



The Governor-General explained that this procedure was the mildest which he could adopt 'consistently with the dignity, position, and interests of the British Government.' The plain construction to be put on the silence of the Darbar was that its intentions were hostile; in which case it was inexpedient to give them more leisure for preparation than could be helped. On the other hand, to prove our good faith and forbearance, full time for a reply from Lahore was to be given before any precautionary movement was made.

Even then the Governor-General did not anticipate that the Sikh army would come as far as the Sutlej, or commit any positive act of aggression; but he saw that the Rani and chiefs, for their own purposes, were 'endeavouring to raise a storm, which, when raised, they will be powerless either to direct or allay.'

This being so, it became necessary to provide for the rapid march of the troops from Meerut, which might at any moment be ordered; and it was in connection with the arrangements for this contingency that Abbott had been summoned. He shall tell his own story.

I was informed by Broadfoot that the Governor-General was much put out by the Commissariat Department. He had asked the Deputy Commissary-General how soon he could collect supplies for 10,000 men, at intervals of twenty miles between Kurnaul and Ferozepore, with a view to the Meerut reserve forces marching up with as little carriage as possible. That officer informed him that it might possibly be done in six weeks.

Sir Henry's reply was more forcible than parliamentary, and he added:

'It must be done in five days;' and, turning to Broadfoot, said, 'You must do it.' 'Well,' said Broadfoot, 'it is rather sharp work, but it shall be done if possible.' And done it was. Broadfoot's object in sending for me was, that I should undertake two of the dépôt stations, orders being sent to Mills, Lake, and Nicolson for stations farther in advance.

I had the honour of dining with Sir Henry, and immediately after dinner set off on an elephant, and reached the first dépôt station at Pehoa in the early morning of December 5; and having put matters in train, and left my Assistant to complete the arrangements, I rode on to Samanah, in the Puttealah district.



When all was ready there, Abbott rejoined the Governor-General's camp on December 8, one march beyond Ambala, having ridden 100 miles on the fourth day.

Sir Henry expressed himself much gratified, and the Commissary-General was overjoyed, and almost embraced me.

Having completed my mission, I expected to be sent back to my district, where I had left my wife in camp, but Broadfoot ruled it otherwise. He said I must come on with the camp, and he would supply my wardrobe, for I had nothing with me but what was on my back.

On the 9th we made one march, but during the night or towards the morning of the 10th Broadfoot received news of the Sikhs crossing the Sutlej. I was with him in his tent, and I can see him now, in great spirits, hastening on his clothes, and saying, 'If we live through this, Abbott, we are both made men.'

We then went to the Governor-General's camp, and met Sir Henry and his Staff just mounting to move to the next camping ground at Sirhind. Broadfoot reported the news, and after a short conference the war offered by the Sikhs was accepted. Broadfoot and myself were then and there constituted aides-de-camp on Sir Henry's Staff, and I was ordered off in haste to bring down H.M.'s 29th Regiment and the 1st Bengal Fusiliers from Kussowlee and Subathoo, to join the camp at Khanna, or wherever I should find it, by forced marches.

With the hill well known in these parts as Tapp's Nose,¹ just above Kasauli, for a guide, Abbott set off at once across country. Thirty-five miles' ride brought him to Kalka, and eight miles beyond in the hills he arrived at Kasauli, where he found a dinner party being given by the colonel to the officers and ladies of the regiment. Abbott had made such good use of his time, that he had outstripped a messenger sent the previous evening to warn the regiments that they might be called on for service. His arrival at the party was, therefore, to use his own language, 'like the bursting of a shell, for they had no warning of coming events.' They had at once to prepare for a start next morning, and husbands and wives had to part, in many instances for ever.

On the 11th these two fine regiments encamped at Mani

Col. H. T. Tapp appears to have been stationed at Sabathu, and probably exercised political functions

under the Resident at the Court of Delhi from 1836 to 1840.



Majra on their way to the front, officers and men in high spirits at the prospect of active service. How and where they found the Governor-General and joined his camp, will in due course be told.

The foregoing information regarding a most important service on which Capt. Abbott was employed is extracted from, and based upon, a memorandum furnished by that officer. The modesty and simplicity with which the story is told afford a strong presumption in favour of its general accuracy.

Mr. Cust, in describing these events, has recorded that on the evening of December 9 he had gone to bed, but had not fallen asleep, when he was sent for and desired to make certain arrangements at once for the supply of the whole Ambala force.

Measures had already been taken to collect at certain places supplies for several thousand men; renewed exertions were now to be made to victual the whole army. Saunders Abbott was sent off to the hills, to bring down the regiments at Sabhatu and Kus-soulie. The Lodeanah force was ordered to fall back and meet us at Bussean. All ladies were sent back to Ambala. Capt. Napier and his wife were with us: he is now Napier of Magdala.

Whilst his Assistants were thus employed, Broadfoot was not idle; indeed, constant active employment seems to have prevented his leaving any detailed account of his proceedings; they are merged in those of the Governor-General. The following letter to his sister has a double interest: it was the last ever received by his family from him, and it contains an explicit affirmation that he was employed to maintain peace, and that no Government had ever striven harder for that result.

Camp, Amballa: December 4, 1845.

You complain of my not writing, and I have nothing to say in defence, seeing that, hardworked as I am, I ought to give a few minutes to it; but the lassitude from unceasing labour makes me defer it till, as now, it is all but too late; and even now Sir Henry Hardinge's letter bag is waiting to be sealed till this is closed. The mail is gone, and this goes by an after express.

I am with Sir Henry, and remain with him while he continues in this division of the country. He treats me with the greatest kindness. Nevertheless, I would give a good deal for ever so short a sojourn among you all, with Jessie and all the London party assembled. That, however, must continue, I fear, for some time, a very distant hope.



You ask if I am employed in preserving peace. Of course I am ; for whatever may be the result, never did Government strive as this Government has done to keep at peace.

Give everyone my kindest love. Remember me most kindly also to Mr. Loch ; say that young Sutherland Orr wrote me lately. I have been too busy to answer, but have been trying to serve him. I fear, however, it is difficult, from his being already well off where he is.

Ever &c.

G. BROADFOOT.

The following notes are taken from Capt. Nicolson's diary :

December 8.—The Sikh army has marched, and is in camp two kos (three miles) from the river. . . . They have fixed to cross on Thursday. Their cavalry are reported to be crossing now at Talli and Nagar, with the view of plundering our villages.

9th.—Wrote a hurried chit [note] to Broadfoot, telling the position of the Sikh force, and saying we were good for all comers, please God.

11th.—We had reports during the night of their crossing, but they did not really begin till morning, when one battalion and two guns and the standards of the others commenced, and the others soon followed. In the evening, nine battalions and eighteen jhandis (colours) were over, and some twenty guns or thereabouts.

The critical reader may notice an apparent discrepancy in the various reports as to the day on which the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej : for example, Capt. Abbott has recorded that Broadfoot received the news of their doing so on the morning of the 10th ; whilst here Capt. Nicolson, more immediately in their neighbourhood, has reported that the crossing began on the morning of the 11th. Other slight discrepancies might be instanced. With reference to these there is what seems to be sufficient explanation ; in certain cases Broadfoot, though somewhat more remote from the frontier than some of his Assistants, got important and trustworthy news before it reached them ; and with reference to the apparent error of date, the fact would seem to have been that comparatively small bodies of the Sikhs crossed the river probably every day from December 8 onwards, but that the main body did not move till the morning of the 11th. This view is fairly consistent with the Governor-General's despatch of December 31, and is, it is believed, sufficient to account for the apparent inaccuracies.



Similar discrepancies, or what appear to be such, are found in respect to the events between the crossing of the Sutlej by the Sikhs and the battle of Múdkí, in which the first actual collision occurred. These are rather annoying than important; they are just sufficiently evident to make a close and detailed examination and tabulation of facts necessary. It is somewhat difficult to account for these mistakes; in certain cases a loose and careless mode of writing, or even a slip of the pen, must be blamed.

Respecting the date on which the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej and thereby provoked the war, some unanimity might have been expected from those who have described the event. Yet we have already noticed the discrepancy between Capt. Abbott's date and that mentioned by Capt. Nicolson. In addition to these it may be observed that the Governor-General has recorded that the Sikh army in large numbers commenced crossing the Sutlej on December 11. In an inclosure to the letter in which this is recorded, the Commander-in-Chief stated that on December 11 it became known in Ambala that the invasion had actually taken place. Now this information, in those days before the telegraph was used, could not by any possibility refer to the event described by the Governor-General, but manifestly alluded to the news received by Broadfoot in Abbott's presence early on the morning of the 10th. But it is more perplexing to find Henry Lawrence, from whom accuracy might have been expected, some time after these events, state precisely that 'on December 12 the Commander-in-Chief moved with his headquarters from Umballa. On the evening of the same day the Sikhs commenced crossing the Sutlej.'² The fact being almost certain that the Sikhs commenced crossing the river in violation of existing arrangements as early as December 8; that on the 11th the first crossing of their troops on a large scale occurred; and that the Governor-General selected this serious breach of neutrality as the act which justified the issue of the proclamation dated December 13, which was, in fact, a declaration of war. Therefore it would seem to be correct to adhere to the 11th as the date on which the Sikh army commenced

² *Calcutta Review*, No. xvi. vol. viii. art. vi. p. 488.



to cross the Sutlej. Without doubt the operation lasted for several days.

