

withdrawal, was "suffered to pass in silence;" and on the 14th Lord Ellenborough had made up his mind to General Pollock's protracted stay at Jelalabad. On the 29th he becomes frightened, and directs a letter to be written to General Pollock, warning him not to be too zealous in his endeavours to obtain the release of the prisoners. Is this the conduct of a great statesman? Is it that of a man even of plain common sense? No; it is that of a man so vacillating as to shift with every breeze, and even without any external cause for change, or so incompetent to the duties of his high charge, that all his faculties were overwhelmed, and he forgot by the end of the month what he had written at the middle of it; or, what is far worse, that of a trickster, anxious only so to play his cards as under all circumstances to exonerate himself from blame, and whatever might befall the army at Jelalabad, be able to secure his own reputation from wreck. But if this letter of the 29th May spoke the honest judgment of the Governor-General—and if it did not, let his friends find an excuse for his duplicity—it is clear that he was then anxious for the return of the army. Unless the negotiations for the release of a part—only a part—of the prisoners were complete, or nearly so, at the time of General Pollock's receiving the instructions of the Commander-in-Chief, he was to come back. This is the purport of the letter, and happily it is so decisive, that there is no possibility of explaining away its obvious meaning; and, let it be remembered, that when these explanatory instructions were given, Lord Ellenborough knew that General Pollock was deficient in the means of moving his troops, but had excellent means of providing for their comfort where they were.

The next letter addressed to General Pollock is dated the 1st June. It treats of the continued stay of the general at Jelalabad as then a settled point; and what is

its tone ? that of disappointment, chagrin, and fear. "The retirement of your army," it is observed, "immediately after the victory gained by Sir Robert Sale, the forcing of the Khyber Pass, and the relief of Jelalabad, would have had the appearance of a military operation successfully accomplished, and even triumphantly achieved. Its retirement, after six months of inaction, *before a following army of Affghans*, will have an appearance of a different and less advantageous character."\* Here, again, it is plain that it was the wish of Lord Ellenborough that General Pollock should retire immediately after effecting a junction with Sir Robert Sale. He not only directed this at the time, but more than six weeks after the junction had been effected, we find him lamenting that his directions had not been followed, and predicting evil from their having been neglected. In this letter a melancholy acquiescence is accorded, not to the arguments in favour of the army remaining, but to the force of circumstances, which rendered it impracticable for it to move. "Since circumstances seem to compel you to remain there till October,"—this is the language used under the instructions of the Governor-General.

We have now to consider a letter to General Pollock, dated June 6th. This, like the letter of the 29th May, is explanatory of previous orders, the Governor-General having a great horror of General Pollock's misunderstanding his instructions. Some thoughts had been entertained of making over the fort of Jelalabad to the Sikhs, and General Pollock had been instructed to give them possession if required by Mr. Clerk to do so. This had been adverted to in a letter from General Pollock to the secretary to the Governor-

\* Papers, page 297.

General, and forthwith a letter is despatched, "at headlong speed," to prevent any thing so calamitous as General Pollock's concluding that he was to stay at Jelalabad till it should be decided whether the fort should be given up to the Sikhs or not. It was known that General Pollock would not move till October. The delay had been coldly and sullenly assented to, but yet on the 6th June it is deemed requisite to warn General Pollock not to delay, with reference to any arrangement with the Sikhs, his movement from Jelalabad, which was not expected to take place for four months. This is not very intelligible, but it marks very distinctly the eagerness of the Governor-General for the return of the army—an eagerness so extreme, as apparently to involve his faculties in oblivion with regard to every thing else. The answer of General Pollock, though framed in perfect accordance with the relative situations of the Governor-General and himself, yet conveys to the former a very severe though dignified reproof by a mere calm statement of facts. The general says, "Had it been in my power to retire on Peshawur, I should not have delayed doing so for the purpose of making over Jelalabad to the Sikh troops, unless the transfer could have been effected immediately. It will be observed that in my letter, No. 64 (to which yours, No. 313, is a reply), I have stated that, owing to the want of carriage-cattle, it was not in my power to withdraw this army."\*

General Nott does not appear to have been written to so frequently as General Pollock, but whenever he was addressed the tone of communication was the same—retire, retire, retire. On the 1st June, he was apprized, by order of Lord Ellenborough, that General Pollock

\* Papers, page 325.

could not move before October. On the 4th July,—and the date is remarkable—he was informed of an intended movement of General Pollock on Pesh Bolak, and subsequently in advance. This communication was, accompanied by a copy of the letter addressed to General Pollock on the 1st June; the letter lamenting that the latter officer had not retired immediately after his arrival at Jelalabad, and foretelling evil results from his stay; and the following reason is assigned for the transmission of this copy to General Nott,—in order “that you may not be misled into the belief that any change has taken place in the main object of the instructions heretofore furnished to the major-general,”\* that object being to get the army away as quickly as possible. On the same day (July 4th) the same steadfastness of purpose is avowed in a letter to General Pollock—“No change has from the first taken place in the Governor-General’s views of the expediency of withdrawing your army at the earliest period consistent with the health and efficiency of the troops; that is, as is now understood, at the beginning of October.”†

Thus it is seen, that from the close of the month of March, or at all events from the commencement of April to the beginning of July, the instructions of the Governor-General were directed to one object—that of facilitating the retirement of the armies in Affghanistan—with little regard to national honour, and with none to the safety of the prisoners detained by the enemy.

At length, the dawn of a change appears. How was it brought about? Was it effected by any process of reasoning within the mind of the Governor-General, by the operation of new and unlooked-for events, or by some other cause? Certainly not by either of the two causes above re-

\* Papers, page 326.

† Papers, page 327.



ferred to. His lordship, it may be presumed, meditated on the circumstances under which he had to act, but the result was only to wed him more closely to his favourite plan of bringing back the armies in Affghanistan as early as possible. The current of events had been chequered; evil had been succeeded by good, but the Governor-General was unaffected; his views, on his own authority, were unchanged. True it is, that he continued to talk, at intervals, of "striking a blow at the enemy," and if the enemy could have been defeated by words, the Governor-General was not the man to spare them. But, at least until the month of July, he contemplated nothing beyond desultory and unconnected attacks—mere "chuppaos;"\* "you may make your strength severely felt by sallies of this description, should they be practicable," it is observed in the letter to General Pollock, June 1st, "and create a strong desire on the part of the enemy"—for what? "to induce you to leave the country." Oh most lame and impotent conclusion! And is this the language of a British Governor-General of India? Let not the shades of Clive and Cornwallis and Wellesley and Hastings hear it!

But to the reasons of the change. There were men who felt that, to abandon Affghanistan without some manifestation of military power, without some effort to recover the British subjects, treacherously kidnapped into captivity, would be a national disgrace. Such men were General Pollock and General Nott. The latter officer, on first learning that an intention was entertained of retiring from Jelalabad as soon as the garrison were relieved, remonstrated. The intention, it should in justice to Lord Ellenborough be observed, was entertained before his arrival, and therefore

\* A chuppao is an attack generally made by night, and for plunder: a surprise; a foray.

he is accountable only for adopting it. In this part of his conduct, as in those parts which present a fairer appearance, he has no pretensions to the blame or the praise due to originality of thought. General Nott remonstrated, representing the evil effects likely to result from quitting Affghanistan under circumstances which could not fail to leave behind us an impression that retirement was the consequence of weakness. The letter conveying this remonstrance was dated the 24th March. On the 18th April, General Nott again delivered his opinion on the question, and in a manner worthy of his character. Although he had then ground for concluding that the offer of advice hostile to retreat would not be very favourably received, he did not hesitate to avow his conviction that the difficulties of prosecuting the war to a more honourable conclusion had been greatly overrated, and that "unnecessary alarm had been created respecting the position of" the troops in Affghanistan. In a passage in the former of these letters the question of immediate retirement is discussed in so just and forcible a manner, that it is due to the gallant officer to quote it. "If Government intend to recover, even temporarily and for the saving of our national honour, their lost position in this country, even if doubtful of the policy that it may be deemed expedient to pursue, I earnestly hope, that before any immediate retrograde step is made, in either direction, our whole position in Affghanistan will be attentively viewed; and that the effect which a hasty retirement would certainly and instantly have on the whole of Beloochistan, and even on the navigation of the Indus, will be taken into consideration. At the present time the impression of our military strength among the people of this country, though weakened by the occurrences at Kabool, is not destroyed; but if we now retire, and it should again become necessary

to advance, we shall labour under many disadvantages, the most serious of which, in my opinion, will be, a distrust of their strength among our soldiers, which any admission of weakness is so well calculated to induce; and in what other light could a withdrawal from Jelalabad or Kandahar be viewed? If retirement should become necessary, it should take place simultaneously and at a proper season. If Government should select Kandahar as the point whence future operations against Kabool are to be directed, still the retention of a position at Jelalabad, in considerable force, will be of the most essential service in all future contemplated operations. In the sanguine hope that some unforeseen circumstances may have occurred to postpone the execution of the Government order for the evacuation of Jelalabad, I have thought it incumbent on me to address this letter to you."\* Now here it will be seen that General Nott looked to future operations against 'Kabool; he deemed them necessary to the vindication of his country's honour, and the retention of a position at Jelalabad in considerable force he regarded as essential to success. He did not abandon all hope of again visiting Kabool and deem retirement the only course open, as did the Governor-General, nor did he propose to run headlong for Kabool without provisions or means of carriage, a step which the Governor-General thought General Pollock might possibly have hazarded. His advice was to stand fast, retaining all the advantages which were possessed, and looking forward to employ them usefully to aid in pressing forward to Kabool when the proper time arrived. In his letter of the 18th of April, General Nott says, "Perhaps it is not within my province to observe, that, in my humble opinion, an unnecessary alarm has been created regarding

\* Papers, pages 245, 246.

the position of our troops in this country, and of the strength and power of the enemy we have to contend with. This enemy cannot face our troops in the field with any chance of success, however superior they may be in numbers, provided those precautions are strictly observed, which war, between a small body of disciplined soldiers and a vast crowd of untrained, unorganized, and half-civilized people, constantly renders necessary. True, the British troops suffered a dreadful disaster at Kabool, and it is not for me to presume to point out why this happened, however evident I may conceive the reasons, and the long train of military and political events which led to the sad catastrophe.”\* After receiving the orders to retire at once from Kandahar, General Nott was obviously in expectation that a better spirit might come over the mind of the Governor-General, and that delay might be beneficial in affording time for the transmission of counter orders. Writing to General Pollock, on the 30th May, he says, “ I have withdrawn the garrison of Kelat-i-Ghiljé ; the order left me no discretion ; the same order applies in the same positive manner to Kandahar ; however, it will take some time to arrange, and before I can possibly carry it into effect, there will be ample time for the Government, should they deem it advisable, to send me other orders. I shall be prepared to ADVANCE or retire agreeably to the pleasure of Government.”†

Such was the language, such the views and hopes of General Nott. What were those of General Pollock ? To ascertain them it is requisite to refer to a letter from the general dated the 13th May, the fate of which was somewhat extraordinary, it having, by a very remarkable accident, strayed into a wrong bundle of papers, from which

\* Papers, page 247.

