



CHAP. XVIII. from the want of water, which was not procurable on the road, when, about three P.M., information was received that the Seik army was advancing; and the troops had scarcely time to get under arms, and move to their positions, when the fact was ascertained. I immediately pushed forward the horse artillery and cavalry, directing the infantry, accompanied by the field batteries, to move forward in support. We had not proceeded beyond two miles when we found the enemy. They evidently had either just taken up this position, or were advancing in order of battle against us. To resist their attack, and to cover the formation of the infantry, I advanced the cavalry under Brigadiers White, Gough, and MacTier, rapidly to the front, in columns of squadrons, and occupied the plain. They were speedily followed by the five troops of horse artillery, under Brigadier Brooke, who took up a forward position, having the cavalry then on his flanks. The country is a dead flat, covered at short intervals with a low, but, in some places, thick jhow jungle, and dotted with sandy hillocks. The enemy screened their infantry and artillery behind this jungle, and such undulations as the ground afforded; and, whilst our twelve battalions formed from echelon of brigade into line, opened a very severe cannonade upon our advancing troops, which was vigorously replied to by the battery of horse artillery under Brigadier Brooke, which was soon joined by the two light field batteries. The rapid and well-directed fire of our artillery appeared soon to paralyse that of the enemy; and, as it was necessary to complete our infantry dispositions without advancing the artillery too near to the jungle, I directed the cavalry under Brigadiers White and Gough to make a flank movement on the enemy's left, with a view of threatening and turning that flank, if possible. With praiseworthy gallantry, the 3d light dragoons, with the 2d brigade of cavalry, consisting of the body guard and 5th light cavalry, with a portion of the 4th lancers, turned the left of the Seik army, and, sweeping along the whole

Meeting of
the armies.

Character of
the country.

Tactics of
the British
cavalry.



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Formidable
position of
the Seik
artillery.Resolute
opposition of
the SeiksDriven from
position with
great loss.Experience
acquired by
the victory.

rear of its infantry and guns, silenced for a time the latter, and put their numerous cavalry to flight. Whilst this movement was taking place on the enemy's left, I directed the remainder of the 4th lancers, the 9th irregular cavalry, under Brigadier Mactier, with a light field battery, to threaten their right. This manœuvre was also successful. Had not the infantry and guns of the enemy been screened by the jungle, these brilliant charges of the cavalry would have been productive of greater effect. When the infantry advanced to the attack, Brigadier Brooke rapidly pushed on his horse artillery close to the jungle, and the cannonade was resumed on both sides. The infantry, under Major-generals Sir Harry Smith, Gilbert, and Sir John M'Caskill, attacked in echelon of lines the enemy's infantry, almost invisible amongst wood and the approaching darkness of night. The opposition of the enemy was such as might have been expected from troops who had every thing at stake, and who had long vaunted of being irresistible. Their ample and extended line, from their great superiority of numbers, far outflanked ours; but this was counteracted by the flank movements of our cavalry. The attack of the infantry now commenced, and the roll of fire from this powerful arm soon convinced the Seik army that they had met with a foe they little expected. Their whole force was driven from position after position with great slaughter, and the loss of seventeen pieces of artillery, some of them of heavy calibre; our infantry using that never-failing weapon, the bayonet, whenever the enemy stood. Night only saved them from worse disaster, for this stout conflict was maintained during an hour and a half of dim starlight, amidst a cloud of dust from the sandy plain which yet more obscured every object."

The experience acquired by this victory taught the British leaders the necessity for bringing every available means to bear against their brave and resolute enemy. When it became evident that the Seiks were marching in force towards the Sutledge, bent on assuming the initia-



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Novel arrangement of the governor-general.

Estimates of the Seik forces.

Their great superiority in artillery.

New position taken up by the Seik army.

tive in the war, Lord Hardinge proceeded to the expected scene of contest, and made the somewhat novel arrangement of tendering his services as an officer to the commander-in-chief, and assuming the position of second in command under his own subordinate. By the arrangements which he effected the largest possible force was placed at the command of Lord Gough, to oppose the Seik invaders. According to the governor-general's despatch, the Seik army, which occupied the intrenched camp at Ferozeshah, amounted to 60,000 men, while the British forces opposed to them did not exceed 17,000 men. Captain Cunningham, however, in his history of the Seiks, altogether questions the evidence of this very great disparity. He states the forces of the enemy as amounting perhaps to 40,000; but he acknowledges that their numbers were further increased by numerous bodies of undisciplined horse, while their artillery included 150 pieces, served with the most desperate valour, as well as with great coolness and skill. "At Ferozeshah," says Captain Cunningham, "the larger calibre and greater weight of metal of the mass of the Seik artillery, and consequently the superiority of practice relatively to that of the field guns of the English, was markedly apparent in the condition of the two parks after the battle. The captured cannon showed scarcely any marks of round shot or shells, while nearly a third of the British guns were disabled in their carriages or tumbrils." Victory achieved against such a force, by an army composed in part of native mercenaries, and dependent for its sustaining energy and perseverance on the British officers and the European troops, composing a minority of its limited numbers, requires no exaggeration to stamp it with the character of a splendid achievement.

