reached them. Twice the assault had been repelled, when the General, seeing the men disheartened, put himself at the head of the storming party, vowing that he would take the fort, or lose his life in the attempt. As he stood within a few paces of the walls, waving his hat and sword, and calling on his men, a shot pierced his heart.

His division continued to besiege Kalinga, with the help of a battering train from Delhi, and was repulsed twice over with heavy losses, the garrison defending themselves with arrows, and with stones which the Gurkha women flung with a good aim. There were only seventy men capable of bearing arms left in Kalinga by the end of November, and they fought their way through the outposts one night, leaving the English to take possession of the ruins.

One day, while the siege was in progress, a Gurkha was seen standing on the breach, making signs with his hand. The firing ceased, and the man advanced, and explained as best he could that the English had broken his jaw with a round-shot; would they mend it for him? The regimental surgeons did their best, and were able, after some time in hospital, to discharge the patient as cured. Asked what he would do, the Gurkha replied that now the English had made him whole, he would

go back to his own corps and fight them again. Apparently, he made the reputation of the English doctors, for, after this, it was a frequent event for a wounded Gurkha to demand their help, in order that he might be in better trim for fighting next day.

II.

Meanwhile, Gillespie's death seemed to have struck a paralysis into his colleagues. General Wood, having succeeded in beating a force much below his own in numbers, took panic, and ordered a retreat, leaving the Gurkhas with all the advantages of a victory. After this, he did nothing with great skill for several months, and then retired upon Gorakhpur.

As for General Marley, he remained on the frontier, waiting for more artillery, through the month of December, without fortifying his outposts. The consequence was that on New Year's Day 1815, they were attacked by the Gurkhas, with a heavy loss in men, guns, and stores. This disaster seemed to produce something like imbecility in the General; though heavily reinforced, and receiving almost daily orders from the Governor-General to bestir himself, he sat where he was, and let the enemy burn villages over

the border, and throw up stockades close to him. Finally, one morning in February, he mounted his horse before daylight, and took the road to his headquarters, without telling any one what he intended, or making any arrangements for his division during his absence. By this time, Moira had lost patience, and another commander was on his way to Nepal; unluckily, the new-comer proved of little more use than his predecessor.

Meanwhile, in India all these things were noted. The Marathas were restless, Amir Khan was collecting his bands, near Agra, and Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the Punjab, gathered an army at Lahore.

For relief, at this crisis, the Government of India was indebted to two men—a Scotchman and an Irishman.

The first of these was David Ochterlony, who had seen nearly forty years' service in India, beginning with the war with Haidar Ali, when he had been taken prisoner by the French. It was he who had held Delhi against Holkar's army, in the second Maratha War, and one of the first acts of Barlow's administration had been to remove him from the Residency "as a mere soldier who could not be expected to understand certain civil duties which were to be attached to the situation."

There was work for a "mere soldier" in Nepal.

The general confronting Ochterlony was Amar Singh, the best officer in the Gurkha army, who was encamped among broken hills, each ridge of which afforded a series of positions. An attack on his principal fortress was repulsed, and Ochterlony began to feel doubtful of succeeding. Nevertheless, he kept his doubts from his subordinates, "nor," we are told, "could his most familiar associates detect in his manner the slightest interruption of that cheerful flow of spirits for which Sir David was characterised through life."[1]

Now came the turn of the Irishman. Among the many European adventurers flocking into India at the end of the eighteenth century was the man said to have been the original of Thackeray's Major Gahagan, William Linnæus Gardner, who had left the British army to take service with Ahalya Bai. He remained with the Marathas when most of the other officers went over to the Company's army, and according to his own account, was ill requited; Jaswant Rao Holkar, having sent him on a mission to Lake, grossly insulted him in durbar on his return. "Drawing my sword, I attempted to cut Holkar down, but was prevented by those about him. Ere they had recovered from their amazement,

[1] Thos. Smith.

I rushed from the tent, sprang upon my horse, and was soon out of reach of my pursuers." The rest of the story is quite in keeping with its beginning. Captured by a Maratha force, Gardner was sentenced to execution, but on his way thither, flung himself over a cliff fifty feet high into a stream below, swam and dived till he had escaped pursuit, and having obtained a disguise, after various adventures, reached Lake's camp, and was given command of a cavalry force.

In the spring of 1814, he had ventured into the Dehra Dun to fish and to shoot, and had narrowly escaped being shot as a spy by the Gurkha officer in command there. From what he had seen of Nepal, he was able to grasp the weak points of the enemy; the army and the country were admirably fitted for guerilla warfare, but the line of defence was too long.

His cousin, the Hon. Edward Gardner, who had been prevented from sharing in his sporting expedition, was at Delhi with Metcalfe, the Resident, and to him Gardner wrote in November 1814, urging the immediate occupation of Kumaon, a province recently conquered by the Gurkhas. Its inhabitants were averse to the new yoke, and the Gurkhas, relying on their peaceable disposition, had left few troops there.

A few days later, the two cousins were on the way to Kumaon, at the head of a compact force of native infantry, "with some light guns," and supported by a column under Major Hearsey, one of the two officers who went with George Thomas on his last ride to Hansi. In the present campaign his support was of little worth, since he was captured by the Gurkhas, and taken prisoner to Almora, the chief fortress of Kumaon. There they kept him and treated him kindly, believing "that he was a Frenchman, and could procure them foreign help."

In April 1815, while in Europe the kings were gathering their armies for a last struggle against Napoleon, David Ochterlony was making his way further into Nepal, and by the middle of the month had established himself among the heights where Amar Singh's force was stationed. He had learned to fight the enemy in their own way, and it was the turn of the Gurkhas to be discouraged, while the invading army triumphed. Meanwhile, Almora was captured, and Amar Singh, as Gardner had foreseen, was cut off from his supplies. The chiefs began to desert him, Ochterlony closed the roads about him, and only two hundred men were still with him when he signed a capitulation in May, engaging to surrender all the Gurkha conquests west of the Jumna, and to evacuate the

hill country between Almora and the fortress of Malaun, where he made his last stand.

Once upon a time, it is said, a Raja of Nepal unjustly put to death his prime minister; the dead man's wife became *sati*, and as the flames were lit about her, she spoke her curse—"May there never be sound judgment in this Durbar!"

How this has been fulfilled may be seen, over and over again, by any one who studies the history of Nepal. The curse was at work now, for the Durbar sent envoys in one direction to treat for peace with the British Government, and in another, to implore the help of the Chinese against the white barbarians, who had invaded the frontier of the Chinese Government.

