur, then Governor of Bombay, he says, “You know Kurachee was my hobby long before I came to Scinde, and now that I know the place I am more sanguine than ever. I am going to put in force the Bombay custom-house regulations, for our intercourse will be so intimate, that the same rules should prevail at both to facilitate mercantile affairs. . . . Suez, Bombay, and Kurachee will hit Calcutta hard before twenty years pass; but Bombay will beat Kurachee, and be the Liverpool, if not the London of India.”

Considering the natural obstacles to be overcome these were bold visions. The neighbourhood of Kurachee was hilly, but the seashore was so flat and the harbour so shallow that it was always difficult, and during the monsoons impossible, for vessels to make the port. To remedy these evils a lighthouse was erected and a pier commenced, which was designed to run out two miles into the sea. "The mole which I have not only proposed but begun, confident that Lord E. will sanction it, will enable troops, stores, and merchandise to land with perfect ease, independent of tides; and my hopes are that we shall be able to communicate with Bombay all the year round. This is too nautical a question for me to speak of, but I shall examine the bar well, and find out if we cannot cut it away; such things have been done I suppose, and if not, it is a reason the more for trying now." The next difficulty was that, though the future of Kurachee depended on its connection with the Indus, it was not built on any of its mouths. There were, however, the remains of an ancient watercourse called the Ghara Canal, which was at once taken in hand, repaired, and continued until it joined the port and the river. Besides the works designed to protect and fortify the city, swimming baths were built for the troops; and under the direction of Major Blenkins a tract of ground was appropriated as a Government garden.

"Major Blenkins, my commissary, is one of those Robinson Crusoe fellows gifted with the power of turning a wilderness into a paradise. His operations are magical. He arrived at Hyderabad after the battle of Meeanee, and before Dubba was fought his house was built, and all domestic animals that ever entered Noah's ark were in his compound. In two months more he had a magnificent garden which supplied the whole army with vegetables. When I reached Kurachee I found all my orders for forming and improving a garden

there had been neglected, though the means were at hand. I brought Blenkins down from Hyderabad. In one month his house was built, and a piece of land, before filled with weeds, though called the 'Government garden,' was by him instantly filled with camp-followers at work. The Government of Bombay was persuaded to allow 60 rupees a month, and the garden now (1845) pays 800 rupees a month, furnishing quantities of every kind of vegetable: for one rupee you may buy eighteen pounds weight of esculents!"

From this garden the soldiers were supplied without charge, and scurvy, which had been a terrible scourge, rapidly disappeared. To water the garden and the town pipes were to be laid down from a small river about 12 miles distant, and, after feeding gardens, fountains, and private houses, were to be carried out to the end of the pier to save vessels the trouble and expense of sending to shore for their water supply. But this useful scheme, though the estimated cost was only £1000 a mile, could never obtain the sanction of the Supreme Government. Though in his enfeebled state, and with the various demands upon his time and strength, Napier could not bestow on these works the time and attention he had given in Cephalonia, still his immense knowledge of detail enabled him constantly to make the most valuable suggestions to his engineers, and helped to keep them working at the full stretch of their powers towards the development of the natural resources of the country, to which he at all times and places attached the very highest importance. "Control the robbers," he says, "control the waters; open the communications, and the natural riches of the land and the variety of produce will do all the rest."

Things did not move nearly fast enough to please him. The Scindian was a lazy workman. One can imagine the governor's frenzied feelings at witnessing the following

sight: "When sick, and sitting in my room at Hyderabad, my attention was fixed on some workmen employed to draw bricks up a wall a little more than 20 feet high. Four men loaded little baskets, into which they put eight bricks and drew up one basket, mind! one basket in five minutes by my watch: thus four men took five minutes to supply eight bricks to the workmen above, whose operations were exactly conformable! the idleness of both being dovetailed and nicely fitted with the putty of interesting conversation." To idleness was added scarcity of labour, for the oppressive conduct of the Ameers had driven good artisans from the country. To attract workmen, and from a sense of justice to their class, Napier abolished the "abominable old Indian system of regulating the price of labour by a tariff; the market for labour was at once thrown open, and wages rose from forced labour, nearly unpaid, to 3d. or even 4d. a day. This met with opposition from the English, and, strange to say, I have hardly been able to enforce this rule yet. A tariff on labour is said to prevail in India at this moment; but this is not known personally to me, and I can hardly believe in such foul injustice and tyranny towards the labouring class."

Occasional growls broke from him at the slowness of his engineers, but more often at the stinginess of the Government in not allowing him a larger staff. Sir George Arthur was evidently exercised by his insatiable demands. "Have you no conscience?" he had written to Napier, who replies, "What a question to ask a Governor! No, to be sure I have not. Did you ever know of a Governor who had? He would, if discovered, be stuffed and sent to the museum! However, so far as I am personally concerned, drying would be unnecessary; Scinde has done that. I feel like a mummy *vivant*, travelling to see the difference between posterity and the times of Sesostris. However,

whatever I am, 'no conscience about engineers' troubles me." After two years' experience his judgment of his engineers was not unfavourable. He complains of the slow progress of works, but adds—

"Waddington would be a capital engineer for Methuselah; he is, however, a first-rate soldier, and few would suit me better for a siege, being clever, resolute, and up to his work, which he finally does beautifully; so does Scott, who is a trump; he is a nephew of Sir Walter Scott. Indeed, when I come to analyse, my remarks are not just: the laziness of their workmen, not the engineers' slowness, should certainly be blamed. Scott has no slowness; Maxwell is all energy, and so is Peate; yet work goes on like a tortoise. Well, patience is the remedy. I have lost Baker; he is very clever and very active; it is a great loss for Scinde."

Another "great loss for Scinde" may be said to have occurred in the failure to secure the services as engineer of Mr. G. T. Clark, so well known since to the industrial world as the manager of the Dowlais Steel Works, and to the learned for his original and masterly writings on military architecture in the Middle Ages. Mr. Clark was then staying at Government House, Bombay, whither he had been led by his intimate friendship with the late Sir Bartle Frere, then Secretary to the Governor. He has kindly sent the present writer an account of the negotiation for his services.

"My point of contact with Sir Charles Napier was narrow, but on his part characteristic. The study of Sir Charles's papers must, I feel sure, have made known to you that, although circumstances forced upon him the conquest of Scinde by the sword, what lay very near his heart was the desire to exercise his great administrative talents in the civil government of the province, and, as a corollary, in the development of its natural resources and the native industry.

He thus hoped to raise the character of the people, and to make the acquisition a strength instead of a weakness to our Indian Empire. Good roads, a canal, the improvement of the port of Kurachee, and the construction of a lighthouse there, were contemplated as his first steps, and he wished to place the construction of these works in the hands of some engineer, not in the regular service of the East India Company, and therefore not trammelled by the official delays of which Sir Charles was by no means tolerant. During the year 1843 he had urged this plan upon the Governments of India and Bombay, and in consequence, Sir George Arthur and Mr. Frere, then his private secretary, had named me to Sir Charles as likely to suit him, and had ascertained from me that, under certain conditions, I was both willing and anxious to be engaged. While these negotiations were pending, I met one day, at Government House, a captain in the Indian navy who had just returned from Kurachee. 'Sir Charles,' said he, 'has been talking to me about you, and asked me all sorts of queer questions; I expect he rather distrusted you as a friend of the Governor's, and he remarked that you wrote from Parell' (Government House). 'Does he wear varnished boots?' 'Upon this latter point,' said the captain, 'I was able to satisfy him, for the last time I saw you, you were in fisherman's boots, and up to the knees in mud, taking the particulars of a salt-marsh.' 'That's the man I want,' said Sir Charles. The result was a letter from Scinde, asking my terms. I stipulated for the pay and allowances of a lieutenant of Bengal Engineers, and to this Sir Charles agreed, but said he must have the sanction of the Supreme Government. This sanction Lord Ellenborough refused as irregular, and there, with a pleasant letter of regret from Sir Charles, the matter ended. He took my stipulation as to terms as reasonable. 'No man,' wrote he, 'not in the service, is likely to prosper, because he can have no foundation in case of illness.' I regretted the result exceedingly, for my tents were packed, horses ready, and instruments all in order, and I had been much attracted both by the energy and consideration shown throughout by Sir Charles."

The anxious question about "varnished boots" was very characteristic. His hatred of any affectation that interfered with honest hard work is illustrated by another story, which also shows how he turned a violent temper to good account. It is told in the words of General Sir M. M'Murdo; Sir Charles's tent at Hyderabad was the scene.