The Seik army encamped in the form of a horse-shoe around the village of Ferozeshah, about ten miles from the scene of their partial defeat at Moodkee, and nearly at an equal distance from Ferozepore. On the 21st of December a junction was effected with Sir John



Littler's division, and an immediate attack on the enemy's position was resolved upon; but considerable delay occurred before the arrangements could be completed, and it was within an hour of sunset before the assault was commenced. Captain Cunningham, who fails not in his history to paint the evidences of bravery and military skill displayed by the Seiks, as well as to expose proceedings of their opponents not likely to be detailed in official gazettes, remarks of the proceedings on the evening of the 21st December:—"The confident English had at last got the field they wanted; they marched in even array, and their famed artillery opened its steady fire. But the guns of the Seiks were served with rapidity and precision, and the foot soldiers stood between and behind the batteries, firm in their order, and active with their muskets. The resistance met was wholly unexpected, and all started with astonishment. Guns were dismounted, and their ammunition was blown into the air; squadrons were checked in mid career; battalion after battalion was hurled back with shattered ranks, and it was not until after sunset that portions of the enemy's position were finally carried. Darkness, and the obstinacy of the contest, threw the English into confusion; men of all regiments and arms were mixed together; generals were doubtful of the fact or of the extent of their own success, and colonels knew not what had become of the regiments they commanded, or of the army of which they formed a part. Some portions of the enemy's line had not been broken, and the uncaptured guns were turned by the Seiks upon masses of soldiers oppressed with cold, thirst, and fatigue, and who attracted the attention of the watchful enemy by lighting fires of brushwood to warm their stiffened limbs. The position of the English was one of real danger and great perplexity; their mercenaries had proved themselves good soldiers in foreign countries as well as in India itself, when discipline was little known, or while success was continuous; but in a few hours the five

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An attack
resolved
upon.Unexpected
resistance of
the SeiksConfusion of
the British
forces.Dangerous
and critical
position.



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Moderated
retreat.Causes
assigned for
the victory.Dishearten-
ing condition
of the British
forces.Indomitable
force of Bri-
tish valour.

thousand children of a distant land found that their art had been learnt, and that an emergency had arisen which would tax their energies to the utmost. On that memorable night the English were hardly masters of the ground on which they stood; they had no reserve at hand, while the enemy had fallen back upon a second army, and could renew the fight with increased numbers. The not imprudent thought occurred of retiring upon Ferozepore; but Lord Gough's dauntless spirit counselled otherwise, and his own and Lord Hardinge's personal intrepidity in storming batteries, at the head of troops of English gentlemen and bands of hardy yeomen, eventually achieved a partial success and a temporary repose."

Even the victory of the following day, the candid historian of the Sikhs ascribes fully as much to the faithless pusillanimity of their leaders, as to the skill and valour of the English. The latter were ill provisioned, and suffering from cold and thirst. They were led to the attack on the evening of the 21st, exhausted with fatigue, and unrelieved from hunger and thirst. When night put a temporary close to the action, there was still neither food nor drink to be had, and the exhausted soldiers had to lie down on their arms during that dreadful night, in a state that might well induce the bravest to despond. Even after they were involved in the fearful struggle of the morrow, they were exposed at one time to the most imminent risk from the failure of the artillery ammunition. With every acknowledgment which candour may induce the generous historian to concede, it cannot be questioned that the indomitable valour of British soldiers was never more strongly displayed than on the bloody field of Ferozeshah. Whatever amount of their success may have been really due to the infidelity of the Sikh leaders, the whole procedure of the British commanders was entirely independent, if not in ignorance of it. The most credulous, indeed, could attach little value to the co-operation of men who were



heading an overwhelming force against which victory had already been twice won with such difficulty and severe losses. During the battle, both on the 21st and 22d, the governor-general commanded the left wing of the army, while Lord Gough personally conducted the right.

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The night that intervened between the commencement and the close of the battle of Ferozeshah must have been one of the deepest anxiety to the British commanders ; nor were even the exhausted troops allowed to slumber in peace, where they lay, with their arms at their side, ready with the dawn to renew the bloody struggle.

Pause in the battle of Ferozeshah.

"Night fell," says Lord Gough in his despatch, "while the conflict was everywhere raging. Although I now brought up Major-general Sir Harry Smith's division, and he captured and long retained another part of the position, and her Majesty's 3d light dragoons charged and took some of the most formidable batteries, yet the enemy remained in possession of a considerable portion of the great quadrangle, whilst our troops, intermingled with theirs, kept possession of the remainder, and finally bivouacked upon it, exhausted by their gallant efforts, greatly reduced in numbers, and suffering extremely from thirst, yet animated by an idomitable spirit. In this state of things the long night wore away. Near the middle of it, one of their heavy guns was advanced, and played with deadly effect upon our troops. Sir Henry Hardinge immediately formed her Majesty's 80th foot and the 1st European light infantry. They were led to the attack by their commanding officers, and animated in their exertions by Lieutenant-colonel Wood, who was wounded in the outset. The 80th captured the gun, and the enemy, dismayed by this counter-check, did not venture to press on further. During the whole night, however, they continued to harass our troops by fire of artillery, wherever moonlight discovered our position. But," adds the commander-in-chief, "with daylight came retribution. Our infantry formed in line, supported on both flanks by horse artillery, whilst a fire was opened

Precarious position of the British

Sufferings and losses.

Harassing service during the night.



CHAP. XVIII. from our centre by such of our heavy guns as remained effective, aided by a flight of rockets. A masked battery played with great effect upon this point, dismounting our pieces, and blowing up our tumbrils. At this moment Lieutenant-general Sir Henry Hardinge placed himself at the head of the left, whilst I rode at the head of the right wing. Our line advanced, and, unchecked by the enemy's fire, drove them rapidly out of the village of Ferozeshah and their encampment; then, changing front to its left, on its centre, our force continued to sweep the camp, bearing down all opposition, and dislodged the enemy from their whole position. The line then halted, as if on a day of manœuvre, receiving its two leaders, as they rode along its front, with a gratifying cheer, and displaying the captured standards of the Khalsa army. We had taken upwards of seventy-three pieces of cannon, and were masters of the whole field."