With the Pindaris growing daily more troublesome, Lord Moira was so anxious to bring the war to an end that he yielded to nearly all the demands of the Gurkha commissions, consenting to give up most of the disputed territory, except what was in actual possession of the British. The family priest of the Raja of Nepal, who had full power to act, signed a treaty to this effect in November 1815. In the next month, believing that the Chinese army was at hand, the Nepal Durbar was again making ready for war.

Ochterlony—now a baronet, in consideration of his services—returned to the hills. A band

of smugglers showed him a track unknown to any servant of the Nepal state. His force climbed by night through a narrow ravine, where a handful of men on the crags above could have destroyed them by rolling down loose stones, and emerged in safety at the hour when, according to the Nepalese saying, "the tiles on the roof of a house can be counted, and the hair on the back of a man's hand can be discerned against the sky." They had traversed the first range of hills, and in a few days they took the Gurkhas by surprise and defeated them.

Again the envoys came to sue for peace, and again they found a generous enemy. By the treaty to which they had agreed, the English were to retain all the territories actually in their possession at the time of its ratification. The Nepal Durbar had not ratified that treaty in November. In March the territory occupied by the British troops had extended widely, and to yield it would rob Nepal of nearly half its revenue. Whether quixotically, as some said, or wisely, the Governor-General did not hold to the letter of the agreement, and the territory actually ceded was small compared to what he might have claimed, and the Gurkhas were ready to surrender.

When that year's rainy season had ended, two

high officials from China appeared in tardy reply to the summons of the Nepal Durbar. They professed themselves satisfied with the Governor-General's statement of the case for the English, and administered a round scolding to the Nepal envoys sent to confer with them. "You Gurkhas are a mischievous race, and have caused the ruin of many rajas. You have been punished justly."

III.

Edward Gardner was established at Kathmandu as Resident. Commercial relations were not encouraged by the Durbar, for the Nepalese have a proverb: "With the merchant comes the musket, and with the Bible, the bayonet." But the war was no sooner over than the Gurkhas began to enlist in the Company's army, and less than ten years after they had been in arms against each other, Gurkha sepoy and British soldier were fighting side by side at the siege of Bhurtpore.

Bhurtpore was besieged because the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, thought fit to disavow a course of action taken by Ochterlony, and was in consequence obliged to send a commander-in-chief and twenty thousand men to settle a difficulty that the "mere soldier" could have conquered

with such troops as were at his disposal, if the supreme authority at Calcutta had not interfered.

The Raja of Bhurtpore, whose stronghold Lake had failed to capture, had put himself under British protection, and become our good friend and ally. His successor, having no son, adopted a boy relation, for whom he asked the recognition of the British Government. Ochterlony, then Resident at Delhi, obtained the authority from Calcutta, and invested the boy as the heir of Bhurtpore. A few weeks later the old Raja died, and his brother murdered the Regent, usurped the throne, and defied the British Government. Ochterlony issued a proclamation denouncing the usurper, and ordered out troops for the young Raja's protection. The wicked uncle thereupon renounced his claim to the succession, humbly pleading to be allowed to rule for his adopted nephew until the boy came of age. The storm might have subsided but for Lord Amherst, who had already determined "on making some arrangement by which Sir D. Ochterlony should retire from active employment." To effect this, he issued a severe official reprimand to Ochterlony, condemning his action as "precipitate and unjustifiable," and denying the young Raja's claim to protection, in the face of the treaty made with his predecessor.

The disgrace broke the old soldier's heart. The dishonesty which repudiated obligations that it was inconvenient to keep, the insult to his fifty years of service, weighed him down with shame. He would neither argue nor protest; he resigned all his public offices and retired. Three months later he was dead, and the Government of India were officially regretting the loss of a valued public servant, while Lord Amherst contributed "a handsome sum" towards a monument for the victim of his "arrangement." A better monument was the title by which Sir David was long remembered in Indian tradition—"Loni-Attah"—"Butter and meal,"—a corruption of his own name, which bore witness to the days of plenty when he ruled Central India.

Ochterlony had not been six months in his grave when Lord Amherst found his views of the Bhurtpore question "materially altered." The usurper was becoming a centre of disaffection, and the Maratha chiefs and others were showing a restlessness that was likely to produce dangerous results. So obligations were remembered, and an army was sent to take Bhurtpore.

For six weeks the siege lasted, to the great enjoyment of the Gurkha contingent, who were usually stationed with the 59th in the last angle of the trenches, "sniping" over the parapet at

the enemy. With no language in common, the men were the best of friends, and the 59th shared their tobacco with the "little Gorkees," who grinned their thanks.

Then came the day of the assault, when the defences were hurled into the air by the explosion of our mines, and the crash was felt at Agra thirty-five miles away. The Gurkhas had received the order to follow the 59th, but when they saw their friends rushing at the breach, nothing would hold them back, and six-foot grenadiers and little hillmen entered Bhurtpore side by side.

"The English are brave as lions," said the Gurkhas next day; "they are splendid sepoys, and very nearly equal to us."

"You bully us, but go and take Bhurtpore," had been for twenty years the taunt of the native rulers with whom the British Government had any difference. Bhurtpore was taken, and restless spirits subsided for an interval of a few years.

XIV.

THE LION OF LAHORE—1805-1839

"The very type and embodiment of the species Sikh is a highwayman in possession of a castle. Take any man of that nation—I care not who—and give him a mud tower as his earthly portion, and next week he will be the Captain of Forty Thieves. Let him alone—that is, don't overmatch him with kings and other great policemen—and he will die a great man. It is the history of the Punjab in a nutshell."—Sir H. EDWARDES.

XIV.

THE LION OF LAHORE—1805-1839.

It was at the close of 1805 that Mr Metcalfe, the Political Agent, sat in Lord Lake's camp beyond the frontier of the Punjab. While Sir George Barlow was arranging his ill-judged treaty with Sindhia, Holkar suddenly had separated himself from his ally, and hurried towards the country about the Sutlej, whither Lake's army had followed him. It was a critical moment, and the man who could influence it was the Sikh, Ranjit Singh, Maharaja of Lahore—"The Lion of the Punjab," as men called him—whose territory both armies had invaded.

As Metcalfe sat in his tent, he was told that "some Sikh troopers had come out of curiosity to see the Sahibs." It was all-important to conciliate Sikh goodwill, and Metcalfe received them with friendliness, and took them round the camp, showing them everything that they wished to see.