"The Bombay Government had intimated their intention of sending some frigates to the mouths of the Indus to take the wounded to Bombay. But as that coast was little known, and much dreaded, it was desirable to have the boats, with the wounded in them, ready to come out over the bar on a given day. I had to calculate therefore the time required for the voyage down the river, in addition to the arrangements for getting them into the boats. My first step was an urgent requisition on the Indus flotilla for the necessary number of native boats to be collected and covered in with reeds. Now the commandant of this flotilla had just joined from some smart appointment in Bombay, and seemed quite too big for his boots! No notice had been taken of my urgent demand that I could discover, and I went and presented myself to the great man on board his vessel, to ask what had been done in the matter; and, without rising from his chair, he said, 'Do you suppose a man of my rank is to collect boats for you?' 'Oh, I beg pardon!' I exclaimed, 'good-morning!' Thereupon I went to the General, and told him how matters stood. 'Send for him at once!' So he shortly arrived in full naval uniform amongst us ragged, unshaven chaps, and we 'run him in' to the General, who had been writing in his shirt and trousers, but for the occasion threw on his uniform coat. It did not require a dozen words to pass for him to twig the man he had to deal with; and he let out at him accordingly. 'I have enough to do, sir, in establishing order and government—oiled though the machinery may be by a competent staff; but when clogged by a pebble like you, sir! ——' or something to that effect, for the words were lost in the superior effect of the General's fist shaken in the direction of the astonished officer. Glaring at the shiny-buttoned coat,

he shouted, 'When work has to be done, I like a man to take off his coat to it!' And off went the General's own coat, which he flung to the corner of the tent! — quietly got to the other side of the table, in the belief, most likely, that the General would assault him! But the boats were collected, I can tell you! and in the early dawn I had them moored from the hospitals, and I remember having my head and shoulders under one of the awnings, arranging a poor fellow on the straw, when I recognised the General's voice behind me, 'Is a man of your rank to put wounded soldiers into boats?' And when I scrambled out, the merry twinkle in his eye told me that the scene in the tent of apparently ungovernable rage was meant for the man he had to deal with."

The works of Kurachee, which have been briefly alluded to, could not be executed without considerable expenditure, and many were the outcries at the Governor's extravagance.

"How strangely people confuse things," he retorts; "scarcely can one be met who discriminates between economy and extravagance; they won't do it! People, generally of good sense, cannot see that £100,000 may be expended with a view to the most rigid economy, and be the most economical thing; while the not spending it would be most extravagant and impoverishing to a country. This mole will be, I am told, ruinous; yet it will change Kurachee from a mud-built hamlet to a large flourishing city, and save money in other ways! Three years ago they would not build a storehouse here for the Commissariat, from economy! I have had an exact calculation made, and fifteen thousand pounds,—I *write* it, so none of your cock-up-nose look, with 'that is an error of figures, he means 1500 rupees,'—fifteen thousand pounds sterling worth of costly stores have been destroyed by exposure to weather, which would have been saved by laying out £500 on a storehouse. This stupidity runs through all our '~~economy~~.' In India economy means

laying out as little for the country and for noble and useful purposes as you can : and giving as large salaries as you can possibly squeeze out of the public to individuals, adding large 'establishments.' What is an establishment? An immense number of half-caste and native clerks to do the work that ought to be done by the head of the office."

Before the Governor's headquarters had been fixed at Kurachee a month, Scinde was visited, simultaneously with many other provinces, by a strange and unknown pestilence. The mortality was small, but no one escaped the sickness, which brought with it not only bodily prostration, but a lassitude of mind that led in many cases to suicide. Europeans and natives were struck down alike, the chief mortality being among the latter. The army could not stir ; public works and agriculture were at a standstill.

"*To Sir G. Arthur, 29th October.*—We are in a fearful way at Hyderabad, and worse at Sukkur. The sickness is, I hear, the same all over India. We do not lose many lives, but neither of those garrisons can relieve their guards! A thousand men are sick in the entrenched camp at Hyderabad, and there are only native doctors ; I have sent them four, but cannot spare one more. The 28th Regiment here cannot parade more than forty-four men, and half of those are convalescents! I trust a few weeks will improve us, or the whole force in Scinde will be helpless. The country people are as ill as we are ; no workman can be had. Can you send me medical men? ours are all ill ; Shikarpoor has not one, and a hundred men are in hospital ; sixteen hundred are ill at Sukkur with only two doctors! Two thousand eight hundred are sick at Hyderabad, and only two doctors able to work!"

The sickness was confined to the banks of the river, about 10 miles on each side of it. Napier had little doubt that it was the result of the unusually high inundation of the past spring ; but he also wrote strongly to Sir H. Gough about the remedy as well as the cause.

“General Lumley’s letter asks, what measures the medical men recommend to prevent a recurrence. Nothing in the power of Government can prevent it; while the Indus overflows its banks and rain falls, malaria will prevail in Scinde.¹ But it may be diminished. By cultivation, which will substitute crops for decayed vegetable matter. By filling up all hollows containing stagnant water. Where that cannot be done without inconvenience to the inhabitants, by turning the ponds into tanks with sides of masonry. By building good barracks, especially for the Europeans. The stench of a low bad barrack is in the morning horrible. No European barracks should be less than 30 feet high; the number of men should be painted on the doors, and officers in command held responsible for this being observed. The heat of this country is tremendous, and if men have not thick walls and lofty rooms, sickness is inevitable. Such barracks are expensive, no doubt; so are sick soldiers; so are dead soldiers. But the difference of these expenses is, that the first is once and done with; the second goes on increasing like compound interest, and quickly outstrips the capital.”

Internal prostration was not the only evil. While all labour was suspended, while the army was in such a state that, at last, there was no one to make out a report, and the gates of Hyderabad were fastened because there was no one to relieve guard, there seemed every probability that external foes were gathering to the aid of the plague. Gwalior was on the point of declaring war; the Sikhs were in arms, and, though in a state of complete anarchy, might at any moment find a leader and pour across the Sutlej; while the air was thick with rumours of preparations by the Afghans for a religious war. It was not surprising,

¹ There was supposed to be some connection between the sickness and the moon. Napier says, “It is strange, but true as gospel, that at the changes of the moon down we all go in fever here! The wise men in England may laugh, but no doctor here laughs; they pitch in quinine at full and new moon.”

therefore, that the hill tribes, too, should be, to use Napier's words, "like banditti listening for the sound of carriage wheels;" the Scindian Beloochees on the west side of the river, "between a growl and a bite;" and "Ali Moorad apparently turning traitor in the midst of the sickening troops." In the midst of these troubles the General himself, only just recovering from his sunstroke, was struck by the new disease; but while all around him struggled unavailingly against the depression and weakness of mind which were the peculiar effects of the disease, his spirit remained erect and firm. Thinking that now was the time to test the moral force that his victories and the benevolent justice of his administration had given him, he assumed the sternest and haughtiest tone, though with hardly an escort to back up his menaces, towards Ali Moorad and the wild chieftains on the west bank of the river, until the abatement of the sickness in December speedily restored him to the power of fulfilling his words. He was soon happily assured that the mass of his subjects were with him. In the Delta, which had been a nest of robbers, the collector's escort were disabled by the sickness, but the peasants voluntarily supplied him with a guard. Officers travelled everywhere without protection, alone or in company. The Hindoo merchants supplied him readily with information, and he was satisfied from every source that he had no one to fear in Scinde except Ali Moorad and some of the greater chiefs. His own force was strengthened by the arrival at Sukkur of Sir Robert Sale, the noble defender of Jelalabad, with the 13th Regiment.

Ali had put forward various claims in insolent language while the sickness was at its worst. As soon, therefore, as some guns had reached Sukkur, he received a menacing reply that promptly brought him to his knees.

"You will be glad to hear," — to Richard Napier, —

"that Ali has been bullied by me. Sir Jasper Nichols was here when my letter to Ali went, and he and the Bombay folk all thought Ali would be furious and not bear it; even Sir G. Arthur thought so. I knew my man. Ali says I am his 'fountain of joy;' that 'his back was bent with the weight of my displeasure; now his heart dances like sunbeams on the waters of delight.' My displeasure would have taken the shape of twelve bomb-shells, tumbling every five minutes on his bent back, and perhaps preventing it ever becoming straight again!"

Having thus put an end to internal dangers, he felt comparatively tranquil about those from without. The troops were recovering their strength. Colonel Roberts had organised an irregular force in Cutch, with such good effect that some of the predatory chiefs asked leave to settle quietly in Scinde. Shikarpoor was reinforced, so as to be strong enough to defy Afghans and hillmen together; armed steamers patrolled the Indus, and Fitzgerald with his camel-corps had pushed up the western bank to Larkhana.

So ended the year of conquest. The summary of its events by Sir W. Napier shows that Sir Charles was not mistaken in his prophecy at Chester that perhaps the years he had yet to live would be the most eventful even of his chequered life.

"He marched at the head of troops about 1000 miles, more than 200 being in the desert.

"He won two great battles against 60,000 enemies, and by his skilful combinations dispersed 12,000 more.

"He took four great fortresses, repaired three, and constructed one, and a large entrenched camp.

"He received the submission of and conciliated 400 chiefs, some of whom could bring 20,000 men into the field.

"He arranged the military occupation of the country: no slight matter in a country where there were few buildings, and where a most pestiferous climate had to be encountered,

joined to the difficulty of ruling a conquered race and keeping in awe innumerable hostile neighbouring tribes.

"He established a civil government in all its branches, social, financial, and judicial, and organised a powerful effective police, horse and foot, for the public security.

"He examined in person the principal mouths of the Indus with a view to commerce, commenced several important public works, and planned others. And during the execution of these things, though twice struck down by most formidable diseases and reduced to the point of death, he conscientiously read and reflected on every court-martial of his military, and every serious criminal trial of his civil government; and, with a very extensive private correspondence, conducted a public one which presents a mass of eight hundred and fifty documents, many being long and profoundly reasoned memoirs upon war, policy, and government, all of them original, pointed, and serious, displaying a mind that never sank under labour."

The new year opened with a brighter prospect. Sir Hugh Gough's victory at Maharajpore had put an end to the Gwalior war, and had made a general rising in the north-west unlikely, though the state of the Punjab still caused great uneasiness. The strength of the troops revived, and Napier's confidence and military ardour grew with it. His dreams sometimes went far beyond India. "How easily, were I absolute, I could conquer all these countries and make Kurachee the capital. With the Bombay soldiers of Meeanee and Hyderabad I could walk through all the lands. I would raise Belooch regiments, pass the Bolan in a turban, and spread rumours of a dream and the Prophet: pleasant would be the banks of the Helmond to the Bombay troops, and to a host of Mahometans, who would follow any conqueror. I have them now as enemies, and so must deal with them, but the Afghans cannot, I am sure, come through the Bolan."