† Papers, pages 313, 314.

retirement it did not emerge till the pertinacious and troublesome inquiries of some members of Parliament had reached Hindostan. This letter was written after the receipt by General Pollock of the Governor-General's letter, adverting to the possibility of the general having advanced to Kabool, and also after the receipt of the letter of the Commander-in-Chief, enforcing the general views of Lord Ellenborough as to the necessity for retreat. Referring to the former communication, General Pollock says, "I trust that I am not wrong in considering this letter as leaving to me discretionary powers; and coming as it does from the supreme power in India, I venture to delay for some days acting up to the instructions communicated in his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's letter, dated 29th ultimo." The general, it will be seen, thus eagerly caught at Lord Ellenborough's allusion to the possibility of his having advanced, and construed it into a permission to delay acting up to the instructions of a later date which he had received from another quarter, and which directed him, except under certain specified circumstances, to retire. General Pollock, after adverting to the reason of his not having advanced towards Kabool, thus goes on: "With regard to our withdrawal at the present moment, I fear that it would have the very worst effect; it would be construed into a defeat, and our character as a powerful nation would be entirely lost in this part of the world. It is true that the garrison at Jelalabad has been saved, which it would not have been had a force not been sent to its relief; but the relief of that garrison is only one object; there still remain others which we cannot disregard. I ALLUDE TO THE RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS." General Pollock then alludes to the negotiations in progress respecting the prisoners, and remarks, "If while these communications were in progress. I

were to retire, it would be supposed that panic had seized us. I therefore think that our remaining in this vicinity (or perhaps a few marches in advance) is essential to uphold the character of the British nation; and in like manner General Nott might hold his post, at all events, till a more favourable season." Lord Ellenborough had expressed much anxiety respecting the health of the troops; and undoubtedly this was a most important consideration. General Pollock thus answers: "I have no reason yet to complain that the troops are more unhealthy than they were at Agra. If I am to march to Peshawur, the climate is certainly not preferable; and here I can in one or two marches find a better climate, and I should be able to dictate better terms than I could at Peshawur." To the dread of being attacked and beaten, General Pollock was as insensible as to that of climate, but he felt deeply the necessity of the co-operation with General Nott. He says: "I cannot imagine any force being sent from Kabool which I could not successfully oppose, but the advance on Kabool would require that General Nott should act in concert, and advance also. I therefore cannot help regretting that he should be directed to retire, which, without some demonstration of our power, he will find some difficulty in doing."\* Thus thought General Pollock; thus did he express himself strictly in accordance with the views of General Nott, though without concert; but with what a wide difference from those entertained and avowed by the Governor-General!

It has been intimated that this letter of General Pollock met with some remarkable adventures. In the Blue Book laid before Parliament it was not to be found, but its existence was ascertained from a reference made to it in another letter, which did appear. The Marquess of Lansdowne,

\* Afghanistan supplementary paper, presented to Parliament 1843.

in the House of Lords, and Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, called for its production, but her Majesty's ministers answered that they had it not, and knew nothing about it—that they had caused search to be made for it at the East-India House, and that there also the return was *non-inventus*. This appeared strange, but there was no remedy. Neither Court nor City could furnish copy of the letter, though evidently an important one, and by what means it had failed to reach the authorities at home was but matter for fruitless conjecture. At last the Secret Committee received a letter from the Governor-General, giving the following account of the matter—the spontaneous tender of his lordship in consequence of reading the “debates in Parliament.”\* “The original despatch of the 13th May never reached the office, and must have been lost in transit. The duplicate was received and acknowledged on the 11th of July. It is the practice of the Secretary's office to keep the unreported papers on all important subjects for each month together, and to forward copies of them to the Secret Committee by the monthly overland mail. The despatch in question was inadvertently put up in its proper place in the May bundle of reported papers, instead of being left for a time, as it should have been, amongst the unreported papers of July. Hence when the July papers were copied for transmission to the Secret Committee, this despatch was omitted.”† Such, according to the old rhyme,

“Is the history  
Of this wonderful mystery.”

This is the explanation given “on authority.” Really Indian affairs are strange matters. The paper in question

\* The letter of the Governor-General and that of General Pollock, then first forwarded, were laid before Parliament, and printed.

† *Affghanistan Supplementary Paper.*

gets from a place where it should be, to a place where it evidently should not be (though Lord Ellenborough calls it "the proper place"), with as much facility as we have seen a clause escape out of one Act of Parliament and creep into another. This wonderful transposition is worth looking into on account of its curiosity. "The original despatch never reached the office, and must have been lost in transit." Here we are led to ask what place it was that the despatch never reached?—"the office," but what office? Does Lord Ellenborough mean that it never reached his hands? that it was intercepted by the Affghans, whose vigilance thus occasioned such an infinity of trouble to various parties—to the Marquess of Lansdowne and Lord Palmerston in asking questions; to the Queen's Ministers in declaring themselves unable to answer them; to the clerks of the Board of Commissioners and of the East-India Company in looking for the copy of a paper of which copy never arrived; and, lastly, to Lord Ellenborough, in giving the account of the transaction above quoted? Is this his lordship's meaning, or does he mean that after he had received and read it, the despatch was lost in the course of transmission to some office where it was to be deposited? Surely, where explanation was the object, a little more clearness might have been attained. But the original despatch was lost—when, where, how—whether before or after Lord Ellenborough had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with its contents, does not appear. Now for the duplicate. "The duplicate was received and acknowledged on the 11th July;" here we are at sea again. It is not quite apparent whether both the receipt and acknowledgment are to be assigned to the 11th July, or the latter only. Was the letter acknowledged on the same day on which it was received, or some time afterwards? If on the



day it was received, there seems to have been marvellous haste in acknowledging a letter which had then become stale, and which with reference to a change which had come over the policy of the Governor-General did not call for any extraordinary promptness. Yet, with reference to this change of policy, we cannot but perceive how flattering it is to the sagacity of Lord Ellenborough, that, before he was in possession of the letter of General Pollock (assuming that he did not receive it till the 11th July), he had become a convert to the opinions therein maintained, so far as to allow a practical trial to be made of their soundness. But we must proceed with the explanation :—It seems that “it is the practice of the Secretary’s office to keep the unreported papers, on all important subjects, together, and to forward copies of them to the Secret Committee by the Monthly Overland Mail.” Well, this “practice” appears a very natural and reasonable one, but it is to be presumed that the papers thus kept together are placed with reference to the month in which they are *received*—not according to the dates they bear. If a letter, dated in November, 1843, should happen, from any cause, not to be received till November, 1844, it would (it is to be supposed) be placed with the papers of the latter month, not of the former. How extraordinary then was it, that a letter received in July (if it were not received till then) should be transferred, “inadvertently,” to the month of May, with which it had no connection but in respect of date! What a strange inadvertency this must have been—to carry back the paper from the current month under which it ought to have been copied for transmission home to a past month—the papers of which had, as it seems, been copied and transmitted previously, or else how did this particular paper escape the process? If, indeed, the original had been received in

May, as it might have been, and after being perused by Lord Ellenborough had been handed over by his Lordship for deposit among the papers of the month, the duplicate might properly have been put there too, and this would seem to have been the case, for Lord Ellenborough says that such was its "proper place;" but then how are we to account for his lordship's apparent ignorance of the contents of this letter? Besides, as the original had never been received at "the office," whether received by Lord Ellenborough or not, those whose duty it was to put up the papers in their proper places must have known this, and as they at least knew nothing of the first copy of the despatch, that copy never having come into their hands, this second copy became virtually the original. They knew no other, and they could not conclude that a paper which had never come into "the office" had been previously copied therein for transmission to England. The explanation, in fact, explains nothing. The matter is still swrapt in mystery, and should any successor of the elder D'Israeli, in emulation of that agreeable writer's "Curiosities of Literature," make a collection of the "Curiosities of Statesmanship," the narrative of the wonderful events which befel General Pollock's letter, and their consequences in the British Parliament and elsewhere, will well deserve a place.

To proceed with the correspondence of General Pollock. That officer, it will be remembered, was unable, from want of the means of carriage, to move from Jelalabad, either in advance as he would have wished, or in retreat, as desired by the Governor-General. In a letter dated the 20th May, he had suggested that he should be authorized to remain at Jelalabad till the autumn, as supplies were plentiful, and the situation quite as healthy as Peshawur.\* This was

\* Papers, page 296.

answered on behalf of Lord Ellenborough by the letter of the 1st of June, already referred to, expressive of disappointment that the retreat of the army did not take place immediately after the forcing of the Khyber Pass, and the relief of Jelalabad, when, in his lordship's opinion, it "would have had the appearance of a military operation successfully accomplished, and even triumphantly achieved."\* This view of the matter is remarkable enough, but it is not the most singular feature in this singular letter, which, to use the language of a learned lord, affords matter for "much pondering." The authority solicited for retaining the army of Jelalabad is not formally and distinctly given, neither is it refused. His lordship only talks "about it and about it." It is assumed in the following passage (already quoted), that the army will remain, "since circumstances seem to compel you to remain there [at Jelalabad] till October;" and shortly after, it is observed, "you have already full powers to do every thing you may deem necessary, for the comfort of your troops and for their efficiency."\* This hesitating, rambling mode of treating such a subject is strange enough in a state paper. But there are things yet more strange. The Governor-General compels us to go back to the famous letter from General Pollock of the 13th May, which emerged from darkness only at the call of two potent magicians, yclept Lansdowne and Palmerston. His lordship acknowledges General Pollock's letter of the 20th May, but he says not one word of the letter of the 13th (the modest, retiring letter, that kept out of the way). Perhaps he had not received it. This supposition will, indeed, account for his not discussing its contents, but will it account for the absence of all allusion to it? It was evident that it was a most important letter.