One of them was noticeable in contrast to all the rest, as being small and ugly, with none of the swagger of the Sikh trooper. His dark-brown face was deeply pitted with smallpox, which had destroyed the sight of an eye; nothing, however, seemed to escape the glance of the remaining one. When he spoke, his voice was unusually soft and pleasant for a common soldier.

Their sight-seeing concluded, the Sikhs took farewell of their host, who kept his suspicions to himself. When they were back at Amritsar, the little ugly man told his Durbar that he saw it would not be to his advantage to quarrel with the English, and that therefore he would not give Holkar the support which had been demanded. The Sikhs might chafe at this decision, but would not rebel against their temporal head, the greatest man in all the Punjab.

It was now more than a hundred years that the Sikhs had been a thorn in the side of the rulers of Hindustan. The Emperor Aurangzib had made great efforts to put down this heretical sect, who, while disregarding the barriers of caste, and teaching that God was One, read a book called the "Granth" instead of the Koran, and revered certain teachers or "Gurus." One of these Gurus, Teg Bahadur, imprisoned in Delhi by the Emperor's orders, refused to save his life by

working a miracle for the amusement of the Court. He was brought forth to execution, accused of daring to gaze from the roof of his prison towards the royal harem. "O King!" he cried, "I gazed not at the apartments of thy queens, but at the white race from over-seas that shall tear down thy purdahs, and slay thy sons in the streets of Delhi."

Guru Govind, his son and successor, swore vengeance for his father's death. The mystical brotherhood of which former Gurus had preached was changed into an armed confederacy; men of all races, castes, and creeds might enter it, did they undergo the rite of baptism, by which each man became one of the Khalsa, or elect, not only a "Sikh" or disciple, but also a "Singh" or lion.

For the next hundred years their fortunes varied. At one time defeated, their leader and chief men put to death with horrible tortures, they were driven to skulk in the waste places, the holes and dens of the earth, until the chaos produced by Nadir Shah's invasion allowed them to steal from their lairs to plunder both sides indifferently. Then for a season they were masters of Lahore and the sacred city of Amritsar, where they built their Golden Temple with marble from the tomb of Shah Jahan; then, driven out

from the cities, they took refuge in the forts with which they had dotted the Punjab, and bided their time for another stroke at the hated Muslim, were he Moghul governor or Afghan invader.

By the end of the eighteenth century they were divided into twelve great confederacies, six holding lands to the south of the river Sutlej and six to the north.

In such leisure time as they could spare from warring with their Muslim neighbours, these clans fought among themselves. One of the most powerful among them, the Kanheyas, had a long-standing feud with a lesser clan, in the course of which their chief's eldest son was killed. The chief died of grief and mortification, and, according to Sikh custom, the leadership of the clan devolved upon the slain man's widow, Sada Kour.

The widow had no son; she had a baby daughter, who, contrary to the usage of her people, had not been put out of the way at birth. Sikhs as well as Rajputs refused to burden themselves with girls, and in one noble house of the Punjab there is no instance of a daughter living to be married till the year 1871. It may be said, in extenuation of this practice, that the Sikh women of whom anything is known were

generally of such a disposition that the men might well fear to be troubled with any more of them.

Sada Kour was ambitious, and aimed at more than the headship of the Kanheyas. Before her father-in-law's death, she had wrung his consent to an arrangement by which her daughter was married to Ranjit Singh, the little son of the chief of the rival clan. Ranjit was no more than twelve years old when his father died, killed by his own excesses, and Sada Kour became virtually the head of both clans. To keep the power in her own hands, she arranged that Ranjit should grow up in total ignorance, unable to read or write, and encouraged him in all manner of shameful excess, so that his will should be softened and his constitution broken.

The only person who interfered with her was Ranjit's mother—not from tenderness to the boy, but because she wished to rule herself. Then Sada Kour contrived that Ranjit should learn of the scandal caused by his mother's lovers. Some say that Ranjit avenged the honour of his house by slaying the wretched woman, as his father is believed to have slain his own mother in like case; anyhow, she troubled Sada Kour no more.

In spite of his mother-in-law's education, Ranjit soon proved that he had both wits and energy.

His first great opportunity had come six years before his visit to Lake's camp. Shah Zeman was hurrying back to Afghanistan to suppress one of the chronic rebellions which had broken out during his absence in India, where he had been leading invading armies for several years, after the example of his grandfather, Ahmad Shah. The river Jehlam was in flood, and he was obliged to leave twelve of his heavy guns behind him. Ranjit Singh, who had paid homage to Zeman through a deputy, being engaged in turning the invasion to his own account by raiding the territory south of the Sutlej, received a promise that if he could recover the guns and send them after the Afghan army, he might call himself Raja of the city and district of Lahore.

It was a grant that cost Shah Zeman nothing, since Lahore was not his to give, being still in the possession of the descendants of the Sikh chieftains who had taken it by surprise from the Muslim governor some thirty years before. But the permission was enough for Ranjit, who led his army to Lahore, and was welcomed by the townsmen, who were very weary of their rulers, and thought that any change might be for the better.

Three years later, he drove another Sikh clan from Amritsar, and seized the city and all its

treasures, including the great gun Zamzama, cast for Ahmad Shah Daurani, which whosoever owns is master of the Punjab, and which may still be seen outside the Museum at Lahore. One by one, as time served, he reduced other clans and chiefs, now in open warfare, now by seizing upon the lands of defenceless widows or newly-made orphans, until he became the head of all the Sikhs.

Sada Kour might well be proud of her work, but one fatal defect was likely to undo everything: her daughter had borne no child to Ranjit, and to make matters worse, a younger wife had given him a son—the only one of the many children attributed to him of whom he was the father. Sada Kour was desperate, and when Ranjit returned from one of his forays, she told him that her daughter had given birth to a son in his absence. He accepted the child with such philosophy that when it died in babyhood, Sada Kour was emboldened "to try the effect of twins."[1]

Every one, including Ranjit himself, knew that the two boys had been purchased for the occasion, and that the one was the son of a washerman, and the other of a carpenter. Ranjit durst not openly repudiate them, for he could not afford

[1] L. Griffin.

at the moment to quarrel with his mother-in-law, but he refused to give them the place and dignity of sons, and waited an opportunity for vengeance upon the woman who had dared to trick him.

II.

Three years after his stolen visit to the camp, in defiance of all his sirdars, who had told him that the very sight of an Englishman would be unlucky, Ranjit was to meet Mr Metcalfe again.