While he was thus scheming improvements, planning defences, and writing memoirs and despatches, the Journal and private correspondence seem to swell rather than diminish. Besides his relatives and friends in England, his wife and daughters were still at Bombay. His interest in his children's education was as lively as ever, and, so incredible was his industry that, during the whole year of labour and anxiety that had parted them, he had never ceased to receive by the mail proofs of their studies in mathematics or other subjects, and to return them with corrections, remarks, and a fresh programme. Many a night he would deprive himself of his well-earned sleep to write long letters to some young officer who was acting foolishly or was in trouble, and whom he had no time to talk to in the day,—letters full of noble views of duty and fine religious feeling, expressed with a mixture of firmness and tenderness such as a father would use to a misguided son. Even private soldiers were amongst his correspondents, and his way of addressing them helps to explain their enthusiasm for him. Here is a good specimen.

"PRIVATE JAMES NEAREY—I have your letter. You tell me you give satisfaction to your officers, which is just what you ought to do; and I am very glad to hear it, because of my regard for every one reared at Castletown; for I was reared there myself. However, as I and all belonging to me have left that part of the country for more than twenty years, I neither know who Mr. Tom Kelly is, nor who your father is; but I would go far any day in the year to serve a Celbridge man; or any man from the Barony of Salt, in which Celbridge stands,—that is to say, if such a man behaves himself like a good soldier and not a drunken vagabond like James J——, whom you knew very well, if you are a Castletown man. Now, Mr. James Nearey, as I am sure you are and must be a remarkably sober man, as I am myself, or I should not have got on in the world so well as I have done:

I say, as you are a remarkably sober man, I desire you to take this letter to your captain, and ask him to show it to your lieutenant-colonel, and ask the lieutenant-colonel, with my best compliments, to have you in his memory; and, if you are a remarkably sober man, mind that, James Nearey, a remarkably sober man, like I am, and in all ways fit to be a lance-corporal, I will be obliged to him for promoting you now and hereafter. But, if you are like James J——, then I sincerely hope he will give you a double allowance of punishment, as you well deserve for taking up my time, which I am always ready to spare for a good soldier, but not for a bad one. Now, if you behave well, this letter will give you a fair start in life; and, if you do behave well, I hope soon to hear of your being a corporal. Mind what you are about, and believe me your well-wisher, Charles Napier, Major-General, and Governor of Scinde, because I have always been a remarkably sober man."

At the end of March* the Governor's firm attitude during the late troubles, backed up by the wonderful marches of Fitzgerald and his camel-corps, which was now in full work on the right bank of the river, produced a happy and unlooked-for result. The mountain chiefs offered to submit in a body. Sir Charles Napier received them at Kurachee.

"All the mountain chiefs have made salaam. One hundred and fifteen arrived here two days ago. A dozen miles off they halted with their armed followers and sent me word, 'They were come.' 'Very welcome! Make your salaam, but, if you come with arms, woe betide you.' Down went the arms. I received them haughtily, asking why they had hung back so long. 'We were frightened, and dared not appear in your presence.' 'Of what were you afraid?' 'We do not know. You are our king, we now lie at your feet and pray for pardon.'

"'Chiefs, have I done evil to any man except in battle?' 'No! You have been merciful to all, everybody says so.'

"'Why, then, were you afraid?' 'We do not know. Pardon, and we will guard all our country from enemies.'

"'I do not want you to guard anything: you saw my camel-corps. What I want is that you should be good servants to the Queen, my mistress.' 'We will.' 'Salaam, then, to her picture;' they did so, and then I said, 'There is peace between us. All Scinde belongs to my Queen: we are now fellow-subjects, and I am here only to do justice. But mark! If, after this, any chief plunders, I will enter his country and destroy his tribe. You all know the battles were won with a few thousand men. Now we have here 15,000, and 100,000 more will come at my call: hence my threat is not an idle one. I give now to each man his jaghire, and all he had under the Ameers.' Then they cried out, 'You are our king. Let it be so, we are your slaves.'

"Having thus assured them, I said, 'My soldiers shall be shown to you in order of battle to honour you.' They did not seem to like this; few had ever seen Europeans before, and seemingly they feared a massacre was designed; their terror was evident. Then I sought to reassure them, by asking questions about the battles of some who had been there and knew me. 'Why did you run away at Dubba when the cavalry charged?' One quickly answered, 'Because we were frightened; and that is the reason why I was unwilling to come before you now, for they say you like those best who fought best, and don't like those who ran away.' The Moor-shee said to another chief, 'You were in our rear at Meeanee with 10,000 men.' 'No, only 8000,' he answered instantly. He is a shrewd old fellow, and told me of all the tribes that were then bearing down on us; we should have had 80,000 within a few days. His account tallies exactly with my knowledge, only he makes out that it would have taken six days; but the place he mentions as that where they heard of the battle proves that they were much closer. Thus I amused them for a good hour, laughing and joking about the battles; but there were three or four stern, unbending, savage-looking ruffians, evidently ripe for mischief and only yielding to circumstances, and I resolved they should see our troops.

"They obeyed my invitation, despite of their fears, and at four o'clock attended on horseback at my door. We rode to the field with my escort, under Ali Bey, who watches over me like a cat over a mouse. I took my guests to a hill in front, and threw out skirmishers; that they seemed to hold cheap, but when the line advanced it was different. 'That's the way you came on at Dubba,' said a Lugaree clansman, and the others called out, 'By Allah! it is a wall, a moving wall! Nothing can stand that! Oh, Padisha, you are master of the world! Who can stand before you?' 'Now, look again,' I said, and, as previously ordered, a long sustained file fire went on until the air was well agitated, and we could not hear each other speak, and then the line charged with shouts. These things surprised them most, and drew forth exclamations of 'Oh, Padisha,' etc. The guns kept a good fire also, and then we formed square, and, darkness having fallen, the sheets of flame covering each square and the rapid march of the guns over some rocky heights delighted them. Seeing this I dismissed them, saying, 'You have now had the same honour as we pay to kings.' This was agreeable, and I think we may count upon their fears for a long time. So much for the mountaineers."

Encouraged by the success of this meeting, as well as by the general tranquillity of the country and the rapid recovery of his own troops, Sir Charles Napier, in concert with Lord Ellenborough, determined on a still greater experiment. A summons was issued to all the Scindian Beloochee chiefs to meet in durbar at Hyderabad on Her Majesty's birthday, and there do homage. When the proclamation was issued neither Napier nor the Governor-General had expected the numbers to exceed two or three thousand, but, as the 24th May drew near, it became known that 30,000 would be nearer the mark, and that the risk must be run of assembling what was really a large Belooch army.

The General cheerfully accepted this new anxiety as an

opportunity for proving conclusively that the tranquillity of the country was genuine, and not due merely to the coercion of the troops. Nevertheless, he took ample precautions for the safety of the lives and interests under his charge. "Caution, coolness, and pluck will put all right," he said; "the first I abound in; the second it is hard to be in the month of May with the mercury at 105°; the last my soldiers have plenty of." In order to diminish the multitude to a certain extent, and under pretence of sparing the chiefs a long journey, those of Upper Scinde were invited to make salaam to General Simpson at Shikarpoor. At Hyderabad the place of conference was fixed between the Fullaillee and the Indus; the Western tribes to assemble on the right bank of the Indus opposite the entrenched camp; the Eastern tribes on the right bank of the Fullaillee, and so on the left bank of the Indus. In and around the fort and entrenched camp were massed the troops, 4000 men with sixteen guns, while the steamers moved up and down the river. The Beloochees were to be called over by tribes, and chieftains only were to wear arms. The meeting is briefly noticed in Sir Charles's Journal.

"*Hyderabad, 22d May.*—Reached this place in forty-eight hours from Kurachee. I believe it has only once before been done so quick. The chiefs begin to collect.

"*24th May.*—Received the salaams of about 1500 chiefs this morning. Their eagerness was such that four whacking Irish sentries and several officers could hardly keep the crowd back, yet all were quiet and orderly. There are more than 20,000 men assembled here, and I confess to being nervous; it would be terrible to have more blood shed.

"*25th May.*—The assembly is nearly over. The chiefs alone came armed, having my permission. Every great chief made salaams; in all about 3000, each having a lot of followers! Chiefs and jaghirdars showed the greatest good-humour and content, and express the latter openly: their

conduct indeed bespeaks their satisfaction, for everywhere we are quiet. This time last year I had conquered but had not quieted Scinde, the country was in arms against me, and I was personally very ill; now all is peace and I am well."¹

The most important political business dealt with at the durbar was the settlement of the land question. Under the Ameers the chiefs had held their land—jaghire—as tenants at will, on condition of rendering military service. Immediately after the conquest the Governor had substituted assistance in the execution of public works for military service; but he now felt himself strong enough to introduce fixity of tenure and low rents, and thus to sap the foundations of the Belooch feudal system. He began by restoring their fathers' lands to the sons of all the chiefs who had fallen in battle against him, and then offered them and all others the choice of paying rent instead of holding on the service tenure. If the jaghirdar said he had no money to pay rent with, then he could purchase his jaghire for life, or for a hundred years, by cutting off from it such a piece as would yield to Government a sum equivalent to the rent charged upon him. "This strip," he says, "is divided among ryots at low rents, payable for the present in kind; and these poor people do, and will, industriously cultivate their small farms, and teach the great jaghirdar to cultivate his large holding."

