



victim to the excited fury of the people. On the contrary, he retained possession of the Bala Hissar, exercised a powerful influence, and was even courted by the different parties. The odium attached to him, it thus appears, had been chiefly reflected from the foreign aid by which his cause was upheld. As all parties united in this sentiment, the shah evidently deemed it expedient to dissemble whatever attachment he might feel for the British; nor is there wanting ground to suspect, that he joined with apparent cordiality in schemes for their entire expulsion. One of the two factions into which the country was rent obtained, it is said, his consent to place himself at the head of a force levied for that purpose. On this destination he left the Bala Hissar; but the hostile party of the Baurikzehee sirdars, strongly attached to Dost Mohammed and Akbar, determined to seize so favourable an opportunity for gratifying their enmity. They placed in ambush a body of skilful musketeers, who, when they saw the monarch coming to the spot, sprung forth, and discharged against him a shower of balls. Two of them took effect in a vital part, when he fell down and expired almost immediately. Several of his attendants were also slain; his crown and jewels were seized; and he left his family in as distracted a state as his kingdom. We have seen his son Sufter Jung raising all the western tribes against the British power; while another, Futteh Jung, was understood to be animated by quite opposite sentiments. The latter, being on the spot, obtained possession of the Bala Hissar, and assumed the reins of sovereignty. Akbar, however, who had been absent during these transactions, and whose power was seemingly much reduced, now hastened to Cabul; and by his talents, influence, and address, regained the complete mastery of that capital. He then turned his arms against the Bala Hissar; and having effected a breach, compelled it to surrender. Yet he did not proceed to extremities against Futteh Jung, but acknowledged him as shah, upon the understanding that he himself, under the title of vizier, should exercise the whole authority. The prince at

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1842.Conduct of
Shah Sujah.His assassi-
nation.Influence of
Akbar.



CHAP. XVI. first consented; but not brooking this mere shadow of royalty, and being in fact treated as a kind of state-prisoner, he made his escape, and presented himself in the camp of General Pollock, whom he urged to advance upon the capital. Akbar was thus left undisputed master of the country, and the only enemy with whom that commander had now to contend.

Change of government at home.

Resignation of Lord Auckland.

Appointment of Lord Ellenborough.

Change of Policy.

The British counsels, at this era, underwent an important change; for in September 1841, Sir Robert Peel and his friends came into power, in no degree pledged to the Indian policy of their predecessors. They do not appear to have intended to recall Lord Auckland; but that nobleman, feeling himself in a delicate situation, and the usual term of his office being nearly expired, solicited permission to resign. This was granted; and, amid very opposite opinions as to the Afghan policy, his departure elicited a high tribute of regret and respect, on account of his strict attention to the duties of his office, generous patronage of merit, and zeal for the promotion of every object tending to the prosperity of the great country over which he had presided. In his room, the ministry appointed Lord Ellenborough, who had bestowed particular attention on the affairs of India, and had, in consequence, been placed at the head of the Board of Control. To this nomination the East India Company gave their cordial concurrence. His lordship having set out on the 8th November, arrived at Calcutta on the 28th February following; and after remaining there some weeks, he proceeded to Allahabad, and afterwards to Simla, the military headquarters in the west. He evidently came at once to the conclusion, that no attempt ought to be made to perpetuate the occupation of Afghanistan, or to control the people as to the choice of their government and ruler. After a correspondence, however, with General Pollock, it was finally settled that this commander from Jellalabad, and Nott from Candahar, should march upon Cabul, display the superiority of the British arms in open warfare, expel Mohammed Akbar, compel the restoration of the prisoners, and level with the ground all the strong for-



tresses by which the country could be defended in case a future expedition should become necessary. CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1842.

Pollock having, in the manner above related, forced all the barriers opposed by the Khyber Pass, arrived on the 16th April at Jellalabad, where the two victorious armies united, and hailed each other with loud and enthusiastic cheers. Early in May they were reinforced by a brigade under Colonel Bolton, who was met on the way by Colonel Monteath. Captain Mackenzie, one of the prisoners, arrived from Akbar, followed soon afterwards by the dead body of General Elphinstone, who had fallen a victim to disease and anxiety. He bore also proposals from the Afghan ruler, understood to relate to the ransom of the captives and the release of Dost Mohammed: but he returned without being able to conclude any agreement. On the 13th July, Captain Troup, with several native chiefs, brought fresh proposals, and having returned to Cabul, came back on the 3d August; but all these negotiations proved fruitless.

Junction of the armies.

Death of General Elphinstone.

Fruitless negotiations.

The English leader had proposed a general exchange of prisoners, which would have incited Dost Mohammed, father to Akbar; but farther demands were made by the latter. The army, meantime, were somewhat straitened for provisions; the heat became intense; and dysentery with other diseases began to be prevalent. Bands of the enemy again hovered around, and rendered it impracticable to stir beyond cover of the fortifications, without the danger of being speared; the camels and other beasts of burden perished in great numbers, without the possibility of supplying their place, so that the means of conveyance became deficient. The army were depressed by seeing the summer months pass in a state of inaction, and without any prospect of avenging the injuries sustained by their countrymen.

Sufferings in the British camp.

Detachments were however sent out to keep open the passages, to overawe as well as punish refractory chiefs; and on these occasions, the most turbulent generally retreated without hazarding a combat. Some of the booty taken from the Cabul army being discovered in the village of Ali Baghan, the troops plundered and set the place on

Proceedings against refractory chiefs.



CHAP. XVI

A. D. 1842.

Forts of the
Goolai tribe
deserted.Attack on
the Shinwa-
rees.Driven from
the castle of
Secunder
Khan.Renewed
operations of
General
Pollock.

fire, without any authority from their officers, by whom this conduct was much disapproved. On the 20th June, twenty-five forts of the Goolai tribe, a desperate race of freebooters, were found deserted, and a considerable supply of provisions procured. The Shinwarees, another fierce band, who boasted that no conqueror had ever entered their valley, refused tribute, and seized all opportunities of giving annoyance. On the 24th July, they attacked a detachment, and drove it with loss back into the camp; upon which Brigadier Monteath, commanding in this station, resolved to give them a serious lesson. On the 26th, leaving the baggage in camp, he pushed forward with his light troops into this supposed inaccessible valley. On his approach, a long range of forts were abandoned, and, to the number of thirty-five, were set on fire, filling the whole atmosphere with flame and smoke. All the men retreated to the castle of their principal chief, Secunder Khan, seated on a high mountain. Major Skinner, with the advance, obliged them to evacuate it, and drove them from successive posts in its vicinity. The British troops were then ordered to withdraw, when the enemy, who remained unbroken, followed them to the camp, but without being able to gain any advantage. Our loss was three killed and twenty-three wounded. They were supposed to have suffered severely, and their chief immediately afterwards intimated his willingness to pay the revenue.

General Pollock remained at Jellalabad till nearly the end of August, apparently with the view of maturing his plans, and concerting with General Nott a joint movement on the capital. On the 20th, he left these quarters, and on the 23d reached Gundamuk: the enemy occupying the village and fort of Mammoo Khail, only two miles distant, with a strong body. To dislodge them, he marched on the 24th, and found them stationed in an orchard with some enclosures, having their front covered by field-works of loose stones. From these positions they were driven into the village, where they made a show of resistance; but on the British coming up, they abandoned it, retired into the fort, and barricaded the gates.



The assailants, by mounting on each other's shoulders, entered a shattered bastion eight feet high, when they saw the defenders going over the walls on the other side, but were unable from fatigue to pursue. The right wing, under General M'Caskill, advanced upon Kookhi Khail, another hamlet two miles distant, held also by hostile troops, who then abandoned it, but took post upon the adjacent peaks of the great range called Soofaid Koh. From several of these they were dislodged, but from others maintained a heavy fire with the long muskets called jezails, which obliged our men to retire from some of the points they had gained. General Pollock, not considering it an object to push farther, burned the remoter village, while in the nearer one he established his camp, lest the enemy should boast of having driven him thence. His loss amounted to seven killed and forty-nine wounded. The success had not been quite complete; yet it was sufficient to secure the British flank, and deter the barbarians from any further attempts to molest his position.

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A. D. 1842.

Partial
success.

The general spent about a fortnight in this place collecting his troops, and making arrangements for their farther advance. On the 6th September, he began his final movement upon Cabul; next day reached Soorkab; and on the morning of the 8th, approached the terrible pass of Jugduluk. Here the enemy, nearly 5000 strong, under the standards of different chiefs, had crowned the amphitheatre of hills on the left of the road, whence they were separated by a deep ravine. They opened a formidable fire on the advancing column, when Captain Nugent, a highly promising young officer, was wounded, and died almost immediately. Our guns were well served, and shells burst among them with powerful effect, yet not so much as to shake their determination or slacken their fire. It was found that the heights must be scaled; for which purpose, Captain Broadfoot was directed to move on the extreme left, while Colonel Taylor, with the light infantry, should cross the ravine and attack the opposite hills, the key of the position, and where the principal chiefs were assembled. This force, in rushing up the steep, raised an animated and enthusiastic cheer.

Movement
upon Cabul.Pass of
Jugduluk.Scaling of
the heights.



CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1842.

Panic and
flight of the
enemy.

on hearing which, the enemy, struck with panic, fled down the opposite declivities. Captain Lockwood, with the dragoons, nearly reached their cavalry, who, however, saved themselves by flight. Captain Broadfoot also completely succeeded on the left; but the fugitives from both points rallied on the top of a very lofty mountain, where they planted their standards, and seemed to consider themselves unapproachable. To dispel this idea, Captains Wilkinson and Broadfoot mounted in columns, covered by the guns of Captains Abbott and Backhouse. As soon as the Afghans saw them approach, they hastily took to flight, abandoning this last stronghold, and carrying off their standards. They included the most powerful of the hostile tribes—those among whom the insurrection had arisen—and who were led by numerous chiefs. But neither Akbar Khan nor any other of the first rank was present. Our loss amounted to six killed and fifty-eight wounded, among which last was General Sale.

Arrival at
Tezeen.

Pollock now proceeded with the utmost diligence, and on the 11th arrived at Tezeen, where, finding the men and cattle much fatigued, he allowed them to repose on the 12th, before entering into the still more formidable passes which lay before him. The barbarians, imputing this pause to timidity, commenced an attack upon the outposts on the left, which it was necessary to send Colonel Taylor with 240 men to repel. The enemy then retired to the crests of the neighbouring hills, whence they kept up an obstinate fire; but the colonel, having made a circuit unperceived, took them in flank, and drove them down with severe loss. Soon after, however, they came suddenly upon a picket on the British right, under Lieutenant Montgomery, which was driven in, with the loss of four killed and seventeen wounded, before a reinforcement could arrive to strengthen the post. They continued similar attempts through the night, but found every point completely guarded. Major Skinner, who had been detached with a party in the evening, succeeded in dislodging a body of the enemy from the heights in front of the camp.

Renewed
attacks on
the outposts.



On the morning of the 13th, the army entered the pass of Tezeen, and found mustered there the whole Cabul force, estimated at 16,000 men, under the personal command of Akbar, Ameenoolah, and other great chiefs attached to his cause. They had most carefully improved the naturally great strength of the position, and manifested a determination to defend it to the last extremity. When therefore the British troops ascended the heights, they found them, contrary to custom, advancing to the contest, which was maintained with desperation, and in many instances decided only by the bayonet. It was peculiarly obstinate before they were dislodged from the numerous positions on the lofty eminence of the Huft Kothul. The resistance was indeed protracted during a great part of the day; but at length British valour overcame every obstacle, and our troops, with three cheers, established themselves on this mighty summit. The enemy then fled in every direction, losing their guns and three standards. A strong body had attacked the rear-guard, with the view of hemming in the army on both sides, or at least of capturing the baggage; but they were gallantly repulsed by Colonel Richmond, who commanded in that quarter.