There were two excuses for sending an envoy to the Court of Lahore. The dread of a French invasion of India was making the British Government anxious for a good understanding with all independent native rulers; and the Sikh chieftains between the Sutlej and the Jumna, alarmed by Ranjit's gradual "eating up" of his neighbours, had sent a mission to the Resident at Delhi begging for protection.

If Ranjit were to be the ally of the English, he must be paid for it, and his price was that he should be acknowledged as suzerain of all the Sikh states. When Metcalfe owned himself unable to grant so much, the Maharaja broke up his camp, and defiantly began to raid in Malwa and Sirhind.

The Governor-General, Lord Minto, lost patience;

the Maharaja must understand that all Cis-Sutlej chiefs were under British protection, and must restore at once all the territories he had seized in the last few months. In former years Ranjit himself had fixed the Sutlej as the southern boundary of his kingdom; he must keep to it.

Ranjit was furiously angry; why should the English interfere with him when he was ready to be their friend? By what right were they to come between him and the wish of his life? He mustered troops and collected ammunition; he prepared the fort at Amritsar for a siege; he even made some recognition of the spurious children that Sada Kour had imposed upon him in order to insure her support. The fate of the Punjab was hanging in the balance when the Muslim festival of the Moharram came round, and the Mahommedans in Metcalfe's suite at Amritsar went forth to mourn for the slaughtered Hussain and Hosein.

There was a certain sect among the Sikhs, the "Akalis" or Immortals, whose fanatical devotion resembled that of the Mahommedan Ghazis. Clad in little beyond their blue turbans, they would hurl their steel quoits and dash themselves headlong against an enemy's ranks, careless of death, if they might kill ere they were killed. Even Ranjit was unable to control them, though he made use of their enthusiasm in the day of battle.

About three or four thousand of them gathered round the place where the Envoy's soldiers were erecting the tinsel shrines to the martyrs of Kerbela, and began to destroy the biers. Finding peaceful persuasion of no use, Metcalfe collected the five hundred men of his escort and attacked the mob; a few were killed or wounded, the rest fled in disorder back to the city, while the sepoys resumed their ceremonies, in no way discomposed by the interruption.

Ranjit Singh had arrived at the close of the skirmish, shaking his cummerbund as a signal for peace, and had seen his "Immortals" put to rout by a tenth of their number. The lesson was not thrown away upon the Maharaja; until his troops were disciplined to the English standard it was hopeless for him to think of resistance.

There is a story that one night he sat with Metcalfe upon his palace roof. The Envoy urged the wisdom of an alliance with the English; Ranjit, sullen and wrathful, still chafed at having to resign his conquests. At last he broke away, without a word, and Metcalfe, looking down, saw him riding like a madman on the level ground beneath the palace walls. Then, springing from his horse, he came back to the roof, to give assent to all that was asked of him. All his fury of thwarted purpose seemed to have spent itself in

that wild gallop, and he was courteous and reasonable as heart could wish.

In April 1809 he signed the treaty: perpetual friendship was to exist between the British Government and the State of Lahore; the British Government was to refrain from any interference with the territories and subjects of the Maharaja to the north of the Sutlej, while the Maharaja was not "to commit or suffer any encroachment" to the south.

It had been a hard struggle to bring himself to accept the treaty, but when once it was accomplished, Ranjit kept it faithfully to the day of his death. For nearly thirty years he was the staunch ally of the English, even when his sirdars urged him to join the anti-English Confederation, and on his refusal, tried to sting him into action by laying woman's apparel before him in durbar.

There were momentary fits of petulance when the old lion himself chafed against the English. Once he asked the son of one of his chiefs, who had received some sort of an English education, to show him the Punjab on a map. The Maharaja's one glittering eye followed the direction of the lad's finger. "What are those red marks?" he asked, and was told that they indicated British territory. "Soon it will be all red!" cried Ranjit, and he kicked away the map.

Withheld from extending his borders towards the south, the Maharaja tried to paint the north of his own colour. Most of all, he had set his heart upon wresting the town and province of Multan from the Afghan governors who had held it since the days of Nadir Shah. The fortress was supposed to be impregnable, and contained shrines which make it a holy place to all good Muslims; the city maintained a flourishing trade with Kabul, and its silk manufactures were renowned through Central Asia. In spite of a heat which seemed to bear out the legend that the sun is a spear's length nearer to Multan than to any city in the world, its gardens produced finer fruit than those of Hindustan, and it was shaded by groves of date-palms, sprung, says a legend, from the date stones thrown away by the army of Nadir Shah.

Four times had Ranjit's arms invested the city, and four times had the governor Muzaffar Khan held the fortress against them. No help could come from Afghanistan, where brother was fighting against brother for the throne of Ahmad Shah, and the English, to whom Khan and Maharaja alike had appealed, would not interfere. In February 1819 eighteen thousand Sikhs camped round the citadel, where two thousand Afghans waited for them. The great gun Zamzama was dragged up from Lahore, and the gates were

blown in, but the garrison entrenched themselves behind earthworks. The women and children took refuge in the great mosque, the dome of which was strong enough to keep out the Sikh balls. Food ran short, and the garrison dwindled hour by hour. Some lay dead, and some lay ill; some yielded to the bribes of which Ranjit was lavish, and went over to the besiegers. Up to the last, he offered lands and honours to Muzaffar Khan in return for the surrender of the crumbling walls and ruinous defences through which Zamzama had made wide breaches; and up to the last his offers were refused. Only three hundred men, nearly all of the Khan's own tribe, remained within the citadel, and they, like himself, would not sell their honour. Then came a June morning when an Akali, drugged with opium, led a handful of men into an outwork of the fort while the worn-out garrison slept; the Sikhs in the trenches followed; they pressed through the breaches, and carried the fortress by storm.

One of the chief officers of the garrison went to take farewell of his wife before going to meet the enemy for the last time, and found her digging a hole in the ground to bury her jewels. "Woman, would you be taken for the wife of a Jat zamindar?" was his stern rebuke. "Put on your ornaments, that you may be known for the

wife of a Pathan. Of what use are jewels to her who has lost her husband?"

Muzaffar Khan, his long white beard and hair streaming in the breeze, waited for the enemy at the gate, his eight sons beside him. "Come out, man to man!" they shouted, as the Sikhs levelled their guns upon them. "Let us fall in fair fight." The Sikhs durst not come within hand's reach of desperate men, and the old hero, obstinately refusing quarter, was shot down by their match-locks. Five of his sons and a daughter died with him.