The manner of fixing the rent is described in a letter to Lord Fitzroy Somerset.

"Now please to observe that this rent is not to be fixed according to the value of the produce of his jaghire; if I attempted to levy rent in that way they would quickly be in arms: it is estimated thus. The jaghirdar is bound to bring

¹ To prove the truth of the last assertion, on 6th June, with the thermometer at 110°, he rode from Tattah to Kurachee, 72 miles, without sleeping.

say, ten soldiers into the field, which would cost him 80 rupees a month. Ay, says he, but you are not going to war every month. No, nor every year, so the Government will only ask from you 40 rupees every year instead of 80 every month, which it can claim. He consents, and returns to the Government a portion of his jaghire, which will yield a rent of 40 rupees yearly. It will, I know, take years to complete this plan, but meanwhile the Government loses nothing but what it will never ask for—viz. military service; and the jaghirdar, no longer a tenant at will, cultivates what he thus acquires a life interest in, or, what is better, a long lease. I think this will so consolidate the conquest of Scinde, and so change the idle character of the Belooch, that in fifty years this may be the richest province and most industrious people in India; but, until men have a property in what they hold, they will be idle and unsteady. Having established a rent, I am indifferent to its being paid for some years; the tenant will feel that he cannot be turned out, while the neighbouring jaghirdar can, and this feeling will do its work in time."

By leaving to the jaghirdars the choice between his new system and the old, he was well aware that he was damaging the prospects of the revenue; but he was confident that the forced comparison of the two systems would be entirely favourable to his own, and his object, to use his brother's words, was "not revenue, but civilisation."

This sketch of the settlement of Scinde may be fitly closed by the notice of two pieces of news exciting very different feelings in Napier's breast. One was the recall of Lord Ellenborough; the other was the arrival of the reports of the speeches in Parliament on the vote of thanks to the army in Scinde.

The departure of Lord Ellenborough was spoken of by Napier as an irremediable misfortune for himself, although he knew that in Sir Henry Hardinge, the new Governor-

General, he had a brother veteran of the Peninsula, a sincere personal friend, and one who might be expected to have a soldier's sympathy with a soldier; but for the Governor of Scinde there could be no friend like Lord Ellenborough. It was Lord Ellenborough who had first given him an opportunity of coming to the front in India, who had sent him to Scinde, and in the execution of whose policy he had become its conqueror and pacificator. Scinde and its ruler had received during his term of office an amount of attention and generous encouragement that could not be expected from any other Governor-General. "Lord Ellenborough is my great support," he had written to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, "for right and wrong are not the rules in India, and but for him I should have been unable to get through my work. They who think he leaves everything here to me are wrong; he looks with indefatigable energy into everything, and directs all the chief points. His mind is most searching, it gauges everything; and his plans are noble and generous to the people." To his brothers he poured out his feelings about the coming change, and his dread that Hardinge's want of special interest in the province would give his enemies in the official world new chances of tormenting him. "No man can supply Lord E.'s place to me. Hardinge must hurt me; common sense tells me he must have his own plans or he would be a fool, which he is not. Lord E. left everything military in my hands, and overthrew all opposition at Calcutta. This I can no longer expect, and plans will now come to me to execute." And again: "The mind works smoothly when following its own invention, and the body feels no fatigue till after. However, fate settles all these things, and my best shall be done wherever placed; but I told Lord E. truly that India, since he left the Government, appears to me like an empty house. I did

not tell him it was full of cursed bugs also, but dare say he knows that well enough, and Hardinge will soon find it out."

The thanks of Parliament for the success of the military operations in Scinde were not voted until 12th February 1844—that is to say, within a few days of a year after the battle of Meeanee. But Napier had not been entirely without consolation for this tardiness. He was personally entirely satisfied by the praise of the great Duke. "The Duke of Wellington has written me a note in his own hand, using this expression, 'The two glorious battles of Meeanee and Hyderabad.' This is enough. He and my brother William think well of my work, and I care for no other opinions. . . . To be thanked or reprimanded by Parliament is nothing to me—the thanks of Joe Hume, *par exemple*, after his Greek loan. I want no thanks from the place-hunters who infest St. Stephen's. I care indeed for Peel, and the Duke of Wellington, and Roebuck, and half a dozen fellows having either ability or conscience, but not for the mass congregated there." Still he felt the delay keenly as a slight upon his reputation, and still more for the sake of his soldiers, who had received no recognition of their heroic courage and endurance. When at last the speeches reached him he could not help giving vent to his exultation at the praises showered on him by his revered leader and by Sir Robert Peel. "Now I ought to die," he exclaims, "and have the Duke's speech graven on my tomb." The Duke gave an admirable summary of the military operations, and a general estimate of Napier's abilities, which, coming from a man of such absolute sincerity, was enough to justify Napier's remark that the Duke's speech alone put him at the top of the tree. The Duke said, "My Lords, I must say that, after giving the fullest consideration to these operations, I have never

known any instance of an officer who has shown in a higher degree that he possesses all the qualities and qualifications necessary to enable him to conduct great operations. He has maintained the utmost discretion and prudence in the formation of his plans, the utmost activity in all the preparations to ensure his success, and, finally, the utmost zeal and gallantry and science in carrying them into execution."

Sir Robert Peel, who had seen much of Napier's private correspondence as well as his despatches, was enthusiastic in his admiration. After remarking that, when all honour had been given to the army, the General was still the hero of the campaign, he proceeds to say :—

"It is most fortunate that at such a crisis, and under circumstances of such difficulty, the command of the British army was committed to a man, one of three brothers, who have engrafted on the stem of an ancient and honourable lineage that personal nobility which is derived from unblemished private character, from the highest sense of personal honour, and from repeated proofs of valour in the field, which have made their name conspicuous in the records of their country. Sir, each of those three brothers learnt the art of war under an illustrious commander, during the whole of those memorable campaigns of which one of them has been the faithful, impartial, and eloquent historian; and the exploits of those three brothers during the whole of those campaigns entitle them to the gratitude of their country. . . . The quality of actions, sir, chiefly depends on the character of those who superintend them. The actions which have been performed by the members of the Napier family may appear foolhardy to the pusillanimous, they may appear the mere result of a lucky chance to the superficial; but however desperate they may appear when they are undertaken and superintended by ordinary minds, they are, nevertheless, reconcilable with the soberest calculations of prudence when directed by such a man as Sir Charles Napier.

"Sir, there is one point I am desirous of adverting to,

because I know if rashness could be imputed to Sir Charles Napier—if it could be imputed to him that he had needlessly led the British army into the conflict—no praise which we could bestow on his valour would compensate him for the painful reflections which such an imputation would give birth to in his mind. I think it is impossible for any one to peruse the papers relating to this question without coming to the conclusion that not only was that the wisest course which Sir Charles Napier could take—namely, that of at once encountering the enemy, but that if he had pursued any other course, the safety of the army would have been compromised. . . . In estimating the conduct of Sir Charles Napier, I do not think the chief praise is due to his military skill—I do not think it is due even to his personal valour; but I do think it is due to him for the course which he took, and his opposition to those who advised a postponement of hostilities, in at once engaging the enemy. Having pondered on the consequences of retreat—knowing the shock which our Indian Empire would sustain by a repetition of a disaster like that of Cabul—he, on his own responsibility, with less local knowledge than was possessed by many around him, had the courage to act in opposition to the advice he received, and committed that army and his own reputation to the fate of a doubtful war. It is chiefly for that exhibition of moral courage that I think him entitled to the thanks of the House.”

The generous warmth of expression and feeling throughout the speech shows that Peel's imagination was really kindled by the subject; nor was his praise exhausted by an official speech. After a careful study of Napier's despatches he often expressed a profound admiration alike for their matter and their form. “No one,” he said, “ever doubted Sir Charles Napier's military powers, but in his other character he does surprise me—he is possessed of extraordinary talent for civil administration.” His opinion of Napier's style is recorded by the Reverend Edward Coleridge:—

"*Eton College, 18th Sept. 1853.*—Some time in 1843 or 1844 Sir Robert Peel said to me, 'You are acquainted, I think, with the Napier family?' 'Yes, in some degree with three members of it.' 'To which of them do you award the palm in literature?' Expressing surprise I answered that I had never regarded Sir Charles Napier as a writer, but as the most heroic and generous of soldiers. 'Well,' he said, 'I can assure you that I am much inclined to rank him above his brother. Not I only, but all those of the Government who have read his letters and despatches from Scinde, are immensely struck by their masterly clearness of mind and vigour of expression, and feel with me that he is as great with his pen as he has long proved himself with his sword. I have no hesitation in placing them in comparison with the Gurwood despatches, or with the best things of the kind which have ever been written. EDWARD COLERIDGE."

It was somewhat surprising after such language that the only honours bestowed on Sir Charles Napier were the colonelcy of the 22d Regiment and the Grand Cross of the Bath. "Sir R. Peel's speech," writes Napier, "has made people here believe that I am to be made a peer. I do not believe this to be the case, and I do not wish that honour to be conferred, because I will on no account take a pension with it, to end my career by robbing my starving countrymen." He was quite content with the praise he had received, deeply grateful to Peel, and exultant at the great Duke's less eloquent but not less weighty words. In a letter to Sir Henry Hardinge he says of Wellington and himself: "The hundred-gun ship has taken the little cock-boat in tow, and it will follow for ever over the ocean of time!"