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1842.Pass of
Tezeen.Obstinate
defence of
the heights.Flight of
the enemy.

The general now marched on to Koord Cabul. The dreadful pass of that name still lay before him, and troops were sent to crown its heights; but the enemy, dismayed and disorganized by their recent overthrow, had made no attempt to secure them. On the 14th, he arrived at Bootkhak, and next day encamped on the race-ground at Cabul. On the morning of the 16th, with his staff and a detachment, he entered the Bala Hissar, on whose summit, amid the anthem of "God save the Queen," the British colours were hoisted. Futtch Jung was allowed to accompany them, and placed himself on the throne, but without any co-operation or guarantee on our part. The strictest orders were issued to the officers and troops not to injure in any shape the city or its inhabitants, nor even to enter it without express permission.

Pass of
Koord Cabul.British
colours
planted on
Bala Hissar.

Meantime, as early as the beginning of June, General



CHAP. XVI. Nott had been making preparations to evacuate Candahar, after dismantling its fortified positions. Colonel Wymer, A.D. 1842.

Evacuation
of Candahar.

Kujuk Pass.

Principal
heights
secured.

The Bolan
Pass.

Engagement
of General
Nott with
Shumshoo-
deen Khan.

who had marched upon Kelat-i-Ghilzie, demolished its strongholds, and withdrew the garrison. A similar course was followed in respect to Ghirisk, long held by Bulwunt Sing, a steady adherent of England. All the stores in the capital which could not be carried off were destroyed; and on the 10th August, the city being evacuated, the army divided itself into two portions. One under General England, composed of the troops recently arrived from Bombay, and removing with them all the heavy baggage, commenced their return by Quetta and Dadur to the Lower Indus. On the 16th, he reached the entrance of the Kujuk Pass, where he had been informed that the Afghans were preparing to make a most desperate effort to intercept his artillery and supplies, including nearly 10,000 beasts of burden. He saw, however, that the highest mountain pinnacles were not yet occupied, and though the troops were fatigued by a night march of twenty-four miles, he lost no time in sending a light detachment to take possession of the most important ridge, and the peaks commanding the principal passes. This proved a most judicious precaution; for, next morning, the enemy began to appear in small bodies, their numbers continually increased, and repeated attacks were made, but rendered fruitless by the want of any commanding position. The loss sustained was only two killed and eight wounded. The army then marched in two columns by Quetta to Dadur, which it reached on the 9th October. In traversing the Bolan Pass, the heat was extremely severe, and some slight annoyance was experienced from the natives.

On the 10th August, also, General Nott quitted Candahar, leaving it to be occupied by Prince Sufter Jung and his adherents. On the general reaching Naunee, however, about twenty miles from Ghizni, Shumshooddeen Khan, governor of that capital, met him on the 30th with 12,000 men. He marched out with only a part of his force, when the enemy advanced boldly, opening a hot fire from small arms and two well-served guns.



The British columns, however, steadily advanced, and after a brisk but short contest, completely dispersed them. Their guns, tents, and ammunition fell into our hands, and the darkness alone saved them from being entirely cut up, their commander fleeing with a train of no more than thirty horsemen. Our loss, however, amounted to thirty-eight killed and sixty-six wounded.

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A.D. 1842

On the morning of the 5th, the general arrived at Ghizni, which he found defended by strong bodies of troops, reinforced by Sultan Jan, one of the leading actors in the scene of assassination. They had occupied not only gardens and ravines in front of the walls, but a long range of mountains stretching to the north-east. The first object being to reconnoitre the place, and the party thus employed being briskly attacked, it was necessary to send additional companies to their support. It was judged requisite to begin by driving the Afghans from the heights, which the troops effected in gallant style, carrying successively every point. The village of Bullal was then chosen as a convenient site for erecting a battery; and before daybreak on the 6th, one of four eighteen pounders was constructed and advanced towards the walls. It was then, however, discovered that the enemy had evacuated the place; and arrangements were immediately made for the demolition of this celebrated citadel, as far as could be effected in two days. The loss in these operations consisted of three killed and forty-three wounded.

Arrival at
Ghizni.

The heights
carried.

Citadel of
Ghizni
demolished.

General Nott now marched directly northward upon Cabul; but in approaching Mydan, he again encountered Shumshoodeen and Sultan Jan, with a force as large as before, occupying a range of strong mountain-posts. The 14th and 15th September were spent in driving them successively from these eminences, which was done with the usual success, though not without a hard resistance, costing a loss of four killed and fifty-nine wounded. The army then proceeded to join General Pollock at Cabul.

March on
Cabul.

An auspicious result now followed the triumph of the British arms. As soon as Akbar saw his victorious enemy



CHAP. XVI advancing, he despatched the prisoners under a strong guard to Khoolloom in Turkestan, where they were either to be thrown into dungeons or given as slaves to the principal chiefs. In this fearful predicament, they of course looked round for all means of deliverance. The escort was commanded by Salih Mohammed, who had deserted from the British cause, and might therefore not be incorruptible. A tender was repeatedly made to him of a lac of rupees (£10,000), on condition of enabling them to reach the English camp. He evaded these propositions, evidently doubtful which side would gain the ascendancy. On their arrival at Bamecan, however, he came and announced that orders had been received for their immediate departure for Khoolloom; but that General Pollock had intimated through another channel a readiness to bestow £2000 and a monthly pension of £100, in case of his effecting their deliverance. This he engaged to do, provided they should enter into a bond guaranteeing the offer just made. Four officers signed the obligation, the other prisoners engaging to pay such sums as might hereafter be demanded from them for fulfilling it. Salih then dismissed the escort, and changed the governor of the fort for one on whom he could rely. Dreading lest the Afghan army, even in its retreat, should take this direction, they made indefatigable efforts to put the stronghold in a state of defence. However, on learning the victory at Tezeen, and anticipating the entry of the British forces into Cabul, they conceived it possible to effect their deliverance by their own efforts, trusting to co-operation from that quarter. In fact, General Pollock, immediately on arriving there, had made arrangements for the departure of 700 Kuzzilbash horse, accompanied by Sir Richmond Shakespeare, to whom he advanced 10,000 rupees; and soon after General Sale followed, with a corps of 2000 men. The prisoners departed from Bamecan on the 16th, and next day crossed the Kaloo mountain-range, 13,000 feet high, being little inferior to Mount Blanc. After descending, they were filled with joy by meeting with Sir Richmond and the Kuzzilbashes, and on the 19th with General Sale.

A. D. 1842.

Treatment of prisoners.

Negotiations for their ransom.

Terms accepted by Salih Mohammed.

Rescue of the prisoners.



The meeting of that officer with his heroic lady and daughter may be more easily conceived than described. His mission proved by no means superfluous, as Sultan Jan was in full pursuit, and would perhaps have been up in twenty-four hours. They arrived in camp on the evening of the 21st, when their arrival was celebrated by a royal salute and the most heartfelt rejoicings. They included General Shelton, Colonel Palmer, Majors Pottinger and Griffiths, twelve captains, three surgeons, nine lieutenants, three ensigns, twenty-eight non-commissioned officers and soldiers. The females were Ladies Macnaghten and Sale, besides the wives of five officers and of three privates. There remained only Captain Bygrave, who had been detained by Akbar; but he, too, arrived on the 27th, with a despatch from that chief.

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1842.

Rejoicings on the arrival of the prisoners.

The Afghans, after so many disasters, retreated into the mountain-territory of Kohistan, immediately north of Cabul, where they hoped to find a present refuge and a point whence they might return upon the city. General Pollock, however, determined to dislodge them, and if he could not capture, at least drive them to a distance. The grand rallying point, to which most of the chiefs had conveyed their property and their wives, was Istalif. This town, with 15,000 inhabitants, consists of clusters of houses and forts built on the slope of a mountain, having in its rear still loftier eminences, that shut in a defile leading to Turkestan. It could be approached only across ranges of hills separated by dark ravines, and covered with gardens, vineyards, and orchards, enclosed by strong walls; all the heights being occupied by the Jezailchees, those formidable sharpshooters. After careful examination, it was determined to make the attack on the right, though the quarter naturally strongest; but from this very cause, the enemy had been induced to place on the left their guns and the most efficient of their force. The troops, formed into two columns, under Brigadiers Tulloch and Stacy, advanced in the face of a heavy fire from the gardens, and then united in a joint attack on the village Ismillah, considered the key of the position, which they stormed with distinguished gallantry. Press-

Retreat of the Afghans to Kohistan.

Istalif.

Chosen point of attack.

Storming of Ismillah.



CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1842.

The fort
and town
carried.

Evacuation
of the coun-
try resolved
upon.

Shah Poora
seated on the
throne.

Destruction
of the great
bazaar.

ing on, and leaving the enemy not a moment to rally, they carried successively all the enclosures, forts, heights, suburbs, and finally the town. The singular spectacle was then presented of the women and children hastening up the mountain-side to effect their escape, which no attempt was made to intercept. As armed bodies, however, were seen rallying on some very lofty heights, guns were conveyed up by some narrow paths, and soon caused their dispersion. The British loss was six killed and forty-five wounded, considered very small in carrying so strong a position. The place was found filled with property conveyed thither for security, and in great part taken from our army in 1841. After removing every thing that could be useful, arrangements were made for the entire demolition of the fortress.

No further operations were undertaken against the enemy. Akbar and other chiefs, on whom it might have been desirable to let fall our resentment, had fled beyond the frontier, and sought refuge in Turkestan. The speedy approach of winter gave warning to lose no time in executing the resolution of evacuating a country which had been the scene of so much glory and disaster. Futteh Jung, as already mentioned, had seated himself on the throne, but without British sanction. It proved that the Kuzilbashes, and other friendly chiefs, chose rather that it should be occupied by Shah Poora, his younger brother, a mere lad, hoping, it is probable, to govern in his name, and taking advantage of the respect with which his family were still regarded. General Pollock, who had resolved to refrain from dictating on this subject, not only acquiesced, but left uninjured the Bala Hissar, with a store of artillery for its defence. The elder brother accompanied our army to India. It was, however, considered indispensable that, before departing, a severe lesson should be given to the Afghans as to the hazards which must always attend a war with Britain. The great bazaar, erected under Aurengzebe, by the celebrated architect Ali Murdan Khan, was esteemed the most spacious edifice, and the chief seat of trade in Central Asia. It was 600 feet long,



and contained 2000 shops; and here had been exposed to public insult the remains of the late envoy. It was therefore determined to reduce it to ashes; and Colonel Richmond, with a party of sappers and miners, and a detachment of troops, were employed two days in completing its destruction.

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A.D. 1842.