The wealth stored in Multan was said to be enormous, and Ranjit was ill-pleased on receiving no more than two lakhs of rupees for his share when the army returned to Lahore. So he made proclamation that "the plunder of Multan was the property of the state," and that every man, officer or common soldier, in possession of money or valuables taken in the three days' pillage of the fort, was to bring the same in to his treasury. Some five lakhs was the result of this high-handed proceeding, and it was said that there was much more which remained with private owners. Little good did the spoil of Multan bring to any of its possessors, nearly all of whom are said by popular tradition to have come to a bad end.

Kashmir, which had also been the object of

many unsuccessful expeditions from Lahore, fell at last into Ranjit's hands in the following year, the Afghans being as powerless to save it as they were to save Multan. Then in turn, one Mahommedan chief or noble after another, from Lahore to Gujerat, was forced or tricked into submission, until Ranjit Singh was overlord of all the Punjab from the Sutlej to the Indus.

On the north-west frontier he was less successful. No man had yet been able to tame the wild Hazaras of the border, and Ranjit could only send an army among them, every few years, to collect his revenues. Peshawar, which was a frequent battle-ground for Sikhs and Afghans, was once seized by Ranjit, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the peerless mare "Laili," belonging to the Afghan Yar Mohammad Khan, who refused to give her up to the Maharaja. Ranjit, who loved horses even more than the jewels which he hoarded but never wore, sent an army to fetch her, and when they reached Peshawar the Khan swore that Laili was dead. Back they went to Lahore, only to hear that the Khan had lied, and Laili was in her stable at Peshawar. Then Ranjit sent another force, under his own son, Prince Kharak, and the Khan fled to the hills, taking Laili with him. For eight months Prince Kharak stayed in Peshawar, and when he retired, Yar Mohammad

returned. At this time a Sayyid was preaching a holy war in the hills; his followers came down to plunder the villages about Peshawar, and the Khan was slain in a skirmish with them. But Laili passed to his brother, who would not yield her until he was made prisoner in his own palace by one of the European officers whom Ranjit had found to drill his army. Laili was taken to Lahore, to suffer like all horses in a Raja's stable from too much food and too little exercise. Some say that the Khan cheated the Maharaja, after all, for the creature exhibited in after years to Ranjit's visitors, decked with golden bangles and overloaded with fat, was a horse, and Laili was a mare.

On the whole, the territories of which Ranjit was the overlord were not the most unfortunate in Hindustan. Upon the north-west frontier, it is true, the Sikh hosts pillaged and destroyed at will, so that scarcely a village from the head of the Peshawar valley to the Indus had not been burned and plundered by them. But if the Sikh killed and robbed, he usually did not add the outrages and tortures inflicted by Maratha or Pindari. In the centre and south-west of the Punjab, life was generally secure, though the revenue was farmed out to those who knew

how to wring the last coin from the wretched cultivator. Nevertheless, he was not actually driven off the land. "The Sikh farmer of revenue did not wish to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs, but he plucked its feathers as closely as he dared."[1] The accounts were audited severely by Ranjit himself. "A true statement he does not reckon among possibilities, so that when the accounts seem all fair and square, and the revenue rendered even exceeds the stipulated sum, he always disallows a certain percentage, the tenacity of his memory enabling him to follow out the most complicated statements."[2]

There are horrible stories of the cruelty of some of the Sikh governors, such as Gulab Singh, who would flay men alive, and Avitabile, the Italian, who introduced hanging as a punishment at Peshawar, and was guilty "of the ostentation of adding two or three to the string suspended from the gibbet on special days and festivals." Ranjit himself was not cruel, according to the standard of his race and his time. He never ordered an execution in cold blood, and he almost invariably provided for the families of his conquered enemies. He was thoroughly selfish, and could treat a faithful follower with shameless ingratitude, but

[1] Sir L. Griffin. [2] Sir H. Lawrence.

there was a certain amount of rough justice in his ordinary methods. He had many favourites, but even when half paralysed and broken, he was strong enough rather to govern them than be governed by them, and one of his amusements was to stir them up to quarrel in his presence, so that he might learn their true characters. There was sometimes a certain grim humour in his methods—as when he sent word to a family that had been boasting of the lavishness with which one of its daughters had been married and dowered, that "those who could spend so much on a marriage must be able to afford to give him fifty thousand rupees."

"In the respectable virtues he had no part," says Sir Lepel Griffin, and after reading how Ranjit kept his troops twelve months in arrears of pay from sheer avarice, how he despoiled the sons of men who had served him truly, and how he paraded through the streets of his capital during the Holi festival, on an elephant, in shameless drunkenness, with a woman of undeniable reputation at his side, it is difficult not to agree. Yet, for all his failings, he was king and soldier, and was feared and respected to his very last hour, even after speech had gone, and he could command by signs only.

III.

Upon at least two occasions in his life Ranjit must have enjoyed a triumph thoroughly.

One was the discomfiture of Sada Kour. As the Maharaja's power waxed, hers had waned. When Prince Kharak, Ranjit's true heir, was married with great ceremony, she alone of the royal family was not present, and it was said that her mortification at her failure in imposing the spurious "twins" upon her son-in-law had kept her away. One of the boys was almost an idiot; but the other, Sher Singh, was handsome and spirited enough to please any father, and as he grew up, he clamoured to have a fief of his own and a separate establishment. Ranjit bade him apply to his "grandmother," who called him her heir, but was resolute that what he needed should come from his reputed father. At the age of twelve, Sher Singh, who was as brave as he was stupid, was sent with a force against the Hazaras, and behaved with great courage. When he returned, the Maharaja visited Sada Kour, who was then in camp a few miles from Lahore, and suggested that she was growing old, and should be released from the cares of this world; let her

give up her property to her "grandsons," and be free to think upon her latter end. The princess durst not refuse; she signed the deed which settled half her lands upon the two boys, but when this was done, she hurried to one of her estates, whence she applied for leave to dwell under protection of the English beyond the Sutlej.

Ranjit soon heard of this project, and summoned her to Lahore to answer for intriguing with the English, who had interfered once with him, and might do it again. She escaped by night in a covered palki, but was overtaken by a troop of his horse, and sent to imprisonment for the rest of her life. She beat her breast continually in her despair, she cursed the son-in-law whom she had helped to a throne; but the prison walls held her close for the little remaining time that she had to live. Thirteen years had Ranjit waited to pay his debt, and he was not one to forgive.