The battle resumed.

Complete success of the British.

Capture of the enemy's cannon.

Opportune victory.

Exhausted state of the victors.

The victory was most opportune, and might well fill the minds of all with joy and gratitude. Nevertheless, though a complete, it was not a decisive victory. The Seiks had, indeed, been routed and driven from the field. "For twenty-four hours," says Lord Gough in his despatch, "not a Seik has appeared in our front. The remains of the Khalsa army are said to be in full retreat across the Sutledge, or marching up its left bank, towards Hurreekkeeputhur, in the greatest confusion and dismay. Their camp is the scene of the most awful carnage, and they have abandoned large stores of grain, camp equipage, and ammunition." However satisfactory such evidences of flight might be, the narration of the commander-in-chief betrays the fact, that the exhausted victors had been unable to follow in pursuit of the retreating foe, and that the flying Seiks, who might have been scattered, and irretrievably broken by a timely pursuit, had been allowed to cross the Sutledge at their leisure, and to reform on the opposite bank. The loss of the British was very severe. The official despatches state 694 killed



and 1721 wounded, or 2415 in all, amounting to about a seventh of the whole British force in the field. CHAP. XVIII.
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When the details of the victory of Ferozeshah were reported to the British public through the official despatches, the news was received with gloomy forebodings rather than with the wonted exultations that follow in the train of victory. The commander-in-chief's conduct was made the subject of unsparing criticism. He was blamed alike for his ignorance of the formidable condition of the Seik army, and for the hardihood with which he had exposed his army to such fearful odds, and incurred the risk of defeat as well as the certainty of such severe loss as his despatches acknowledged. Even his tactics in the field were freely discussed and censured, and the excited critics seemed disposed to make the British general responsible alike for the bravery of the Seiks, and for his own inferiority in numbers and artillery. The want of proper supplies both of provisions and ammunition was unquestionably an oversight of the gravest nature, though not justly chargeable on the commander-in-chief. From the want of the latter, the British forces were compelled to remain inactive while the Seiks recrossed the Sutledge in great force, and proceeded to construct a bridge-head by which to secure the passage of the river. The commander-in-chief feared to oppose these proceedings of his beaten foe, lest an attack on his part should bring on another general engagement, while they were so deficient in ammunition that their artillery must have been nearly useless, and they were even prevented from attacking some petty forts which still overawed the neighbouring population, and checked the march of convoys and detachments whose approach was so indispensable to them.

Reception of the news of victory.

Unreasonable censures.

Consequences of insufficient supplies.

The battle of Ferozeshah threatened to prove a fruitless victory. By the capture of Dhurm Kot, the safe transit of grain to the army was rendered more secure; but the march of the large convoy of guns, ammunition, and treasure, for want of which the British forces had been compelled to remain inactive, was not accomplished. Difficulties of the conquerors.



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Partial
triumph of
the Seiks.Relief of
Loodiana.Critical
position of
the British
forces.Triumphant
anticipations
of the Seiks.

without a severe skirmish, in which 137 were killed or wounded, and, what was felt still more, several of the British were left prisoners in the hands of the Seiks. "Every beast of burden," says Captain Cunningham, "which had not got within sight of Loodiana, or which had not, timorously but prudently, been taken back to Jugraon, when the firing was heard, fell into the hands of the Seiks, and they were enabled boastfully to exhibit artillery store carts as if they had captured British cannon.

"Loodiana was relieved; but an unsuccessful skirmish added to the belief, so pleasing to the prostrate princes of India, that the dreaded army of their foreign masters had at last been foiled by the skill and valour of the disciples of Govind, the kindred children of their own soil. The British sepoys glanced furtively at one another, or looked towards the east, their home; and the brows of Englishmen themselves grew darker as they thought of struggles rather than triumphs. The governor-general and commander-in-chief trembled for the safety of that siege train and convoy of ammunition, so necessary to the efficiency of an army which they had launched in haste against aggressors, and received back shattered by the shock of opposing arms. Sir Harry Smith, the leader of the beaten brigades, saw before him a tarnished name after the labours of a life, nor was he met by many encouraging hopes of rapid retribution. The Seiks on their side were correspondingly elated; the presence of European prisoners added to their triumph."

The Seiks seemed about to retrieve their losses, and march victorious into the British dominions. Golasb Sing was chosen their leader, and with the unanimity and vigour of determined councils and a definite plan of action, the Khalsa forgot their previous losses and boasted that the British army should be annihilated, or driven in dishonour from the field. But the time was gone when unity in the councils of Seiks could secure their triumph over the conquerors of the East. Sir Harry Smith was