The army marched on the 12th October in three divisions, commanded respectively by Generals Pollock, M'Caskill, and Nott. General Sale, with a light corps, went in advance to clear the right flank, and crown the heights of the Koord Cabul Pass. Through these good arrangements General Pollock's division arrived at Jugduluk on the 16th, without any serious attempt to molest it. The second, under General M'Caskill, suffered some annoyance and loss. General Nott's rear was much retarded by the exhaustion of the baggage-cattle, of which advantage was taken by large hordes of Ghilzies to make several brisk attacks. They were gallantly repulsed, yet with a loss on our side of twelve killed and forty-nine wounded. From Jugduluk, the divisions, for the convenience of march, proceeded separately, each at a day's interval. On the 22d, 23d, and 25th, they successively arrived at Jellalabad. Three days were employed in destroying the military works of that celebrated fortress. On the 27th, the first division left it, followed on the 29th by the others. They proceeded with all expedition through the passes, and though constantly harassed by the Khybercees, sustained no serious loss except on the 3d November, when General M'Caskill's division was attacked with great fury, and a contest ensued, in which two officers and a considerable number of men fell. Two guns were taken, but recovered next day. On the 6th, the last, under General Nott, emerged from the pass at Jumrood, and the whole were soon united in the vicinity of Peshawer. On the 10th, they marched in four brigades; on the 17th, crossed the Indus at Attock, and, proceeding through the Punjab, on the 18th, passed the Sutledge to Ferozepore, where the governor and commander-in-chief joyfully received them. On the 25th October, Lord Ellenborough had

Order of march.

Attacks by the Ghilzies.

Destruction of Jellalabad.

Passage through the passes.



CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1842.

Captive
Afghans set
at liberty.Result of the
contest.Mistaken
policy of Lord
Auckland.Wisdom of
evacuating
the country.

announced in a proclamation, that with a view to terminate as early as possible all the evils arising out of the war, the several Afghans now in the power of the British government would be set at liberty. In this number, Dost Mohammed, his wives and family, and also those of Akbar Khan, were included.

Such was the termination of this long contest diversified by so many events at once glorious and tragical. It was doubtless a subject of rather painful reflection that the only result should be, the restoration of all things to their previous state, and the renunciation of every object for which the war had been undertaken. Yet few, we think, will deny, that the resolution thus to close it, as announced by Lord Ellenborough, was highly judicious. The expedition had, as formerly shown, been projected by Lord Auckland, under the belief, that the deposed monarch would be welcomed by his former subjects, and that the secure possession of the throne in his hands would form a barrier to our Indian possessions. It has indeed appeared, that the people were not without some attachment to the ancient family, but as soon as it was proved that he could not be maintained in power except by a British force, all hope of holding this proud, brave, and turbulent people in willing subjection necessarily vanished. We might, indeed, by good management, have held a number of fortified positions in a besieged state, but could never have possessed the country. It must have been what Spain was to Napoleon, and what Algiers now is to France, a source of weakness, inasmuch as it would have proved a continual drain both of men and treasure.



CHAPTER XVII.

The War in Sind and Gwalior.

Rejoicings on the termination of the Afghan War—Desire for the consolidation of the British possessions in India—Disturbances in Sind—Hostile manifestations of the Ameers—Sir Charles Napier assumes the command in Sind—Faithless proceedings of the Ameers—Attack on the British Resident—Battle of Hyderabad—Defeat of the Sindian and Beloochee Forces—Important effects of the Victory—Battle of Dubba—Strong position of the Enemy—Decisive Victory—Insalubrity of the Climate—Disturbances on the Northern Frontiers—Disordered state of Afghanistan—Revolutions in the Punjab—Army of Observation on the Sutledge—Disturbances at Gwalior—Battles of Maharajpore and Panjagar—Decisive effects of these Victories—Recall of Lord Ellenborough—Lord Hardinge appointed Governor-general—Change of Policy—Continued Disturbances in the Punjab—Discussions which they gave rise to.

THE year 1842 closed, both in India and at home, with gratulations and rejoicings for the successful termination of Eastern warfare. A succession of disasters had attended the British arms, such as had scarcely before been matched in its history. Dishonour, defeat, and flight, had disgraced the British standards beyond the Indus, and already boding prophets, both in England and on the Continent, were anticipating the overthrow of our whole Indian empire. Events the most tragical and disastrous had, however, been followed by triumphs no less glorious, and the temporary humiliation of British arms had only helped more thoroughly to show their superiority, in the long run, against any power that Asia can muster against them. All parties, however, were thoroughly convinced of the necessity imposed upon England, to accept of the

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1842.

Disasters in
Afghanistan.

Final success.



CHAP. XVII. great natural barrier which the Indus appears to offer as the north-western boundary of her Eastern possessions; and the establishment of peace on a firm and lasting basis was confidently anticipated as the result of this definite line of policy. There remained, however, another enemy still bent on hostility.

Kingdom of
Sinde.

Hostile mani-
festations of
the Ameers
of Sinde.

State of the
surrounding
tribes.

The kingdom of Sinde which occupies both banks of the Great Delta of the Indus, immediately to the south of Afghanistan, altogether differs in climate and natural features from that rugged hill country which the British arms had so recently conquered, only to return into the hands of its turbulent native possessors. It was at the very close of 1842, that Lord Ellenborough completed the arrangements for the renunciation of Afghanistan, and restored to liberty the last of the Afghans still remaining in his power. Almost immediately thereafter, his attention was directed to various acts of the Ameers of Sinde in contravention of their existing engagements, as well as to decided manifestations of hostile intentions. During the temporary disasters in Afghanistan which threatened to destroy the prestige acquired by British valour in India, the Ameers had displayed an evident desire to avail themselves of the first favourable opportunity for setting at naught all existing treaties, and thereby almost as effectually favoured the Afghanistans as if they had raised an army to co-operate with them against the British. Decided symptoms of hostile intentions became speedily apparent. Early in August a letter describes the surrounding tribes as little better than in a state of insurrection. Chiefs were moving about with armed bands, endeavouring to enlist followers, and availing themselves of every opportunity to plunder. In the Bombay Gazetteer of 9th September, it is remarked.—“With regard to the Ameers of Sinde, we think there will be ample grounds for sending them to Benares.” The movements of British troops speedily afforded indication that the governor-general was resolved to adopt summary measures for suppressing any hostile move-



ments on the part of the Sindians. The force under General England, amounting to about 3500, was ordered to move from Candahar, towards Sinde, and other bodies of troops soon followed them, increasing their number to above 5000 men.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1843.

General England's forces experienced little interruption in their progress towards Sinde, excepting that which arose from the excessive heat. The temperature in the Bolan Pass is described as almost unbearable. Eight men died in the course of two days from its effects. The last portion of General England's forces left Quattali on the first of October, and proceeded without interruption for the first two marches into the Bolan Pass. But as they threaded a difficult portion of the defile on the 3d, an attack was made on the column, and skirmishing kept up for some hours, during which the rear-guard suffered considerably.

Sufferings in
the Bolan
Pass.

On the 4th of October, Sir Charles Napier arrived at Sukker, and assumed the command of the forces in Sinde. On his way he had left with the Ameers Lord Ellenborough's ultimatum, and a few days after Major Outram was commissioned to demand an equally definite reply. It was then confidently anticipated that when they learned the complete success of the British arms in the North, there would be little difficulty in negotiating with them. In this, however, the governor-general was disappointed. Negotiations were indeed carried on for above four months, with considerable hopes of a satisfactory termination; and new provisions, which Lord Ellenborough deemed indispensable, in consequence not only of their manifestations of a hostile disposition, but of various acts in direct contravention of existing engagements, received the assent of the Ameers of Sinde. The usual difficulties, however, were experienced in dealing with native powers. It was obvious, notwithstanding their adoption of the prescribed terms, that no reliance could be placed on their good faith. Of this abundant evidence was speedily afforded. The new treaty which

Sir Charles
Napier
assumes the
command of
the forces in
Sinde.

Want of good
faith in
negotiating
with the
Ameers.



CHAP. XVII. had been proposed and agreed to, received the signature of the Ameers on the 14th of February 1843, and on the very day thereafter, they made a sudden attack, at the head of a large force, on the residence of Major Outram, the British commissioner. Unexpectedly sudden and undisguised as this treacherous assault was, the commissioner had been warned to place little faith in their sincerity. On leaving the durbar the previous day, where the whole body of the Ameers had formally affixed their seals to the treaty, Major Outram and his companions were exposed to great peril, and were only rescued by the Ameers' guards from a hired band of assassins. But on the following morning, the Major's residence was attacked by a body of 8000 troops, headed by several of the Ameers and principal chiefs. The small force under his command maintained their post with the utmost gallantry, and had it not been for the terror of the camp followers, who were employed to remove the property on board a steamer that lay in the river, the assailants would not have obtained possession of any portion of it.

Assault of
Major
Outram.

Attack of
the British
residency.

Despatch of
Major
Outram.

Major Outram writes to Sir Charles Napier, on the 15th: "My despatches of the last few days will have led you to expect that my earnest endeavours to effect an amicable arrangement with the Ameers of Sind would fail, and it is with much regret I have now to report that their highnesses have commenced hostilities by attacking my residence this morning, which, after four hours' most gallant defence by my honorary escort, the light company of Her Majesty's 22d regiment, commanded by Captain Conway, I was compelled to evacuate, in consequence of our ammunition running short. At nine A.M. this morning, a dense body of cavalry and infantry took post on three sides of the Agency compound, (the fourth being defended by the Planet steamer about 500 yards distant,) in the gardens and houses which immediately commanded the enclosure, and which it was impossible to hold with our limited numbers. A hot fire was opened by the enemy, and continued incessantly for four hours; but all



their attempts to enter the Agency enclosure, although merely surrounded by a wall, varying from four to five feet high, were frustrated by Captain Conway's able distribution of his small band, and the admirable conduct of every individual soldier composing it under the gallant example of their commanding officer and his subalterns, Lieutenant Harding and Ensign Pennefather, Her Majesty's 22d regiment, also Captains Green of the 21st regiment native infantry, and Wells, of the 15th regiment, who volunteered their services, to each of whom was assigned the charge of a separate quarter, also to your aide-de-camp Captain Brown, Bengal Engineers, who carried my orders to the steamer, and assisted in working her guns and directing her flanking fire. Our ammunition being limited to forty rounds per man, the officers directed their whole attention to reserving their fire, and keeping their men close under cover, never showing themselves or returning a shot, except when the enemy attempted to rush, or showed themselves in great numbers, consequently great execution was done with trifling expenditure of ammunition and with little loss." Major Outram had held out in the hope of obtaining reinforcements and a supply of ammunition from the Satellite steamer, which was hourly expected; but in this he was disappointed, and they were at length compelled to evacuate the place, which they did, says Major Outram, "covered by a few skirmishers, as deliberately as on parade." The commissioner joined Sir Charles Napier at Hala, and immediately on learning from him of the commencement of hostilities, he put the whole forces at his command in motion, to oppose the united armies of Upper and Lower Sind, which were already in the field. On the 18th Sir Charles reached Muttaree, where he learned that the Ameers had taken up a position at Meeanee, about twelve miles distant, at the head of a force of 22,000 men, while the number then with him did not amount to 3000. At eight o'clock on the following morning, his advanced guard came in sight of their camp at

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1843.Slight
defences of
the resi-
dency.Failure of
ammunition.Disappointed
in expected
supplies.Sir Charles
Napier puts
his whole
forces in
motion.



CHAP. XVII. Meeanee, within sight of the towers of Hyderabad. The position occupied by the Sindians had been chosen with great skill, and their immense superiority in point of numbers allowed them to turn it to the utmost advantage. Both flanks were protected by thick woods, which seemed calculated to baffle any attempt to turn them, while the whole length of their front was effectually secured by the dry bed and steep banks of the river Fulaille, one of the branches of the Indus. So soon as the British forces came within range of the enemy's guns, a battery of fifteen pieces of artillery opened upon them with deadly effect. The whole artillery on the side of the British consisted of twelve small field-pieces, which Sir Charles posted on his right, while some skirmishers and a body of native cavalry were ordered to advance, in order to make the enemy show his force. The main body then advanced from the right in echelon of battalions, moving rapidly across the open plain, which was swept by the enemy's cannon. The British fire of musketry opened at about 100 yards from the bank of the river, and in a few minutes the engagement became general along the whole line. The Sindians, however, made good use of their well chosen position, and for above three hours the combatants struggled for mastery along the banks of the river, fighting with the most deadly fury man to man. The Beloochees, who formed an important branch of the Sindian army, are celebrated as bold and skilful swordsmen, and they fought in this engagement with the most desperate fury. Rushing on to the top of the embankments, they discharged their matchlocks and pistols at their opponents, and then dashed into the midst of them sword in hand.