The crowning triumph of Ranjit's policy was in the winter of 1838, when the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, visited Lahore in state. In June had been signed the Tripartite Treaty by which the East India Company and the Maharaja undertook to replace Shah Shuja upon the throne of Afghanistan, and it was necessary above all things

to flatter and conciliate England's ally and partner in an extremely hazardous experiment.

Ranjit made great display of all his troops and his treasures, to impress his new allies. Miss Eden, Lord Auckland's sister, writes of "thousands all dressed in yellow or red satin, with quantities of their led horses trapped in silver and gold tissues, and all of them sparkling with jewels"; of driving for two miles and a half through a lane of Ranjit's bodyguard, half of them dressed in yellow satin with gold scarfs and shawls, half in cloth of gold, and all bearing gold arms, and shields and lances studded with gold; of a line of troops extending four miles and a half, which at first she took for a white wall with a red coping. In the midst of all this splendour, the Maharaja wore "a red stuff dress, with a little edging of the commonest grey squirrel fur, and a common red muslin turban," and looked "exactly like an old mouse with grey whiskers and one eye."

He was in the highest spirits at the Governor-General's visit, laughed and jested, and nearly poisoned some of the gentlemen of the suite by plying them with his favourite drink—a spirit distilled from dried grapes, saffron, and cardamoms, mixed with pearls ground to powder. He astonished his sirdars by taking the Governor-

General into the fort of Govindgarh where all his treasures were kept. Up to the last moment no one would believe that he would really admit Lord Auckland within his gates, which had been closed against all visitors, and when Governor-General and Maharaja went in together, "even the common soldiers said that they now saw that the Sikhs and English were to be one family, and to live in the same house." Jealous and suspicious as he had always shown himself, Ranjit at last had made up his mind that the English were to be trusted.

If his life could have been prolonged, the history of the Punjab for the next few years might have been less dismal to tell; but although his constitution was of the toughest, it was breaking under the strain of the life that he had led. He was half paralysed, and had to be lifted on to the back of the horse that he still rode with ease and grace. During Lord Auckland's visit, he had one or two alarming attacks of illness, which the English doctor was unable to do much to relieve, as the Maharaja always refused to take any medicine unless he first tried its effects upon some of his *entourage*, and then, if the results did not please him, declined it altogether.

He lingered into the summer, his mind clear, though his speech had failed. "By a slight turn

of his hand to the south he would inquire the news from the British frontier; by a similar turn to the west he would demand tidings from the invading army." He struggled hard for life, but the "musk, ambergris, pounded pearls, sandal and almonds" of the native doctors availed him as little as the dispersion of his hoarded treasures among Sikh and Hindu shrines. "What will become of us if you give everything away?" wailed Kharak Singh and the sirdars, sitting round his bed; the Maharaja wept also, but dread was stronger than avarice, and his jewels, his elephants, and his horses were sent, one after another, to propitiate the gods, until on June 27th 1839, the end which he had greatly feared would be held off no longer.

XV.

CHIEFS IN THE NORTH—1773-1841

"Dost Mohammad is calm, prudent, and wise in cabinet, and an able commander in the field. In treachery, cruelty, murder, and falsehood he is equally notorious. . . . On the whole, whatever odium may be attached to the Amir of Kabul, it is an unquestionable fact that he is the only person fit to rule Kabul."—MOHUN LAL, *Life of Dost Mohammad*.

XV.

CHIEFS IN THE NORTH—1773-1841.

THERE are certain gems which are said to influence the fate of their possessors. Some, as they pass from hand to hand, bring good fortune—but the greater number bring a curse. Among the latter was the great diamond of the Moghul Emperors of Hindustan.

Some would trace its story back to the misty days when the Five Brothers dwelt on the plain where the cities of Delhi rose, one by one, in after time. But leaving myth and tradition aside, it is certain that a very great diamond came into the possession of Shah Jahan, who placed it upon the Peacock Throne. When Nadir Shah came down from Persia, and for nine hours the gutters of Delhi ran with the blood of its slaughtered inhabitants, the treasure which he coveted most of all was the diamond. Great was his wrath and disappointment when, having forced the wretched

Mohammad Shah to surrender the Peacock Throne, the most valuable of its jewels was found to be missing.

Every one, of course, professed ignorance of its hiding-place, and Nadir chafed in impotent fury, until a woman of the Emperor's harem, bribed to betray her master, revealed that the diamond was hidden in a fold of Mohammad's turban.

Nadir bided his time, until the hour when he was to take formal leave of the Moghul Emperor before returning to his own land. There, in the despoiled Hall of Audience, sat the miserable descendant of Akbar, surrounded by his nobles, longing for the moment when they should see the last of their terrible guest. The Persian embraced the Moghul, with the assurances of friendship. "Henceforth we are brothers; in pledge thereof, behold my turban."

An exchange of turbans has long been the pledge of friendship in Eastern lands. Mohammad durst not refuse. It was his destiny to lose the diamond, as he had lost all else, and no expression of his face betrayed what he felt while he took the turban from his head. The Persian's greedy fingers were already searching amongst the folds, and as he drew forth the jewel from its place of concealment, he involuntarily burst into the exclamation, "Koh-i-Nur!" (Mountain of Light),

by which name it has been known ever since that day.

The greatest diamond in the world belonged by right to the strongest hand. It had brought no luck to the Emperor Mohammad, who died in such poverty that he was buried in an old clock-case; and it brought no luck to Nadir Shah, whose life henceforth was made wretched by his distrust of all around him, including his own son, whom he blinded on a false suspicion. He was planning the slaughter of every Persian in his army when some of his own nobles, wearied of his insane cruelty, assassinated him at midnight in his tent; his empire fell to pieces, and his treasures were parted among new owners.

In the confusion that followed, Ahmad Shah, an Afghan of the Daurani tribe, contrived to lay hands upon the diamond, which he had long marked for his own. At the age of three-and-twenty he was elected King of Afghanistan by the wild tribes of the north, the Abdalis, the Ghilzais, the Biluchis, the Hazaras, and Kizilbashis, who had determined to break loose from Persia after the death of Nadir Shah. It is not many who have been able to rule the Afghan tribes, who call no man master, and whose natural occupations are war, murder, and plunder. But Ahmad Shah understood the art of governing his

fellow-countrymen. Fight they must, and to keep them quiet at home they must have war abroad. He seized Kabul, Ghazni, and Herat; four times did he invade India; he destroyed the great confederate army of the Marathas on the field of Panipat; his son's bride, a princess of the royal house of Delhi, brought the Punjab and Sind as her dowry. But before he was an old man he was attacked by cancer in the face. "Cure it," he bade his physician. "I can cure it," answered the wise man, "but the cure will kill you."