\* Papers, page 297.

But perhaps Lord Ellenborough knew nothing about it—he was ignorant of such a letter ever having been written. Not so, for General Pollock, in the letter which was so fortunate as to obtain an answer (that of the 20th May), says, “I have already, in my letter dated the 13th instant, entered on the subject,”\* that subject being nothing less than the withdrawal of the army from Jelalabad to Peshawur, and yet this letter receives no more notice than if it had been a complimentary note inquiring after his lordship’s health—possibly not so much. Whether his lordship had received the letter or not, his silence is alike inexplicable. If he had received it, how came he not to acknowledge the receipt—if he had not, how came he to pass over the mishap so calmly? His lordship must answer—no one else can. The despatch to the Secret Committee reporting this correspondence throws no light upon the affair, but seems to make it more mysterious. In an early part of the despatch, General Pollock’s want of carriage is noticed, and it is observed, “the season is now, however, too far advanced to make it probable that Major-General Pollock will be able to commence a retrograde movement for some months.” In a subsequent part, one of the letters of General Pollock is thus noticed: “On the 20th May, the Major-General (Pollock), in reply to the letter addressed to him on the 4th, again represented the difficulty under which he laboured in procuring camels at Jelalabad, and under the circumstances stated, requested that he might be permitted to defer his retrograde movement until the month of October or November next. But you will perceive elsewhere,† that circumstances connected with the disorganization of the Sikh troops in the rear of our

\* Papers, page 296.

† This refers to a letter on the subject, addressed by order of the Governor-General to the Commander-in-Chief.

army in Affghanistan, make me more earnestly desire the speedy return of that army to the Sutlej; and that in order to enable Major-General Pollock to meet any difficulties in procuring carriage and supplies, treasure to the amount of ten lacs has been directed to be sent to Jelalabad.\* From this statement, had it stood alone, what could the Secret Committee and the Board of Commissioners have concluded? Obviously that General Pollock's request had been refused—that he had been peremptorily ordered to return. Could they have thought that even the desponding acquiescence “since circumstances seem to compel you to remain” had been given; and taking the statement in connection with the passage first quoted, what could they make of it? Nothing consistent or intelligible; the whole seems a piece of studied mystification.

But now the curtain must rise upon a new scene in the strange drama before us—a scene, in the language of melodramatic managers, replete with striking effects. On the 4th of July we have seen that the Governor-General caused a letter to be written to General Nott cautioning him against concluding from General Pollock's movements, that any change had taken place in the main object of the instructions issued to the latter officer, those instructions having been invariably directed to his retirement at as early a period as possible. We have seen that on that same 4th of July General Pollock was also addressed in a similar strain.† But on that very same 4th of July, the two generals were addressed in two other letters which may be regarded as unexampled specimens of political chicanery. Men may have seen something like them before, but nothing so good of the kind. The principal letter, that to General Nott, is indeed a master-piece, and the greatest adepts in that crooked science which disregards means, and looks but

\* Papers, page 263.

† See page 57.

to ends, and those selfish ends, may hail Lord Ellenborough as a worthy brother. The Jesuits immortalized by Pascal might be delighted with him—Talleyrand give him a fraternal embrace, and Machievelli, as belonging to a graver and less excitable nation, bestow on him a gracious smile of approval. Lord Ellenborough had always held out the retirement of the army as the chief object of his policy, and had strenuously urged that such retirement should be as early as possible. Does he continue to hold the same opinion still on this same 4th of July? He does—for he says so in the two brief and simple letters addressed on that day by his orders to the two generals; nay, more, he says the same in the second and more elaborate letter of that date to General Nott, the Jesuitical letter just introduced to the notice of the reader. Listen to him: “Nothing has occurred to induce me to change my first opinion, that the measure, commanded by considerations of political and military prudence, is to bring back the armies now in Afghanistan at the earliest period at which their retirement can be effected consistently with the health and efficiency of the troops, into positions wherein they may have easy and certain communication with India; and to this extent the instructions you have received remain unaltered.”\* “To this extent!”—What extent? To bring back the armies to proximity with India as soon as possible. There is no limitation here—it is, in the more expressive than elegant phraseology of our brother across the Atlantic, “going the whole hog.” Get back the troops as soon as you can is the substance; albeit, dilated in diplomatic fashion, it occupies more space than these simple words. “But,” his Lordship commences his next sentence—Touchstone proves that there is great virtue in an “if,” and a voice from Allaha-

\* See page 328.

bad demonstrates—practically, too, the best of all modes of demonstration—the virtue of a “but.” “But the improved position of your army, with sufficient means of carriage for as large a force as it is necessary to move in Affghanistan, induces me now to leave to your option the line by which you shall withdraw your troops from that country.” This reads well; the general, as a military man, and acquainted with the localities, might undoubtedly be a better judge upon such a matter than the most richly gifted Governor-General not thus qualified.\* Lord Ellenborough proceeds to speak of the line by Quetta and Sukkur, which he pronounces eligible—and so for mere retreat it might be. He then passes to another line, and the description of it almost takes away the breath of the reader. The line is by Ghuznee, Kabool, and Jelalabad! This—let all attention be given—this is laid down as a line of retirement from Kandahar to India, and being laid down by such eminent authority, it is not to be disputed that it is such a line, though certainly not the nearest, nor the most direct. It is as though a man at Gloucester should say, “I’ll retire to London, and I think the best line will be by Birmingham and Manchester.” Well, let us admit that General Nott, in going from Kandahar to Ghuznee, and from Ghuznee to Kabool, is to be considered as retiring upon India. It is hard, very hard, to receive, but it is *nothing* compared with what must yet be submitted to. General Nott’s line is marked out, but what is to become of General Pollock? He, too, must retire, and his presence has long been required in Peshawur, with all convenient speed (perhaps the qualifying epithet might have been omitted). Of course, now that he is provided with the means of carriage, he is at once to take the retrograde step, the necessity for which has been so unceasingly rung in his unwilling ears. Yes, General Pol-

lock is to retire, but not *immediately*, to Peshawur. He is to vary his line of march—slightly,—by a deviation in the direction of Kabool ! Perhaps he may reach that place, memorable from the atrocities of which it was the scene, perhaps he may not reach quite so far, as the purpose of his *retiring* in this direction is represented as being to support General Nott—but towards Kabool is his course. Retire from Jelalabad towards India by Kabool ! To adopt the mode of illustration before resorted to, this is as though a man at Northampton should talk of retiring to London by way of York. Every mile he traverses carries him away from the place that he says he is going to, nor has he the pretence afforded by a movement somewhat oblique to set his conscience at rest. He is going away from the place that he professes to be anxious to reach, in a manner most direct, palpable, and undisguised, that can be conceived. He does not cast even a sidelong glance towards the avowed point of his destination ; he turns his back upon it, and must know what he is about. But there is a result, which evidently follows, from the mode of speaking adopted by Lord Ellenborough on this occasion, of which, perhaps, even he was not aware. The marches of General Nott and of General Pollock to Kabool were marches made in retirement—that is settled—well then, the march of Lord Keane was the same,—we are accustomed to speak of this as an advance, but it is now clear that we have been wrong,—General Pollock and General Nott marched to Kabool, and these marches were steps in retirement. Lord Keane made a similar march, and, therefore, his lordship must also have been retiring ; though, so blindly infatuated have we always been, that we have regarded his march as an advance. It is useless to say that the two Generals, Pollock and Nott, did not mean to remain ; that they were only to perform



certain acts, and then to evacuate the country. This does not convert an advance into a retreat; and, moreover, this was precisely what was contemplated in the case of Lord Keane and his army. They were not to remain; they were to fix Shah Shoojah on the throne, and then to withdraw! But stifling for a time—if we can—the laugh of derision which such perversion of language cannot fail to raise, let us ask, why was this contemptible juggling with words resorted to? The answer is plain—to save the infallibility of Lord Ellenborough. He had been for months saying that there was no course but retreat, and he continued to say so when forced by a regard to his reputation to yield—not to the more mature dictates of his own judgment—but to the counsels of others, and to change his policy. He thought the change might be masked—so he goes on still preaching retreat, but giving a new gloss to the old text. Retreat was still the word—the decree for its accomplishment had gone forth—but—the line of retreat was open—and what an extraordinary line it was has been already shewn. But to forget for a moment—if possible—the astounding audacity of this proceeding, let us look at the consistency which marked it. A letter is written to General Nott on the 4th July, telling him that the Governor-General's mind is unaltered, and that he must not conclude *otherwise from any movement of General Pollock*. Another letter is written on the same day, giving the general permission either to act in accordance with the Governor-General's views which remained unchanged, or to follow his own. The latter letter is not placed upon record, which Lord Ellenborough seems to think a marvellously deep piece of policy. Why was it not placed upon record? Was it to keep its contents entirely secret? Secrecy is a good thing in such cases, but the danger to be apprehended

was not likely to be provoked by the letter giving sanction—coldly and hesitatingly and reluctantly, indeed, but still giving it to a bold and manly course of action; the source of danger was to be found in the timid and cowering instructions for retreat. The generals invariably urge, that the design to retreat should, as far as possible, be concealed from the enemy—that the knowledge of such a design would embolden them, while the apprehension of more vigorous proceedings would keep them in a state of alarm. It was therefore the letters which contained the whining deprecations of any protracted occupation of the country that ought to have been kept especially secret,—but these were brought upon record, while that which allowed the generals to prosecute the war to an honourable conclusion—though with a sword suspended over their heads,—was deemed so dangerous, that for this or some other reason, it was for a time kept back.