the first to give the check to those who had momentarily tarnished his well-won reputation. With the reinforcements he had received, which raises the forces under his command to 11,000 men, he marched on the 28th of January 1846, determined to give the enemy battle. The commander-in-chief had reinforced him on the 26th both with cavalry and guns, and on the following day he occupied their deserted position. The Seiks retreated about ten miles, towards the banks of the Sutledge, where they were joined by a reinforcement, which raised their forces to fully 15,000 men, and they took up a position, with the village of Aleewal on their left, and threw up banks of earth to protect their line in front, and oppose additional impediments to their assailants. Sir Harry Smith's narrative of the battle which followed is characterised by singular coolness and precision. "As I neared the enemy," he remarks in his despatch, "the ground became most favourable for the troops to manœuvre, being open and hard grass land. I ordered the cavalry to take ground to the right and left by brigades, thus displaying the heads of the infantry columns, and as they reached the hard ground I directed them to deploy into line. Brigadier Godby's brigade was in direct echelon to the rear of the right, the Shekawatte Infantry in like manner to the rear of my left. The cavalry in direct echelon on, and well to the rear of both flanks of the infantry. The artillery massed on the right, and centre and left. After deployment I observed the enemy's left to outflank me, I therefore broke into open columns and took ground to my right: when I had gained sufficient ground, the troops wheeled into line; there was no dust, the sun shone brightly. The manœuvres were performed with the celerity and precision of the most correct field-day. The glistening of the bayonets and swords of this order of battle was most imposing, and the line advanced. Scarcely had it moved forward 150 yards, when, at ten o'clock, the enemy opened a fierce canonade from his whole line. At first his balls fell short, but quickly reached

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A. D. 1846.Operations of
Sir Harry
Smith.Position of
the Seiks at
Aleewal.Manœuvring
of the British
forces.Coolness in
presence of
the enemy.



CHAP. XVIII. us. Thus upon him, and capable of better ascertaining
A D. 1846. his position, I was compelled to halt the line, though
under fire, for a few moments, until I ascertained that by
bringing up my right and carrying the village of Aleewal,
I could with great effect precipitate myself upon his left
and centre."

Capture of
the village.

The capture of the village proved an easier task than
was anticipated. The holders of the post speedily gave
way before the determined charge of the British brigades.
The Seiks stood their ground on the field, however, with
the most resolute valour, and even threatened at one
time to out-flank the right wing of the British. "The
enemy," says Sir Harry Smith, "fought with much resolu-
tion; they maintained frequent rencounters with our
cavalry hand to hand. In one charge of infantry upon
Her Majesty's 16th lancers, they threw away their mus-
kets, and came on with their swords and targets against
the lance." But their brave resistance proved unavailing.
They made several ineffectual attempts to rally but at
length were driven across the Sutledge, with immense
loss, and in the utmost confusion and terror. The whole
artillery of the enemy was either captured or destroyed,
52 guns remained in the hands of the victors. The
whole of the Seik camp, baggage, stores of ammunition,
grain, and nearly every thing brought into the field re-
mained as the spoils of the conquerors, and the com-
mander exultingly exclaims in his despatch, "I am
unwont to praise when praise is not merited, and I here
must avowedly express my firm opinion and conviction
that no troops in any battle on record ever behaved more
nobly."

Valour of
the Seiks.

Their total
defeat.

Importance
of the victory
of Aleewal.

The victory of Aleewal was one of the most important
that has ever been gained by the British forces in India.
The number engaged was indeed comparatively small.
But the effect of this opportune defeat of the Seiks, at
the very time when they were rejoicing in united coun-
cils and exulting in anticipated victory, completely over-
threw their whole schemes. Golab Sing instead of



attempting to rally his defeated forces upbraided them with the rashness and folly of hoping to overcome the conquerors of India, and immediately opened negotiations with the English commander. Another battle, however, had to be fought, and another victory won, before the British conquerors could dictate terms to the hardy and resolute race whom they encountered on the northern boundaries of British empire in the East. The terms offered by the British leaders in reply to the negotiations of Golab Sing were such as must be acknowledged to afford reasonable evidence of the integrity of their motives in entering on the contest. They disclaimed all desire of annexation or conquest, and intimated their readiness to acknowledge a Seik sovereignty in Lahore, so soon as the army should be disbanded. But, however reasonable and even generous such terms might appear to those that dictated them, they struck at the very root of the Khalsa's dreams of supremacy and integrity, and if the historian of the Seiks is to be relied upon, the battle of Sobraon, which followed these abortive negotiations, was fought with a perfect understanding with the faithless rajah, that in case of British arms being once more victorious, the Seik army should be openly abandoned by its own government, and that the victors should pass the Sutledge unchecked, and march without opposition to the capital. The conditional terms of a negotiation thus mutually agreed upon by belligerent leaders, preparatory to once more appealing to the arbitration of battle, are probably unparalleled in the history of ancient or modern warfare. They suffice, however, to show the singular footing on which our vast Eastern empire rests, and how difficult it is to judge of the proceedings of those to whom its conduct is committed, or by whom its progress is opposed, according to any standard of European policy.

The Seiks, meanwhile, were not wanting in preparation for renewing the contest. The brilliant achievement of Sir Harry Smith's division at Aleewal, had been conducted with an amount of boldness, caution, and military

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Negotiations
opened by
Golab Sing.Reasonable
terms offer-
ed by the
British.Singular
negotiations
which pre-
ceded the
battle of
Sobraon.Preparations
of the Seiks.



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Moral effect
of Sir Harry
Smith's vic-
tory.

Necessity for
prompt mea-
sures.