At his death, in 1773, he was succeeded by his second son, Timur, a strong man like his father, but preferring peace to war. His aim was to decrease in every way the power and influence of the tribal chiefs, and to keep all the real authority in his own hands. A well-regulated civil service and well-ordered finances might be desirable in other countries: the hillmen were not in a state to profit by them. Outlying provinces revolted; there were rebellions and conspiracies; the kingdom was seething with discontent, when Timur died after a reign of twenty years, leaving no instructions about the succession, but leaving three-and-twenty sons who might dispute it.

It was the opportunity of the tribal chiefs, and

they did not let it slip. They were weary of being governed by the strong hand. "We are content with discord," confessed one of them to Mountstuart Elphinstone; "we are content with alarms; we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master." One son of Timur after another was set upon his throne, the puppet of one of the great chiefs, who paid off old scores against rival clans in the king's name. During the greater part of the next forty years the condition of Afghanistan may be described in the words originally applied to the kingdom of Poland, "a state of anarchy tempered by frequent revolutions."

Zaman Shah was first to be chosen king, thanks to the intrigues of his mother, who sent her veil to the chief of the Barakzai clan—the most humble entreaty that a woman could make,—begging him to support her son. Deposed, betrayed to his enemies by the Mulla with whom he took refuge, he found an opportunity of hiding his most precious jewels in the wall of the room where he was made prisoner. Blinded and a captive, he yet hugged the knowledge that the brother in whose name he had been cast down knew not where to find the Koh-i-Nur. It was not until that brother had been deposed in his turn, to make room for a third, Shah Shuja, that

some official, happening to touch the wall of the room where Zaman had been confined, scratched his hand against something sharp-pointed. He picked at the crumbling plaster, in idle curiosity, and discovered the fatal diamond, which Shah Shuja, the new king of Afghanistan, wore henceforth in a bracelet on his arm.

Shah Shuja was an Arabic scholar, and might have won credit as a minor poet; as a ruler of Afghanistan he was not successful. After revolts and civil wars, extending over several years, he was obliged to flee from the country, and fell into the hands of the rebel governor of Kashmir, who tried every means of persuasion to induce him to part with the few jewels he was supposed to have secreted.

Meanwhile, his chief Begam and some of his family had sought refuge with Ranjit Singh at Lahore. The shrewd old Maharaja was always ready to take advantage of other men's troubles for his own ends. He meant to profit by the confusion in Afghanistan to extend his own frontier, and he would not protect Shuja's family without gaining something for himself. So he set to work upon the Begam, and, other arguments proving ineffectual, placed a guard about her house, so that her servants could bring no food to her.

At the end of two days she yielded so far as to surrender some of her treasures, amongst them the great balas ruby which Timur the Lame had carried away from Delhi at the end of the fourteenth century. But she would say nothing of the diamond.

Then Ranjit, fearing to what lengths an obstinate woman's determination might carry her, and not wishing for the scandal of her death, changed his treatment, offered bribes instead of threats, and the Begam condescended to name her terms. Her husband must be relieved from captivity, and there must be pensions for herself and certain others whom she named.

Forthwith word was sent to Kashmir, and the captive was released and brought to Lahore. But having gone so far, Ranjit was in no haste to keep his promise about the pension, and the Begam suddenly recollected that neither she nor her husband was in possession of the stone any longer: it had been pawned to a merchant at Kandahar.

Whereupon the Maharaja replaced his cordon of guards, and for a month the exiles endured semi-starvation. The Begam was dauntless as ever, but Shuja's spirit had been broken by his misfortunes, and he sent word to Ranjit through a confidant that he was ready to yield up the diamond for a consideration.

Ranjit himself came to visit his guests, and swore "by the Granth of Baba Nanak and his own sword" to grant certain fiefs to Shuja and his heirs for ever, and to help him with troops and treasure to regain his lost throne. For an hour the two sat opposite to each other, neither speaking a word; then Ranjit's patience gave way, and he bade the confidant remind Shuja of his promise. Shuja made a sign to a slave, who laid a packet on the carpet at an equal distance between them. Ranjit ordered it to be opened, and cried out in exultation when the diamond flashed out upon them.

"At what price do you value it?" he asked Shah Shuja, who answered, "At good luck, for it has ever been the associate of him who has vanquished his foes."

If the unhappy prince had hoped to break the spell of his ill-fortune by giving up the diamond, he was mistaken. He was stripped of everything else that was worth having, including the exquisite green enamel scent-sprinkler, with its pattern of white jasmine flowers, made long ago for Shah Jahan, and borne away with the spoils of Delhi by Nadir Shah.[1] Treated as prisoner, not as ally, he thought of Ludhiana, where his brother, Shah Zaman, had been living for some

[1] Now in the India Museum.

time under British protection. The ladies of his harem were disguised, and smuggled in covered carts out of Lahore. A stricter guard was set in consequence upon Shah Shuja, who was watched day and night. The few trusty attendants left to him bored through seven other chambers to the outside of the building; one remained in bed to impersonate him, and two more followed as, disguised in a beggar's dress, he climbed through the holes in the walls into the street and made his escape from the city by the main sewer.

Once beyond the gates of Lahore, he dreamed of recovering his kingdom; but such forces as he could muster were driven back from Kashmir by a heavy fall of snow, and he came disconsolate to his family at Ludhiana. Later attempts upon the throne of Kabul proved equally fruitless, until his evil destiny, or the spell of the diamond, brought him back for the last time—only to perish miserably.

II.

There are certain pages in the history of the English in India which Englishmen would rather leave unread. It is small consolation to say that they are very few, and that there are many more

in the history of other dominant nations. The pages are there, and nothing can blot them out. They shall be turned as quickly as possible, but let it be noted that even on the blackest page may be found certain passages which light up the blackness. If the heroism, the honesty, the unselfishness of certain men could not wipe out the ill-doing of a few in high places, they went far to atone for it.

Early in the nineteenth century Russian aggression was the bugbear of English politicians. Russian influence was paramount in Central Asia and Persia. England looked uneasily towards the "buffer states" to the north-west of her possessions in India. The most important of these were Afghanistan and the Punjab. Ranjit Singh long ago had made up his mind that his interests could best be served by alliance with the English, and he professed himself ready to stand with them. But Afghanistan was an uncertain quantity.