CHAPTER VIII.

HILL CAMPAIGN—SIKH WAR—ADMINISTRATION.

SIR CHARLES NAPIER'S name will go down to posterity in Indian military history in connection with the battles of Meeanee and Hyderabad. Those achievements had direct political results of considerable importance in themselves, and of a nature to attract general attention. But brilliant as they were as pure feats of arms and generalship, they are surpassed in daring originality of conception and execution by the expedition of 1845 into the fastnesses of the robber tribes.

The submission of the Western tribes has already been noticed, but there remained yet the most troublesome of all the neighbours of Scinde—the tribes on the northern frontier. Between Mooltan and Scinde rises a range of mountain rocks, separated from Scinde by a considerable stretch of desert, and trending from the Indus to the Soliman and Hala ranges. These rocks, called the Cutchee Hills, were the almost inaccessible home of the Murrees, Jackranees, Mazzarees, Bhoogtees, Doomkees, and other predatory tribes owning a nominal allegiance to the ruler of Mooltan, or the Khan of Khelat, but practically independent, and always engaged in fighting one another or plundering their more industrious neighbours. Of these tribes the Doomkees under Beja Khan were the most audacious and formidable. This chief, who was supposed to be receiving encouragement from Mooltan and from the

exiled Shere Mohammed, made a foray into Scinde in the spring of 1844, and committed acts of the most barbarous cruelty. Forty people were killed, and the hands of little children were cut off for the sake of their bangles. This outrage could not be tamely borne. Beja Khan's fortress was at Poolajee, on the edge of the desert. Fitzgerald persuaded the General to let him take a small force and surprise him there. The unfortunate result of the expedition is related as follows:—

“Fitzgerald and Tait wrote that they could catch Beja in his bed at Poolajee, as Fitz had lived a year there and knew the place. With a bushel of cautions and orders about supports, to protect the retreat after the capture, I consented. They then discovered that Poolajee was protected by a fort, with 500 matchlock men, and that there must be a regular attack, the place being fortified, which Fitzgerald never told me. Tait wrote to me for further orders, and they were ‘not to stir a foot;’ but the boiling courage of Fitzgerald overpowered the more sober Tait with taunts, and off they went with 500 horse and 200 foot (camel-men) to attack Poolajee. They lost their way, arrived at Poolajee about eight o'clock instead of night, man and beast knocked up—grilled with the sun, and no water. Fitzgerald led his men slap at the gate, with a sack of powder carried by the same sergeant who carried the bag of powder at Ghuznee. A terrible fire opened, ten were killed, the poor sergeant one, and twenty were wounded. How Fitz escaped no one knows—differently dressed from the men, and striding at their head, lots of men on the walls knowing him well, distinguished also by his giant size and daring courage!

“Unable to make any impression, they all retired, and with great difficulty reached Chuttar Bazaar, a fort in the desert, where they got water, the enemy having luckily forgotten to fill up the well. They afterwards got back to Khangur, nearly dead, having marched 77 miles without a stop, except to drink at Chuttar! And in this sun!! The

courage of the sepoys was conspicuous. Fitzgerald and Tait have been in bed ever since from fatigue, chagrin and fear of my reproaching them, which I ought to do, but the will and the courage were so good I cannot bring myself to be very angry; yet the death of the ten gallant men grieves me deeply."

Napier at first thought of going north in person, but restrained himself, for he would not appear in arms unless to strike a heavy blow, and that could not be done till the next cool season. In order to keep Beja occupied during the hot weather he accepted the services of Wullee Chandiah, the old chief whom he had restored to liberty, and who now came forward to prove his gratitude by declaring war against his benefactor's enemies. No further disturbance occurred until June 1844, when Beja Khan again swooped down and surprised a party of grasscutters and their escort; 200 men were killed and 50 wounded. Owing to the presence of soldiers the occurrence was magnified into a victory, and the fame of it spread to Candahar. The officer commanding the detachment which furnished the escort subsequently attacked and defeated another band of robbers, but as nothing further could be done owing to the heat, the General had to content himself for the time with issuing a severe order on the subject of discipline on the frontier:—

"The Major-General desires that the European officers of the irregular cavalry shall never quit their saddles, day or night, when a detachment is out of their cantonment. The European officer who commands at an outpost must be eternally on his horse, with his sword in his hand; he should eat, drink, and sleep in his saddle. An outpost officer has no right to comfort or rest except when all is safe; and that can never be in the presence of such an active enemy as these mountain robber tribes are in every country where they exist. It is

ignorant work for officers to gallop their troops over country after mischief has been done. This is to harass their men and horses, and is a mark of inexperience in outpost duty ; it is to play the game of the enemy."

All that summer and autumn Napier meditated deeply how this new danger to his government should be dealt with. Action of some sort had become imperative. Besides the loss of life and property, a repetition of such forays would bring discredit on the Government and weaken its authority. Outside, again, there was the danger that the exaggerated accounts of Beja's successes would attract all the roving swordsmen between the Sikh country and Beloochistan, and swell the numbers of the robber tribes, which already amounted to 18,000 men, into a host that might prove perilous not only to Scinde but to India. He attempted successfully to divide the tribes and make them fight one another, but his allies, to whom he had promised their enemies' lands if they conquered, were defeated by Beja so thoroughly as to extinguish all hope of effecting his purpose by such means. This failure only confirmed his resolution to put down the mischief, and set him free to do it in his own way. Early in November he quitted Kurachee, designing to march through the western hills up to Sukkur, a tract of country still unknown to him. The journey was meant not only to prepare for a decisive settlement of the border troubles but to ascertain how his government was working in the wildest part of his province. Before setting out he gave a most practical and crushing reply to the repeated assertions of a hostile party in Bombay that the whole province was eagerly waiting an opportunity to revolt from his rule, by sparing, at the earnest request of the Bombay Government, one European and one native regiment ; and still more by filling their places with two regiments which he raised from

among the very Beloochees in whose eyes he was said to be so detestable.

Everywhere on his march he was struck by the natural resources of the country and the goodwill of the people, but, owing to the ravages of the late sickness, Government had become somewhat slack and freebooters very audacious. Shortly after he set out two robber chiefs were captured, one, Nowbut Khan, by Wullee Chandiah. The Governor rewarded Wullee by giving him Nowbut's sword, which secured a blood-feud between them. But Nowbut's crimes had been so atrocious, and the necessity for a severe example was so great, that he was sentenced to be hanged with his fellow-captive. This second capture had been made by Fitzgerald, who had taken his camel-corps 65 miles in the night, and surprised the chief when most of his followers were away on a foray.

"All the people," writes Napier, "are rejoicing at the capture of these murderous fellows. A man placed as I am must have nerve for his work, but it is very painful. May God make just my decisions, for my mind being once fixed, I strike! If self-defence is permitted, I am justified to kill these men as if struggling for life with an assassin: this some think contrary to the Christian religion; perhaps so, but then government must cease, and ruffians rule: human nature cannot go this length. Hence with a heart free from all feeling but that of duty to society, I will put down the Scindian robber in three months, unless it be God's will that I should fail."

His progress through the country was slow, for at many villages the people came to him with complaints, and he would not stir from the spot until the truth had been made clear to his mind, and the offenders punished. Errors of government and scattered instances of oppression he had expected, but he found, besides, to his indignation, that in

many parts his decree prohibiting slavery was a dead letter. Slavery, these villains carry it on to an immense extent, and treat their slaves cruelly. I have arrested several, and am marching them as prisoners, meaning to punish rigorously; the whole country is in alarm—i.e. the slaveholders. This is what I want. They talk of their property—they bought the slaves. In fine I have a full dish of ‘vested interests,’ ‘rights of property,’ and all the cant of old; but being a sensible man, the right of the child not to be sold or bought is uppermost. My answers to the Beloochees, who argue their claims to slaves as well as if they were professors of Brougham’s London College, are handcuffs, the scourge, and working on the road.”

The subtlety of his method of dealing with the slave-owning chiefs is well shown in the following passage:—

“Take two men, the same crime, everything the same in the eye of the law; hang one and all the country will bow to your justice; hang the other and the country will rise in arms. Now Wullee would handle a caravan as well as Nowbut; but Wullee is a holy man as well as chief and robber, and my friend. He could turn out 20,000 men to mend the matter, and he took Nowbut prisoner! It would never enter the head of a civil servant to consider how far our strength would go. But here is another affair for management. Wullee has slaves, and so have his chiefs. So I took advantage of having done him the favour of hanging Nowbut, to make an oration against slavery in general, and, growing gradually more violent, swore in the midst of a great assembly, I would have vengeance on any man who thus defied the Queen’s orders; and then told Wullee to warn all the sirdars against it; I had ten of them prisoners in my camp as felons, all his friends. . . . But my policy is so little understood, that I have even had trouble to keep my highest officers from making Wullee Chandiah revolt; they class all natives alike as rascals, but they are not so; their robberies are their trade, and not in their eyes dishonourable; and I do not rest my anger on the

ground of any man being a robber, but that he does not obey the orders issued by me."

In these durbars he often felt profoundly his ignorance of the native language, but no doubt his vigorous gestures and flashing eyes did much to make up for that deficiency. On one occasion he says, "I took fire in excellent style; Kean never acted better, and the scene was perfect. I swore to bury myself and my army in Scinde, or destroy slavery; I made my interpreter roar aloud that the Queen was the *Father* of all the poor; that every person should be as free as I was myself; and having thus laid down the law in a way that no man there liked to dispute—lo! the perfect freedom of Scinde!—I went off in a eulogy on old Wullee Chandiah's high character, faith to Government, and ended by giving him Nowbut Khan's sword, which, by the way, I wished to keep myself, but thought it too like thieving."