The nature of the ground almost completely precluded the ordinary manœuvres of a disciplined force, and from the vast superiority of the enemy in point of numbers, it appeared for a time impossible that the British could hold their ground. Fast as one wild band of desperate assailants fell before their cool and resolute defence, an-

A. D. 1842.

Position of
the Sindians
at Meeanee.

British
artillery.

General
engagement.

The Beloo-
chees.

Difficulties
arising from
the strength
of the Sindians'
position.



other hand equally numerous and fearless sprung into their place. On seeing the perilous state in which the main body in his front was placed, after maintaining their ground for above three hours against a foe which seemed to spring up before them anew as fast as they were struck down or driven back, Sir Charles sent orders to his reserved cavalry to force the right wing of the enemy. This movement was most gallantly executed. In the first charge the 9th light cavalry took a standard and several pieces of artillery, and another body of native cavalry obtained possession of the enemy's camp, from whence a large body of their horse were slowly driven, fighting every inch of ground as they withdrew. They were pursued for upwards of two miles, until they were effectually broken and scattered in hopeless disorder. This gallant charge decided the fortunes of the day. Though the main body of the enemy did not immediately give way, their resistance slackened as soon as they saw their wing turned and the chief body of their cavalry driven from the field. The 22d, the 23d, and the 12th regiments then successively charged up the bank with muskets and fixed bayonets, which in the hands of British soldiers have rarely been withstood. They forced the line of the enemy at all points, the last regiment capturing several guns, while the Sindians gave way in all directions and fled from the field, leaving the whole of their artillery, ammunition, standards, and camp, with considerable stores, and some treasure, in the hands of the victors. Not a single prisoner, however, was captured by the British, a fact to which Sir Charles Napier made special reference at a later period. In the barbarous system of warfare to which the Beloochees had been accustomed, no quarter is ever given to an enemy, and the consequence was, that, anticipating the same treatment from their British victors, the wounded refused all quarter, and continued to strike at every one that approached them, until they were bayoneted where they lay. On taking possession of Hyderabad, considerable

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1843.

Successful charge of cavalry.

Its decisive effects.

The enemy's line broken.

Barbarous system of native warfare.



CHAP. XVII. treasure fell into the hands of the British, and further discoveries afterwards greatly augmented this, so that a total amount of specie was ultimately reported in the hands of the victors, amounting to above three millions sterling.

Loss of the British.

This victory was not secured without considerable loss on the side of the British;—256 are reported in the despatch of the general as killed and wounded, including an unusual proportion of officers. But the loss of the enemy was immense, amounting, it is believed, to more than twenty times that of their opponents. In referring to the unavoidable absence of certain British officers, and the loss of others during the engagement, Sir Charles Napier remarks in his despatch to Lord Ellenborough:

Necessity for European officers for native troops

"I hope your Lordship will pardon me for saying, that the want of European officers in the native regiment at one period endangered the success of the action. The sepoy is a brave and excellent soldier, but, like all soldiers, he expects to be led on in certain moments, and as he looks to his European officer, if he misses him, the greatest danger arises; three times I saw them retreat, evidently because the officers had fallen, and when another appeared and rallied them, they at once followed him boldly. This, my Lord, accounts for the great number of European officers killed and wounded in proportion to the whole." The policy indicated in this suggestion of the general, has since been acted upon by the government at home, and the staff of British officers for the Indian army, and especially for the native troops, has been permanently enlarged to a considerable extent.

Satisfaction at the victory.

Much satisfaction was naturally experienced at the news of a victory of so brilliant a character, gained under unexpected circumstances, and against such very considerable odds. Whatever doubts might have been entertained of the good faith or friendly intentions of the Ameers of Sinde, the British general might have been excused had he been found unprepared for so sudden and treacherous an attack as that which immediately followed



the signing of the treaty. Still the disasters of the first Afghan war had not been entirely effaced from recollection, even by the decisive character of the victories of the second campaign. It was perhaps felt by some of the native powers, little inclined to appreciate any far-sighted course of policy, that the British had neither accomplished the object for which the war in Afghanistan was originally undertaken, nor had they enlarged their Indian empire by retaining possession of the conquered territory. Victory beneath the walls of Hyderabad might therefore be said to be indispensable to secure the prestige of British superiority, against whatever odds it had to be achieved. This the military skill of the leader, and the valour of the forces under his command, had accomplished, and their victory was welcomed with corresponding gratulations. By a despatch, dated from the palace of Agra, on the 5th of March, Lord Ellenborough conveys the thanks of the Government and people of India to their gallant defenders. In referring to the first act of hostility by the enemy, he remarks: "The governor-general cannot forgive a treacherous attack upon a representative of the British government, nor can he forgive hostile aggression prepared by those who were in the act of signing a treaty. It will be the first object of the governor-general to use the power victory has placed in his hands in the manner most conducive to the freedom of trade, and to the prosperity of the people of Sind, so long misgoverned. To reward the fidelity of allies by substantial marks of favour, and so to punish the crime of treachery in princes as to deter all from its commission, are further objects which the governor-general will not fail to effect. To Major-general Sir Charles Napier, and to the brave troops he commanded, the governor-general offers the tribute of his own admiration, and of the gratitude of the government and people of India. The bravery of the enemy against whom they were engaged has enhanced their glory—the most decisive victory has been gained upon the best fought field. In perpetual commemoration of

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1843Important
effects of
this victory.Observations
of the gover-
nor-general.



CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1843.

Honours
awarded to
the victors.Partial
effects of this
victory.Superior
numbers of
the enemy.Desperate
position of
their leaders.Rumours of
the defeat of
the British.

this brilliant achievement, the 2d company 2d battalion, and the 3d company 3d battalion, of Bombay artillery, and the company of the Madras sappers and miners, will bear upon their appointments, and the 9th regiment of Bengal light cavalry, the Poonah horse and the Sinde horse, upon their standards and appointments, and the 12th and 25th regiments of Bombay native infantry, upon their colours and appointments, the word 'Hyderabad, 1843.' The regiment of Sinde horse is on its present establishment permanently attached to the army of Bombay." The policy, however, which is indicated in the despatch of the governor-general, as to the use which was to be made of this important victory, was not yet to be carried out. The Ameers of Sinde must have been well aware that when they drew the sword under such circumstances they flung the scabbard away, as all further friendly treaty was vain with princes who had availed themselves of the very time of completing amicable negotiations to break through even the common courtesies of hostile nations.

Notwithstanding the very severe loss sustained by the enemy, they were still greatly the superior in point of numbers to their opponents, and were headed by chiefs who could not hope for any satisfactory terms from the conqueror. The foremost of these was Hoche Mohammed Seede, one of the Beloochee chiefs, who, along with Meer Shere Mohammed, the chief of Meerpoor, was looked upon as the great promoter of the war. The deeply-rooted impression which had been left on the public mind by the disasters in Afghanistan, was manifest from the exaggerated and dubious rumours that speedily superseded the rejoicings with which the news of the defeat of the Sindean army under the walls of Hyderabad had been received, so that on the departure of the May mail from India, an ill-defined rumour was prevalent, that in a second engagement the British army under Sir Charles Napier had sustained a decided defeat.

The small number of the forces under Sir Charles's



command, amounting only to about 6000 men in all, prevented his occupying any extended positions beyond the walls of Hyderabad, which he had taken possession of immediately after the victory at Meeanee. The British commander, accordingly, learned, towards the middle of March, that the enemy were once more mustering in numbers not greatly inferior to the force he had already defeated after so arduous a struggle. On the 23d of March, the British General writes from the camp at Hyderabad, announcing to Lord Ellenborough the junction of Major Stack, on the previous day, with the 3d cavalry, the 8th native infantry, and Major Leslie's troop of horse artillery. This reinforcement sufficed to supply the losses sustained in the previous victory, and to restore confidence to the British army, in the prospect of again encountering the same determined foe. Sir Charles, accordingly, states in the same despatch to Lord Ellenborough, that the enemy then lay within six miles of his camp, in such force that they had already begun attacking his camels, and he was resolved to go in pursuit of them on the morrow, and attack them wherever they might be found.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1843.
Small numbers of the British forces.

Opportune reinforcement.

The Sindians had posted themselves in a strong and well-selected position, little more than four miles distant from the British camp,—a strong evidence of the very restricted operations to which the British General had been reduced, in consequence of the small number of his available forces. The position of the enemy was nearly similar to that which had formerly proved so difficult to surmount. They had again posted themselves on the banks of the Fullalie, whose dry channel in the previous engagement afforded them such valuable protection. But they had improved not only on the experience acquired in the former defeat, but strengthened their position with a degree of skill never before manifested by them in their wars, and which was considered as affording undoubted indications of the presence of European councillors in their army.

Position of the Sindians.

Skillful strengthening of their position.



CHAP. XVII. Sir Charles put his forces in motion early in the morning, and by the time they had advanced about two miles, they descried the enemy about a mile and a half in advance. Approaching within twelve hundred yards of their position, the troops were drawn up in order of battle, and advanced in echelon of regiments to the attack. About nine o'clock the British guns opened their fire on the enemy's position, producing considerable confusion in their centre, where considerable bodies were observed to move to the left, apparently unable to sustain the cross fire of the artillery. The position of the enemy was nearly a straight line. The nullah which formed its front consisted of two deep parallel ditches, one twenty feet wide and eight feet deep, the other forty-two feet wide and seventeen feet deep, further strengthened by banks and escarpments of the most formidable character. These skilful preparations, however, proved altogether ineffectual in arresting the victorious career of the British army, manned though they were by defenders immensely outnumbering them, and inferior in courage and daring to no native force which had yet attempted to withstand the British arms. When the centre of the enemy was seen to give way under the severe fire of the British artillery, Major Stack, at the head of the 3d cavalry, supported by a body of native horse, charged them on their left flank, crossing the nullah, and bearing down upon them with such determined valour, that they gave way before them, and were pursued for several miles with great slaughter.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1843.

Advance of
the British
forces.Battle of
Dubba.Effect of the
British artil-
lery.Sir Charles
Napier's
despatch.

Sir Charles Napier thus describes the action in the centre and on the left, at the period when the cavalry on his right charged the left flank of the enemy, and drove them from the field :—"While this was passing on the right, Her Majesty's 22d regiment, gallantly led by Major Poole, who commanded the brigade, and Captain George, who commanded the corps, attacked the nullah on the left with great gallantry, and, I regret to add, with considerable loss. This brave battalion marched up to the



nullah under a heavy fire of matchlocks, without returning a shot till within forty paces of the intrenchment, and then stormed it like British soldiers. The intrepid Lieutenant Coote first mounted the rampart, seized one of the enemy's standards, and was severely wounded while waving it and cheering on his men. Meanwhile the Poonah horse, under Captain Tait, and the 9th cavalry, under Major Story, turned the enemy's right flank, pursuing and cutting down the fugitives for several miles. Her Majesty's 22d regiment was well supported by the batteries commanded by Captains Willoughby and Hutt, which crossed their fire with that of Major Leslie. Then came the 2d brigade, under command of Major Woodburn, bearing down into action with excellent coolness. It consisted of the 25th, 21st, and 12th regiments, under the command of Captains Jackson, Stevens, and Fisher, respectively. These regiments were strongly sustained by the fire of Captain Whitley's battery, on the right of which were the 8th and 1st regiments, under Majors Brown and Clibborne; these two corps advanced with the regularity of a review up to the intrenchments, their commanders, with considerable exertion, stopping their fire, on seeing that a portion of the Sindhe horse and 3d cavalry in charging the enemy had got in front of the brigade. The battle was decided by the troop of horse artillery and Her Majesty's 22d regiment." The enemy stood their ground well, and defended themselves with the utmost bravery, in so much so that the victory has been pronounced by experienced officers, as perhaps the most sternly contested of any in which British troops have ever been engaged in India. The 22d regiment, which had to bear the brunt of the fight, alone lost six officers and 145 men, out of about 300 British killed and wounded. It is in the despatch, in which Sir Charles Napier announced this victory to the governor-general, that he refers to the capture of some prisoners (only eight in all) as a subject of congratulation, since it affords some indications of amelioration in the barbarous and exter-

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1842.