After many years of civil strife under the nominal rule of one or other of Timur's three-and-twenty sons, the greater part of the country was now enjoying peace—as the term was there understood—under Dost Mohammad Khan, of the clan from whom the prime ministers of Afghanistan were chosen. At first he and his elder brother, Azim Khan, had set up rival claimants

to the throne in the persons of two otherwise negligible sons of Timur Shah; Dost Mohammad's nominee was murdered by Azim's nominee, after which the two brothers joined in an expedition against the Sikhs, apparently the best of friends, until word came to Azim that Dost Mohammad had secretly allied himself with Ranjit. Azim knew his brother too well to neglect the warning; he fled precipitately, dying before he could reach Kabul. Dost Mohammad, after some years of stress and toil, and after conscientious attempts on the part of all the chiefs concerned to establish the public peace by the assassination of rivals, succeeded in making himself master of Kabul Ghazni, Jalalabad, and Kandahar. In 1835 he had been proclaimed Amir at a great durbar in Kabul—modestly avowing that his poverty would not allow him to call himself Shah, after the example of the Daurani rulers.

A tall handsome man, with the marked Jewish features which have caused some persons to derive the Afghans from the Ten Lost Tribes, in his good points—of which he was not destitute—as well as in his vices, he was a type of his countrymen. He was entirely uneducated; before becoming Amir, his life had been a scandal to all with an elementary sense of decency or morality. He was recklessly brave, and first attracted the notice

of his elder brothers by slaying an enemy of their house in broad day in the crowded streets of Peshawar when only fourteen years old. Even when power and responsibility had taught him better, he knew no higher law than his own will. A strong, reckless man, he respected strength in others, however it might be manifested, and first learned to esteem a wife forced upon him by necessities of state when he saw her eat fifty eggs at a sitting. By dint of industriously stirring up the innumerable blood feuds of the chiefs, he contrived to keep them too busy with each other to have leisure to combine against him. His cruelty was notorious. An English officer once asked him, "Is it really true that you have caused twelve thousand of your subjects to be flayed alive?" "Never!" exclaimed the Dost, in visible horror. "At the utmost, it was only three hundred."

It was to his court at Kabul that both Russia and England sent a mission in 1837. Our envoy was Captain Alexander Burnes of the Bombay Infantry, a keen soldier, a great Oriental scholar, who had previously visited Kabul in 1835, when making a tour through Central Asia. He was now sent with instructions to conclude "a commercial treaty" with Afghanistan.

At first Dost Mohammad received him with

great cordiality, and the fact that certain of the chiefs—amongst them his own brothers—inclined to the Russian alliance, made him all the more anxious for a connection with England. It seems incredible that we should have thrown away this opportunity deliberately, but so it was. The one point upon which the Amir insisted was that we should put pressure on our ally, Ranjit Singh, to restore Peshawar, upon which he had seized at an opportune moment when the ruler of Afghanistan was incapable of holding it. Lord Auckland refused to allow this, and censured Burnes for having shown too much favour to the Amir.

Then came the turn of Russia, whose agent, Captain Vikovich, at first received coldly, and scarcely admitted to the Amir's presence, was overwhelmed with attentions when he promised money and support. The Amir was bitterly mortified by our refusal to do anything for him except to prevent Ranjit from attacking Afghanistan—which, as he well knew, the Maharaja was far too astute to attempt under present conditions. "I had a turban of muslin," he complained, "and I had thought that the English would help me to change it into one of shawl." And he repeated, "It is not I who have abandoned the English—it is the English who have abandoned me."

All concerned in this ill-fated experiment were destined to be abandoned or betrayed. Burnes' despatches were garbled before they were given to the printer, so as to make it appear he had represented Dost Mohammad as hostile, and had urged for war. The fraud was exposed, twenty years later, when Burnes had been hacked to pieces in Kabul. Vikovich, on his return to Petersburg, was disowned by Count Nesselrode (with whom our Government had been expostulating) as "an adventurer lately engaged in some unauthorised intrigues." He went back to his hotel, wrote a few lines of reproach to those who had first made use of him and then cast him aside, burned all his other papers, and shot himself.

Having committed one act of folly by quarrelling with Dost Mohammad, the British Government now proceeded to crown it by arranging to depose him from his throne, and replace Shah Shuja in his stead. "They proposed to depose the ruler who out of chaos had evolved at least a semblance of order, a form of government, and, most certainly, a respect for authority, . . . and to replace him by a prince who had already enjoyed the opportunity of ruling and who had failed; who had twice attempted to force his return, and been driven back; and who, when at

one time victory was in his grasp, had preferred flight to making the effort requisite to gain it."[1]

But the siege of Herat by the Persian army was filling English statesmen with alarm; the nominal pretext was the desire of the Shah to wrest the city from the Afghans, but there were Russian officers in its ranks, and the attempt was held to have been inspired by the Russian Ambassador at Teheran. The Russian Cabinet denied this, but without succeeding in convincing public opinion of their good faith. For ten months the siege dragged on; within the walls was a young lieutenant of Bombay Artillery, Eldred Pottinger, and it was he who inspired and led the resistance of the garrison, until the great army drew back, baffled and discomfited.

The "Russian terror" then subsided, but too late to save us from the consequences of our actions. Lord Auckland had already signed the Tripartite Treaty of Lahore, with Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja. Our forces and those of the Sikhs were to co-operate in replacing Shah Shuja, who undertook to prevent all other foreigners from invading Sikh or British territory; Ranjit was to keep Peshawar and the states on the Indus in return for his support.

[1] Malleson.

III.

It was a triumphant "Army of Occupation" that marched into Kabul in August 1839. In their midst, on a white charger, trapped with gold, his royal robes covered with jewels, rode Shah Shuja, and with him were the British Envoy, William Macnaghten, and Alexander Burnes, who had been appointed to the Mission.

Good reason had they to be proud. Kandahar had been entered without opposition; the strong fortress of Ghazni, deemed impregnable by the Afghans, had been carried by storm in a few hours. Dost Mohammad was a homeless fugitive; Koran in hand, he had ridden out among his troops, and besought them in the name of Allah and the Prophet to make a last stand against the Feringhi dogs. "You have eaten my salt these thirteen years; if ye will have a new master, grant me a last favour—let me die with honour." Only a small handful of men had come to his side; the rest had determined to worship the rising sun. The Dost saw that nothing was to be saved but life; his disorderly troops were surging to and fro, his guards had melted away, his servants were already cutting