By the middle of December he had reached Sukkur, having meditated and seen enough to convince him that war with the hill tribes was inevitable. The march through the country had helped him in many respects. It had given a new impulse to the loyalty of the population. "The people here come from afar and squat down 50 yards from my tent, to see their 'king.'" The fame of his progress, too, had spread far into the west.

"In my camp now there is a prince, ambassador from Khiva, who has with great danger effected his journey. He assures me that the King of Ourgan, or Khiva, hates Russia and the Khan of Herat; and, if we will march against Herat and Bokhara, he will work them from the west, and my success is certain! And if I will attack Cabul, he will, at the word, be at the Afghans. To confirm his goodwill he gave me presents, which I accepted, made a return from our gift *dépôt*, and sold his by auction, which put ten rupees profit into the

Company's purse. Well, Khiva was too late. An ambassador from Yar Mahomed of Herat had got here first, and gave me a fine horse—good beast! he is close to my tent asking for a biscuit; I bought him, however, at auction. This ambassador was accredited for the Bombay Government, but on reaching Scinde, heard that I was the man to bribe. . . . The greatest honour for them is to show our strength and discipline, our rapid firing, our artillery. I sent a troop of horse artillery full gallop up a rocky height for this man; it delighted him, and he will tell such Eastern lies as will do good all over Asia."

Meanwhile the constant strain of body and mind was again telling on his diminished strength. Marching, redressing grievances, meditating on the coming campaign all day, and writing the greater part of the night, he was wearing himself out. He had started, feeling "as strong as Red Rover," his pet charger; but in ten days fever was upon him again. "I feel very unwell," he writes, "and know not what ails me; my spirits flag in an unwonted manner; perhaps my end is near." Bad spirits gave a gloomy turn to the superstitious feelings which were so habitual with him. "Things do not please me; strange events occur of a dark nature; men receive warnings. I went back to my home the 12th of November, when one march from Kurachee, at the beginning of this journey; my horse fell, and how I escaped is strange, for he rolled over me. I never quitted the saddle, and one foot was fast in the stirrup, yet I got free, because my boot came off. Red Rover stood still, but he, my favourite horse, fell! Again, I went to see the *Sir Charles Napier* steamer, I fell down the hold, and that from the cabin, where I thought I was safe! These things affect me. Am I to fail, or fall, in the raid against the robbers? If to fall, well, of that I am not afraid; but am I to fail?"

If he had failed, it would certainly not have been from

underestimating the difficulties before him, or from want of forethought in preparing to overcome them.

"Troops must be moved over a desert, and through mountains, with much privation, and my age disables me as to the personal labour required to stimulate soldiers to endurance; and when they lie down to sleep, I must write. Pretty refreshments for an exhausted man! Some of the marches also are likely to be in snow, and cold is death to the poor sepoy, while the heat of the desert kills Europeans. The passes also will be formidable, and if the Murrees should turn out foes, there will be many defiles to deal with. These Murrees are the men who defeated Clibborne, and destroyed Clarke; and though success seems to me certain, defeat would be equally so if want of caution gave those warlike men an advantage. I shall take foot artillery, being sure they are best in mountains; they jump off the gun in an instant, and on again; whereas the horse artillery have led horses to mind while their riders are with the guns. If there are very bad passes, the guns can be taken to pieces, but the horses add to the delay, by as much as their number exceeds that of a foot battery; this is a trifle, but on such occasions trifles tell heavily. Foot artillery can move as quick as horse artillery, or any infantry on a mountain road; the men always walk half the march, but the horsemen never. My plan is to have light 6-pounders, with a great power of draught. I have furnished 125 horses to a foot battery. I am now getting some mountain guns ready to put on camels or mules. It is everything to have a gun up, no matter if it carries but a pound ball. As to myself, I am conscious of having gained much as to a battle; I cannot describe it, but feel myself a better man, able to attempt, not more perhaps than I have done, but with more confidence."¹

By the beginning of January 1845 his plans were matured; both Lord Ellenborough and Sir H. Hardinge

¹ The Duke of Wellington once said to Sir W. Napier, "I have fought many battles, and have acquired an instinct about them which I cannot describe, but I know how to fight a battle."

had approved of them, and the troops were ready to carry them into execution.

"My preparations have all been made so quickly as to give no alarm ; yet 2000 infantry, 1100 cavalry, twenty-three guns, and two elephants, are ready for Beja. Amongst my ordnance will be four mortars and six howitzers, and I have a strong corps of pioneers and artificers for preparations of carriage and the opening of roads ; miners are also provided, and well-sinkers, with plenty of jumpers, and steel to renew them, for they wear fast if the rock be hard. Bags of lime also I have provided, which in blasting rocks saves powder ; nor have water-skins been forgotten, in case they should poison the desert wells, which is probable.

"8th January.—Plot thickens, but no impatience, Charles Napier ! No jumps to conclusions ! Step-by-step work is this ; things must go on deliberately, and settle down ; one order must be well understood before another is issued, or horses will be overloaded and asses crushed. Thought first, arrangement next, and then for rapidity without confusion ; thus before Beja thinks I am out of bed he shall find me on his track."

When his designs became known they were received with an outburst of incredulity and ridicule. The Bombay press had poured torrents of abuse upon him ever since he had been in Scinde ; in their columns he was generally described as "an imbecile ruffian, delighting in carnage, faithless, rapacious, a liar who disgraced the army, and stained the glorious age of Wellington." "The sordid and shameless leader of Scinde." "The liar at the head of the Scinde Government," and so on. It was not surprising therefore that such critics should now remark that "he was an insane old man about to lose all his troops ; was in utter ignorance of these terrible mountaineers' strength ; they would baffle, would laugh at him, and then destroy." But there were many Indian officers of experience who were equally discouraging, though less abusive. It was said in military

circles that Sir Charles Napier was too confident from his previous successes—he did not know how terrible those mountaineers were in their fastnesses. Even the Scinde army was infected by the feeling that success was hopeless, and M'Murdo was said to be the only man on the staff who believed the plan to be feasible. There was plenty of reason for doubt. A desert of sand, with few wells, and all protected by forts, lay between the Indus and the gloomy mass of precipitous rocks amidst which 18,000 daring swordsmen were lying hid. It was their boast that for six hundred years no king had ever got beyond their first defiles; they had massacred one English force and defeated another. If followed into their fastnesses they contested every pass and every rock with matchlock, sword, and stones. On a foray they rode small high-blooded mares of wonderful speed and endurance; the horse's food being tied under its belly, while the man carried a coarse cake and arrack over his shoulder. "Every man," says Napier, "has his weapon ready, and every man is expert in the use of it; they shoot with unerring aim, they occupy positions well, and strengthen them ingeniously, and their rush on a foe is very determined; they crouch, they run, covered with protruding shields, which they thrust in their adversaries' faces, and with a sword, sharp as a razor, give a blow that cuts through everything, lopping heads and limbs."

In the face of such opponents and such difficulties Sir Charles Napier showed himself as wily as he was daring. He moved columns on many directions in Scinde to encourage a notion that he was preparing for a march of conquest into Central Asia. This imposed on the Scindian chiefs and many surrounding nations, and received a certain colour from the arrival of the envoys of Herat and Khiva. He forced Ali Moorad to take the field, whereby he not only kept that Ameer under his eye, but secured the aid of his

subjects, the Boordees. He induced the Khan of Khelat to favour the enterprise, though his chiefs were all secretly partisans of Beja. While he was pushing on his preparations with the utmost speed and secrecy he spread the report that the sickness of the troops at Sukkur would prevent him stirring before the following year; and letters to the same effect were sent to the Khan of Khelat by a route which would ensure their falling into Beja's hands. By 11th January 1845 all was ready for the start.¹ "In executing my general plan," he writes, "all accidental circumstances must be carefully observed to make them bear on my leading principle—namely, a course of action in direct contradiction of that great principle of war, which prescribes concentration of your own forces and the aiming to divide that of your enemy. My object shall be to drive the hillmen into masses; because all history tells us that neither barbarous nor civilised warriors of different tribes or nations long agree when compressed."² To drive their cattle into masses along with their masters is another object, for then will follow want of water for man and beast, and they must fight or perish." With the completion of preparations came happier omens. "This time two years I marched against the Ameers and a comet appeared: three

¹ His force, exclusive of Wullee Chandiah's followers and Ali Moorad's contingent, was composed as follows: the Scinde Horse, 6th and 9th Irregulars, and the horsemen of the Bundelund legion, about 2000 in all. Infantry—the Company's 2d Europeans, two weak native battalions, the foot of the Bundelund legion, and the camel corps: altogether 2500. Siege artillery: 21 pieces, of which 13 were mortars or howitzers. Field artillery: 16 pieces, 9 being howitzers, 3 mountain guns, and the rest 6-pounders.

² The Duke of Wellington said to Mr. Rogers, "Napoleon should have waited for us at Paris." "Why?" "Because 800,000 men would then have gathered round him." "Is not that the reason why he should not?" "No! why he should; for when 800,000 men get together there's a damred deal of jostling!"

days ago another comet appeared. Does this argue the same success? How these strange coincidences strike the mind!—at least they do mine: they have not much influence on me, but they have some. Accident has also given me the 16th of January" (Coruña) "for crossing the frontier. God's will be done, whether evinced by signs or not: my business is to do my duty."