With reference to the various movements of importance between the 11th and the 18th, when the battle of Mudki was fought, it is hoped that the following record is fairly correct. It is compiled from the despatches of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, and from the accounts written by Herbert Edwardes and Henry Lawrence in the 'Calcutta Review.'

On December 7 and 8 the Governor-General desired the Commander-in-Chief to move up the force from Ambala, Meerut, and some other stations.³ He then, being some days' march in advance of the Commander-in-Chief, rode to Ludhiana, inspected the fort, and, seeing that it could be held by a draft of the more infirm soldiers from the regiments stationed there, desired Brigadier Wheeler to be prepared to march at the shortest notice with the rest of his force.

By the 12th the Commander-in-Chief, with the headquarters and the Ambala force, marched sixteen miles to Rajpura. Next day they marched to Sirhind; eighteen miles of a sandy and distressing road. On that day the Governor-General, who was two marches ahead, received the 'precise information that the Sikh army had crossed the Sutlej, and was concentrating in great force on the left bank of the river.' He then issued a proclamation recapitulating events already described, announcing the invasion of our territory by the Sikh troops, and his determination to vindicate the authority of the British Government, and to punish the violators of treaties and the disturbers of public peace.

He declared the cis-Sutlej estates of the Maharaja to be confiscated and annexed to the British territories, and called upon the chiefs and inhabitants of the Protected States for co-operation and fidelity, promising indemnity in case of loss and threatening punishment in case of disobedience. By arrangement he met the Commander-in-Chief one march in advance of the army. The result of the consultation, as far as it affected the Ambala force, was the issue of 'after orders at midnight for a forced march of twenty miles on Esrú.'⁴ The object was to reach Bussean before the Sikhs, and pre-

³ *Papers &c.* p. 26.

⁴ *Calcutta Review*, No. xi. vol. vi. art. vi. p. 259.



vent them from seizing the supplies which Broadfoot and his Assistants had collected.

By the 14th the comparative safety of this important point was secured; the Ludhiana force, of 5,000 men and twelve guns, having been moved somewhat in front of it.

On December 15 the Umballa force moved on to Luttala, nearer thirty than twenty miles, and orders were issued for a rigid reduction of baggage. On December 16 the force marched thirty miles to Wudni, overtaking the Governor-General and the Ludhiana force at Bussean.⁵

Regarding the supplies for the army, Edwardes remarked that Major Broadfoot might be said to have been the Commissary-General of the army of the Sutlej.

Even after his death his subordinate officers became and continued till very late in the campaign the real Commissariat of the army. The people of the country were now all supposed to be hostile; and those who were with the advanced guard that day will not easily forget Major Broadfoot and his rough-and-ready troop of wild-looking Affghans, galloping across the plain from village to village, summoning out the greybeards, and, with perfect mastery of their corrupt and broken dialect, acquired in a short residence of fifteen⁶ months upon the frontier, explaining the terms of the proclamation, and extracting from the most refractory *Mufsid*⁷ supplies for the advancing army.⁸

On December 17 a short march of ten miles to Charrak was made, as the long marches had told most severely on man and beast. Next day a march of twenty-one miles brought the force to Mudki, where the first shot of the first Sikh war was fired.

During these days the Sikhs appear to have been employed crossing the river at various fords: on the 15th Capt. Nicolson has recorded that 'the Sikhs crossed, and we stayed where we were.' They plundered several villages situated six or eight miles north-west of Firozpur. At ten o'clock A.M. they threatened Firozpur itself, and Sir J. Littler moved out

⁵ *Calcutta Review*, No. xi. vol. vi. art. vi. p. 260.

⁶ Thirteen months, to be more accurate.

⁷ *Mufsid*, malcontent.

⁸ *Calcutta Review*, No. xi. vol. vi. art. vi. p. 260.



to meet them with two brigades. They did not accept the challenge, probably preferring to choose their own ground and to fortify it, so as to make the task of beating them as hard as possible. They encamped at Langiana, about three or four miles north of Firozpur. During the next two days a considerable number of the Sikh troops with guns advanced to Firozshah,⁹ and took up a position, which they immediately entrenched and fortified. The news of the approach of the Governor-General towards Mudki reached Firozpur and probably the Sikh camp on the 16th, and the idea seems to have occurred to Raja Lal Singh that by a sudden attack he might be destroyed or captured. The force with the Governor-General was greatly under-estimated; in all probability the Sikhs did not reckon on having to deal with more than the Ludhiana force, and did not think that the Ambala force could have effected a junction. The plan was perfectly reasonable, and likely to be, even if not successful, very embarrassing to the English; for a considerable force, reckoned at sixteen battalions of infantry, over 3,000 cavalry, and fifty guns, threatened Firozpur; a strong force, the numbers of which were not known, had occupied Firozshah; and, in advance, Raja Lal Singh, with a considerable body of men supported by artillery, lay in wait for the Governor-General between Firozshah and Mudki. Such was the position on December 18, but even on that date more Sikhs were crossing the river.

⁹ Firozshah, around which the well-known battle was fought, has also been called, with equal error, Ferozshahr and Pheerooshuhur. The correct name is probably Pherú Sháh, called after Bhái Pherú, a devotee or man of religious repute; Sháh being a

not unusual title by which such people are addressed. A Punjabi speaking of the battle generally calls it 'Pheru da larai.' Shahr ('city') is a very unusual termination of a village name in that district.

CHAPTER XVI.

1845.

The battle of Mudki—Deaths of Sir R. Sale and Sir J. M'Caskill—Private accounts of the battle—Capt. S. A. Abbott's services—Arrangements for attack at Firozshah—Disposition of the forces—The Sikh position—The battle of Firozshah—Broadfoot killed—Our troops bivouac outside the Sikh lines—Insubordination among the Sikhs—Gravity of the situation of the British—Assault in the morning of the 22nd—Arrival of Tej Singh—Sufferings of our troops—Quotations from despatches—Burial of George Broadfoot—Letters and general orders about his death—His loss regretted in both Houses of Parliament—Opinions of eminent men of his value—Monument and tablet erected—Sir H. Hardinge to the Earl of Ellenborough—Arrival in England of the news of the battles—Comments on the Governor-General's measures—Current criticisms—Propriety of a Governor-General serving in a subordinate capacity discussed—Accusation of treachery made against Sikh leaders rejected—Mr. Currie to Lord Ellenborough—Inscription on the Madras memorial.

THE battle of Mudki was fought on December 18, 1845. On this field Britons met Sikhs for the first time as foes; and there was founded a mutual respect, confirmed three days later at Firozshah, which has lived to the present day.

The force under Raja Lal Singh has been estimated by Cunningham as under 'two thousand infantry, supported by about twenty-two pieces of artillery, and eight or ten thousand horsemen.'¹ Capt. Nicolson's estimate, from native report, fairly agrees with these figures; they are probably as accurate as any which can now be supplied, and may be considered approximate. It should, however, be recorded that the Commander-in-Chief, in his official despatch, made a very different estimate of the strength of his enemy. 'They were said to consist of from 15,000 to 20,000 infantry, about the same force of cavalry, and forty guns.'²

On the morning of the 18th the Raja advanced from Firozshah towards Mudki, and sent forward a detachment to

¹ Cunningham's *Sikhs*, p. 301.

² *Papers &c.* p. 32.



watch and report the movements of the British army. On our side, Broadfoot, with a party of Christie's horse, was similarly employed. When he arrived at Mudki he found it occupied by the Sikh advanced party, of whose strength he was necessarily ignorant. He immediately informed the Commander-in-Chief, who was then about three miles behind. Sir H. Gough formed his troops in order of battle and resumed the march. The Sikh advanced detachment retired on their main body, and informed the Raja of the approach of the British. The latter marched steadily on and reached Mudki at noon; finding it unoccupied, there was a disposition to believe that Broadfoot's report of the Sikh occupation of the village was a false alarm, and the men, exhausted and suffering grievously from thirst, lay down to await the arrival of the baggage. Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon the camels began to come in; their loads were removed, and the men commenced to cook their food. The moment seemed to the Raja propitious for the attack, and he advanced accordingly. A scrap of paper was brought to Broadfoot, who was at luncheon with the Governor-General. He read it, and said, 'The enemy is on us.' He rode at once to the front, and gave immediate warning of the impending attack. He was not at first believed, and even the cloud of dust which appeared in the direction of the enemy failed to convince the sceptical, who attributed it to skirmishers.