So dishonest a paper as the second letter, addressed, on the 4th July, 1842, by Lord Ellenborough to General Nott, has rarely seen the light; but dishonesty is not its only characteristic; it is ungenerous to a degree that could not have been expected in a man holding the office of Governor-General of India. Lord Ellenborough casts from himself all responsibility, and throws it upon General Nott. Most judiciously was the burden bestowed; but ought a Governor-General of India thus to relieve himself at the expense of one under his orders? His lordship knew that if the armies in Affghanistan were brought back without making some demonstration of their power, and without some attempt to rescue the prisoners, he should be met by a universal shout of execration from his countrymen at home; but he shrunk from the responsibility of directing any measures necessary for the vindication of the

national honour, so he hit upon the expedient of leaving all to General Nott. He saws and balances through a letter of considerable length, and at last comes to no conclusion but that of advising nothing. Let the reader judge. After stating that he left to the general's "option" the choice of a line of retreat, he thus proceeds:—"I must desire, however, that in forming your decision upon this most important question, you will attend to the following considerations:—In the direction of Quetta and Sukkur, there is no enemy to oppose you: at each place, occupied by detachments, you will find provisions, and probably as you descend the passes, you will have increased means of carriage. The operation is one admitting of no doubt as to its success. If you determine upon moving upon Ghuznee, Kabool, and Jelalabad, you will require for the transport of provisions a much larger amount of carriage; and you will be practically without communications from the time of your leaving Kandahar. Dependent entirely upon the courage of your army, and upon your own ability in directing it, I should not have any doubt as to the success of the operation; but whether you will be able to obtain provisions for your troops, during the whole march, and forage for your animals, may be a matter of reasonable doubt. Yet upon this your success will turn. You must remember that it was not the superior courage of the Affghans, but want, and the inclemency of the season, which led to the destruction of the army at Kabool; and you must feel as I do, that the loss of another army, from whatever cause it might arise, might be fatal to our Government in India. I do not undervalue the aid which our Government in India would receive from the successful execution by your army of a march through Ghuznee and Kabool, over the scenes of our late disasters. I know all the effect which it

would have upon the minds of our soldiers, of our allies, of our enemies in Asia, and of our countrymen, and of all foreign nations in Europe. It is an object of just ambition, which no one more than myself would rejoice to see effected ; but I see that failure in the attempt is certain and irretrievable ruin ; and I would endeavour to inspire you with the necessary caution, and make you feel that, great as are the objects to be obtained by success, the risk is great also.\* Now this language is substantially—"I have set before you the advantages and disadvantages of every conceivable course—do as you please, but take care that what you do is the best that can possibly be done." Let us mark the generosity of this proceeding—suppose that General Nott had participated in the more than girlish timidity of Lord Ellenborough, and had said—"I can get back in safety to Sukkur, so I will run no risk by trying to reach Kabool," he then would have incurred all the odium attendant on so inglorious an abandonment of Affghanistan. It would have been said—"you had permission to go on, and you did not." The Governor-General would thus have been exonerated ; and now that he has found men more courageous than himself—men who dared to perform what he did not even dare to recommend, shall he enjoy any portion of the praise due to their noble conduct ? Justice forbids it. What, give the prize to one who never entered the lists, or even divide it between the gallant soldiers to whose counsel the movement is to be attributed, as is its success to their arms—divide it between these distinguished men and "a certain lord, neat, trimly drest," whose dislike "to those vile guns" was so great that he thought it better to fly than to fight ! Honour, never-dying honour, rest on the heroes who rescued the British name in Affghanistan from the contempt

into which it had fallen ! but let not another, presuming upon the accident of his having at the time held the highest office in the government of British India, be allowed to step in, and rob them of any portion of the glory which is theirs, and theirs alone.

Is there on record any parallel to the conduct of Lord Ellenborough ? Yes, one instance occurs. The readers of Roderick Random will remember, that while that erratic person is serving as a surgeon's mate on board a man-of-war, his superior, one Dr. Macshane, proposes to amputate a sailor's leg, in a case where Roderick and one of his comrades do not think the operation necessary. The doctor, shocked at the contumacy of his assistants, at first talks big, and declares that he is not accountable to them for his practice ; but not feeling quite secure in his own judgment, and not liking to bear the responsibility of operating in opposition to theirs, he, after slight consideration, hits upon the expedient of turning the case over to his mates, and holding them accountable for the result. Just so did Lord Ellenborough. He gives orders, against which remonstrance is made by those who are to execute them. He persists for a while, and then, in conformity with the precedent afforded by the case of Dr. Macshane, he lets his troublesome advisers do as they please, but saddles the concession with a complete transfer of all responsibility from himself. Jack Ratlin, the wounded sailor, recovered under the hands of the two mates—no thanks to Dr. Macshane. The honour of England was vindicated in Affghanistan—but no thanks to Lord Ellenborough. He renounced all claim to praise by renouncing all responsibility. He would have nothing to do with the march to Kabool. Like the sceptical Philosopher Marphurius, in *Le Mariage Forcé*, he said, “*Je m'en lave les mains,*” though with far

better luck ; Molière's hero received a hearty thrashing for his indifference ;—

“ But yet, as fortune, by the self-same ways  
She humbles many, some delights to raise,”

Lord Ellenborough, by a like manifestation, gains an Earl's coronet, and a Grand Cross of the Bath.

Yet indifferent as was Lord Ellenborough to some things, which appealed powerfully to the feelings of men inferior in rank to the Governor-General of India, it must not be supposed that he was on all subjects equally philosophical. He was not such “ a dish of skimmed-milk ” but that there were matters capable of moving him, and the letter to General Nott affords an instance. Anticipating that the general would be so hot-headed as to advance upon Ghuznee and Kabool—to *retreat* by way of these places it should have been said—anticipating this movement, Lord Ellenborough thus instructs the gallant officer upon a very important point relating to his conduct at the former place. “ You will bring away from the tomb of Mahinood of Ghuznee his club which hangs over it, and you will bring away the gates of his tomb, which are the gates of the temple of Somnauth.”\* Let the defamers of Lord Ellenborough now stand forth and say, if they dare, that he is without enthusiasm. The charge is false. His enthusiasm may be of extraordinary character—it may require extraordinary occasions to call it forth—but it is clear that it may be called forth. Though it may slumber long, it exists. True, that the reparation of the damaged honour of Great Britain did not provoke it ; true, that it was proof against the claims of the brave men, delicate women, and innocent children who were in captivity among the Affghans ; but it is raised to boiling-heat by the thoughts of a mouldy old club and a pair of

rotten gates. No, it would be wrong to charge Lord Ellenborough with being deficient in generous enthusiasm, but the feeling is in him of a singular kind. The club, alas ! eluded the grasp of the victors of Ghuznee ; but the gates—thrice happy chance ! were taken ; a fact as well known as John Gilpin's ride to Ware and back again.

“ I am a linen-draper bold,  
As all the world doth know.”

And Lord Ellenborough took good care that all the world should know the story of the gates of Somnauth. The Hindoo princes, he thought, would be delighted with it, and he rushed to electrify them with the good news as eagerly as ancient Pistol to communicate to Sir John Falstaff the news of the accession to the throne of his old boon companion, Henry the Fifth.

“ Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend,  
And helter-skelter have I rode to thee,  
And tidings do I bring, and lucky joy,  
And golden times, and happy news of price.”

But ancient Pistol never uttered such fustian as is to be found in a certain Indian state paper. Who has forgotten the famous proclamation which threw Europe, Asia, and America, into apoplectic fits of laughter, except when the risible propensity was subdued by rising feelings of disgust or apprehension ? That a Christian nobleman should have dictated such a proclamation and sent it forth, with the stamp of his authority, is indeed calculated to excite impressions of deep regret, not less than of surprise. But that any man, except the concoctor of a low American newspaper—one of the fraternity transatlantically denominated *Slangwhangers*—could have written such a paper, would have exceeded belief were not the fact before us. If there be in existence any state paper with which it may fitly be

compared, it must have emanated from the cabinet of King Chrononhotonthologos. But to this sounding prelude what succeeded? The parading of the gates was to delight Lord Ellenborough's "brothers and friends,"—so he styled them—the Hindoo princes and chiefs. Did it answer the purpose? Far from it. His lordship's enthusiasm was shared by none. No man in India but himself cared for these gates, or deemed them worth a thought. To him they furnished a stand on which to hang the flowers of Bedlam eloquence, and there their importance ended. They slumber in obscurity, no one knows where. Certainly they have not been honoured with a triumphal progress into Guzerat, as Lord Ellenborough proposed, and it seems that if they had, there is no temple for them!