Storming of
the enemy's
intrench-
ments.Decisive
charge.Brave stand
of the Sin-
dean troops.Capture of
prisoners.



CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1843

Humanity of
the British
leader.Bravery of
the British
officers.Reception of
the victors.Policy of the
Directory.

minating mode of warfare which their enemies had forced upon them. The reference to this apparently trivial circumstance, in the flush of victory, is a pleasing and honourable trait in the gallant British leader. "It gives me," says he, "great satisfaction to say, that some prisoners have been taken, and though the number is small, it is still some advance towards a civilized mode of warfare; for I cannot help thinking that the desperate resistance generally made by wounded Beloochees has arisen from their own system of warfare, which admits of no quarter being given in action. We are at present employed in collecting the wounded Beloochees within our reach, in order to render them medical assistance."

Many acts of intrepid valour were displayed in this severe contest. The general exposed himself during the whole fight, moving with the utmost coolness where the enemy's shots were flying thickest, and his example was not lost on his officers. Eleven pieces of ordnance and nineteen standards were taken, Hoche Mohammed Seede, and three other chiefs, fell in the battle, the Beloochee force was entirely routed and dispersed in every direction, and Meer Sher Mohammed fled into the desert, taking his family with him, and attended by only forty followers, whom he could attract to his service. The British commander is said to have been welcomed with joy by the inhabitants of the country, who had suffered so much from the fickle rule of the Ameers, that they testified the utmost anxiety to be assured that Sindh was to be annexed to the British possessions. By the 5th of April, Sir Charles Napier announced to Lord Ellenborough, that the important fortress of Omerecote had opened its gates to a British force sent against it.

The termination of the Afghan war had been characterized by a practical manifestation of the policy repeatedly dictated to the governor-generals of India, by the Home Directory, to refrain from all further augmentation of the vast possessions of British India. The con-



quests in Sindh, however, which so speedily followed those in Afghanistan, originated under totally different circumstances, and showed how little reliance can be placed on theories of policy, however well grounded they may appear to be. The following is the opinion, expressed at the time, of this new acquisition, though longer experience has tended greatly to modify the first ideas of its value:—"It is a country without the possession of which our boundary of the Indus cannot be compact. Neither can the navigation of that river be considered safe while an independent, and now hostile power, keeps possession of either bank of the Delta. It is productive, and under our management, may be made more productive, and the troops required to keep possession of it, will cost us nothing; the country itself will maintain them with ease. It lies within a week's reach of our western capital. Its high roads do not run through impassable defiles like the Bolan and the Khyber and the Khoord Cabul; they consist of magnificent streams, which our steam flotilla may traverse with speed and safety. It lies open to the sea, and troops, ammunition, and supplies may be poured in with ease. It is a plain and may be defended with little difficulty, for there will soon be no enemy more formidable than the heat."

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1843.

Inconsistency of the annexation of Sindh.

Ideas entertained of its value.

Considerable annoyance was experienced from the proceedings of such of the Ameers and Beloochee chiefs as were still at large, and especially from those of Shera Mohammed, who was making the most determined exertions to bring another army into the field. Meanwhile the conduct of the chiefs, who had been confided in as friendly to the British was even more alarming than the threatening position assumed by the defeated leaders. Ali Moorad, who had received repeated marks of favour from the British occupants of Sindh, when put in possession of Kyrpoor, appears to have concluded that whatever other territories the British wrested from the Ameers, would in like manner be transferred to him. As a further evidence of favour, the guns captured at

Continued opposition of the Ameers.

Alarming conduct of British allies.



CHAP. XVII. Meeanee had been made over to him, and so soon as he
A. D. 1843. found that his extravagant expectations were not to be
Ali Moorad. realized, he surrendered the artillery captured by our
forces to Shere Mohammed.

Alarming rumours. The near approach of the hot season, when Europeans
are exposed to such severe sufferings if forced to take the
field, led to much anxiety as to the movements of that
chief. The most extravagant and contradictory rumours
were afloat. Shere Mohammed was said to be already mustering

Shere Mohammed. a more numerous force, than either of those which
had sustained such complete defeat; while great and well-
grounded apprehensions of sickness were entertained
within the camp at Hyderabad, where the troops were
hemmed in by low marshy grounds and the river, in a
situation in which any of the native epidemics could
hardly fail to prove fearfully destructive if it should break
out among them. By letters from the camp in the month

Extravagant reports of his forces. of May, Shere Mohammed is said to be at Sukkurind, at
the head of 40,000 men, and a large park of artillery;
marauding parties of the Beloochees were moving about,
and committing great depredations on the live stock, so
that great fears were entertained of a scarcity of pro-
visions. Most of these rumours, however, proved to be
grossly exaggerated. A despatch of Sir Charles Napier's,
dated 17th June 1843, announces an attack on Meer

Total rout of Shah Mohammed's force, and his capture. Shah Mohammed at the head of 2000 men, in which that
leader was captured, and his whole forces totally routed.
So complete was their panic, that the British forces suf-
fered much more from the heat than from any opposition
offered by the enemy. In order to take them by surprise,
Lieutenant-colonel Roberts, who commanded the detach-
ment sent against the ameer, moved without any camp
equipage, and the sufferings consequent on their exposure

Sufferings from the heat. to the heat are described as very severe. "The heat,"
says Colonel Roberts, "after nine o'clock, became most
awful, and the whole detachments were much distressed."
Two European artillery-men died of *coup de soleil* while
on the march. In a despatch, dated two days later,



the commander refers to the sudden change to extraordinary heat, and reports the death of a lieutenant, five sergeants, and forty-four men, by the same sudden and terrible stroke.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1843.

While Lieutenant-colonel Roberts proceeded against Meer Shah Mohammed, other parties had been sent out to attempt to surround Shere Mohammed, where he kept the field at the head of a force of about 10,000 men. The ameer finding that several strong columns were advancing on him from different quarters, attempted to strike a sudden and decisive blow, by attacking Captain Jacob, who, at the head of a comparatively small force, had been sent to intercept him, in case of his attempting to retreat to the desert. The whole of the ameer's forces were totally routed and broken, dispersing in every direction, and leaving their guns and standards in the hands of the victors. Meer Shere Mohammed fled with only ten horsemen; but though intercepted in his attempt to gain the desert, he succeeded in effecting his escape.

Shere Mohammed.

His forces routed.

His escape.

The apprehensions as to the great danger to be dreaded from the effects of the climate, and position of the troops in Sind, were speedily realized. Every account brought more alarming intelligence of the ravages of disease, in so much so that before the cold season began to set in, there was a period of about six weeks, during which it is doubtful if out of a force of 10,000 men, 3000 could have taken the field had any sudden attack occurred; and the whole outposts in the country, exposed to the mountain Beloochees in front, and effectually cut off, by the Indus and the desert beyond it, from resources in the rear, were in such a condition, that a sudden and well-directed descent upon them by the scattered tribes of Beloochees, might have destroyed them to a man. Fortunately before this deadly enemy had prostrated for a time the conquerors of Sind, the point of danger had been removed to an entirely different scene.

Insalubrity of the climate.

Critical position of the British.

The letters brought home by the Indian mail of October 1843, announced the satisfactory intelligence that our

News of general peace.



CHAP. XVII

A. D. 1843.

Peaceful
state of Sindh.Disturbed
state of the
northern
frontier.Disorders in
Afghanistan.Wise policy
of abandon-
ing Afghan-
istan.New source
of apprehen-
sion.

Eastern empire, which had been for many months the object of such lively and painful interest, had ceased to furnish any incidents worthy of comment or discussion. The Bombay Times, of 6th September, remarks:—"Letters are now received with as much punctuality from Sukkur and Hyderabad, as from any of the most tranquil quarters of our empire. The tidings brought by them are stale, flat, and unprofitable; no fighting, no adventure, no stir of any description, and even rumours of danger have died away. The chiefs, it is said, are daily coming in, and the country becoming pacified with most unexpected celerity." Accounts, however, from the north continued to indicate a very different state of things. Afghanistan furnished frequent reports of distraction and threatened outbreaks. Cabool was in the most disturbed state. Dost Mohammed Khan was stated to be exercising a most arbitrary and despotic sway, and directing his acts of oppression in an especial manner against such of the native chiefs as had manifested any friendly feeling towards the British during their occupation of that country. Ameenollah Khan had been imprisoned and put in chains, and upwards of twenty of the chief men of Cabool were reported to be held in durance by the same chief. At Candahar, Sufter Jung was stated to be in close confinement with chains, while his adherents and advisers were every where seeking safety by flight. In all this, however, British interests were no further concerned than in so far as there might be any risk of the disturbances extending to the provinces under our control. The wise line of policy dictated to Lord Ellenborough, had happily freed Britain from the necessity of interfering in these intestine quarrels, though it could not but be felt that it was more difficult to throw off the responsibility of having to a great extent occasioned such division and strife among that brave but turbulent race.

Another country, beyond the northern boundaries of our Indian empire, was, however, already furnishing cause for apprehension. In the extensive regions comprehended



between the Sutledge and the Indus, considerable symptoms of disturbance were already apparent, and we find official correspondents, early in the following year, giving expression to congratulations that the affairs of British India were in such a tranquil state, as to permit the attention of the governor-general and his council to be devoted to the crisis which seemed to be approaching both in the Punjaub and at Gwalior. So early as the month of August, the whole troops in the Agra district received orders to keep themselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice, and it was reported that an army of observation was to be immediately formed on the Sutledge, under the immediate command of Sir Hugh Gough. The causes which finally led to a sanguinary revolution in the Punjaub, may be thus briefly recapitulated. Upon the death of Runjeet Sing, in 1839, his favourite wife—after she had ascended the funeral pile, where, along with three others, she was burnt with his corpse—called to her Kurruck Sing, the deceased rajah's son and heir, along with Dhian Sing, his favourite minister, and placing the dead rajah's hand in that of his son, she required the latter to swear to protect and favour his father's minister, and by the like solemn oath bound the minister to be faithful to his new master. Kurruck Sing immediately ascended the throne. He was well-affected to the British government, but possessed none of the talent or energy requisite for so difficult a post. He had not occupied the throne four months when he died, as has been stated in a previous chapter, not without strong suspicions of poison, and his son and heir, Now Nehal Sing, who should have succeeded him, was killed by the falling of a beam, as he returned from the funeral pile on which his father's corpse was consumed. These successive deaths were both ascribed to the intrigues of Runjeet Sing's favourite minister; and, after some difficulty, chiefly arising from the opposition of one of the widows of the latter prince, he succeeded in his long-cherished project of placing Shere Sing on the throne. During the

CHAP. LVII

A. D. 1844.

Disturbances in the Punjaub.