'That dust,' he energetically exclaimed, 'covers thousands; it covers the Sikh army.' . . . While the British troops were yet forming, he returned from his reconnaissance, galloped up to the Commander-in-Chief, and gracefully saluting him, pointed to the rising cloud of dust ahead, and said, 'There, your Excellency, is the Sikh army!' It was the Political Agent making over the frontier to the soldier.³

The Sikh guns opened fire, and afforded convincing testimony to the accuracy of the Agent's information. The British artillery replied; the cavalry was sent forward, some to turn the right, and the others the left, of the enemy's line, which in length far exceeded that of the advancing British infantry. The cavalry manœuvre was brilliantly successful; the irregular Sikh cavalry was swept away on either side,

³ *Calcutta Review*, No. xvi. vol. viii. art. vi.



and the guns even, for the moment, were silenced. The infantry continued to advance, and drove the Sikhs in front of them, 'using that never failing weapon, the bayonet, whenever the enemy stood. Night only saved them from worse disaster, for this stout conflict was maintained during an hour and a half of dim starlight, amidst a cloud of dust from the sandy plain, which yet more obscured every object.' ⁴ Fifteen guns were taken, and next day, apparently, two more were brought from the field to the fort of Mudki, thus making in all seventeen guns captured. ⁵

Our loss was heavy; 215 Europeans and natives of all ranks were killed, and 657 were wounded. The enemy's loss cannot be ascertained.

Of the officers who were killed, the most distinguished at the time were Major-Generals Sir R. H. Sale, G.C.B., Quartermaster-General of the Queen's troops, and Sir J. McCaskill, K.C.B. and K.H. The former was struck by a grape shot, and the wound proved to be mortal; the latter was shot dead on the field. Both were veteran officers, whose services were of a highly distinguished order, and the former had especially a deserved reputation for great personal gallantry.

In a previous part of this work, the facts related tend to show that Sale, though personally most brave, was, like many other good men, unduly fearful of responsibility, and therefore scarcely equal to the position in which he was placed during the critical period of the siege of Jalalabad. It is, therefore, a duty as well as a pleasure to record, as fully as space will permit, the leading events of his distinguished career. He was born in 1782, and entered the 36th Regiment in 1795. He had a long and honourable record of service in the field; the principal sieges, battles, and campaigns at which he was present being: Seringapatam, 1799, medal; storming of the Travancore lines, 1809; capture of the Mauritius, 1816; first Burmese war, 1824-25, C.B.; first Afghan war, 1838-41, including the siege of Ghazni, at which he commanded the main column of the attack, and the operations in Kohistan which resulted in the surrender of Dost Muhammad; commanded the garrison of Jalalabad during the siege, 1841-42;

⁴ *Papers &c.* p. 32. Commander-in-Chief's despatch, December 19, 1845.

⁵ *Paper &c.* p. 24.



served with the army under Gen. Pollock, 1842, G.C.B. and three medals. He fell gallantly at the battle of Mudki, 1845, after more than fifty years' service.⁶

In the House of Lords, the late Lord Ripon, in expressing the regret felt for his loss, remarked: 'One of the most distinguished men in that or in any other army fell in that battle. Who does not know the name of Sir Robert Sale? Who can forget the services he has rendered to his country and his sovereign?' In the House of Commons Sir R. Peel similarly bore testimony to the value of his services.

Sir John McCaskill, too, had seen much service, both in the Peninsular war and in India. It will be recollected that he commanded the force which took Istalif. He joined the army in 1797, and was, therefore, but two years junior to Sir R. Sale. His meritorious services were also acknowledged in both Houses of Parliament.

Amongst the wounded who afterwards rose to distinction may be mentioned Major P. Grant, D.A.G., dangerously wounded; Capt. Herbert B. Edwardes, A.D.C., slightly wounded; Lieut. G. Reynell Taylor, very severely wounded; and Lieut. Edward Lake.

The following extract from Mr. Cust's memorandum is interesting and graphic.

I found the Governor-General sitting under a tree writing letters. Of a sudden we heard that the Sikh army was *advancing in force*. . . . Our whole army turned out, the sepoys in their dhotees,⁷ leaving their food. It was 4 P.M. I overtook Broadfoot and the Governor-General, and stuck to them; we were under a heavy fire. Regiment after regiment passed by us, and the Governor-General pointed out the direction of the advance. We saw old Gen. McCaskill killed. We heard the cheers in the front when the first battery was taken. We passed through it, saw the dead and dying; we saw Sir Robert Sale lying wounded on a gun, and many friends. The firing had now ceased, and the battle was won.

The only other account which should be quoted, and which has not, as far as is known, been previously published, is one

⁶ This account of Sir R. Sale's services is taken from an obituary notice in the *Morning Herald* of February 24, 1846.

⁷ *Dhotee, dhoti*, is the waist cloth. Hindus when cooking strip themselves to their *dhotis*.



found in an intercepted letter from a father present at the battle on the Sikh side, to his son in Lahore. It has at any rate the merit of being brief, and is probably not a very incorrect description of what took place.

The Ghorcharras would not come on; the British charged; the Sikhs ran; lots killed and all or nearly all the guns lost.⁸

After the action the Sikhs seem to have retired on their main body at Firozshah, and the British to the village of Mudki.⁹

On the next day, December 19, it was expected that the Sikhs would renew their attack; the British troops were therefore for many hours under arms, but though dust was seen which betokened the presence of the enemy, our men were unmolested. That evening Capt. S. A. Abbott, an Assistant to Major Broadfoot, accompanying the 29th Foot, the 1st European L.I., the 11th N.I., and four heavy guns, arrived after an arduous and harassing march. It is not clear whether the value of Capt. Abbott's services on this occasion has been fully recognised. In a remarkably short space of time he had succeeded in carrying the message to the troops that they were wanted, and in piloting them to the front. The presence of these troops was of vital importance to the army, which even with them was scarcely adequate to the task they had to perform. The Governor-General appreciated this, and warmly thanked Capt. Abbott for his exertions.¹

⁸ Capt. Nicolson's diary. The Ghorcharras were the irregular cavalry.

⁹ *Calcutta Review*, No. xviii. vol. ix. art. vi. p. 521.

¹ The Abbott family have rendered varied and meritorious services to their country. Four brothers were in the E.I.C.S. Major-Gen. Augustus Abbott, C.B., of the Bengal Artillery, had medals for Bhartpur, Ghazni, Jalalabad, and Kabul; he also had, but did not wear, the Order of the Durani Empire. He was honorary A.D.C. to the Governor-General, and died in 1867.

Major-Gen Sir Fred. Abbott, Kt., C.B. Bengal Engineers, has medals for

Ava, Kabul, and Sobraon. He was for many years Governor of Addiscombe College, Member of the Council of Military Education, and of the Commission for National Defences.

Gen. James Abbott, C.B., Bengal Artillery, has medals for Chilianwala and Gujrat; he also saw service at Bhartpur, and commanded an expedition against the Hassanzais of the Black Mountain. He is best known, perhaps, for his adventurous journey to Khiva to negotiate the release of Russian prisoners, and as in charge of the district of Hazara in the Punjab, the headquarters of which, Abbottabad, is named after him.



On the evening of this day, Sir H. Hardinge tendered his services, as second in command in the field, to Sir H. Gough, who accepted the offer with pleasure.²

On the 20th, the British force completed the duty of burying their dead. Broadfoot and his Assistants were busy recording the information collected regarding the Sikh entrenched position at Firozshah.

The information went to show that the position was entrenched on three sides, surmounted with guns of very heavy metal. It was somewhat in the shape of a horseshoe.

The north face commanded the Loodeanah and Ferozepore road; the south, the road by which we were approaching; and the west, the position of Ferozepore. The eastern face was open and unprotected.

That the position was attacked on the strongest faces was not due to want of information supplied by Broadfoot, . . . but to the desire of the Chiefs to relieve Ferozepore, which was considered to be in danger, and with a view to forming a junction with its garrison before the attack was delivered.³

During the evening of December 20, instructions were sent to Sir John Littler to move out from Firozpur towards Mudki with as strong a force as he could spare after providing for the safety of his post. He made his arrangements with great promptitude and skill, completely deceiving Tej Singh, the Sikh commander, who for some time was unaware that Littler had marched.