The folly of this unparalleled proclamation is obvious enough—the political danger attending its issue is not less apparent. His lordship had a keen scent for danger when British honour was to be vindicated and British prisoners rescued. How came his apprehensions to be lulled into insensibility when he prepared this extraordinary paper? Did his lordship think that in this proclamation he should carry with him the feelings of the Mahomedan subjects of the British Crown? Did it never occur to him that the almost divine honours claimed for a trumpery piece of carpenter's work might be offensive to those who, though aliens from the Christian fold, have yet a deep horror of idolatry, and of all that ministers to it? Did he overlook the fact, that the capture of these gates, if a triumph for the Hindoos, was a triumph over the Mahomedans, or did he think that there was no danger in irritating the latter? Did he forget how proud and excitable is the Mahomedan character—that those by whom the gates of Somnauth were carried to Ghuznee



were followers of Mahomed, and that the original capture of the gates, like their recapture, was less a national than a religious cause of triumph? Did he forget that thousands of Mahomedans were serving in the British armies, and that it was scarcely worth while to offend them for the sake of trumpeting the march of the gates, of which the tomb of Mahmood the Destroyer had been despoiled, even though the tomb his lordship assured his "brothers and friends 'looked' upon the ruins of Ghuznee,"—an extraordinary proceeding on the part of the tomb. Did he forget HIS OWN declaration—surely he could not forget *that* whatever else might slip from his memory, that the war had "assumed a religious as well as national character?"\* or did he disregard the possible consequences of disgusting a host of bold, reckless, uncalculating men, whose "brothers and friends" in Affghanistan professed, like themselves, the creed of Mahomed? True, no harm has followed. The Mahomedan population of India have cast aside their ordinary gravity, and, like all the world beside, laughed at the mad effusion which the Governor-General thought would please everybody, and found to please nobody. But because no mischief has ensued, are we to acquit the man who provoked it? A burning brand may be thrown into a mass of combustibles, and it may happen that the mass does not take fire, but we do not thereupon conclude that the application of the brand was a prudent or even an innocent act. Lord Ellenborough's proclamation has turned out only a good jest, but it might have been no jest at all. There would have been nothing like a jest in a widely-spread Mahomedan revolt. We might have been satisfied, as we are now, that Lord Ellenborough did not intend to produce such an out-

\* Letter to Sir Jasper Nicolls, 15th March, 1842. Papers, page 167.

break—that his lordship, in fact, meant nothing by his proclamation—that it was a mere flourish of words, as unmeaning as a flourish of trumpets; but had an insurrection followed, it would have consoled us little to recollect that it had no more dignified origin than the passion of a Governor-General for writing turgid nonsense.

There was another proclamation issued a few months before, something in the same strain with the Somnauth paper. One passage is very characteristic of the author. “Disasters unparalleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated, and the treachery by which they were completed, have, in one short campaign, been avenged upon every scene of past misfortune.” Now did it become the Governor-General of India thus publicly to cast a stigma on his predecessor, whoever he might have been? It is not necessary to defend the policy of Lord Auckland—many, and among them some of the highest authorities on Indian affairs, condemn that policy—but, whether it were right or wrong, Lord Ellenborough had no right to sit in judgment upon it—no official right; he might hold his own opinion, he might express that opinion to his friends, or after he had quitted office, not before—he might have diffused it by means of the press; but as Governor-General of India, Lord Ellenborough had no right publicly to criticise his predecessor. The bad taste of the proceeding is aggravated by the character of the party attacked. The administration of Lord Auckland terminated amid clouds; but who is there of any party who will deny to his lordship the character of an upright, conscientious, and intelligent functionary? Moreover, Lord Auckland was eminently a modest and unpresuming statesman: Oh! how unlike, in this respect, to his successor.

Towards the conclusion of this proclamation, the first in

order of time, though the second noticed, are two intimations of very singular character viewed in connection with that which has followed. The first of them is to the effect that "the rivers of the Punjaub and the Indus" are to "be placed between a British army and an enemy approaching from the West." The Indus, therefore, is to be one of the boundaries of British territory and occupation. The sentence immediately preceding the passage above quoted commences thus:—"Content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its empire, the Government of India will devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of general PEACE." This last word brings us to the second point, which is prominently put forward in the sentence with which the proclamation concludes:—"Sincerely attached to peace, for the sake of the benefits it confers upon the people, the Governor-General is resolved that PEACE shall be observed." Here are two things pronounced distinctly; first, that Lord Ellenborough would regard the Indus as a natural boundary of the British Empire in the East, and secondly, that his policy should be pacific—

"The lady doth protest too much, methinks,  
Oh . but she'll keep her word."

Let us see how the Governor-General kept his. Peace had been his unceasing song. He had sung it after dinner at the London Tavern when about to proceed to India, and he continued to encore himself upon all fitting occasions, and some unfitting ones, after he arrived in that country. He would have purchased peace with Affghanistan, even though national dishonour were the price. He afterwards became more warlike. The military had gained laurels in Affghanistan, a portion of which he transferred to his own brows; but while they were ripening, a series of events were in progress in Sinde, which, in their termination,

illustrated, in a most extraordinary manner, both the consistency of his lordship's professions with his actions, and the pacific character of his policy.

Sinde had been for many years under a government of an extraordinary character. It was divided into three states, Hyderabad, Khyrpoor, and Meerpoor, subject to rulers called Ameers, some of whom exercised the powers of sovereignty in undivided tenancy. Of these states, Hyderabad was the chief. The East-India Company long maintained some commercial intercourse with Sinde, but no political connection subsisted between the Company's government and that of any of the states of Sinde till the year 1809, when, it being an important object to keep the French from gaining any footing in India, a treaty was concluded, by which the rulers of Hyderabad bound themselves not to admit that people to settle in their country. In 1820, another treaty was concluded, by which all Europeans and Americans were to be excluded from settling in the dominions of Sinde. In 1832, it being an object with the British Government to open the navigation of the Indus, another treaty was concluded, by which that object was attained, subject to three conditions—the exclusion of the transit of military stores by the river as well as by the roads of Sinde, the exclusion of armed vessels, and the prohibition of English merchants settling in the country. By another treaty with Khyrpoor, the passage of the river was conceded upon the same terms as might be agreed upon with the Government of Hyderabad. A supplementary treaty, having reference especially to the tolls to be levied, was concluded with the Hyderabad Government very soon after the former treaty; and in 1834, a commercial treaty, in conformity with a provision in the supplementary one, was entered into with the same state, and extended to

Khyrpoor, as previously agreed upon. In 1838, another treaty was formed, by which the British Government undertook, to use its good offices to adjust differences existing between the Ameers and Runjeet Singh, the Sikh ruler, who meditated the extension of his conquests in the direction of Sindé. By this treaty, also, the Ameers agreed, for the first time, to receive permanently a British minister to reside at Hydrabad, or elsewhere within their dominions, as he might deem expedient.

Sinde was formerly a dependency of the Mogul empire. About the middle of the last century it became subject to Kabool, but from the weakness of the Government of that country, the dependency was little more than nominal. When the British Government resolved to support the claims of Shah Shoojah, and reinstate him in possession of his dominions, it was deemed necessary to settle the relation of Sindé with Kabool, and accordingly, by an article in the Tripartite treaty, to which the British Government, Runjeet Singh, and Shoojah-ool-Moolk were parties, it was provided that, on the payment, by the Ameers, to Shoojah-ool-Moolk of a sum to be fixed under the mediation of the British Government (part of which was to be paid by Shoojah to Runjeet Singh), all the claims of the ruler of Kabool upon Sindé, whether of supremacy or for tribute, were to be relinquished, and the country was to continue to belong to the Ameers and their successors in perpetuity.

The conclusion of this treaty, and the mode in which their interests were affected by it, were communicated to the Ameers by the British minister at Hydrabad, who was instructed, also, to announce the approach of the army intended to reseat Shah Shoojah on the throne of Kabool. A long course of diplomatic proceedings, varied by sundry hostile acts on the part of the British Government, too

well known to require detail, here followed. These ended in the conclusion of new treaties, the effect of which was to add the Ameers to the number of princes over whom the British Government held control by the tenure of a subsidiary alliance. Thus matters stood in February, 1842, when Lord Ellenborough arrived to take the reins of government in India.

It is not offering his lordship any injustice to say that almost from the period of his entering upon the duties of his office, he seems to have contemplated the reduction of Sinde to the condition of a British province, in name as well as in fact. On the 6th May, 1842, he writes to the political agent in that country thus: "The Governor-General is *led to think* that you *may* have seen reason to doubt the fidelity of some one or more of the Ameers of Sinde."\* Accordingly, with reference to what his lordship had been "*led to think*" *might* have occurred, he transmitted a letter, to be addressed to any one or more of the Ameers who might incur suspicion. This letter, which breathes gunpowder in every line, thus concludes: "On the day on which you shall be faithless to the British Government, sovereignty will have passed from you; your dominions will be given to others" (to whom?—we shall shortly see), "and in your destitution, all India will see that the British Government will not pardon an injury received from one it believes to be its friend."† In the letter of instruction to the political agent, this passage is referred to as "no idle threat, intended only to alarm, but a declaration of the Governor-General's fixed determination to punish, cost what it may, the first chief who may prove faithless, by the confiscation of his dominions."‡

\* Correspondence relating to Sinde, 1836, 1843. Printed in conformity with a resolution of the General Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock, 17th November, 1843. Page 347. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

Proceeding onward, we find another letter addressed by order of his lordship to the political agent in Sindé, under date the 22nd May. The British, as is well known, had, on advancing upon Affghanistan, taken possession of certain towns and fortresses belonging to the Ameers of Sindé. Whether this were justifiable or not, this is not the place to inquire; but this much is quite certain without any inquiry, that we had possessed ourselves of these places avowedly for military purposes, and that our retention of them was professedly only temporary. In the letter last referred to, the political agent in Sindé is thus instructed: "In any future negotiation with the Ameers of Khyrpoor, you will therefore bear in mind that it is the wish of the Governor-General to possess the island of Bukkur and the town of Sukkur, with such an ample *arrondissement* as may give every facility for the maintenance of a good police within the town, and for the formation of commercial establishments therein; regard being had likewise to the changing character of the Indus, and the necessity of providing for every variation in the course of that river which the localities make it possible to foresee. The island of Bukkur would be considered as a citadel and arsenal of the town of Sukkur, and should be rendered easily defensible by a small force."\* If advantage should be taken of an expression in a previous part of this letter, "his lordship feels that it will be necessary, *at least until the affairs of Affghanistan shall assume a more settled and satisfactory form*, to retain a position on the Indus, and to have the means of acting upon both banks"—if advantage be taken of the above qualification to say that Lord Ellenborough meant to retain possession of certain parts of Sindé only for a limited period, an answer is furnished by himself in the following passage from the latter part of his letter. "The

\* Correspondence, page 350.

Governor-General would consider that it would be a most desirable arrangement if, in lieu of all tribute payable, under treaty or otherwise, by the Ameers of Sind and of Khyrpoor, such cessions of territory as may be necessary were made to us at Kurrachee, the island of Bukkur, and the town of Sukkur, and all claims to tribute payable by the Ameers to us, or to any other power, were, after such cessions, to be cancelled, in consideration of the establishment of the perpetual freedom of trade upon the Indus, and of such other provisions for the freedom of transit through their respective territories as it might appear expedient to make." Thus it is obvious that even at this early period of his administration Lord Ellenborough contemplated permanent territorial acquisition in Sind.