The uncondi-
tional sub-
mission of
the Sikh
chiefs indis-
pensable to
peace.

skill, worthy of a brave and experienced commander, and it had been productive of the happiest effects on British interests in India, nevertheless it was only the victory of a division. Its moral effect in confirming the courage and high faith in the destiny of British arms of the one party, and in moving the opposite party to despondency and dread, was doubtless great. Fortune had deserted the Khalsa. Defeat and subjection already depended over them, and divided councils were hurrying on their fate. A decisive victory was, however, still needed, ere the British could force the passage of the Sutledge, and become masters of the Punjaub. Prompt measures were indispensably required. "To subjugate the Punjaub in one season, by force of arms, was a task of difficult achievement and full of imminent risks. The dominion of the English in India hinges mainly upon the number and efficiency of the troops of their own race which they can bring into the field. But besides this, it was felt that the minds of men throughout India were agitated, and that protracted hostilities would not only jeopardize the communications with the Jumna, but might disturb the whole of the north-western provinces, swarming with a military population which is ready to follow any standard affording pay or allowing plunder, and which already sighs for the end of a dull reign of peace. Bright visions of standing triumphant on the Indus and of numbering the remotest conquests of Alexander among the provinces of Britain, doubtless warmed the imagination of the governor-general; but the first object was to drive the Sikhs across the Sutledge by force of arms, or to have them withdrawn to their own side of the river by the unconditional submission of the chiefs and the delegates of the army; for, until that were done, no progress could be said to have been made in the war, and every petty chief in Hindostan would have silently prepared for asserting his independence, or for enlarging his territory on the first opportunity." This critical state of things in our Indian empire has long been felt by the few earnest



thinkers, on whom the false glare of military glory exercises no blinding influence. Even the short-sighted policy of self-interested motives has sufficed to awaken the Home Directory to a sense of it; and for many years each successive governor has been warned against any further aggressive movements, or the annexation of additional domains to the already unwieldy empire which owns our sway. It is easier, however, to dictate a theory of policy, than to control the events by which it must ultimately be modified. Some of the later wars have perhaps been justly characterized as aggressive, notwithstanding the necessity which frequently compelled the first movements which were thought to render the rest indispensable to the safety of our former possessions, but others of them were reluctantly begun, and only boldly and effectively carried on as the safest and swiftest means of preventing their recurrence.

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General conviction of the necessity for consolidation in India.

Difficulty of carrying out this policy.

While Sir Harry Smith was manœuvring his division, and the indispensable reinforcements were being brought up from the rear, the main body of the Seiks had been no less active in their preparations for the final struggle. They had gradually brought the greater part of their available force into an intrenched camp formed on the left bank of the Sutledge, and which comprised within its irregular ramparts the whole possessions they still held by force of arms in the British dominions. Their force was estimated at 35,000 fighting men, though Captain Cunningham inclines to think that such an estimate greatly exceeds the truth. He adds, moreover, that their works exhibited marked evidence of a want of unity of design, the soldiers doing every thing and the leaders nothing. It is probable, however, that in this the candid historian of the Seiks ascribes to want of unity of purpose what should rather be ascribed only to imperfect knowledge and inferior skill. It was hardly to be expected that an experienced military engineer, as he is known to be, should find in the Seik intrenchments a satisfactory display of engineering skill, even although

Active preparations of the Seiks.

Number of the Seiks.

Defective nature of their works



CHAP. XVIII. there were European officers of acknowledged experience

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Their despondency.

and great bravery in command of some of their divisions. But the defeat at Aleewal, which had proved so welcome and so important in its results to the British, had a corresponding depressive effect on the Seiks. Some of the older and more experienced Seik chiefs looked forward with sad forebodings to the approaching contest, and one favourite leader, Sham Sing, announced to the desponding Khalsa his resolution to meet death in the foremost ranks that engaged with the enemy, and so to offer himself up as a sacrifice on behalf of the sacred commonwealth, threatened with such impending danger.

Confidence in the British camp.

Confidence and joyful anticipations of triumph prevailed throughout the British camp. The victory of Aleewal had restored the faith of the Sepoys in the fortune of British arms, while the European forces exulted in the anticipation of victory. Substantial grounds of confidence had meanwhile been supplied by the arrival of the heavy ordnance, with abundant ammunition and stores. The obstacles which had impeded their earlier operations, and made victory so difficult and so hardly won, no longer existed to check the bold advance of the British forces, or the daring impetuosity of the commander-in-chief. The 10th of February, only twelve days after the victory of Aleewal, was fixed for storming the Seik position, and driving them beyond the river. Through indifference or neglect, the British had allowed a post of observation of some importance to fall into the hands of the Seiks, and the surprising of this was determined upon as the first proceeding. Long before dawn, the whole British camp was in motion, and an advanced party was ordered to drive in the enemy's pickets. The additional gloom of a thick haze added to the darkness of the night, as the British forces silently advanced to assume the initiative in the contest, but the posts of observation, both at the Sobraon and in front of Koodeewalla, were found unoccupied, though held by a strong force on the previous day. The Seiks were every where

Arrival of heavy ordnance and abundant supplies.

Preparations for storming the Seik position.



taken by surprise, and beat loudly to arms throughout their wide intrenchments on both sides of the river. The English heavy ordnance had been arranged in masses on some of the most commanding points opposite the enemy's intrenchments, and at sunrise the batteries opened upon them. For three hours the deadly shower of iron hail poured down upon the Seik forces within their intrenchments, mingled with the more deadly shells, that scattered death on every side as they fell. But the Seik intrenchments bristled with the heavy ordnance which had told so effectively against the light fieldpieces that formed the sole British artillery in the earlier engagements, and the sun's level rays hardly pierced through the clouds of sulphurous smoke that loomed over the scene of deadly strife. "Our battery of nine-pounders," says the commander-in-chief in his despatch, "opened near the little Sobraon, with a brigade of howitzers formed from the light field batteries and troops of horse artillery, shortly after daybreak. But it was half-past six before the whole of our artillery fire was developed. It was most spirited and well directed; but notwithstanding the formidable calibre of our iron guns, mortars, and howitzers, and the admirable way in which they were served, and aided by a rocket battery, it would have been visionary to expect that they could, within any limited time, silence the fire of seventy pieces behind well-constructed batteries of earth, plank, and fascines, or dislodge troops covered either by redoubts or epaulements, or within a treble line of trenches. The effect of the cannonade was, as has since been proved by an inspection of the camp, most severely felt by the enemy; but it soon became evident that the issue of this struggle must be brought to the arbitrement of musketry and the bayonet. At nine o'clock, Brigadier Stacey's brigade, supported on either flank by Captains Horsford's and Fordyce's batteries, and Lieutenant-colonel Lane's troop of horse artillery, moved to the attack in admirable order. The infantry and guns aided each other correlatively.