Army of observation on the Sutledge.

Causes of revolution.

Kurruck Sing

Sudden death of Kurruck and Nehal Sing.

Shere Sing.



CHAP. XVII. frequent agitations and alarms that ensued, the British government continued to watch their proceedings with some anxiety; but after a time, the affairs of the kingdom, which chiefly owed its formation to the abilities of Ranjeet Sing, seemed to acquire some degree of order and settlement, and ceased to attract special attention from the government of India, occupied as it soon was with objects of more pressing interest. Meanwhile causes of mutual difference and dislike were springing up between the new rajah and his ambitious minister. Various reasons are assigned for these. The Hon. Mr. Osborne, who describes Shere Sing as a fine, manly-looking fellow, adds that he had become especially obnoxious to his minister, in consequence of his attachment to European manners, and his friendly inclinations toward the British, whom Dhian regarded with rancorous hate.* This, however, was probably only one of the causes of dissension, sufficing to indicate their disagreement on all questions of general policy. It is stated that the rajah had abandoned himself to the indolent and dissolute habits which have so frequently been the ruin of the native dynasties of India, and that during the frequent dissensions which prevailed between Shere Sing and his powerful minister, the latter went so far as to reproach him in open durbar with his dissipation and excesses.

Whatever might be the ostensible grounds of dispute, however, the previous character of the minister leaves little room to doubt, that the real ground of offence was the interference with his policy, and the curtailment of his power. He accordingly organized a conspiracy for the assassination of the rajah, in which he enlisted several of the chief sirdars of the court. His influence with the army is sufficiently apparent, from the time chosen for executing his base design. The rajah had appointed a general review of his troops, at the Dusserah festival, and Ajeet Sing, who is described as an effeminate-looking youth, was selected as the assassin. The Delhi Gazette thus describes the assassination and the fearful slaughter

Anxiety of
the British
government

Internal
sources of
difference.

Accusations
charged
against the
rajah.

Ambitious
character of
his minister.

Plots against
the rajah.



that followed, in which the faithless originator of it perished, the victim of his own plot :—“ Dhian Sing made the arrangement by proposing to the rajah to inspect Ajeet Sing's troops, which he said he would do the following morning, and orders were accordingly issued. On the rajah's arrival on the parade-ground, he found fault with the appearance and condition of some horsemen purposely placed to attract attention, when Ajeet Sing became saucy, words ran high, and, drawing a pistol from his bosom, he shot Shere Sing through the head, the ball having entered his right temple. General Ventura and his party attacked the murderer, but, being opposed by a powerful body of troops, were defeated. Ajeet Sing cut up the rajah's body, placed his head on a spear, and on entering the town met Prince Purtaub Sing's (Shere's son) suwarie, which was immediately attacked, and the prince killed; the palace was taken, and Dhulleep Sing, the only remaining son of Runjeet Sing, a lad ten years old, proclaimed to the throne. The treasury was thrown open, and the troops paid up their arrears. Troops were sent off to guard all the ghauts, and all the opposite party (except Ventura, who escaped) were made prisoners. Ajeet Sing, after having killed Shere Sing, was returning to the fort, and met Dhian; he told him he had done the deed, and asked him to return; he got into Dhian's carriage, and when they got near the gate of the fort, Ajeet Sing stabbed Dhian, and sent his body to his brother and son, Sookhet and Heera Sing. These two individuals surrounded the city with their troops, and the people within continued plundering all night. In the morning, Heera Sing having entered the fort, seized Ajeet Sing, Lena Sing, and others, and having put them to death, exposed their heads in the plain, and threw their bodies into the bazaar. Dhulleep Sing has been put on the guddee, and Heera Sing made vizeer. Six hundred men were slaughtered on both sides.”

CHAP. XVII.

A.D. 1843.

Assassination of Shere Sing.

Dhulleep Sing proclaimed rajah.

Assassination of Dhian Sing.

Consequent slaughter.

This barbarous deed was enacted on the 15th September 1843, and by means of it the nominal authority was



CHAP. XVII. vested in Dhulleep Sing, a child of ten years old, while
A. D. 1843. the real power, which the unprincipled minister destined
for himself, had passed into the hands of Heera Sing,
Rajah Dhul- who was now both commander of the army and vizier,
leep Sing. and was therefore actual ruler, so long as he could retain
the fidelity of the army.

Disturbances at Gwalior. Meanwhile the affairs of the court of Gwalior, which
had so long occasioned anxiety and distrust, were at
length brought to a crisis. Confusion and anarchy pre-
vailed there, one party deposing another, and successive
chiefs struggling for power, while the country was left at
the mercy of licentious and undisciplined troops. The

Obligations of the British government. British government being bound by its treaties with the
late rajah to protect his successor, and preserve his ter-
ritories unviolated, the governor-general could no longer
overlook the fact that the conduct of the authorities
of Gwalior involved a virtual violation of the treaty.
Lord Ellenborough accordingly immediately ordered the
advance of troops, sufficient, as he said, "to obtain gua-
rantees for the future security of its own subjects on the
common frontier of the two states, to protect the person
of the rajah, to quell disturbances within his highness's
territories, and to chastise all who shall remain in dis-
obedience." This was rendered the more imperative by
the tender age and helpless position of the rajah, which
exposed him to the double danger of being made a tool
in the hands of his enemies, and the nominal source of
wrongs to his friendly allies. Notwithstanding the pre-
parations which had been made for such an emergency,
the commander-in-chief, Sir Hugh Gough, was met by a
much stronger and more determined opposition than he
had anticipated.

Helpless position of the rajah. The army had left Agra betwixt the 12th and 18th
December, and continued steadily to move on. On the
17th, General Valiant with the advance arrived at
Dholpoor. On reaching the ghaut opposite Kentree, the
Dholpoor Rajah paid a visit of ceremony to the governor-
general, and his visit was returned by Lord Ellenborough

Advance of
the British
army.



and the commander-in-chief the following day. On the 22d they moved, with the head-quarters of the 4th brigade, on Kentree ghaut, and the advance, under Sir J. Thackwell, crossed to the right bank of the river. On the 23d the second division crossed the Chumbul, and proceeded seven miles in the direction of Hingonah, where the advance was encamped. The road was extremely difficult, winding through a steep ravine, scarcely more than twenty feet wide, which a determined enemy might for a time have obstructed almost with impunity. Here for five days the force halted to take rest and counsel. Bappoo Seetoleah had been despatched from Gwalior on the 22d, and on the following day had an audience with the governor-general, when it was believed in camp that every thing was settled—the Maharanee and the Sirdars having, it was said, agreed to the terms proposed. On the 24th, the Gwalior Vakeels had a further interview of some duration with the governor-general. Many of the more respectable inhabitants, who came from Gwalior on a visit to the camp, conceived the idea of resistance out of the question. Preparations were made to receive the Maharanee, who was expected in camp on the 28th, with sufficient pomp and circumstance for the rank she held, and audience to which she was about to be admitted. The governor-general, who had originally been moderate in his demands, requiring the restoration of the Mama Sahib and his friends—the surrender of the Khasjee Walla, and dismissal of his partisans—the exchange of certain portions of country, so as to improve the condition of the mutual frontier—and the disbanding of the mutinous portion of the troops—finally demanding the entire revision of the military establishment, and the surrender of the park of artillery, brought into existence about forty years since by Dowlut Rao Scindia, and regarded as the palladium of the state. This was looked upon as implying the entire destruction of the army, and surrender of the independence of the nation. There is every reason, however, to believe that, through-

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1843

Negotiations

Rumours of agreement.

Increased demands of the governor-general.

Attachment of the natives to their artillery.



CHAP. XVII. out, the professions of the Mahratta durbar were hollow and insincere—that so soon as it was found that their earlier and delusive propositions were insufficient to arrest our progress, it was resolved to offer the most determined resistance. Further negotiations appear to have been resorted to merely to gain time.

A. D. 1843.

Insincerity of the durbar.

Difficulties of diplomatic intercourse with the natives.

Formidable character of the Mahratta army.

Difficulties of the country.

Position of the British army.

Battle of Mahanjpoor.

It must always, indeed, form one of the greatest difficulties in the diplomatic intercourse between civilized and semi-barbarous nations, the difficulty of knowing what dependence can be placed on the most solemn asseverations, and professions of good faith. Among highly civilized nations the value of national credit and unblemished honour is so thoroughly appreciated, that it is rare indeed for the most unprincipled diplomatist to set it at defiance; but among the native princes of India such faithless proceedings as those of the Ameers of Scinde have been too frequent to excite very great surprise. The formidable character and position of the Mahratta army, however, had not been anticipated from the vacillating character of their councils. The country generally exhibits features offering great natural obstacles to the operations of disciplined forces, being intersected with numerous deep and almost impassable ravines, and gullies, affording great facilities for the irregular tactics of an undisciplined army. It was only by the unceasing labours of the sappers, that a practicable passage was effected for the army under Sir H. Gough; and after passing the Koharee river in three columns, at points considerably distant from each other, the whole British army took up their position by eight o'clock on the morning of the 29th of December 1843, about a mile in front of Mahanjpoor. The Mahrattas had occupied the ground during the previous night, taking up their position with such skill as compelled the commander to alter the disposition of his forces. Seven regiments of Mahratta infantry were ranged in front, each corps having four guns attached to it, which opened on the advanced forces of the British as they took up their ground. The



39th regiment of British infantry advanced gallantly to the charge, supported by the 56th native infantry. The Mahrattas stood their ground with great bravery, and the British forces sustained a severe loss, their guns doing great execution as they advanced. But no native force has ever been able to withstand the determined charge of the British bayonet. They drove them from their guns into the village, but there the Mahrattas again rallied, and a most sanguinary conflict ensued. After discharging their matchlocks, they flung them from them, and fought hand to hand with the most determined courage. Meanwhile General Valiant had led on his brigade, and succeeded in taking Maharajpooor in reverse. Twenty-eight guns were captured by this combined movement, but the Mahrattas still stood their ground; nor was their strong position taken till nearly every one of its defenders had been left dead on the spot. The same determined resistance was experienced at every point. They had thrown up entrenchments, and planted their guns with great skill, and in nearly every case the gunners were bayonetted at their posts, without attempting to fly. The consequence was, the loss of the British, both in officers and men, was unusually great. "I regret," says Sir H. Gough in his despatch to the governor-general, "I regret to say that our loss has been very severe, infinitely beyond what I calculated on; indeed, I did not do justice to the gallantry of my opponents. Their force, however, so greatly exceeded ours, particularly in artillery, the position of their guns was so commanding, they were so well served, and determinedly defended, both by their gunners and their infantry, and the peculiar difficulties of the country giving the defending force so great advantages, that it could not be otherwise." As usual, where the native forces have displayed peculiar steadiness and skill, it was found that they had had the benefit of more experienced assistance; though they required no aid to give effect to their undisciplined courage and gallant daring. There was found to have

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1849

Bravery of
the Mah-
rattas.Combined
movement of
the British.Determined
resistance.Severe loss of
the British.Advantages
of their
opponents.



CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1843.

European
deserters.Auxiliary
force under
Major-general
Grey.Great disparity
in point
of numbers.Battle of
Punnar.Capture of
the Mah-
ratta artil-
lery.

been a considerable number of the Company's discharged native infantry, as well as one or two European deserters among the Mahratta troops. One of the latter, it is stated, named Berry, from the 2d European regiment, had, when he fell, his lighted port-fire in his hand, and fired off his gun, sweeping away fifteen men.