On the 4th of June we have another letter to the political agent in Sind, in which his lordship is represented as "resolved to keep every thing within the Lower Indus in his hands." In this letter he inquires "whether the territories under Meer Roostum Khan be in such a position as to make it easy to annex a portion thereof to the dominions of the Khan of Bhawalpore, whose dominions his lordship is desirous of increasing, in reward for his own uniform fidelity and that of his ancestors."\* Here we find Lord Ellenborough treating the dominions of the Ameers as though they were his own—not only assigning as much as he thought fit to the Government of which he was the representative and head, but proposing to carve them out for the benefit of others, provided that they lay conveniently for the purpose.

Shortly after this, the reader of the Sind correspondence is treated with a specimen of his lordship's usual vacillation. A letter addressed to the political agent on the 10th of

\* Correspondence, page 370.



July concludes thus: "After all, it will be a matter for consideration, before the final instructions shall be issued to you, whether any probable benefit to be ever derived from the treaty could compensate for the annual expenditure which would be brought upon the Government of India by the maintenance of a large force at Sukkur and Kurachee."\* On the 22nd May, the Governor-General had been most anxious to retain possession of Kurachee, Bukkur, and Sukkur. But between that date and the 22nd July, "consideration like an angel came,"† and he began to doubt whether these places were worth the expense of keeping.

A new actor, and one destined to play a very important part, now appears on the stage. This is Sir Charles Napier. This functionary was not only to hold the chief military command in Sind and Beloochistan, but within those limits was to "exercise entire authority over all political and civil officers." Such are the instructions of the Governor-General, dated the 26th August. They conclude thus: "It may be convenient that you should at once be informed that, if the Ameers, or any one of them, should act hostilely, or evince hostile designs against our army, it is my fixed resolution never to forgive the breach of faith, and to exact a penalty which shall be a warning to every chief in India. On the other hand, it is my intention to seize the first opportunity of bestowing substantial benefits upon the Khan of Bhawalpore, as a reward for the constant support which the British Government has received from him and his ancestors."† Here the old spirit again breaks out. The Ameers had as yet not gone the length which would afford a decent pretence for depriving them of their territory; but the eye of Sir Charles Napier was to be kept on them in the hope that they would. The

\* Correspondence, page 381.

† Ibid. page 384.

fruit was not quite ripe, but it was to be watched till it could be gathered with some appearance of propriety; and when the much-desired opportunity arrived of stripping the tree, a friend and neighbour was to be thought of, and a good basket-full of the produce handed over to him. These things it was "convenient"—that is the word—that Sir Charles Napier should know. That Sir Charles Napier might be informed of every thing that the Ameers had done of a hostile character, and even of every thing that *might be so construed*, Major Outram was, on 1st September, instructed to "explain to the major-general (Napier) the actual state of things, shewing him what had been done by the Ameers and chiefs, in pursuance of the treaties, and place before him, with *judicial accuracy*, the several acts whereby the Ameers and chiefs may have seemed to depart from the terms or *spirit* of their engagements, and to have evinced hostility or unfriendliness towards the Government of India."\* One might suppose that this was an extract from a letter to an attorney, directing him to lay before counsel a statement of facts, for the purpose of framing a criminal indictment. Of these instructions to Major Outram, Sir Charles Napier was advised, in a letter reiterating the Governor-General's determination to inflict signal punishment upon any of the chiefs who might have evinced hostile designs.† Indeed, these denunciations of "signal punishment" occur so frequently in his lordship's communications respecting Sind, as to mark beyond the possibility of mistake the feelings and intentions which were cherished by him.

On the 23rd October, the desire which the Governor-General had long felt, of being munificent at the expense of others, is found prevailing in great activity. In a letter of that date, to Sir Charles Napier, he says, "I am very anxious to be enabled, as the result of any new arrangement with the

\* Correspondence, page 385.

† Ibid. page 386.

Ameers, to have at my disposal the Pergunnahs of Bhoong Bhara, and, if possible, Subzulkote likewise, in order to bestow them in free gift upon the Khan of Bhawulpore. No chief in India deserves so well of the British Government as that Khan. He and his family have been faithful for three generations, and I know no measure which, would be so conducive to our reputation and influence (certainly there is none that would be so gratifying to myself) as to be enabled to make this gift to him. The cession should be made to us, and then we should give it over to the Khan; and, as there may be some difficulty in the proposed arrangement with the Ameers, it would be better to say nothing to the Khan till the thing is done.\* The Governor-General is "very anxious" to get a portion of the property of the Ameers of Sind to give away to a third party, because that third party deserved well of the British Government. Nothing, he thinks, would conduce so much to "our reputation" as to take from John and give to Peter! "The cession should be made to us, and then we should give it over to the Khan!" Let us by threats or cajolery get possession of something that does not belong to us, for the sake of generously bestowing it upon a friend. The exercise of gratitude is as delightful as it is respectable, and it is the more delightful (though perchance not the more respectable) when it can be indulged, not at our own proper cost, but at that of our neighbours. This is the morality of a British Governor-General who flourished in India in the year 1842.

Under the same date, the 23rd October, another letter to Sir Charles Napier occurs, in which his lordship says, "I am inclined to think that the Ameer Nusseer Khan will be so wrong-headed, or so ill-advised, as to persist in refusing to observe the conditions of the treaty, in which case

\* Correspondence, page 392.

he must be at once compelled to do so ; and if the Government is obliged to incur any expense for the purpose of so compelling him, the least punishment which can be inflicted upon him is that of defraying the expense.”\* In a letter formerly quoted, we find that his lordship was “*led to think*” that which was most convenient for his purpose. Now he is “*inclined to think*,” an assertion which it cannot be doubted was quite in accordance with fact. It being settled that Ameer Nusseer Khan would oblige the British Government to incur expense, and that he ought to defray it, the master passion of the Governor-General suddenly peeps out again. “But,” he continues, “I should prefer depriving him of territory.” Territory again ! “Still harping on my daughter ;” and his lordship proceeds, through a portion of the remainder of his letter and a rather respectable postscript, to offer suggestions for disposing of the territory of which Nusseer Khan was to be deprived, with as much coolness as the commissioners under an inclosure act might make allotments to the parties interested. As is frequently the case in regard to right of common, there were some rather complicated questions, which, however, the Governor-General discusses with perfect *sang-froid*.

It cannot be denied that in Sir Charles Napier the Governor-General found an efficient and by no means a scrupulous agent. In a paper of considerable length (so considerable indeed, that its author terms it “an essay rather than a letter”), Sir Charles Napier shews a degree of aptitude for following up the suggestions of his superior which is perfectly astonishing.† After some observations on the expediency of keeping the Ameers strictly to the terms of their treaties, he says, “By treaty, the time for

\* Correspondence, page 393.

† See the paper in Correspondence, page 394.

which we may occupy our present camps is unlimited ;"—true, Sir Charles, true ; but surely you are aware that the occupation was always professed to be temporary, though no precise time was fixed for its conclusion. Having always professed an intention to depart as soon as the circumstances which led to your presence shall have ceased, will you stay for ever, because the exact moment for your departure has never been determined ? This would be just what we should look for in a Mahratta visitor—first to get a temporary footing, then to make it permanent ; but from the Government of British India we expect something better. If honour and good faith find no place beside in India, let them at least irradiate the counsels of British statesmen and British soldiers, whether they emanate from Calcutta, from Simla, or from Sukkur. You will not force one party to observe the strict letter of a treaty, and claim for yourself the privilege of violating its spirit, together with an understanding so distinct as to have acquired almost the force of a formal treaty ! Yes, even this is what is recommended. The position that the time for the stay of the British army is not limited, is laid down, not as an idle display of dialectic sagacity, but as a basis on which to rest a most formidable scheme of aggression. Sir Charles Napier's argument may be stated, in an abridged form, thus :—If we depart, we must soon come back ; therefore we ought to stay. If we stay, our camps will grow into towns, and the inhabitants will engross all the trade of the Indus. These towns will flourish, while the territory of the Ameers will decay. The rival governments will quarrel, and the stronger will swallow up the weaker. This is all very straightforward, and having brought his *sortes* to a conclusion, Sir Charles asks, " If this reasoning be correct, would it not be better to come to

the results at once?" And he answers, "I think it would be better, if it can be done with honesty." Now this qualification is somewhat embarrassing; but Sir Charles Napier is too experienced a tactician, and too brave a man, to despair. He proves to his own satisfaction that the Ameers deserved all that he proposed to bring upon them, because they were charged with certain acts of apparent hostility, some of which were very questionable in point of fact, while others were of very trifling nature; and further, because they had a passion for hunting, rivalling that of even our William the First. The fact is, that both the Governor-General and the chief military and political functionary in Sindé had made up their minds to a particular course; and, this being the case, there was no difficulty in finding reasons to justify it. It is but a new illustration of the old fable of the Lion and the Lamb. The stronger animal wanted a meal, and the casuistry of hunger readily furnished him with pretexts for gratifying his appetite. So Sindé was coveted, and a pretext for taking the whole, or a part, was eagerly sought for, and, it is unnecessary to say, not sought in vain. Sir Charles Napier, who, to render him justice, speaks out with most soldierly frankness, says, "I have maintained that we want only a fair pretext to coerce the Ameers."\* And again: "They have broken treaties"—as he proposed to break the implied obligation to depart at a proper time—"they have given a pretext;" and the Governor-General, under whom Sir Charles Napier served, was not more slow in laying hold of it than was Sir Charles in advising such a step.