The first object the General had in view was, by pushing with unexpected rapidity across the desert, to seize the principal defiles leading into the Cutchee Hills.¹ These were five in number—Poolajee, Tonge, Zuree-Kooshta leading to Zuranee, Gundooee, and Seebree. Beyond Zuranee were the double defiles of Lallee and Jummock. Fronting these defiles were the protected watering-places of the desert. Chuttar, leading to Poolajee; Ooch, leading to Zuranee; and Shahpoor between them, leading either to Poolajee or Tonge. On the 13th Napier marched with an advanced guard of cavalry and guns from Sukkur to Shikarpoor, 26 miles. A detachment of sappers and well-diggers under Lieutenant (now General) Harley Maxwell pushed forward to Khangur; while Jacob and Fitzgerald, in support of the Chandikas in advance on their left, were to start the same day from Larkhana to surprise Poolajee. The infantry, artillery, and commissariat remained at Sukkur under Brigadiers Hunter and Simpson, who had orders to follow at a stated time, Ali Moorad being instructed to march at a still later period. On the 14th Napier marched 13 miles to Jaghur, and 16 miles next day to Khangur. Here he heard that Jacob's force was at Rojan, 14 miles on his left, but suffering much from fatigue and thirst. It was further reported that the enemy were at Shahpoor, deceived by the General's intercepted letter, and ignorant of his approach. Wullee Chandiah, marching on

¹ See Map No. 1 at the end of the book.

Jacob's left, was still making for Poolajee; so the General modified his plans as follows: "If Wullee Chandiah be true, he will this night attack Poolajee, and though Jacob's horsemen are too distressed to reach that place for the morning combination, they can reach Shahpoor; and an attack there, coupled with that of the Chandikas at Poolajee, will still drive the hillmen eastward, and cut them off from the western mountains, which is the first great object of the campaign. Ooch is the next watering-place east of Shahpoor, and only 16 miles from it: to Ooch, then, the enemy will naturally retire, unless he defeats Jacob at Shahpoor, and Beja may still be intercepted." When he wrote this the troops had already marched 16 miles, and Ooch was 40 miles distant, the sand heavy, and the track unknown. But orders were at once sent to Jacob to advance on Shahpoor, and Captain Salter with two guns and some fresh cavalry stationed at Khangur were despatched against Ooch. Hardly had Salter gone when news came of another hostile force at Ooch; whereupon the General, fearing Salter might be overpowered, set off after him with two guns and 200 irregular cavalry. This little force, in spite of their previous 16 miles, accomplished the additional 40 before daybreak. "Being a little tired," says the General, who was now in his sixty-third year, "with riding and incessant thought, from daybreak on the 15th till daybreak on the 16th, I fell asleep on my horse and was awaked by his stopping: then I found that the advanced guard, with which I was, saw lights not far off, but when we looked for the cavalry and guns they were lost! This was very awkward, for we were but fifty men in a desert, close to a numerous enemy. Still we hoped to find Salter. Day broke, M'Murdo rode to the top of a sand-cliff and returned to me, saying he saw Beloochees firing in the plain below. I drew up our handful of troopers, in whose pluck, it must be

confessed, I had not much confidence, but thought they would stick by the 'Sahibs' of the staff. Having removed out of matchlock fire from the sand-cliff, we awaited adventures, and at that instant our errant guns and main body came round another hillock of sand to my no small satisfaction; for fifty tired men and horses were not in a state to give battle to many hundreds of good swordsmen quite fresh."

The firing in front was from Salter's force. That officer had come up with the enemy in the night, and at once engaged them. The hillmen had stood firm at first, but on hearing the artillery they dispersed, crying out, "The Sheitan-ka-Bhace (the great devil's brother) himself is there"—such was the General's name and reputation among the robbers. Three thousand head of cattle were captured, and the number would have been greater but for the fatigue of the troops. While the camp was being pitched for the day some members of the staff suddenly caught sight of a body of hillmen on a rocky height close by. Instantly M'Murdo, John Napier, and Lieutenant Byng galloped off towards them. Byng got separated from the other two, and suspecting an ambushade, rode back for some cavalry. Meanwhile occurred an incident that might have happened five or six hundred years before, round St. Jean d'Acre, or have been described in the *Talisman*. Riding to the top of the ridge the two young men found no foe, but looking down on the other side they saw the hillmen in retreat—a brightly-coloured mass of human beings and cattle stretching far away, and moving confusedly but rapidly in the direction of the hills. As they sat motionless in their saddles watching this strange spectacle there suddenly emerged from behind a rocky knoll a splendidly-mounted and accoutred chief, armed with a matchlock and two swords, and riding his active little mare as only the warriors of the desert can. He pulled up on seeing the two Englishmen;

but when M'Murdo drew his sword and trotted towards him alone, he too seemed eager for the fray. Twice and thrice they charged with desperate stroke and parry, wheeling round to face one another again after each charge as if they were in the tournament ring. At last M'Murdo, whose horse was tired out with the long march, said to Napier, who had been an excited but motionless spectator, "John, I am tired; you may try him." But the chief, seeing a new opponent advance, began to set off after his comrades. Napier pursued, followed hard by M'Murdo. The chief, seeing himself pressed, bent low down on his horse and handled his matchlock. M'Murdo's quick eye caught the movement, and knowing the extraordinary skill with which such men could hit the mark while at full speed, knowing, too, that Napier was quite ignorant of their ways of fighting and would be taken at a disadvantage, he hastily drew a pistol and fired. The robber fell, and in an instant the young men were kneeling at his side, eager to bind his wound, M'Murdo overwhelming himself with reproaches for having been so hasty with his pistol when they were two to one, and the chief clutching his sword as though more anxious to give another blow than to accept their help. They did what they could for him, but he soon expired.

About noon the same day a horseman rode into the camp with the news that Jacob had surprised Shahpoor. The General immediately remounted, and reached Shahpoor that evening, having ridden altogether upwards of 70 miles and having been thirty hours in the saddle. It was only after writing his despatches and issuing orders for concentrating the infantry and artillery that he went to rest. "Tired out," as he says, "I thought I should never awake again." Thus the passage of the desert was brilliantly accomplished. Wullee Chandiah too had been successful, and the General found himself in possession of Poolajee,

Shahpoor, and Ooch, with the loss of only eighteen men. The original design of moving upon Poolajee and connecting the army with the Murree tribe, who were on the north side of the hills and had declared in his favour, was now abandoned; for although he still designed to cut the robbers off from the west and drive them eastward, they had shortened the operation by abandoning the western passes and moving on the southern side of the hills along the edge of the desert. Accordingly, the infantry, artillery, and supplies, which had not yet finished the passage of the desert, were directed upon Shahpoor; Salter remained at Ooch, and Jacob's cavalry was detached to hold Poolajee and Lheree with the Chandikas, so as to awe the Khelat tribes and join hands with the Murrees on the north.

The Cutchee hills¹ are split, roughly speaking, east and west, by long parallel valleys or ravines, arid during the greater part of the year, but torn by foaming rivers in the wet season. These ravines could only be entered from the south by a series of cross defiles or narrow clefts between almost perpendicular rocks. There were no maps of the country; the movements of the army had to be governed by the finding of water, and the guides were as firmly convinced of the absolute impregnability of the inner recesses as were the robbers themselves. The army now occupied two sides of a square, one stopping the western ends of the valleys, the other menacing the cross defiles from the south. On 18th January Napier writes: "My change of plan is because I am sure Beja is now on the south side of the hills, between a low ridge that hides him from the desert and a high one to the north. I examined my good friend Yarro Khosa"—a double spy—"this morning. There is, he says, plenty of good water at a point behind the low ridge, but very little at two other places, and very bad as well as

¹ See Map No. 2 at the end of the book.

scarce. At a third it is, he says, plentiful and excellent. Now it appears very improbable that water should abound at the two places, and be scarce and bad at one which is just between them. Wherefore I am sure Yarro Khosa is in Beja's hands, and that Beja himself is at the place said to be without water, called Tonge. Yarro and I, however, immediately agreed that we could not march there." Having blinded the spy, he ordered Jacob to block the ravines opening on Poolajee and Lheree with 600 men and two guns. Then up one ravine, the bed of the Teyaga, he sent the Mugzee tribe, and up the next to the south he sent Wullee Chandiah to try the way up to Tonge, where the spy said there was no water. He meant to move in person by Ooch on the Zuranee pass, and sent orders to Ali Moorad, who had not yet come up, to proceed to the Gundooce pass, and there wait till the enemy were pushed eastward upon him. This fresh combination had a rapid and decided effect. Wullee Chandiah dispersed a small body of Bhoogtees, killing several men and capturing a large flock of goats; whereupon Beja, alarmed lest the Chandikas should be merely covering the British advance, forsook the fastness of Tonge and moved across the British front in the direction of Zuranee. On the 22d Napier writes: "I could easily have caught Beja Khan, and I can now catch him as he passes by a flank march across my front; but, as he marches with his families, it is most probable he would cut their throats if menaced, and I want to avoid such a dreadful catastrophe! . . . I at first thought of sending Geddes at once against him, but now think it wiser to go leisurely, as it will give more time for the women and children to go off to their distant places of refuge, and I shall not risk a repulse by being over hasty." The Chandikas were now reinforced with a squadron of cavalry, and were posted at Tullar to watch the Tonge defile, which, as Napier had con-

jectured, was well supplied with water. Colonel Geddes was sent with a column to Zuree-Kooshta to watch the Zuranee defile. A battle seemed imminent, but the General still lingered at Ooch. "There is no need for haste," he says; "a check at any point might force me to retrograde; that would be dishonouring, and would weaken the effect of the first surprise. My army hems the enemy in on the south and west, the Murrees hem him in on the north, Ali Moqrar ought to be now marching on the Gundooee defiles, and the hillmen's provisions are decreasing, while mine are increasing by the arrival of supplies and the captures of cattle. All the young men are eager for fighting, but I will not indulge them unless Beja goes to the Zuranee defiles, for I must force the passes there. Meanwhile every man's life ought to be as dear to me as my own, and I will not lose any by provoking fights with small detachments to hasten results, when my measures are, it appears to me, sufficient to ensure final success." On the 23d General Hunter arrived with provisions and the Company's second regiment of Europeans—"not big, but with a big spirit," as Napier remarked. Geddes wrote from Zuree-Kooshta that they found the water very bad; but the General's eye for difficulties was getting as bad as Nelson's at Copenhagen. "When they grumble and cry out 'no water!' I answer 'dig.' When they growl 'bad,' I say 'boil;' and I will go on, bad or good."