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Surprise of the Seiks.

Deadly effect of the heavy artillery.

Powerful batteries of the Seiks.

Charge of British brigades.



CHAP. XVIII. The former marched steadily on in line, which they halted only to correct when necessary. The latter took up successive positions at the gallop, until at length they were within three hundred yards of the heavy batteries of the Seiks; but, notwithstanding the regularity, and coolness, and scientific character of this assault, which Brigadier Wilkinson well supported, so hot was the fire of cannon, musketry, and zumboorucks, kept up by the Khalsa troops, that it seemed for some moments impossible that the intrenchments could be won under it; but soon persevering gallantry triumphed, and the whole army had the satisfaction to see the gallant Brigadier Stacey's soldiers driving the Seiks in confusion before them within the area of their encampments." The resistance of the Seiks was terrible. The deadly fire of their muskets and well-served artillery, mowed down the advancing lines of the British, and compelled them to give way. The first assailants were repulsed, but they rallied and returned to the charge, and, supported by the advance of the second division, after a severe struggle, they obtained possession of some of the enemy's most important batteries in the front. Still the Seiks stood their ground. No panic seized these hardy enthusiasts, though thus assailed within their own intrenchments. One point after another was forced. The sappers levelled spaces sufficient for the cavalry to pour into their camp, and sustain the efforts of the infantry who had borne the brunt of the deadly struggle. But still the Seiks fought with all the wild fury of despair. Single batteries still held out, and hundreds fell in the attempt to arrest their persevering efforts to retrieve the hopeless fortunes of the Khalsa. "The interior," says Captain Cunningham, "was filled with courageous men, who took advantage of every obstacle, and fought fiercely for every spot of ground. The traitor, Tej Sing, indeed, instead of leading fresh men to sustain the failing strength of the troops on his right, fled on the first assault, and, either accidentally or by design, sank a boat in the middle of the bridge of com-

A. D. 1846.

Coolness of their advance.

Their partial success.

Terrible resistance of the Seiks.

Desperate struggle for their position.



munication. But the ancient Sham Sing remembered his vow ; he clothed himself in simple white attire, as one devoted to death, and calling on all around him to fight for the Gooroo, who had promised everlasting bliss to the brave, he repeatedly rallied his shattered ranks, and at last fell a martyr on a heap of his slain countrymen. Others might be seen standing on the ramparts amid showers of balls, waving defiance with their swords, or telling the gunners where the fair-haired English pressed thickest together. Along the stronger half of the battlements, and for the period of half an hour, the conflict raged sublime in all its terrors. The parapets were sprinkled with blood from end to end ; the trenches were filled with the dead and the dying. Amid the deafening roar of cannon, and the multitudinous fire of musketry, the shouts of triumph or of scorn were yet heard, and the flashing of innumerable swords was yet visible ; or from time to time exploding magazines of powder, threw bursting shells, beams of wood and banks of earth, high above the agitated sea of smoke and flame which enveloped the host of combatants, and for a moment arrested the attention amid all the din and tumult of the tremendous conflict. But gradually each defensible position was captured, and the enemy was pressed towards the scarcely fordable river. Yet, although assailed on either side by squadrons of horse and battalions of foot, no Seik offered to submit, and no disciple of Govind asked for quarter. They everywhere showed a front to the victors, and stalked slowly and sullenly away, while many rushed singly forth to meet assured death by contending with a multitude. The victors looked with stolid wonderment upon the indomitable courage of the vanquished, and forbore to strike when the helpless and the dying frowned unavailing hatred. But the warlike rage, or the calculating policy of the leaders, had yet to be satisfied, and, standing with the slain heaped on all sides around them, they urged troops of artillery almost into the waters of the Sutledge to more thoroughly destroy the army which had

CHAP. XVIII.

A.D. 1843.

Sham Sing
sacrifice.Bloody character of the
conflict.Desperate
bravery of
the Seiks.Fierce policy
of the victors.



CHAP. XVIII. so long scorned their power. No deity of heroic fable
A. D. 1846. received the living within the oozy gulphs of the oppressed stream, and its current was choked with added numbers of the dead, and crimsoned with the blood of a fugitive multitude.

‘Such is the lust of never-dying fame.’

Triumphant
joy of the
victors.

But vengeance was complete ; the troops, defiled with dust and smoke and carnage, stood mute indeed for a moment, until the glory of their success rushing upon their minds, they gave expression to their feelings, and hailed their victorious commanders with reiterated shouts of triumph and congratulation.”

Determined
nature of the
struggle.