At the same time that the commander-in-chief crossed the Sindian frontiers, Major-general Grey led an auxiliary force, by order of the general, towards Punnar, twelve miles south-west of Gwalior, to co-operate with the main body, and place the Mahratta army between two forces, acting in concert. The immense excess of the Mahrattas in point of numbers over the British forces, however, was such as enabled them to counteract this plan of mutual co-operation. A body of 12,000 men, with a large complement of guns, &c. was detached to arrest the progress of Major-general Grey, whose whole force did not amount to a fourth of that number. The two armies met on the 29th of December, in the vicinity of the fortified village of Mangore, near Punnar, where the Mahrattas had taken up a strong position, and were able to begin the attack at considerable advantage, by assaulting the cumbrous baggage trains which necessarily accompany an Indian army. Towards four o'clock the commander observed the enemy taking up a strong position on a chain of hills to the east of his camp, and resolved on an immediate attack. By a judicious disposition of his forces, the enemy were assailed simultaneously on the centre and left, and completely broken. The whole guns, twenty-four in number, were captured, and all their ammunition, with a portion of treasure, were taken. The action did not close till night-fall, which prevented the pursuit of the enemy, and enabled them to carry off many of their killed and wounded. Their loss, however, had been very severe, and the occurrence of two such decisive victories on the same day, as those of Maharsjipoor and Punnar, effectually put an end to further resistance.



Private accounts would lead to the idea, which the acknowledgments in the despatch of the commander-in-chief may seem in some degree to confirm, that little or no opposition had been anticipated either by the governor-general or the commander-in-chief, both of them probably conceiving that the presence of so large and effective a British force would have sufficed to overawe the rebellious Maharattas. The commander-in-chief's staff, with the ladies of his family, are said to have been quietly proceeding towards Maharajpooor when the Maharatta guns opened upon them. Lord Ellenborough was likewise present with the ladies of his family; nor was he forced to quit his dangerous and exposed position, until the well-served Mahratta guns gave proof that the elephants of the governor-general, towering over the rear of the 39th regiment, as it took up its position on the field, had become the objects towards which their fire was directed.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1818

Misconception of the Mahratta power.

Surprise of the commander-in-chief, and governor-general.

The result of the two great battles of Maharajpooor and Punniar destroyed the hopes not only of the mutinous Mahrattas at Gwalior, but of numerous restless malcontents of Hindostan, and had the effect of diffusing tranquility throughout our whole Eastern empire, where the existence of so many races still very partially amalgamated, and curbed in their predatory habits and love of plunder only by the well-directed force of disciplined authority, renders the whole empire peculiarly sensitive to such indirect but powerful influences. The rajah was installed with great ceremony at Gwalior, in presence of the governor-general, the commander-in-chief, and an immense assemblage of native chiefs. An eye-witness of the imposing ceremonial describes the juvenile rajah as seated beneath a gorgeous canopy of gold, see-sawing his legs beneath his throne according to the fashion of listless schoolboys, seemingly altogether indifferent to the import of the stately proceedings in which he was made to bear so prominent a part.

Effects of the victories of Maharajpooor and Punniar.

Installation of the rajah.

Meanwhile, however, great and increasing dissatisfac-



CHAP. XVII.

A.D. 1844.

Dissatisfac-
tion at Lord
Ellen-
borough's
government.

Motives for
choosing him
as governor-
general.

Contrast of
the proceed-
ings of his
successor.

Causes of the
irritation of
the Direc-
tory.

tion was expressed in many quarters at the government of Lord Ellenborough. His fondness for military display, and for such pompous exhibitions of vice-regal grandeur as that which immediately followed the victories over the insurgent Mahratta forces, were occasionally manifested in a way that seemed somewhat inconsistent with the wonted gravity of British rule, and frequently led to the neglect of the civil service and the internal government of India, which were, in fact, his principal duties as governor-general. His whole course of procedure was erratic, and opposed to the definite policy by which the Directory had sought to avert a continued system of aggression on the surrounding native states, and to consolidate the vast possessions over which their rule was only very partially and imperfectly extended. In the choice of Lord Ellenborough as governor-general, they had calculated on the probable weight of his influence as a civilian, in carrying out measures in accordance with the peaceful line of policy they were anxious to see pursued; but the character of the proceedings of his successor suffice to show that the false glitter of military glory was more seductive to an inexperienced civilian than to a military veteran. A writer, in the *Indian Mail* of December 1844, remarks of the latter: "The quiet, unostentatious demeanour of the governor-general has doubtless had its share in tranquilizing India. He has given no intimation, in public at least, of an intention to quit the Presidency, where he is employed in occupations which befit a man of peace." In addition, Lord Ellenborough had excited the indignation of the Directorship of the East India Company, by a line of conduct which seemed to imply that he was too well assured of the favour of the Duke of Wellington and the British Cabinet, to greatly concern himself as to the approval his proceedings might meet with from the Directory. Great, therefore, was the sensation created both in India and at home by the sudden recall of Lord Ellenborough, in consequence of the vote of the Court of



Directors, in the exercise of their legitimate power, not only without consulting with the government, but in direct opposition to its expressed opinions. The Duke of Wellington openly and severely censured their proceedings, and it was generally anticipated that an act so embarrassing, if not humiliating, to the government, and to one of its chief leaders, would have led to still more direct collision in the choice of a successor. Such anticipations, however, were not realized. Sir Henry Hardinge was selected to succeed to the important trust. On the 6th of May 1844, he was appointed by the Court of Directors to the office of Governor-general of India, and the Crown immediately confirmed the choice. This bold and decisive measure of the Court of Directors excited much discussion and considerable diversity of feeling for a time; but the contrast between the wonted proceedings of Lord Ellenborough, and the unobtrusive course adopted by Lord Hardinge, speedily reconciled all parties interested in the affairs of India to the change of its governor-general.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1844.

Threatened collision of the Government and Directory.

Sir Henry Hardinge appointed governor-general.

The country of the Mahrattas still continued in a disorderly and disturbed state, and required the presence of a considerable military force to hold the insurgents in check. Many of the difficulties unquestionably originated in the complicated system of Eastern policy, which has grown out of the circumstances by which a trading company gradually assumed the character of conquerors and rulers. The system of permitting independent or subsidiary princes or rajahs to sway their feeble sceptres within the British dominions has been again and again condemned, as leading to the very worst consequences. British rulers have thereby frequently been unwillingly made accessory to acts of which they could not approve, while such petty principalities become the centres of constant intrigue, and generally prove a barrier to any effectual measures for the improvement of the people.

Unsettled state of the Mahrattas.

Evils of subsidiary native rulers.

The Punjaub continued for many months to furnish the most novel and unexpected phases of intelligence.

State of the Punjaub.



CHAP. XVII. Each successive Indian mail brought accounts of new revolutions, massacres, assassinations, and capricious plottings and schemings, leading to no definite settlement, and keeping up a feeling of anxiety and alarm throughout our whole Indian possessions, where so many elements exist ready to be excited into opposition and rebellion upon every new impediment or threat of danger to British supremacy in India. The army of observation was still maintained on the banks of the Sutledge. From time to time, skirmishes, assaults, and sorties, diversified the dull routine of their passive line of duty, and kept their leaders on the alert. Politicians meanwhile continued to discuss the propriety of the annexation of the Panjaub to our Indian empire to round its northern frontiers, and free it from the endless anxiety which must result from the proceedings of a barbarous people in a constant state of revolution, maintaining undisciplined hordes of fierce soldiery ready to take advantage of the first necessity that might induce us to recall the army on their frontier, to make aggressive inroads on our own possessions.

A. D. 1844.

Influence of the unsettled state of its government.

Schemes of annexation proposed.



CHAPTER XVIII.

War in the Punjaub.

Disturbed state of the Punjaub—Influence of British policy—Disparaging misconception of the Seiks—Their origin and singular character—Acts of aggression—War proclaimed by the British—The battle of Moodkee—Its uncertain results—Battle of Ferozeshah—Critical position of the British from insufficient supplies—Assault on their convoy—Victory of Aleewal—Its important results—General estimation of Indian policy—Battle of Sohraon—Passing of the Sutledge—Terms of peace—Proud bearing of the vanquished.

FOR many months the news of each mail which brought CHAP. XVIII.
to England information of the state of her vast Eastern A. D. 1845.
possessions, consisted chiefly of confused and alarming
rumours of revolutions, tumults, and assassinations, in
the Punjaub. A large military force was concentrated
on the banks of the Sutledge, and war was regarded as
inevitable, however long circumstances might delay the
commencement of hostilities. Very great misapprehen-
sion however existed, both in India and at home, as to
the character of the Seiks, or the nature of the prepara-
tions requisite for meeting any aggressions on their part.
So universal was the conviction of their disorderly and
mutinous state, and of the want of any supreme power
among them, calculated to secure that unanimity of ac-
tion on which the success of great military movements so
Revolutionary state of
the Punjaub.



CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1845.

Misapprehension of the Sikh character.

Nature of English policy.

Misconstruction of their defensive preparations.

Presumed inferiority of the Sikhs.

greatly depends, that when at length the long-expected collision took place, both the governor-general and the commander-in-chief were found to have overlooked some of the most indispensable preparations for war. Considering the lengthened period during which war with the Sikhs had been anticipated, and arrangements made for resisting their threatened aggressions, it may well astonish the reader to learn of the difficulties which impeded the first operations of Lord Gough, when hostilities were commenced by the Sikh army crossing the Sutledge. Captain Cunningham, the impartial historian of the Sikhs, seeks to show that, although the first aggressive movements were undoubtedly made by the Sikhs, the English were guided rather by the selfish and short-sighted policy which guards against immediate danger, than by the wise and honourable foresight which should direct the councils of an enlightened nation when dealing with a people esteemed in every respect their inferiors. He accordingly conceives, that the open preparations for defensive, and, if necessary, for offensive measures, which marked the progress of the army of observation, appeared in the estimation of a rude people as so many acts of designed hostility deliberately marshalled for an attack on their country whenever a convenient opportunity offered. "The same defective apprehension," says this intelligent officer, "which saw no mark of hostility in collecting boats for bridges across a boundary river, and which paid no regard to the effect on a rude people, with more to fear than to hope, of displaying an army with no road before it except that to Lahore, also led the confident English to persevere in despising or misunderstanding the spirit of the disciples of Govind to an extent which almost proved fatal to the continuity of their triumphs. In 1842, the Sikhs were held to be unequal to cope with the Afghans, and even to be inferior in martial qualities to the population of the Jummoo hills. In 1845, the Lahore soldiery was called a 'rabble' in sober official despatches, and although subsequent



CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1845.

Confidence of
an easy vic-
tory.Disregard of
the unanim-
ity of the
Sikhs soldiers.Inefficient
provision of
supplies.Origin of the
Sikhs.

descriptions allowed the regiments to be composed of the yeomanry of the country, the army was still declared to be daily deteriorating as a military body. It is, indeed, certain that English officers and Indian Sepoys equally believed they were about to win battles by marching steadily and by the discharge of a few artillery shots, rather than by skilful dispositions, hard fighting, and a prolonged contest. The English not only undervalued their enemy, but they likewise mistook the form which the long-expected aggressions of the Sikhs would assume. It was not thought that the ministry, or even that the army would have the courage to cross the river in force, and to court an equal contest; the known treasonable views of the chiefs, and the unity and depth of feeling which possessed the troops, were equally disregarded, and it continued to be believed that a desultory warfare would sooner or later ensue, which would require the British to interfere, but which would still enable them to do so at their own convenience. Thus boats for bridges, and regiments and guns, the provocatives to a war, were sufficiently numerous; but food and ammunition, and carriage and hospital stores, such as were necessary for a campaign, were all behind at Delhi or Agra, or still remained to be collected." Thus, at the very time when a soldier was at the head of the Indian government, distinguished for military experience as well as for courage and sound judgment, the army was allowed to take the field in every way worse provided and equipped than had been the case when an inexperienced and rash civilian held the office of governor-general.