The plan arranged by the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor-General was, that after a junction with Littler's force had been effected, the combined army should assault the Sikh position in such a way as to interpose, at any rate, a considerable part of the British army between the Sikhs at Firozshah and the station of Firozpur.

To give effect to this, the troops, under the command of

Major-Gen. Saunders A. Abbott, Bengal Army, has a medal and clasp for Mudki and Ferozshah (severely wounded). A.D.C. to the Governor-General. Served in the Civil Department in the Punjab and Oudh; and after he had retired from the service, was Agent for the S. P. & D. Railway Co. at Lahore.

A fifth brother, Keith E. Abbott, served with credit for many years in the Consular Department. Was Consul-General at Tabreez in Persia, and afterwards at Odessa, where he died in 1873. Order of the Lion and Sun.

² *Papers &c.* p. 36.

³ Gen. Abbott's *Episode &c.*



Sir Hugh Gough, marched on the morning of December 21 along the road from Mudki to Firozpur. The sick and wounded were left at Mudki, with two regiments of Native Infantry⁴ for their protection. The road lay nearly four miles to the south of the Sikh position, opposite to which, towards midday, a halt was made to enable Littler to join, and advantage was taken by officers and men to eat a hasty meal if they could get it, and enjoy a little rest.

During this halt an incident occurred, which is of interest as illustrating the extreme delicacy of the position occupied by Sir Henry Hardinge. He was by his own offer serving as a lieutenant-general under the Commander-in-Chief; but he remained the responsible Governor-General of India. Whilst he and his Staff were resting and getting something to eat, Sir Hugh Gough arrived, and with characteristic impetuosity urged an immediate attack on the Sikh position, without waiting longer for Littler. The gravity of the situation was perceived by the Governor-General, and his resolution was formed. He retired for a short space with the Commander-in-Chief, pointed out to him that, though second in command as far as leading the troops was concerned, he was still responsible for the safety and welfare of British India, and therefore must, in his capacity of Governor-General, sanction nothing which in his opinion would imperil either. He considered that to attack without waiting for Littler's force was to incur an unnecessary risk of failure, and therefore he pronounced against the proposal.

Opinions differ as to the wisdom of the Governor-General's decision in this matter. This question need not be discussed just now; at present we are mainly concerned with recording events as they happened, as far as we have been able to discover them; and the fact here recorded is at once unusual and important. The Governor-General as supreme ruler in India took the responsibility of superseding the Commander-in-Chief in the field.

Littler's arrival was awaited; he was tolerably punctual, and it is recorded in despatches that the junction was complete by half-past one o'clock. The small plan at the commencement of this chapter shows in a general way the disposition

⁴ *Papers &c.* p. 27. Governor-General's despatch.



of the British and Sikh forces, and will, it is hoped, assist the reader to follow the description of the battle.

The army was formed in four divisions ; the first, under Sir Harry Smith, being in reserve. The other three were thus arranged : on the right the second division, commanded by Major-Gen. Gilbert ; in the centre the third division, under Brigadier Wallace ; and on the extreme left the fourth division, under Major-Gen. Sir J. Littler. The artillery was under Brigadier Brooke, and was principally massed between Wallace's and Gilbert's divisions.

The Sikh position was very irregular in shape and roughly traced. The longer sides towards the east and west may be said to have faced Mudki and Ferozpur respectively. The entrenchments were not formidable as fortifications ; that is, neither were the ditches deep nor the ramparts high. They were simply good shelter trenches, well defended by a well-appointed and easily movable artillery supported by a numerous and determined body of infantry.

Sir John Littler's division was on the left, and with his left thrown forward he appears to have commenced the attack. The Commander-in-Chief led the right wing, and Sir H. Hardinge commanded the left.⁵ It was nearly four o'clock when the battle commenced. Littler's men advanced under a most galling and destructive fire to within 150 yards of the batteries, when they were ordered to charge. Had they done so with vigour, they would, in spite of the havoc and slaughter, have effected a lodgment ; indeed, it is probable, in that case, that the loss of life would have been less. Unfortunately, they did not press home the charge ; the 62nd halted and wheeled about, under an order, it has been said, of the Brigadier in command.⁶ In vain did Sir John urge them to seize the prize which was within their grasp ; and, ignorant of the order referred to, he naturally concluded that the arrest of the advance, and the retrograde movement, were the result of panic. This attack, therefore, failed ; and the division, with greatly reduced numbers, passed the night in the vicinity of the spot occupied by the left of Wallace's division prior to the advance, and out of shot.

⁵ *Papers &c.* p. 37.

⁶ Compare *Calcutta Review*, No. xi.

vol. vi. art. vi. p. 273 ; and Macgregor's *Sikhs*, vol. ii. p. 106.



It should be mentioned, that as Wallace's division advanced, they met the 14th N.I., who were retiring. That regiment, with its colours, joined the advancing troops, and returned to a more successful assault.

The attack on the south face would seem to have been delayed longer than was intended. As the line advanced, it became evident that its length extended considerably on either side beyond the limits of the immediately opposite part of the Sikh entrenchment.

The first result of this was that the men crowded towards the centre, and before long got in front of our own guns. The Sikh artillery fire was most destructive. Capt. Abbott was sent back to bring up the guns; he had scarcely returned, when his horse was shot and fell under him. He rose, but was immediately struck down by two bullets, one in the shoulder, one in the arm, in such a way as to show that the Sikhs had established a cross fire. Broadfoot, who was on horseback, called out to him to get up, and greatly to his surprise he found he could obey. The next moment it was Broadfoot's turn; he was shot in the thigh, and was either thrown from his horse, or dismounted to examine the nature of his wound. He considered it insufficient to stop him, remounted, and rode on cheering some men into the trenches.

The attack was resolutely made, and the Sikh resistance was most determined. The result was a partial success, achieved at a terrible sacrifice of life. It is difficult to trace precisely the part played by each regiment. In the confusion of the attack it is probable that the relative positions of the regiments were changed, and that this has led to some ambiguity in the various descriptions of the battle. In a general way it may be said that the Sikh batteries were carried at the point of the bayonet; but the Sikhs retired no farther from them than their tents and camp in the immediate rear, from whence they opened a severe musketry fire.

As the assault was being made, the Governor-General and his Staff appear to have moved towards the right. It was to the right of the centre of the south face that Broadfoot rode into the Sikh battery, and there he was killed: shot through the arm and heart, he fell dead. Abbott, noticing some hesitation in two companies of the 80th, and finding that all their



officers had been killed, put himself at their head. They responded to his order, charged the entrenchments, and fired a volley into the Sikh tents, which were set on fire, and the blaze spread along the line. The different regiments penetrated different distances into the Sikh camp. The despatches and some other accounts seem to show that those on the right got farthest in; and, indeed, the reserve under Sir Harry Smith⁷ and part of the 1st E.L.I. are said to have reached the village of Firozshah and swept the Sikhs out of a great part of their camp.⁸ H.M.'s 3rd Dragoons added to the reputation they had so justly acquired at Mudki. They were sent against a battery from which the Sikhs maintained a heavy fire. They charged, and carried it—

the leaders filling up the yawning trench with their own numbers, and those who followed crossing on a living bridge of their comrades. . . . Having put the artillerymen to death and silenced the battery, this gallant band faced the whole Khalsa army within the entrenchment, swept through their camp with loud huzzas over tents, ropes, pegs, guns, fires, and magazines, cutting down all that opposed their passage; and, having traversed the enemy's position from side to side, emerged among their friends, with numbers thinned indeed, but 'covered with imperishable glory.'⁹

The combat was continued with obstinacy on either side till night fell, and even then it did not cease. Numerous explosions of mines or magazines occurred, one of which took effect under the feet of the 1st E.L.I., the distinguished regiment of which William Broadfoot had been adjutant; and rending it in twain scattered the survivors on either side. The brave men, however, when no longer able to find their own regiment, attached themselves to the nearest and continued the struggle. The Sikh fire was so destructive, and successful progress in the dark so improbable, that it was decided to withdraw the troops from the entrenchments, restore some degree of order, and await the dawn. Accordingly a position from 300 to 400 yards distant from the south face of the Sikh camp was selected, and there were gathered together the remnants of Gilbert's and Wallace's divisions.

⁷ The movements of the reserve under Sir Harry Smith are involved in considerable obscurity. The despatch in which they are described is

far from being either clear or distinct.

⁸ *The War in India: Despatches &c.*

⁹ *Calcutta Review*, No. ix. vol. vi. art. vi. p. 276.



Their combined strength did not exceed that of one division, and the men were exhausted, hungry, and thirsty. They were put under Gen. Gilbert's command, and with them were Sir H. Gough and Sir Henry Hardinge, who were indefatigable in visiting the various regiments or detachments, encouraging the men, and, with Gen. Gilbert, showing an example of calmness and fortitude most valuable in that trying time. Thus order was restored, and the men lay down to rest.