His Journal shows that, exciting as his position was, it did not occupy all his mind. Interspersed with military plans there occur passages which are more like the soliloquies of a hermit than the casual thoughts of a General in the field. For instance, on the 24th, he says:—

"This desert of sand is full of life. I dropped a bit of butter, and in a moment a little animal, an aldermanic insect, was upon it. One, two, three—it is covered! These creatures

feed birds, birds feed men, and men die to feed vegetables, which are again eaten; the world is one self-consuming, self-creating animal! So much for matter; but for mind! The grosser appetites belong to matter, they exist for its reproduction, they are wholly material, and have no apparent use except for reproduction. It is easy to see so far; but then the union of the body and spirit! There is the insuperable difficulty, unless we admit that two powers are at strife—the evil labouring for matter, the good for spirit. Bad minds, which seek to give pain, belong to the dark spirit of evil, whose very essence is cruelty. Those who abhor the infliction of pain to either mind or body of others belong to the brilliant spirit of light, ever on the watch to receive our adoration; not from vanity but pure benevolence, for of what could such a being be vain? Merciful spirit of light! I in all this work of war labour to do right in your sight, and abhor giving pain. Self-defence and social order and harmony are of thy own ordination, and for them alone am I in war. Yet I feel the vain desire of doing my work well. Can I without that desire do it well?"

Having received his supplies and given time to the enemy to send their families out of danger, he left Ooch on the 25th. The exact position of the hostile force he did not know, but suspected it was gathered within the hills for the defence of the Zuranee and Gundooee passes. Marching in person towards Zuranee, he sent Simpson with a column from Shahpoor to Poolajee with orders to push up the Tomb Valley to Deyrah, a distance of seven marches. He was supported, as the auxiliary tribes had been, by Jacob's force, stationed at Iheree and Poolajee, and the object of his movement was to scour the valley until he could turn the cross defiles of Lallee and Jummock, while the main body assailed them in front. Two marches of 21 and 23 miles brought the headquarters to Zuranee past Zuree-Kooshta with great labour to man and beast; the cold, too, as they advanced into the hills, occasioned great

suffering to the sepoy's, though it braced the Europeans. The pass of Lallee now lay immediately in front of them, and behind that the pass of Jummock. It was considered certain that the robbers would contest every inch of these important positions; and on the 28th, accordingly, the British force advanced eager for battle, though their leader was resolved to try all that mortars and howitzer batteries could do before he sent his infantry between those terrible mountain walls. But the enemy had vanished; Simpson's movement, as foreseen, had been magnified into the approach of a great army, and the passes were abandoned. "Not being defended, both passes are mine," writes Napier, "and my camp is between them. So far all is right. Simpson will be in two days at Tomb, and the robbers be thus driven eastward. We occupy from Tomb to Zuree-Kooshta; that is a line 30 miles across the Bhoogtee country, driving Jackranees and Doomkees upon the Bhoogtees, who have not much to eat and will not like to have visitors." The camp was now fixed between the Lallee and Jummock passes, both of which were strongly fortified. The General describes his position as follows: "From Poolajee and Tonge run, nearly to the Indus, two rocky ranges, walls they may be called, and I am between them. The lowest on the south is of sandstone rock, rising from 50 to 150 feet perpendicularly; and through this wall the first entrance from Zurance is through the Lallee Pass, and then through the Jummock to Deyrah: the Bhoogtees should have defended both. In this situation I am anxiously looking for Simpson's arrival at Deyrah; for his march, being beyond the second range, is very important, as my object is, not to defeat only, but to destroy the robbers: I do not mean kill them, but to root them entirely out of their rocks." Until news came from Simpson's force Napier employed himself by exploring the ravine, in which he had

pitched his camp, at the head of a strong column. While thus picking his way over ground of inconceivable ruggedness he heard a true Hibernian voice from the ranks exclaim in a pathetic tone, "Och ! when God made the world He threw the rubbish here !" The result of his exploring was to convince him that the enemy had gone eastward. This they had in fact done. Frightened by the approach of Simpson's force from passing at once from Jummock into their principal fastness called Trukkee, which lay but a short distance northward, they had moved eastward up the ravine, and then issuing by the Gundooee defile back into the desert and skirting the southern slopes of the hills they re-entered them at Dooz-Kooshta, the easternmost defile, leading to the Mazzaree Hills. Had Ali Moorad been at his post at Gundooee instead of halting ten days on the road to observe a feast, Napier's first well-calculated combination would have been perfectly successful ; the robbers would have been forced to fight, surrender, or at once shut themselves up in Trukkee, where they could be blockaded.

"*Journal, 30th January.*—Well, I chew the cud very much, and it has come into my head that we must have left men behind us in the hills, for some of our people have been killed on the line of communication. Wherefore 300 infantry shall try back, and a squadron of cavalry skirt the ridge along the plain, searching : both to meet at Tonge. I offered this command to —, but he had been infected with the camp nonsense. 'Oh, we can never catch these fellows.' Our two surprises of the robbers surprised these talkers, but still many hold this tone ; and so I cut — short, saying, 'I see you have no confidence, and a man shall command who has. Get your corps ready.' I sent John Napier, who has zeal and spirit and head ; very likely nothing may be found, but I will have my own way. The more wrong everybody thinks me the more resolved am I to carry into effect my own

opinions. I do not form them on light grounds, so to-night Jack marches, resolved to do all he can to succeed: it will give him the habit of command in a night march.

"31st January.—Jack has come back: he saw no robbers, but has brought in 2000 head of cattle, which is as good—it starves them. This proves that there were lurking bands behind us, and that all their cattle could not have been carried off. We have now taken 6000 cattle, and a vast quantity of grain: I am a good robber at all events."

Meanwhile Captain M'Murdo was sent with some cavalry and two guns to find Simpson. The latter had exactly executed his instructions, and was at Deyrah, which was undefended. M'Murdo therefore returned; Salter's cavalry were charged with the communication between Simpson and headquarters, while, in the rear, the pass of Lallee and the way to Shahpoor were entrusted to Smallpage and his mounted police. Things were now in order for another advance; but the curious behaviour of the enemy was increasing the despondency with which the ultimate success of the expedition was viewed in camp. It was bad enough to know that many of the officers did not conceal their belief that Beja could not be caught; but on 1st February despondency took a disagreeably practical turn. "The rascally camel-men, to the tune of 500, have refused to bring up provisions past Shahpoor, and I am fairly put to my trumps. Well, exertion must augment: I will use the camel-corps, and dismount half the cavalry if need be; I will eat Red Rover sooner than flinch before these robber tribes: my people murmur, but they only make my feet go deeper into the ground." In spite of the bold front he showed to this unlooked-for misfortune he was fully conscious of its gravity. The chief dangers to be apprehended were:—"1. Checking my rapidity of operations, for which all my previous preparations had been made. 2. This check

would induce surrounding nations to think the British had again failed, as they had before done in the hills at Seebree, at Moostung, at Noofusk, at Sartoof, and at Khaheree: for 600 years, it was said, no force had entered the hills and returned unscathed; and the tribes, being thus unconquered, were by all Asiatic nations deemed unconquerable. 3. This opinion might easily turn the Murrees and the troops of Khelat against us, and then a flame of war would have been kindled in all the hill ranges, for the Cabul massacre was a source of pride with these nations: there was a burning zeal to repeat it, and from all the mountain-tops keen eyes were bent upon the British force. 4. Worse than this check, however, was to be apprehended. It might be necessary to go back even to Shahpoor for sustenance, and there is no saying what misfortunes want of carriage will entail on an Indian army: success may be within its grasp, and yet be lost in a moment. Had I retreated, a shout of victory would have pealed along the Cutchee hills to Seebree, would have reverberated in the Bolan rocks, and echoed along the Hala range to Sehwan: and then a wild storm of swords, shields, and matchlocks would have swept the plain." Well might he quote Napoleon's opinion that war amongst deserts is the most difficult of any. He was having a most practical demonstration of its truth. "To get supplies is difficult," he says; "to move is difficult; to find a road is difficult; in short, it is a chain of difficulties that no other country presents. And we have here the agreeable addition of mountains and rocks, all barren and wild, and full of passes: desert behind, rocks before! Well, it teaches a man his trade, though with me too late, for I grow perceptibly weaker, principally from extreme anxiety lest I should blunder."

At this embarrassing conjuncture the four principal robber-chiefs sent to offer to surrender, and to ask for