Still some degree of caution was to be observed; greatly as the object was desired, there was danger of going too fast. What instructions Lord Ellenborough carried from

\* Correspondence, page 395.

home cannot be known ; but apart from all fear on this head, there were grounds for hesitation sufficient to make even the most quixotic pause. There was the Court of Directors of the East-India Company watching the proceedings of their Governor-General ; there were the Proprietors of East-India Stock ; there was the Press of England ; there was the British Parliament ; and there was the whole body of the British people. The Ameers, too, were not so hostile as they ought to have been. "The Ameers," says Sir Charles Napier, writing to the Governor-General on the 8th of November, "have not committed any overt act ;"\* but there was some comfort, inasmuch as it was to be hoped that they would. "If they refuse to listen to reason," he shortly afterwards observes ; "if they persist in sacrificing every thing to their avarice and their shikargahs, or hunting grounds, they must even have their way, and try the force of arms at their peril, if so they are resolved."†

And truly the crisis was approaching. From the time of his arrival in India, the Governor-General had marked out Sind for a prey. In furtherance of the *denouement* which had long been foreseen and prepared, the existing treaties were voted obsolete and inapplicable to the then state of affairs, and new ones were submitted to the unhappy Ameers, which, it was anticipated, they would reject. This is evident from the letter of Lord Ellenborough to the Secret Committee, of the 19th of November, 1842, wherein he says : "I cannot but apprehend that the Ameers of Hyderabad and Khyrpoor will resist the imposition of the terms I have deemed it just and expedient to demand from them, in consequence of the violations of treaty, and the *acts of intended hostility*, of which *they appear* to have been guilty."‡ Surely this is strange

\* Correspondence, p. 476.

† Ibid. p. 476.

‡ Ibid. p. 488.

phraseology. What a confusion of intention and action! "Acts of intended hostility!" Was it mere intention that was imputed to the Ameers? If so, what is meant by "acts?" Or had they actually manifested their hostility by overt acts? If so, what means the word "intended?" But passing this, how hesitating, qualified, and unsatisfactory, is the mode in which these intentions or actions, or whatever they were, are spoken of! "Acts of intended hostility of which they *appear* to have been guilty." So then the Governor-General was not quite sure. Appearances indeed were, in his judgment, against the Ameers—there was ground for suspicion—was there not ground for doubt on the other side? Would he visit mere appearance with severe punishment and call this "just and expedient!" This is a revival of "Lydford Law;" hang the accused first, and try him afterwards.

But what sort of terms were those which Lord Ellenborough expected would be rejected by the Ameers? They were terms nearly as offensive as it was possible to frame. Nothing short of the total deprivation of territory and sovereignty could exceed them in this respect. The Ameers were to be relieved of all pecuniary payments, and this article, naturally enough considering who framed them, parades conspicuously in the very front of the drafts of the revised treaties. This is the single sweetener thrown into the bitter potion which the unfortunate Ameers were called upon to swallow. Tribute was to cease, but, in conformity with views long entertained and avowed, large cessions of territory were required—a sacrifice known to be most hateful to the Ameers. With regard to the portions of territory to be held by the English, the Ameers were to be entirely at the mercy of those who demanded them, for the limits were not defined in the draft of treaty, nor were they



to be determined by commissioners chosen by the parties respectively interested, but by the agent of one of them, namely, by Sir Charles Napier ! Was ever such a mode of dealing heard of ? The representative of the British Government in India walks into the country of a power with whom his Government has for some years maintained friendly relations, and which relations are about to be revised—only revised—and says, “I am instructed to take a portion of your territory—I cannot, at present, tell you how much ; I must see how much we want—in the meantime there is a treaty which you are to sign without muttering a word of dislike.” This course of proceeding placed the Ameers in worse than a state of vassalage. The draft of treaty would seem to have been studiously drawn with a view to give to them as much pain as possible—to give the deepest wound to their feelings of self-respect, and to add to their humiliation every ingredient of bitterness of which it was susceptible. They were to relinquish the right of coining money, one of the most valued appendages of sovereignty—the British Government were to coin it for them, and none but the rupee thus specially coined and the Company’s rupee were to circulate in Sind. The very coin which passed from hand to hand among the subjects of the Ameers was to testify to their degradation. Further, they were to supply, at a price to be fixed, fire-wood, for the purpose of steam navigation, in whatever quantities the officers of the British Government might from time to time require ; and failing in this, those officers were to be empowered to cut down wood within a specified distance of the river—an exercise of which power would have had the effect of destroying the shikarzars, or hunting preserves, in which these princes delighted. Such was the mode in which Lord Ellenborough proposed to treat a power with which he was ostensibly

desirous of maintaining friendly terms. If this treaty were a specimen of his friendship, what must his enmity be? It is worth while to see what account the Governor-General gives of the matter. In a letter to Sir Charles Napier, dated November 4th, he says, "The treaty proposed to be imposed upon Meer Roostum and Meer Nusseer Khans, rests, for its justification, upon the assumption that the letters said to be addressed by Meer Roostum to the Maharajah Shere Sing, and by Meer Nusseer Khan to Beebruck Boogtie, were really written by those chiefs respectively, and that the confidential minister of Meer Roostum did, as is alleged, contrive the escape of the Syud Mahomed Shureef."\* Here are Lord Ellenborough's motives as stated by himself. There is his defence—he has chosen his ground and he must stand on it. This was perfectly understood by Sir Charles Napier, who, in a letter to the Governor-General, of the 17th November, says, "The whole proceedings towards the Ameers now depend, as I construe your decision, upon three things:—1st. Is the letter of Meer Nusseer Khan, of Hyderabad, to Beebruck Boogtie, an authentic letter or a forgery? 2nd. Is the letter of Meer Roostum Khan, of Khyrpoor, to the Maharajah Shere Sing, an authentic letter or a forgery? 3rd. Did Futteh Mahomed Ghoree, confidential agent of Meer Roostum Khan, of Khyrpoor, assist in the escape of Mahomed Shureef?"†—These are the three points, and how does the general dispose of them? The first letter, that alleged to be written by Meer Nusseer Khan, of Hyderabad, is about as vague as native letters generally are; but if it were genuine, it would seem to indicate that the Ameer had fomented movements hostile to the British cause, and that he meditated shaking off his connec-

\* Correspondence, page 472. •

† Ibid. page 486.

tion with British Government.\* But its genuineness cannot, as it seems, be proved. The seal, the great evidence of its authenticity, is pronounced, by certain witnesses, to be that of Meer Nusseer Khan; but then Sir Charles Napier measures the details with a pair of compasses, and it is found 'that they do not correspond with those of the seal known to be in use by the Ameer. This would seem to discredit the letter, for an inscription upon a seal is not a shifting thing, in which the letters are sometimes of one size and sometimes of another, with variable distances between them. But as the half-starved apothecary, Lampedo, had a remedy, even though soul and body were divorced, so Sir Charles Napier has one for this awkward flaw in the evidence against the Ameers. It "is accounted for by the circumstance (said to be notorious), that the Ameers have two seals."† Now it seems that the fact of their having two seals was not positively "notorious"—it was only "said to be" so;—and thus the rumour of a rumour is the ultimate evidence upon which this charge rests. Was this a sufficient ground for such a proceeding as that which Lord Ellenborough founded upon it—even though strengthened by the declaration of Sir Charles Napier, "that no one has a doubt of the authenticity of the letter?"‡

The second point relates to the letter of Meer Roostum of Khypoor, referring to a supposed treaty between that prince and the ruler of Lahore. With regard to this letter, Sir Charles Napier says, there are doubts on the mind of Major Outram whether the Ameer was privy to it or not; but that it certainly was written by his confidential minister, and bore the Ameer's seal;§ and he concludes, that Lord

\* See Correspondence, page 440. † Ibid. page 486. ‡ Ibid.

§ Mr. Clerk, British Envoy at Lahore, to whom this was, with some other letters, transmitted, doubted of their authenticity. See Correspondence, page 478.

Ellenborough will hold, that Meer Roostum must be responsible for the acts of his minister. He was right in concluding that such would be the decision of the Governor-General, but this system of making the prince responsible for the act of his minister is a reversal of the old doctrine, that the minister is responsible for the acts of the prince. We have seen how one of the Ameers was dealt with as to evidence. Now we have another sentenced to equally severe treatment on account of a letter which there is not the slightest proof that he ever saw.

The third point relates to the escape of an insurgent leader from the custody of the British authorities, and the evidence, if it be worthy of belief (which is not quite certain), proves that the aforesaid confidential minister was in correspondence with him; but, as in the former case, there is nothing to implicate his master.

Such is the evidence collected by Sir Charles Napier, with regard to which he observes: "If I have your lordship's answer, saying, that you consider the above sufficient to act upon, I shall lose no time in proposing your draft of the new treaty to the Ameers."\* His lordship did think it sufficient, and Sir Charles was instructed to act.

He did act, and a strange and disgusting combination of vile intrigue and unjustifiable violence marked his course. Meer Roostum, the unhappy chief of Khyrpoor, had a brother, named Meer Ali Morad, who was anxious to supplant him. It seems that, by the established rule of succession, he would have succeeded to this dignity on the death of his brother, though the latter had a son, but he was unwilling to wait. Sir Charles Napier lent his countenance to the designs of Meer Morad Ali, promised him the support of the Governor-General,† and the result was, that the chiefship (the turban it is somewhat affectedly called) was trans-

\* See Correspondence, page 486.

† Ibid. page 515.

ferred to the usurping brother. He was desirous of something more; having obtained the chiefship prematurely, he wished to divert the line of succession in favour of his own family. "The rightful heir at Ali Morad's death is his nephew, the son of Meer Roostum."\* These words are Sir Charles Napier's. But Ali Morad wished his own son to succeed, and a British officer does not shrink from asking a British Governor-General whether or not this could be accorded. What says the Governor-General? He shall not be misrepresented; he shall speak for himself. "I shall therefore gladly see established the right of primogeniture in the direct line; and this you may, if you deem it advisable, communicate to Meer Ali Morad; and I have little doubt, that once established in the possession of the turban, with our support, he will be able, with the concurrence of a majority of the family, to establish the more natural and reasonable line of succession to the turban, and clothe the measure with the forms of legality; but recognizing, as I do, Meer Ali Morad as the successor to Meer Roostum, according to the present custom, whereby the eldest son of Meer Roostum is superseded, I could not at once recognize the eldest son of Meer Ali Morad as his successor, in contravention of the very principle upon which his father's rights are founded."† Most straightforward and righteous policy! The rights of the heir cannot be invaded openly and immediately, but they shall be undermined—they shall be attacked secretly and by degrees. This is the policy of a British Government in the nineteenth century of the Christian era! Can the annals of the most depraved of native states furnish any thing more crooked, despicable, and base than this?