As has been already stated, the movements of the reserve are somewhat doubtful. The troops under Sir H. Smith are said to have penetrated to the village of Firozshah, to have held it for some time, and eventually during the night to have retired to Misriwala, distant about two miles to the south or south-west.

The Sikhs, having recovered that part of their position, appear to have somewhat cautiously returned to the batteries on the south face. They manned some guns and opened fire whenever they could discover the position of any part of the British force. On one occasion the fire was so harassing, that Sir Henry Hardinge called on the 80th and 1st E.L.I. to charge the battery.

Lieut.-Col. Bunbury, assisted by Lieut.-Col. Wood, my aide-de-camp, led the attack, on which occasion the latter officer was wounded. The guns were spiked, the enemy driven away with loss, and this part of our line left undisturbed for the remainder of the night.¹

Fortunately for us, insubordination and licence prevailed in the Sikh camp: the Akalis plundered the tents of Lal Singh, the Sikh commander-in-chief; a general riot ensued, and the remnants of discipline were lost. This was not known to our leaders; had it been realised, they would have been spared a night of anxiety unparalleled in our experience of war in India. The prospect, it cannot be disputed, was gloomy in the extreme. The Sikhs had practically recovered the whole of their entrenched camp. The remnant of Sir John Littler's division was away in a village due west of Firozshah, Sir Harry Smith's division was two miles distant in another direction, each ignorant of the position and intentions of the other, and of those of the exhausted division and headquarters which alone remained on the field.

¹ *Papers &c.* p. 44.



It is not a matter of surprise that some officers were unequal to the emergency, and suggested retreat on Ferozpur; nor will it astonish anyone acquainted with the impetuous gallantry of the Commander-in-Chief, and the quieter but not inferior resolution of the Governor-General, that such suggestions met with the reception which they deserved.

The two Chiefs met in the night and decided, without hesitation, that the attack must be at once resumed in the morning, and that the result must be victory or death.

In case of disaster, which was far from impossible, the Governor-General sent orders to Mudki, where Mr. Currie was in charge of the official papers of the Government of India, and Mr. Cust of the records of the Agency, for the destruction of all State papers. Sir Henry's son Charles, who was private secretary, being a civilian, was ordered off the field. Major Somerset conveyed the order, and was mortally wounded about five minutes afterwards. Mr. Hardinge passed the night with Major Brind's battery, and rejoined the Governor-General next morning immediately after the Sikh camp had been carried. Prince Waldemar of Prussia and his suite were also desired to leave the field, but not before Dr. Hoffmeister had been killed.

Whilst thus the situation of the British, as far as could be known to their leaders, was well nigh desperate,² there is no doubt that the courage and resolution of the Sikhs had been severely tried by the day's fighting, and had much abated. Their position, defended by an artillery greatly superior in number and weight of guns to that of their assailants, had been stormed at the point of the bayonet; whilst, as has been recorded, the 3rd Dragoons had ridden over and through their camp, unchecked by opposition or by obstacles. Such shocks are not without their effect, and cannot be sustained with impunity. One result was manifest in the insubordination and riot already mentioned. And so it happened that when dawn at last appeared, and the one division on the field, which had been led forward in the dark close to the edge of the entrenchment, and there lay concealed, arose and delivered its

* The position of the British was unnecessarily aggravated by the action of an officer in the Adjutant-General's Department, who, presumably acting under some uncontrollable impulse of

a mind unequal to the situation, ordered several regiments to retire from the field to Ferozpur. The order was obeyed by a considerable portion of the force.



assault, a success was achieved which decided the result of the battle.

As in the proceedings of the previous day, so in the accounts of what took place on the morning of the 22nd, differences and discrepancies are to be found. In the despatches of the Commander-in-Chief, and of Sir H. Hardinge as second in command, it is stated that Gough led the right, and Hardinge the left ; but Major-Gen. Gilbert has reported thus :

The front of the left of my division was led into action by his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, and the right by the Right Hon. the Lieut.-Gen. Sir H. Hardinge, and I myself leading her Majesty's 80th Foot ; and notwithstanding the advance was made under a tremendous fire of heavy guns, the enemy's entrenchment was retaken, battery after battery, at the bayonet's point.³

It is not, perhaps, of much importance to fix precisely the posts occupied by the two leaders. Sir Henry Hardinge had sent his son Arthur, the only unwounded member of his Staff, with Col. Benson to bring up Sir J. Littler and his division ; but the advance was not delayed till they arrived. On hearing the firing commence, Capt. Hardinge galloped on and rejoined his father, who, with the Commander-in-Chief and the officers of their Staff, rode thirty yards in front of the British line to prevent the men from firing.

The assault was made on the south face, which was carried ; the troops then turned, swept eastwards, keeping the village of Firozshah on their left, and emerged victorious on the plain to the north. There they were formed in line, and received their two leaders with loud cheers. Many standards, seventy-three guns, and the whole Sikh position, were in possession of the victors.

But their work was not yet done. Tej Singh, who commanded the force which threatened Firozpur, either attracted by the cannonade, or more probably informed by some of the fugitive Sikhs that the fortune of the day was going against them, brought up his army, principally cavalry, and a large field of artillery. By this time Sir J. Littler and Sir Harry

³ Major-Gen. Gilbert's despatch to the Commander-in-Chief, dated Dec. 24, 1845. *War in India : Despatches* &c. second edition, 1846, p. 70.



Smith, with their men, had joined; but at no moment was the situation of the British more critical than when Tej Singh's fresh troops drove in our wearied cavalry parties, whose horses could not even muster a trot. Our soldiers were exhausted and starving: there was no ammunition for the guns. Fortunately the Sikh commander did not know to what extremity we were reduced. He made a strenuous effort to regain the position, was repulsed, but immediately renewed the contest, and opened a heavy fire from his artillery. Our guns could not reply, but the best that could be done was done: a bold front was shown to the enemy, and preparations were made indicative of an intention to attack him on either flank.⁴ Meanwhile Tej Singh became aware of the loss and carnage which had attended our capture of the position; and considering that an assault when we were the defenders would be hopeless, he withdrew his troops, to the intense relief of the British leaders.⁵

Thus, after a prolonged and determined struggle, which had lasted with but little interruption for twenty-four hours, the British remained masters of the field, and the Sikhs, defeated but not demoralised, retreated towards the Sutlej.

The British loss during the two days' fighting amounted to 694 killed and 1,721 wounded; in all, 2,415 of all ranks.

This description of the battle of Firozshah has been compiled from many sources, some of which have been accessible to the public and others have not. Endeavour has been made to omit what is merely conjecture, and to verify the statements

⁴ *Papers &c.* p. 38.

⁵ This is the reason given by Tej Singh himself for his inaction, and it seems sufficient. Gen. S. A. Abbott has recorded the following remarks on the subject: 'It has been said that Tej Singh, alarmed by the movement of the troops which deserted the field the previous evening, thinking it a threatening flank movement, desisted from the attack; but he informed the writer of these lines, some time afterwards, that finding the loss we had sustained in capturing the position, as evidenced by the numbers slain, he gave it up as hopeless when we were

the defenders.' (*Episode &c.*) This account has been recently confirmed by Major-Gen. R. Young, R.E., who, being present soon after at an interview between Henry Lawrence and Tej Singh, heard the former ask the latter why he withdrew. Tej Singh replied as indicated in the text. The retrograde movement of our cavalry and some of our artillery on Firozpur, in obedience to an unauthorised order, may have nevertheless influenced the Sardar; that it did so is believed by some whose opportunities for observing, and ability to deduce correctly, entitle their opinion to consideration.

made; but the difficulty of making a trustworthy and complete account of circumstances and movements, in themselves involved in confusion and obscurity, as well as of reconciling evidence apparently conflicting, is fully realised.

The sufferings of the troops, both wounded and unwounded, may be more easily imagined than described. As far as can be ascertained, it would seem that, with the exception of some limited refreshment about noon of the 21st, neither food nor water which could be used was available till the evening or night of the 22nd. A very scanty supply of rum was served out during the night of the 21st. Dead bodies had been thrown into the wells at Firozshah by the Sikhs in order to make the water undrinkable. There was no field hospital, nor were medical stores, instruments, or appliances procurable, save those attached to regimental hospitals. Capt. Abbott, who, though severely wounded, had with great gallantry continued to serve wherever he could be useful, has thus described the night of December 22 :

The Governor-General bivouacked under a tree that night with a miserably reduced Staff, of which I was one, desperately hungry. But fortunately during the night some refreshments came up. The next morning, [the 23rd] I accompanied Sir Henry Hardinge on an elephant to Ferozepore.