Never before had British arms been opposed to such determined bravery and skill, as strove with them on that bloody plain. The deadly struggles which had hung disgrace for a time on the British banners in the passes of Afghanistan, owed their fatal terrors to the natural character of the country, far more than to the bravery of its hardy but undisciplined forces. But here they were withstood on a fair field by a foe that listened unappalled to the thunders of their cannon, and stood unmoved before the glittering points of their bayonets when laid to the charge. Even the brave Seiks, however, sustained by all the nerve that fanaticism can add to native valour, found British skill and daring more than a match for them on an equal field. “At one time,” says the British commander, in his despatch from the field of battle, “the thunder of full 120 pieces of ordnance reverberated in this mighty combat through the valley of the Sutledge ; and as it was soon seen that the weight of the whole force within the Seik camp was likely to be thrown upon the two brigades that had passed its trenches, it became necessary to convert into close and serious attacks the demonstrations with skirmishers and artillery of the centre and right ; and the battle raged with inconceivable fury from right to left. The Seiks, even when at particular points their intrench-

Unexpected
courage of
the foe.

Description
of the battle.



ments were mastered with the bayonet, strove to regain them by the fiercest conflict sword in hand. Nor was it until the cavalry of the left, under Major-general Sir Joseph Thackwell, had moved forward, and ridden through the openings of the intrenchments made by our sappers, in single file, and reformed as they passed them, and the 3d dragoons, whom no obstacle usually held formidable by horse appears to check, had on this day, as at Ferozeshah, galloped over and cut down the obstinate defenders of batteries and field-works, and until the full weight of three divisions of infantry, with every field artillery gun which could be sent to their aid, had been cast into the scale, that victory finally declared for the British. The fire of the Seiks first slackened, and then nearly ceased, and the victors then pressing them on every side, precipitated them in masses over the bridge, and into the Sutledge, which a sudden rise had rendered hardly fordable. In their efforts to reach the right bank, through the deepened water, they suffered from our horse artillery a terrible carnage. Hundreds fell under this cannonade; hundreds upon hundreds were drowned in attempting the perilous passage. Their awful slaughter, confusion, and dismay, were such as would have excited compassion in the hearts of their generous conquerors, if the Khalsa troops had not, in the early part of the action, sullied their gallantry by slaughtering and barbarously mangling every wounded soldier whom, in the vicissitudes of attack, the fortune of war left at their mercy. 67 pieces of cannon, upwards of 200 camel swivels (zumboorucks), numerous standards, and vast munitions of war, captured by our troops, are the pledges and trophies of our victory. The battle was over by eleven in the morning, and in the forenoon I caused our engineers to burn a part and to sink a part of the vaunted bridge of the Khalsa army, across which they had boastfully come once more to defy us, and to threaten India with ruin and devastation."

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1846

Charge of
British
cavalryRetreat of
the Seiks.Dreadful
carnage of
the van-
quished.Trophies of
victory.

The victory was complete; but it was not purchased



CHAP. XVIII. without a severe loss on the part of the victors; 320

A. D. 1846.

Severe loss
of the victors.

British soldiers lay dead on the field, including Major-general Sir Robert Dick, a veteran soldier, who had served with honour in the Peninsula and at Waterloo; Brigadier Taylor, and other distinguished officers, who fell while leading on their men, or recalling them to a sense of their duty, as they recoiled from the deadly fire of the enemy. In addition to these, the British had 2083 wounded, some of them fatally. But the loss of the Seiks did not amount to less than 8000, while they were irretrievably broken and scattered, without hope of again being able to take the field. "We have to deplore a severe loss," says the commander-in-chief, "but certainly not heavy when weighed in the balance against the obstacles overcome and the advantages gained." That same

Passage of
the Sutledge.

night several regiments were pushed across the Sutledge opposite Ferozepore, but no enemy appeared to resist their progress. On the 11th the British forces pushed on to Kusoor, and on the following day its fortress

Occupation
of Kusoor.

was occupied by them without opposition. On the 13th the British army encamped under the walls of that ancient town. They learned there that the Seiks had re-assembled to the amount of 20,000 men; but they were no longer formidable to the victorious invaders of the Punjaub. Their whole artillery and munitions of war were in the hands of the enemy. The power of the

The power of
the Seiks
effectually
broken.

Khalsa was effectually broken, and no force of innate courage or fanatic zeal could replace to it the indefensible provisions for continuing the struggle, or even restoring the confidence which had before nerved them to the fight, and upheld them with the hope of victory even after repeated defeats.

Declaration
of British
policy.

The official proclamation of the governor-general, issued only four days after the victory of Sohraon, contains both a declaration and a defence of British policy. It thus proceeds to announce, and to justify the course pursued under the immediate surveillance of the governor-general, who had combined in so unwonted a man-



ner the duties of the civilian and the soldier. "The British army has crossed the Sutledge, and entered the Punjab. The governor-general announces by this proclamation that that measure has been adopted by the government of India, in accordance with the intentions expressed in the proclamation of the 13th of December last, as having been forced upon the governor-general for the purpose of 'effectually protecting the British provinces, for vindicating the authority of the British government, and for punishing the violators of treaties and the disturbers of the public peace.' These operations will be steadily persevered in and vigorously prosecuted, until the objects proposed to be accomplished are fully attained. The occupation of the Panjaub by the British forces will not be relinquished until ample atonement for the insult offered to the British government by the infraction of the treaty of 1809, and by the unprovoked invasion of the British provinces, shall have been exacted. These objects will include full indemnity for all expenses incurred during the war, and such arrangements for the future government of the Lahore territories as will give perfect security to the British government against similar acts of perfidy and aggression. Military operations against the government and army of the Lahore state have not been undertaken by the government of India from any desire of territorial aggrandizement. The governor-general, as already announced in the proclamation of the 13th of December, 'sincerely desired to see a strong Seik government re-established in the Punjab, able to control its army, and to protect its subjects.' The sincerity of these professions is proved by the fact, that no preparations for hostilities had been made when the Lahore government suddenly, and without a pretext of complaint, invaded the British territories. The unprovoked aggression has compelled the British government to have recourse to arms, and to organize the means of offensive warfare, and whatever may now befall the Lahore state, the consequences can alone be attributed to the

[HAP. XVIII.]