Chicane requires time—violence is more prompt. Sir Charles Napier had wormed Meer Roostum out of the

\* Correspondence, page 511.

† Ibid. page 512.

chiefship, and prevailed on the poor old man ("poor old fool" the general calls him \*) to surrender himself to the usurper of his rights.† Lord Ellenborough approved the

\* See Correspondence, page 509.

† Sir Charles Napier subsequently endeavoured to shew that he had nothing to do with the transfer of the turban. In a paper drawn by him and which appears in the Supplementary Correspondence relating to Sind, pp. 114, 115, he says, "when I heard that he [Meer Roostum] had resigned the turban to Ali Morad I disapproved of it, and Mr. Brown will recollect my sending Ali Morad's vakeel back to him with this message. I even recommended him to return the turban and merely act as his brother's lieutenant." Again in a letter to the Governor-General in Council (page 116), he says, "I assuredly did not press the abdication of the turban by Meer Roostum, nor did I ever advise it." Sir Charles Napier, however, admits (page 114) that he ever advised Meer Roostum to seek the "protection" of his brother and be guided by him, though he boasts as follows:—"I gave Meer Roostum the option and invitation of coming to my camp and putting himself under my protection." He says further, "by my advice, which, let the reader observe, was not given till it was asked, I secured to Meer Roostum the honourable and powerful protection of the British Government. This he did not choose to accept—he went to his brother."

With reference to these statements, nothing more is necessary than to quote Sir Charles Napier's words from the first volume of Correspondence relating to Sind. At page 510, we find him reporting a proposed escape of Meer Roostum to his (Sir C. N.'s) camp, on which he observes, "I DID NOT LIKE THIS, AS IT WOULD HAVE EMBARRASSED ME VERY MUCH HOW TO ACT, BUT THE IDEA STRUCK ME AT ONCE THAT HE MIGHT GO TO ALI MORAD, WHO MIGHT INDUCE HIM (AS A FAMILY ARRANGEMENT) TO RESIGN THE TURBAN TO HIM. \* \* \* I therefore secretly wrote to Roostum and Ali Morad, and about one o'clock this morning I had an express from Ali Morad to say, that his brother is safe with him." Again, at page 515, Sir Charles Napier writing to the Governor-General, after adverting to a particular view which he entertained as to the policy of the Ameers, says, "This made me venture to PROMISE ALI MORAD YOUR LORDSHIP'S SUPPORT IN HAVING THE TURBAN, which your Lordship has approved of. The next step was

step, and on the day which among his countrymen is eminently one of peace and good-will, recorded his approval. On Christmas-day, 1842, he wrote to Sir Charles Napier, "I entirely approve of all you have done and express your intention of doing."\* But the course of events did not run smooth. The degradation of Meer Roostum, according to Sir Charles Napier, "burst upon his family and followers like a bomb-shell." Alarmed at what they witnessed, and not knowing what to expect next, they fled towards Emaun-ghur, a fortress situate about a hundred miles within the great sandy desert separating Sinde from Jessulmair. What did the British general? He determined to follow them with an armed force, in order to prove, as he says, "that neither their deserts nor their negotiations can protect them from the British troops;"† —be it remembered, we were at peace with the Khyrpoor state—"war has not been declared,"‡ observes Sir Charles Napier; "nor," he continues, "is it necessary to declare it." The people of Sinde, it seems, were not entitled to the benefit of any of those principles which have been established for the regulation of hostile proceedings between nations, and which serve to distinguish civilized warfare from mere brigandism. The general is fond of calling them barbarians, and he seems to have treated them as something even lower than barbarians. To the beasts of the forest—animals *feræ naturæ*,—the sportsman allows what is called "law;" the unhappy Sindians were allowed none. Sir Charles Napier marched; he arrived at Emaun-ghur, and on arriving, coolly determined to "blow it down."§ He

to secure him the exercise of its power now, even during his brother's life. This I was so fortunate to succeed in by persuading Meer Roostum to place himself in Ali Morad's hands."

\* Correspondence, page 512.

† Ibid. page 516.

‡ Ibid. page 515.

§ Ibid. page 528.

was fortified in this determination by reflecting that the fortress belonged to Ali Morad, who consented to its destruction. It is, however, by no means clear that it belonged either to Ali Morad or to the man whom he had manœuvred out of the turban; the real owner seems to have been Meer Mahomed Khan. But, waiving this point, how came it to belong to Ali Morad, if belong to him it did? This question it is unnecessary to answer here, for the reader will not have forgotten. Twenty thousand pounds of powder were found in the fortress. This was employed in its destruction; Emaun-ghur became a heap of ruins; and this was the act of an ally during a period of peace. During a period of peace did this same ally take forcible possession of the districts of Subzulcote and Bhoongbara, and give them over to the Nawaub of Bhaulpore, as long contemplated; and then came a conference between Major Outram and the Ameers, reported most dramatically in the Blue Book,\* in which, though the commissioner maintained a bold front, relying on the army that was rapidly approaching, the Ameers had clearly the advantage in regard to fact and argument. They referred to the last treaty concluded with them, by which the British stood pledged never to covet any portion of the territory or property of the Ameers,—but in vain. Nusseer Khan denied the letters which formed the ground for one of the charges, and called for their production; but this too was vain—they were with the Governor-General. He referred to the ease with which seals are forged, and reminded the commissioner that he had himself called for the punishment of a person who had forged his. The commissioner answered that the handwriting had been identified. The Ameer repeated his disclaimer of any knowledge of the letter, and demanded, “Why was not the paper shewn to me?” Ay, why? Does he obtain a satisfactory

\* Correspondence, pages 534, *et seq.*



answer? Yes—if the following be satisfactory. “These are points which it is not for me to discuss!” No, discussion was not the object, truth was not the object, right was not the object—but the wrenching from the Ameers of power and territory. Even this might perhaps have been accomplished at once, but for a false move on the part of Sir Charles Napier which it was now too late to retract. This was the treatment which Meer Roostum had received. “Why was he deposed?” demanded the Ameers, and the answer was, that he resigned of his own free will! What says “the poor old fool”\* to this? “By the general’s own direction I sought refuge with Ali Morad (here he produced the letter directing Meer Roostum to place himself under Meer Ali Morad’s protection, and to be guided by his advice), who placed me under restraint, and made use of my seal, and compelled me to do as he thought proper. *Would I resign my birthright of my own free will?*”† Thus much we learn from the report of the British commissioner—much more we might know had we a report on the other side. This appears from his own statement—“Lest my memory should have failed me, I read the above to Captain Brown, who accompanied me. He says *it embraces every thing that was said on my part, but that much which was said by the Ameers in defence of themselves, and especially on behalf of Meer Roostum Khan, is omitted; that I did not consider necessary to enter more in detail.*”‡

Why should more than one side be heard—especially as the commissioner declined discussion, and told the Ameers—“The question is whether or not you accept the new treaty?”§

On the 9th Feb. they did accept the treaty, by allowing

\* See Correspondence, page 103.

† Ibid. page 535.

‡ Ibid. page 536.

§ Ibid. page 535.

their seals to be affixed to a written pledge to that effect. On the 12th, the majority personally applied their seals to the treaty itself. On that day, Major Outram thus wrote to Sir Charles Napier:—"These fools are in the utmost alarm in consequence of the continued progress of your troops towards Hyderabad, notwithstanding their acceptance of the treaty, which they hoped would have caused you to stop. If you come beyond Halla (if so far) they will be impelled by their fears to assemble their rabble, with a view to defend themselves and their families, in the idea that we are determined to destroy them, notwithstanding their submission."\* The event shewed that the Ameers were not such "fools" as Major Outram thought them. Sir Charles Napier answered, "I shall march to Syudabad tomorrow and next day to Halla, and attack every body of armed men I meet."† Major Outram, however, judged rightly as to the probability of resistance being offered, should the British general continue to advance. The scandalous wrong done to Meer Roostum was working like leaven in the mind of the Beloochees, and the Ameers expressed to the British commissioner their apprehensions that they should not be able to control them. On the 15th, the British Residency was attacked, and on the 18th, Sir Charles Napier achieved the brilliant victory of Meanee. it would be useless to pursue the subject further; the result is known; the Ameers became prisoners, and their territory the prize of the English, if that can be called prize which has hitherto been only a source of disease to our brave troops, and a heavy burden on the Indian finances.

Almost as useless would it be to discuss the conduct of the Governor-General and his chosen agent. The facts

\* Supplementary Correspondence relative to Sind, pages 35, 36.

† Ibid. page 40.

speaking for themselves. Yet one or two questions must be asked. How far are the means by which Lord Ellenborough pursued the conquest of Sind consistent with his vapouring declarations of desire for peace? And how far is the annexation of Sind to the British territory consistent with his position, that the Indus was one of the natural boundaries of India?

Of the justice of the entire proceeding not a word need be said. The rulers of Sind had always been suspicious of us; they seem to have had a presentiment that our alliance boded them no good. We forced our friendship—so called—upon them. We dragged from them one concession after another. We overran their country with our armies, and finally we took the greater part of their territories, and gave the rest away. And then we talk of treachery and ill-feeling on their part. Could there be any other than ill-feeling? What says the Governor-General himself?—"That they may have had hostile feelings there can be no doubt; it would be impossible to believe that they could entertain friendly feelings."\* It certainly would—we had injured them too deeply to confide in them—too deeply it seems to forgive them.

The cant about the misgovernment of the country under the Ameers, and the improvement which will attend our administration, is altogether beside the question. Supposing it all true in point of fact, what then? Are we to go about in the spirit of knight-errantry to redress the grievances and avenge the wrongs of all the oppressed people in the world?—and if not, why is Sind selected? We might find employment in this way nearer home. What think they who thus talk of sending an army to Poland, to recover it from the yoke of the Emperor Nicholas? What say they

\* Supplementary Correspondence, page 1.