There Abbott's wounds were for the first time attended to; he was laid up for six weeks, during which he was often visited by Sir Henry, and 'properly supplied with every necessary by the well-known Buxoo, the head butler.' The other wounded occupants of his tent were Herbert Edwardes and Paul Haines, now Sir F. P. Haines, who afterwards became Commander-in-Chief in India.

Of those killed, the foremost place in Sir Henry Hardinge's despatches is assigned to George Broadfoot, because of his official position and the value of his services, political and military. The same compliment may be appropriately paid in this book to him whose services form its most prominent feature. The paragraphs in which his death is recorded are as follows : first in despatch as second in command :

It is now with great pain that I have to record the irreparable loss I have sustained . . . in the death of Major Broadfoot, of the Madras Army, my Political Agent. He was thrown from his horse



by a shot, and I failed in prevailing upon him to leave the field. He remounted, and shortly afterwards received a mortal wound. He was as brave as he was able in every branch of the political and military service.⁶

Again, in a letter to the Secret Committee :

I have now to conclude this despatch by expressing my deep concern for the loss, in the action of the 21st instant, of that most invaluable officer, Major Broadfoot, my Political Agent for these States. He was wounded and thrown off his horse at my side, but I failed in prevailing on him to retire. He remounted his horse, and shortly afterwards received a mortal wound in leading on the troops against the battery in our front. I entertained the highest opinion of his abilities. He was second to none in this accomplished service, in every qualification by which the political or military interests of the East India Company could be advanced; and I shall be most gratified if, at a season of more leisure, some special mark of honour can be conferred, by which his great merits and glorious death may be perpetuated.

Major George Broadfoot was the last of three brothers, who held appointments in the Company's army, and all these have fallen in battle, in the service of their country.⁷

Brigadier Wallace 'fell bravely at the head of his troops.'

Major Somerset was mortally wounded about the same time that Broadfoot was killed; he 'was shot through the body, conducting himself with the hereditary courage of his race. He was always foremost where difficulties required to be overcome.'

Capt. P. Nicolson, whose name has often appeared in these pages, was killed on the 21st in the assault on the western face led by Sir J. Littler. The Governor-General has recorded that he 'was a most able and gallant officer.'

The officers of the Agency, Major Broadfoot's Assistants, mentioned in the despatch of the Governor-General to the Secret Committee, were Capt. Abbott, Lieut. Lake, Capt. Mills, and Mr. Cust; Mr. Currie's services as Chief Secretary to the Government of India were also warmly acknowledged.

For a complete list of the officers killed and wounded, or specially mentioned, reference must be made to the despatches which are printed and available to the public. The selection

⁶ *Papers &c.* p. 45. Despatch of Lieut.-Gen. Sir H. Hardinge.

⁷ *Papers &c.* p. 28. Despatch of the Governor-General, dated Dec. 31, 1845.



of the names here recorded is not intended to be in any way invidious, but is made because of their connection with Major Broadfoot, either in the conduct of the business of the Agency, or as, for the time, fellow members of the Staff of the Governor-General.⁸

After the battle the British army marched to Sultan-khanwala, where they destroyed about 80,000 lbs. of gunpowder collected by the Sikhs; and afterwards the headquarters moved towards the Sutlej in the neighbourhood of Atari and Butawala, in the direction of Harike. There they remained awaiting ammunition and reinforcements.

From Firozpur the Governor-General issued the usual notifications, proclamations, and general orders.

On Christmas Day, 1845, Major Broadfoot's body, with that of Capt. Hore, Assistant Military Secretary, who had been killed about the same time and near the same place, was brought into Firozpur. He was buried with military honours, the Governor-General and his Staff attending the funeral.

It is appropriate to record here letters from persons well qualified to judge of Broadfoot's character and merits; the reader, who has accompanied us so far, can form his own estimate of the man as a soldier, as an administrator, and as a diplomatist.

On December 30, Mr. Cust, his Personal Assistant, wrote to Broadfoot's only surviving brother as follows :

Camp, Ferozepore : December 30, 1845.

My dear Sir,—It is my painful duty to announce to you the death of your brother, Major George Broadfoot, in whose demise I have lost a valued and esteemed friend, and the East India Company one of their most distinguished and talented servants. Your brother's end was caused by a shot through the heart while accompanying the Governor-General on the battle-field of Ferozshahr on December 21. He was first wounded through both thighs, and thrown off his horse; but with that gallantry which distinguished him through life, he again mounted his horse, when almost immediately he was pierced through the heart and arm, and fell dead. His remains were brought in and buried with the usual honours at Ferozepore, in the presence of the Governor-General.

⁸ Capt. Herries and Capt. Munro, both A.D.C., were killed at Mudki. Capt. Hore at Ferozshah. All the

Staff were killed or wounded except Capt. Arthur Hardinge.



Everyone bears testimony to the singular talents, and noble and heroic character, that distinguished your lamented brother; but it remains to those who knew him intimately as I did, to speak of his kindness of heart, his benevolence, his wonderful and almost universal information. I have lived with him as his private secretary for more than a year, and have sincerely to regret his loss, both in a public and private view.

Yours &c.

ROBERT CUST.

The Governor-General wrote thus to Mr. Alexander Broadfoot:

Camp, Ferozpoor: January 1, 1846.

My dear Sir,—You and I have sustained an irreparable loss.

Your able and distinguished brother fell by a grape shot in the battle of Ferozshah on December 21, whilst bravely animating the troops to do their duty. The first shot threw him off his horse by my side. I in vain entreated him to retire. His invincible courage induced him to remount, and he was killed as we took the batter in our front.

I caused him to be brought in here and buried in the military burial ground; my chaplain and all of us, who admired and esteemed him, attending at this last mournful ceremony.

His abilities were of the highest order; and in all the relations of life, whether public or private, the force of his character was felt and appreciated.

In my despatch to the Committee of the E.I.C. I have expressed my sentiments of my late friend. I send you a copy. If ever I should have the felicity of making your acquaintance, I should be most happy to express to you how sincerely I was attached to him. I never can replace him.

I remain &c.

H. HARDINGE.

And again:

Camp, Ferozpoor: January 13, 1846.

My dear Sir,—My invaluable friend, your late brother, being an officer on the Madras Establishment, I wrote a letter to the Marquis of Tweeddale, desiring that the services of Major Broadfoot might be noticed in a general order to be published to the whole of the Madras Army, to which he belonged.

Scarcely a day passes in the midst of these stirring scenes which does not forcibly remind me of the loss the service has sustained in your admirable brother.

The Arab on which he was mounted has had two bullets extracted, and will recover. I am now the owner of the animal, and



with care he will be fit to be ridden, and always be a protected favourite of my stud.⁹

Mr. Cust will have written to you on matters relating to your brother's affairs.

Believe me &c.

H. HARDINGE.

The general order referred to, dated January 10, 1846, is as follows :

Sir,—I am directed by the Governor-General to state, for the information of the Most Noble the Governor in Council of Fort Saint George, that in the battle fought at Ferozshah, on December 21, Brevet Major Broadfoot, C.B., of the 84th Regiment, Madras Army, was killed in action.

2. The Governor-General desires me to observe, that the career of this brave officer had been so highly distinguished during the Afghan war, and in the defence of Jellalabad, and now so gloriously closed in the hour of victory (for he fell in the enemy's camp, which had been carried), that he deems it his duty to the Madras Army to cause the circumstances under which he died to be promulgated for the satisfaction of that army.

3. Major Broadfoot's remarkable intelligence had induced the Governor-General, in the latter end of 1844, to appoint him to be his Political Agent on the North-Western Frontier. In the performance of this very arduous duty, he on all occasions evinced great ability and judgment.

4. In reporting the death of this most able officer to the home authorities, the Governor-General has expressed his sense of his merits in the following words. . . .¹

5. Major Broadfoot's remains were laid in the burial ground of this cantonment, by the side of Sir Robert Sale's and Major Somerset's, with the military honours due to his rank; the Governor-General and his Staff, and the civil authorities, attending the funeral.

6. The Governor-General deeply regrets the loss which the public service has sustained by the death of this distinguished officer.

I have &c.

J. STUART, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*

Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department.

⁹ Sir Henry's son, the present Lord Hardinge, has remarked : 'I often rode this horse myself; so did the Governor-General, who was very fond of him. The shot passed clean through the

withers. He was kept in the Governor-General's stable till he left India.'

¹ The quotation is omitted, as it has already been made. See page 399.

*Lieut.-Col. H. Havelock to Miss Broadfoot.*

Simla: October 30, 1846.