It is only now that the peculiar characteristics of the Sikhs is coming to be rightly understood. Their origin is traced back to the sixteenth century, when Narruk and Govind, two Khutree prophets, obtained a few converts to a doctrine of religious and social reform, from among the peasants of Lahore and the southern banks of the Sutledge. It is not necessary here, however, to trace their history further than to remark, that by the time



CHAP. XVIII

A. D. 1845.

Points of
resemblance
to the Mo-
hammedans.Ignorance of
the source of
their revolu-
tions.Faithlessness
of the Seik
rulers.Spirit of the
Seik soldiers.Just cause of
anxiety.

the Seiks came into collision with the British empire in India, they had grown into a powerful nation, bound together not only by social and political ties, but by the still more stringent bonds of a common creed. The history of Mohammedanism furnishes sufficiently striking evidence of the remarkable effects that may result from such a source, and the Seiks, or "disciples," appear to be not a whit behind the zeal of the Arabian prophet's followers in their devotion to the "Khalsa," or chosen people. The powerful influence of such a bond of union can hardly be over-rated, though unfortunately the true character of the Seik nation was completely misunderstood previous to this war; and the source, as well as the spirit, of the continued revolutions which created such alarm on the northern frontiers of British India, entirely escaped the notice of the sagacious diplomatists who conducted our intercourse with that people. It would now seem, that so far from the revolutions and tumults being the evidences of disunion and revolt among that people, they originated in their devotion to the essential elements of their singular polity, while it was the successive rulers who struggled with them and sought alliances with the English that were in reality mutineers and rebels against the state. Ambition, and the desire for unlimited power, overcame in the minds of successive Seik rulers the earlier bonds of good faith as members of the Khalsa, but the very cause of alienation between the rulers and the people, supplied a stronger bond of union to the latter. The soldiery talked of themselves as pre-eminently the "Punt'h Khalsajee," or congregation of believers, and their leaders were awed into submission by the resolute spirit with which they were animated. It was by this united and resolute body that successive revolutions were brought about, and one ruler after another dethroned and put to death. Doubtless such a state of things was well calculated to excite uneasiness among neighbouring states, and might perhaps be justly enough characterized both as fanatic and revolutionary,



according to more civilized notions of social and political compacts. Nevertheless, it was manifestly something altogether different from the mutinies and rebellions of an ordinary army of hireling soldiery, such as has most commonly opposed our arms in the East, where the only bond which secures the services of the soldiery is the prospect of pay and plunder. The aspect of the Seik army, indeed, is one altogether singular, and to a disinterested observer remarkably interesting. The soldiery are seen animated by a lofty spirit of patriotic daring, aided doubtless by the fierce fire of fanatic zeal, while the Seik leaders are frequently found secretly counteracting their brave efforts, and more effectually checking their success than the enemy by whom they are openly opposed. "The object of Lal Sing and Tej Sing," says Captain Cunningham, in describing some of the early proceedings of the Seiks, "was not to compromise themselves with the English by destroying an isolated division, but to get their own troops dispersed by the converging forces of their opponents. Their desire was to be upheld as the ministers of a dependent kingdom by grateful conquerors, and they thus deprecated an attack on Ferozepore, and assured the local British authorities of their secret and efficient good will. But these men had also to keep up an appearance of devotion to the interests of their country, and they urged the necessity of leaving the easy prey of a cantonment untouched, until the leaders of the English should be attacked, and the fame of the Khalsa exalted by the captivity or death of a governor-general. The Seik army itself understood the necessity of unity of counsel in the affairs of war, and the power of the regimental and other committees was temporarily suspended by an agreement with the executive heads of the state, which enabled these unworthy men to effect their base objects with comparative ease. Nevertheless, in the ordinary military arrangements of occupying positions and distributing infantry and cavalry, the generals and inferior commanders acted for themselves,

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1848.

Singular aspect of the Seik army

Lal and Tej Sing.

Double dealing of the Seik leaders.

Wise policy of their army.



CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1845.

Manifestations of enthusiastic zeal.

Ready co-operation of the Seiks.

Superiority to the Sepoys.

First acts of aggression.

and all had to pay some respect to the spirit which animated the private soldiers in their readiness to do battle for the commonwealth of Govind. The effects of this enthusiastic unity of purpose in an army, headed by men not only ignorant of warfare, but studiously treacherous towards their followers, was conspicuously visible in the speediness with which numerous heavy guns and abundance of grain and ammunition were brought across a large river. Every Seik considered the cause as his own, and he would work as a labourer as well as carry a musket; he would drag guns, drive bullocks, lead camels, and load and unload boats with a cheerful alacrity, which contrasted strongly with the inapt and sluggish obedience of mere mercenaries, drilled, indeed, and fed with skill and care, but unwarmed by one generous feeling for their country or their foreign employers." Here, therefore, the Sepoy force, by which so much has been accomplished for British power in India, was opposed by native soldiers, actuated by all the inspiring influences of patriotic feeling, as well as by the wilder fire of fanatic zeal. It was doubly incumbent on British India to lean for safety on the indomitable energy and valour of her European troops, who could alone be safely entrusted to cope with such a foe.

The first acts of aggression were characteristic of the uncivilized race, with whom collision had become inevitable. Intelligence reached Ferozepore, on the 5th of December 1845, that a party of Seiks had crossed the river and carried off fifty of our camels, with which they had retraced their steps, in order to distribute the booty in their own camp. Several parties of their horse continuing on the left bank, it was deemed advisable, on the same day on which this information arrived, to send off a strong force for the purpose of protecting some military stores that were on their way from Dhurumkote to Ferozepore. On the 6th, three days' supplies were ordered to be laid in by the different regiments, and it was supposed that operations against the Seiks would be



CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1848.

Mustering of
the Seiks on
the Sutledge.Harassing
manœuvres.Preparation
of the Seiks
for passing
the river.

commenced without delay. This, however, was not the case, the measure being merely one of precaution. On the 8th, the Seik troops began to appear in large masses on the right bank of the Sutledge, and their numbers, on the two following days, greatly increased: they had a good deal of artillery with them, which they were constantly discharging. From opposite Ferozepore, they occupied the bank of the river as far as Hurreekee ghaut, some thirty-five miles distance, and considerable parties of their cavalry crossed to the left bank, within their own territory, however, and commenced cutting off supplies, in a manner which led to some apprehensions in Ferozepore that their store of firewood and bhoosa might run short. Between the 8th and 11th, thirty more camels were carried off to the other side of the river, making a total of eighty. On the 9th or 10th, the main body that was opposite Ferozepore changed its position, and moved a little up the river towards the Hurreekee ghaut, and a rumour having found its way to Ferozepore on the night of the 10th, that the Seiks were crossing in numbers, the assistant quartermaster-general, Captain Egerton, was directed to reconnoitre early on the following morning. He went, escorted by a squadron of the 8th light cavalry, and on approaching the point at which he expected to find them, he left the escort behind and rode forward with two orderlies. The Seiks were seen to be busy collecting boats about eight miles from Ferozepore, a little beyond our boundary line, and they no sooner perceived Captain Egerton than they fired upon him. It would appear that the men who fired were on the left bank of the river, and only some 600 yards from Captain Egerton. Certain it is that the balls fell around him, and that the moment the firing commenced by the party, the alarm was given in the whole camp, the drums beat to arms, and the whole of the force turned out with great rapidity. It was now evident to all that a Punjaub campaign was inevitable. The whole of the ladies in the governor-general's camp took their depar-



CHAP. XVIII. ^{ture and returned to Umballah, while orders were issued}
A. D. 1845. ^{to troops in all directions to move up with all practicable}
^{haste to the frontier. The governor-general paid a hur-}
^{ried visit to Loodiana on the 11th, and inspected the}
^{troops there, returning afterwards to Sirhind. The Seik}
^{vakeel at Loodiana received his congé, while the Bri-}
^{tish agents at the Lahore court were ordered to withdraw}
^{themselves—a sure sign of coming hostilities. By the}
^{12th, about 10,000 Seiks had crossed the river, with}
^{twenty-seven guns, at a place about twelve miles from}
^{Ferozepore, and on the 13th they were seven miles from}
^{that station, crossing, men and guns, by a bridge of boats,}
^{with great activity and expedition. The ladies at Fero-}
^{zepore were now all sent into the fort for safety, and}
^{an immediate attack was expected.” On the 13th, the}
^{governor-general issued a proclamation, setting forth the}
^{views and objects of the British government, and sum-}
^{moning all the chiefs and sirdars of the protected terri-}
^{tories to render faithful service against the common}
^{enemy.}

Signs of
inevitable
hostilities.

Proclama-
tion of the
governor-
general.

Startling
rumours of
war.

The Indian mail of February 1846, which brought advices from Bombay up to the 2d of the previous month, startled all who sympathized in the fortunes of our Eastern empire, with the news that a great battle had been fought on the banks of the Sutledge, while it left the result in the utmost uncertainty. Rumour immensely exaggerated the number of the Seik forces, and the public mind, still agitated with the recollection of the early reverses in Afghanistan, was thrown anew into a state of feverish excitement by the nature of the information thus imperfectly conveyed.

Defence of
Ferozepore.

Sir John Littler had been left with a body of 7000 men to defend the exposed post of Ferozepore. This was menaced by the overwhelming forces of the Seiks, but the British commander showed a resolute and undaunted front, and boldly led out his little force to give them battle. Had the Seik leaders been as resolutely bent on the defeat and extermination of their opponents as the



faithful Khalsa were, it may be well doubted if all the heroism of this isolated division of the British army would have saved it from destruction. But Lal Sing and Tej Sing were both probably in greater dread of their Seik followers than of their British foes, and regarded the chances of victory with greater dread than the prospect of a defeat, which would disperse the enthusiastic Seiks, who, amid all their fickleness to their leaders, maintained an unimpeachable fidelity to their faith. A battle, however, had become inevitable, and the rumours which conveyed the first uncertain and contradictory reports, magnified the difficulties experienced by the British forces into renewed disasters, if not absolute defeat. Doubts and fears, however, were speedily dissipated by the arrival of well-authenticated news of victory, though purchased at a cost which served to temper the rejoicings at a partial triumph with many fears.

CHAP. XVIII.
A.D. 1845.Vasiliating
policy of the
Seik leaders.

The first battle fought with the Seiks took place on the 18th of December, between the Ambala and Ludhiana divisions of the British army, which had been prudently united by order of Lord Hardinge, and a detachment of the Seik army under Lal Sing. The two armies met at Moodkee, twenty miles from Ferozepore, and the Seiks immediately begun the attack. The whole forces under Lord Gough amounted to about 11,000, while the Seiks were estimated at 30,000 men, with forty guns. This estimate, however, appears to have greatly exaggerated their number, and Captain Cunningham even inclines to doubt if they much exceeded the British in numbers. The Seiks were repulsed with severe loss, and seventeen of their guns were taken; but the British learned in the battle of Moodkee the valour of the enemy they had to contend with. The forces of Lord Gough, already too few, were reduced by a loss of 215 killed and 657 wounded; among the former of whom were Major-generals Sir Robert Sale and Sir John McCaskill. The commander-in-chief remarks in his despatch: "The troops were in a state of great exhaustion, principally

Battle of
Moodkee.Relative
numbers of
the forces
engaged.Severe loss of
the victors.