My dear Miss Broadfoot,—Three or four days ago your letter of the 5th ultimo reached me, and I cannot describe the emotion with which I received a communication from one so near to my lost and ever lamented friend. How often, in my evening rides at this place, do I look up as I pass it at the house on a lofty eminence which George Broadfoot occupied last year, and almost expect to see his well-known figure pacing his favourite verandah; and then when I awake to the reality of my loss, with how heavy a heart do I move on around the mountain, kept back from the sin of repining only by the remembrance of God's presence, of the innumerable comforts and blessings with which my cup still overflows, and of the necessity of calmly acquiescing in the inscrutable decrees of Providence, which, though painful and seemingly severe, are assuredly benevolent and wise!

I rejoice indeed to hear of the pensions granted to you and your sister, as a tribute of respect to the memory of dear Broadfoot. Lord Hardinge told me a few days before that this arrangement had been or would be made. His Lordship's regard for your brother, my lamented friend, was perfectly enthusiastic. To love and admire him, indeed, it was only necessary to understand, and not to envy; but to compass these two was a difficulty too great for small men and bad men; and you will conceive that we are not exempt from the plague of selfish sciolists² in India any more than in other countries.

I have been attempting a memoir of my friend, to be published either in the paper called the 'Friend of India' or the 'Calcutta Review.' A part of it is already in type; and I took some extracts from the journal to aid me. I have felt, indeed, at every step that the time, as you observe, was not yet come to speak plainly about Jellalabad, whilst regarding Maulmain my information was deficient. However, if my sketch is only finished, it shall, I will take care, be sent to you, and I think I must venture then to ask of you to aid me with facts to enable me to write more fully at some future period. You will not find the journals when they reach you very ample, for the entries in them were evidently made in great haste in two small books. . . . There is attached, however, a very valuable memorandum of the proceedings of the council of war at Jellalabad, in which I may say your brother George's firmness mainly contributed to the salvation of Sale's force. Of this he had previously sent me a copy. The most valuable pages in the journal are those which contain a record

² This word is doubtful; the original is difficult to read.



of Broadfoot's own views during the blockade of Jellalabad, which are clear and convincing, at times almost prophetic. . . .

Believe me &c.

H. HAVELOCK.

Lord Ellenborough to Miss Broadfoot.

(Extract.)

Southam House : April 12, 1846.

Madam,—I have read with the most sincere interest, but with much pain, your letter. . . .

You must well know the personal regard as well as the public confidence I reposed in your brother.

Of the seven officers who had been on my personal staff and were present in the late battles, four were killed and three were wounded ; of these, one, I fear, mortally ; but deeply as I lament the misfortunes of all of them, I feel that on public grounds I must give my greatest sorrow to the fate of your brother ; while I know at the same time that I lost in him one of the truest friends I made in India, where I hope I made many.

Time will, I trust, give tranquillity of mind to you and your sister ; but the loss you have sustained is in all respects irreparable.

I beg you to believe me &c.

ELLENBOROUGH.

On Monday, March 2, 1846, Major Broadfoot's death was recorded as a public calamity in both Houses of Parliament. The following are extracts from the speeches in which the thanks of Parliament were conveyed to the Army of the Sutlej. There is an inaccuracy in the Earl of Ripon's speech, but it is of little consequence. Broadfoot had held the post of Agent for about fourteen months only, not for two years and a half ; but he had previously acquired considerable knowledge of the country and of some of the leading men.

In the House of Lords, the Earl of Ripon, after bearing testimony to the value of the services of the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Army of the Sutlej generally, and after deploring the loss of Sir Robert Sale and Sir J. McCaskill, proceeded to say :

There was another individual who fell in this action, whom I cannot help noticing, even if it should appear to be somewhat invidious to do so, because it is impossible to mention all who fell on this occasion : I mean Major Broadfoot, one who has singular demands upon our respect and gratitude, as a political servant of



the Company, as well as in his military capacity. He had been two years and a half Political Agent of the Governor-General in those quarters, and performed his duties in a manner which won for him universal respect and admiration. He knew the country and he knew the people, and of all men was perhaps the most fitted to be employed in so delicate and difficult a mission. Admirably, however, as he performed his civil duties, he did not forget what belonged to his military character. If he had any fault, it was that of being too forward. He was always first in the fray, and in this instance he paid the penalty of his gallant character. The tribute paid to him by the Governor-General is no more than is just and deserved; and though I have no right to panegyrise him as an officer, yet, knowing what he has done in his political character, I thought I was bound to notice the irreparable loss which we have sustained by the death of that individual.

In the House of Commons, in his speech on the same subject, Sir Robert Peel said:

We have, Sir, also to deplore the loss of Sir J. McCaskill, to whom a brief but touching testimony of approbation is borne in the despatch of the Commander-in-Chief, as well as one of the most eminent men in the civil and military services of India—Major Broadfoot. In that gentleman the highest confidence was placed by everyone who came in contact with him. He obtained the applause of every civil and military authority in the country, and his prudence and skill as a civilian were only equalled by his ardour and bravery in the field. He was, I believe, the last of three brothers, all of whom have died in the service of their country on the field of battle. Major Broadfoot was present with Sir R. Sale during the siege of Jellalabad, and took a most conspicuous part in its defence. It is mournful, Sir, that we should have to deplore the loss in the same conflict of two gallant men so devoted to their country's service as Sir R. Sale and Major Broadfoot.

The following letter from the Earl of Ripon to Miss Broadfoot has an interest because it is from the person to whom Major Broadfoot's secret reports were submitted in the ordinary course of business. He was therefore specially qualified to pronounce an opinion on the value of the Agent's services.

Putney Heath: April 14, 1846.

Madam,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the



8th inst., and beg you will accept my grateful thanks for the manner in which you have expressed yourself in respect to what was stated by me in the House of Lords regarding your lamented brother. I can claim no other merit in having so spoken of him than that of having spoken the literal truth : and the manner in which my observations were received by the House satisfied me that those to whom they were addressed fully sympathised with my own feelings.

I have no right to intrude upon you, or other of Major Broadfoot's family, with my personal condolence. But next to those higher sources of consolation to which you refer, it must be grateful to you to know the universal admiration and respect in which Major Broadfoot's memory is held, not merely by those who knew him, but by the public at large. No one not connected with his family can entertain those feelings more strongly than I do.

I have &c.

RIPON.

Over Broadfoot's grave at Firozpur his friend Colin Mackenzie caused a stone to be placed, on which there is a brief inscription, in which he is termed 'the foremost man in India.' Exception has, not unnaturally perhaps, been taken to the expression; the benevolent ascribing it to the well-known enthusiastic admiration of his friend. But the opinion there expressed was shared by many well qualified to judge. It might be less briefly but more accurately defined thus : that Broadfoot, in the eminence of services rendered, and the brilliant promise of services to come, had distanced all competitors of his own standing, and had passed the greater number of his seniors.

Amongst those who appear to have concurred with Colin Mackenzie in his estimation of Broadfoot's value, may be mentioned Sir Henry Havelock and Sir Herbert Edwardes. The former was by nature rather cold and prudent than enthusiastic, and therefore what he has said on the subject is entitled to weight.

In 1848, in seconding an address to Sir George Clerk in Bombay, Havelock said :

Now, of the defenders of Jellalabad, Sir Robert Sale, Col. Dennie, and greater than either—greater than any and all that fought for the defence of that old wall—Major George Broadfoot are in their soldiers' graves.

Further, in a letter dated March 9, 1849, he remarked :

To my youngest son, born in June 1847, I have ventured to give the names of George Broadfoot. If he lives to look upon a battle-field, surely his heart will not fail him when he thinks of this prefix to his father's designation.³

And again on June 5, 1856, in a letter to this son :

I have just returned from the tomb of the great man after whom you are named—Major George Broadfoot. He is called in the inscription on it, from the pen of his friend Colin Mackenzie, 'the foremost man in India,' and truly in intellect and resolution he was.⁴

Sir Herbert Edwardes was a younger man than Broadfoot, Havelock was older. The younger man thus wrote after a description of the battle of Firozshah :

Foremost among the dead, as he was for ever foremost among the living, let us weep over GEORGE BROADFOOT, with whose life there left this earth one of the noblest spirits that ever lit upon it. Alas, that even the memory of such a man should not be sacred from slander, calumny, and *lies*—lies as black as his name was *fair* ! . . .

A more honourable man than George Broadfoot never lived. . . . Whatever may have been Lord Ellenborough's deficiencies, he was undoubtedly possessed of that keen insight into character which is, to statesmen and governors, a *diviner's rod*.

A civil reformer was wanted in Maulmain: Broadfoot was selected; and scarcely were the abuses of a corrupt administration in those provinces cleared away, than he was chosen to succeed Col. Richmond in the important charge of the North-West Frontier. A higher compliment could not have been paid by the Government than in thus calling him from one extremity of the Empire to another. The nature of our relations with the Punjab at this crisis has been fully entered into at the commencement of this article; and the 'Papers laid before Parliament' supply us with abundant evidence, and indeed the most repeated and solemn assurances, that the course which Sir H. Hardinge wished to steer through that stormy sea was the one which promised most effectually to maintain *peace*. The danger is throughout admitted to be great; fears even are anxiously confessed that war cannot be avoided; but *peace* is declared to be the Governor-General's *policy*; and for its

³ *Memoirs of Sir H. Havelock &c.* p. 167.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 215.

preservation the Governor-General is ready to incur the reproach of infatuation and neglect, to sacrifice everything except the national honour. When, therefore, this same Governor-General, who has staked all on peace, finds himself plunged in *war*—and that war threatening to embarrass his whole administration if not endanger the very stability of the Empire—it would have been only too consistent with weak human nature, and especially hard, ungrateful, *statesman nature*, if he had at once thrown the whole blame of the frustration of his policy on the incapacity or treachery of the Agent who should have carried it out. That that Agent was *dead*, would only have made the plan more feasible, and surprised us less; for it is astonishing how uncomplainingly the dead bear the burdens of the living! Sir Henry Hardinge, however, was too true a soldier to ask any man to fight his battles; and he pronounced over Broadfoot's tomb—or rather over his grave, for those were not the days of *tombs*—that remarkable eulogy, *that 'he was second to none in this accomplished service.'* No man can read that passage of Sir Henry Hardinge's despatch, wherein he laments the untimely death of his Agent, and expresses his determination 'at a season of more leisure to confer some special mark of honour, by which his great merits and glorious death may be perpetuated,' without a full conviction that it came from the *heart*, and was written of one who had *done his duty ably and conscientiously to the Government*. Let those, therefore, who are not behind the scenes, and have no means of judging what Broadfoot either *did* or *did not*; who have no access to public documents, and who could possibly know nothing of a man who had *no confidant* in State affairs; reflect for a moment on what is implied in the charge of 'forcing on the war,' and pause ere they vilify the memory which the Governor-General of India and the Prime Minister of England have delighted to honour.⁵

These observations might well have been kept in mind by some who have undertaken to write the history of those times. In some cases the accusation was made through ignorance, in others from causes of a different character; but it is trusted that the papers now published form a complete reply, and may be held to entirely refute the charge.

The opinion of Broadfoot's character held by an older and by a younger man have been expressed: the sentiments of the Governor-General, who was Broadfoot's immediate official superior, are declared in the following extracts: the first is from a letter to Mr. Alexander Broadfoot, dated May 18, 1846.

⁵ *Calcutta Review*, No. xi. vol. vi. art. vi. pp. 282-284.



I shall never cease to regret the loss of your excellent brother, on my own and the public account. He united a greater variety of admirable qualities than any other officer I have met with in the Indian Army.

The next is from a letter to Miss Broadfoot :

Great Stanhope Street : July 4, 1849.

. . . All your excellent brother's letters will bear the severest scrutiny in proof of the integrity and judgment with which all his political and diplomatic duties were transacted, his private letters always confirming his public acts ; and though written at moments of great fatigue, show in every line the energy and ability of his superior mind. I accidentally perused a memoir of his on Jellalabad, which induced me to come to the decision that he was the ablest man I could select for the most difficult station ; and had his ardent courage been of a less heroic stamp, he might have refrained from further conflict after his first wound, which threw him off his horse by my side. But, guided by his noble courage, as long as he could sit his horse he felt he could be useful at a most critical moment of the battle ; and at the close of the assault on the enemy's batteries he received his mortal wound at the very moment of our success.

There was a project of building a church at Ferozpoor when I left India, which I hope will shortly be carried into execution, on the inside walls of which I have ordered a tablet in gun-metal to be erected as a testimonial of my personal friendship for the dear friend we have lost.

You are aware that the E.I.C. feel the greatest difficulty in laying down any rule by which selections could be determined upon for raising public monuments at their expense to the memory of officers dying in their service.

In your brave brother's instance the monument ordered by the officers of the Madras Army will, however, be an honourable and lasting testimonial to his fame ; whilst my more humble tribute, as a personal friend, will, on every Sabbath day, remind every young officer of the meritorious life and heroic death of the most accomplished officer of the Indian Army, near the spot where I attended his burial after the battle of Ferozshahur.

I will not dwell on this subject. The perpetuation of his fame will be secured in the Presidency, and near the spot where he devoted his life to his country ; and in Madras, which army can claim the honour of lending Broadfoot to Bengal, his memory will survive as long as the British power in India.

Yours &c.

HARDINGE.



Two more expressions of Havelock's opinion seem worthy of record here. The first is to Mrs. Anderson, a distant connection of the Broadfoot family.

George Broadfoot was my most intimate friend. Our intimacy was not indeed of long duration, for it began in the defile of Khoord Cabool, and ended on the bloody field of Ferozeshahur. But I not only ever regarded him, and think him still, a giant in intellect and resolution amongst ordinary men, but I was attracted in a manner which I should in vain attempt to describe, by the truthfulness of his mind, the largeness and tenderness of his heart, and the more than Roman self-devotion of his character.

The other is a quotation from the 'Memoirs of Sir H. Havelock.'

In the annals of British India . . . there is no name more illustrious than that of George Broadfoot. Havelock, his bosom friend, remarks of him: 'No person of common discernment could have enjoyed opportunities of knowing him intimately without perceiving that he was eminently, as old Paoli described the youthful Napoleon, "one of Plutarch's men," a man formed, if his life had been spared, to play a leading part in great events, and astonish those who gazed around and after him, by the vigour and grasp of his intellect, his natural talent for war and policy, his cool and sound judgment, his habit and powers of generalisation, his moral courage and personal intrepidity, and his uncompromising love of truth.' ⁶

Sir Henry Lawrence, who succeeded Broadfoot on the frontier, and who could not be correctly described as his enthusiastic admirer, has recorded that he 'had no equal on the frontier, and perhaps few in India.' ⁷

These opinions and estimates of Broadfoot's character and ability, held by distinguished men, having been freely quoted, there is no necessity to add further praise, which might, moreover, be attributed to exaggeration not unnatural under the circumstances.

As an acknowledgment of his services the Court of Directors continued the allowance of 200*l.* a year which he had made to his two unmarried sisters.

The following letter from Sir Henry Hardinge to the Earl

⁶ Marshman's *Life of Havelock*, p. 86.

⁷ *Calcutta Review*, No. xvi. vol. viii. art. vi. note, p. 476.



of Ellenborough is full of interest: it was written on the eighth day after the battle, whilst recollection was fresh.

Camp, Ferozpoor: December 30, 1845.

My dear Lord Ellenborough,—The despatches will inform you that the Sikhs have crossed the Sutlege in great force, that we moved up the Umballa force to support Ferozpoor, and that we have fought a very severe battle, driving the enemy out of his entrenched position defended by 60,000 men and 108 pieces of cannon, of which we have now 91 pieces in the fort here. No accident or disaster has occurred, and the enemy is now on the other side of the river.

As far back as November 15 the Sikhs began to assemble their forces. Major Broadfoot demanded explanations: no answer was sent. The army was held in readiness to move; the accounts of the Sikh preparations perpetually varied, and all our best politicians decided that the Sikhs would never cross the river. I reached Umballa on the 2nd, and dismissed the Lahore Vakeel until he should bring with him some explanation in reply to Major Broadfoot's remonstrance, considering his residence improper whilst his Court continued to treat the Political Agent's letter with disregard. On the 6th I marched towards Loodiana. No infantry or artillery had moved from Lahore, and the movement appeared to be much the same as similar demonstrations had been in 1843 and 1844. However, we were prepared with 4,000 camels, and Broadfoot had laid in supplies on the routes by which the troops, if required, would have to march.

On December 8, I ordered the Umballa forces to move forward, and also those from Meerut, because the preparations of cattle and artillery stores indicated some larger movement than usual. Still no aggression had been committed. The Sikhs had a right to move to their bank of the river, and the only act of hostility was in the silence of the Durbar in affording no explanation. On the 11th we were in full march. On the 13th I heard the enemy had crossed the river, followed by infantry and artillery.

When our force came near Loodiana, I galloped over, inspected the fort, and ordered the Brigadier to be ready to march in twenty-four hours with *all* his force on Bussian, restricting our defences to the fort, and leaving in it the old and infirm men. To leave two or even three regiments in such a defenceless cantonment appeared to me to be an encouragement to an active enemy to cut such a force off. I therefore took every regiment, drafting their weakly men into the fort. Brigadier Wheeler marched at once on Bussian with 5,000 infantry, two regiments of cavalry, and twelve field guns. The Umballa force was one day in his rear, and was 7,000 strong. After