A. D. 1846.

Proclamation
of the com-
mander-in-
chief.Ample
atonement
required.Defence of
British
policy.Responsa-
bility of the
Seiks for the
consequences
of the war.



CHAP. XVIII. misconduct of that government and its army. No extension of territory was desired by the government of India ; the measures necessary for providing indemnity for the past and security for the future will, however, involve the retention by the British government of a portion of the country hitherto under the government of the Lahore state. The extent of territory which it may be deemed advisable to hold will be determined by the conduct of the durbar, and by considerations for the security of the British frontier. The government of India will, under any circumstances, annex to the British provinces the districts, hill and plain, situated between the rivers Sutledge and Beas, the revenues thereof being appropriated as a part of the indemnity required from the Lahore state."

Foreed
extension of
territory,

Limits of
annexation.

Candid
estimate of
British
policy.

Its unsuita-
bleness for
the Seiks.

The earnest
defence of
British
policy.

From the sketch we have already drawn of the singular religious commonwealth of the Seiks, the reader will readily perceive that, however consistent with sound policy and the just claims of the victors the proposed terms might appear, they were dictated without any reference to the peculiar consistency of the Seik commonwealth, if not indeed in ignorance of the peculiar features on which it was based. For the British governor-general to dictate terms by which a government might be established in the Punjaub capable of controlling the Seik army, might not unreasonably be compared to the liberal offers of the English Edward to Baliol, on condition that he should control the patriot army of Scotland. The defence of British policy, however, lies in the fact that, whoever may be justly chargeable with the initiative in the war, the movements of the British was purely defensive. They desired no accession of territory, and did not seek to interfere in the control of the Seik soldiers, until their revolutionary movements menaced the British frontier, and endangered the peace and safety of the empire. In the conclusion of the same official proclamation, the governor-general thus confidently appeals to the integrity of purpose which had influenced the



whole course of British policy. "The governor-general, CHAP. XVIII.
at this moment of a most complete and decisive victory, A. D. 1846
cannot give a stronger proof of the forbearance and moderation of the British government than by making this declaration of his intentions, the terms and mode of the arrangement remaining for further adjustment. The governor-general, therefore, calls upon all those chiefs Appeal to
who are the well-wishers of the descendants of Runjeet native chiefs.
Sing, and especially such chiefs as have not participated in the hostile proceedings against the British power, to act in concert with him in carrying into effect such arrangements as shall maintain a Seik government at Lahore, capable of controlling its army and protecting its subjects, and based upon principles that shall provide for the future tranquillity of the Seik states, shall secure the British frontier against a repetition of acts of aggression, and shall prove to the whole the moderation and justice of the paramount power of India. If this opportunity of Alternative
rescuing the Seik nation from military anarchy and mis- in case of
rule be neglected, and hostile opposition to the British renewed
army be renewed, the government of India will make hostilities.
such other arrangements for the future government of the Punjaub as the interests and security of the British power may render just and expedient."

If the Seik soldiers did not acquiesce in the justice of Submission of
British policy, which dictated the necessity for a supreme the Seik
and independent power by which their future motions soldiers.
would be controlled and kept in check, they at least acknowledged the right of dictation which victory had placed in the conquerors of Sobraon. They agreed to authorize their chosen minister, Golab Sing, to treat with the British, and empowered him to concur in arrangements on the basis announced in the proclamation, of recognizing a Seik government in Lahore.

On the 15th of February, the governor-general was Interview of
visited at Kussoor by the rajah and several of the most the Seik
influential Seik chiefs, to whom he stated the terms upon chiefs with
which he was willing to conclude a peace. These in- the gover-
nor-general.



CHAP. XVIII. cluded the recognition of Dhuleep Sing as sovereign of

A. D. 1846.

Dhuleep Sing
sovereign of
Lahore.

Reasons for
exact-
ing humili-
ating
terms.

Occupation
of the citadel
of Lahore.

Selfish policy
of Golab
Sing.

Impartial
estimate of
proceedings.

Lahore, but required the cession of the country between the Beas and the Sutledge, as specified in the proclamation. They were likewise required to pay to the conquerors a million and a half sterling, as some indemnity for the expenses of the war. The governor-general was induced to dictate humiliating terms, in order that the full conviction of the supremacy and invincibility of British arms might be felt wherever rebellious thoughts had been cherished, among the allies or the dependents of our Indian empire. After vain endeavours to evade some of the most unpalatable requirements, the Seik chiefs reluctantly accepted the offered terms, and the young rajah personally tendered his submission. Still more effectually to demonstrate how effectually the Khalsa was humbled under the supremacy of their conquerors, the British army entered Lahore on the 20th February, and, two days afterwards, an English garrison occupied the citadel of the Seik capital.

In the arrangements which followed, Golab Sing contrived that his own interests should be advanced, however those of the great body of the disciples of Govind might suffer. His influence with the Seik forces, and his own wealth both in treasure and munitions of war, rendered him still formidable, should he be driven, by the exacting demands of his conquerors, to fall back on the support of the Seiks. Captain Cunningham thus narrates this part of the transactions in the Punjab:—"The low state of the Lahore treasury, and the anxiety of Lal Sing to get a dreaded rival out of the way, enabled the governor-general to appease Golab Sing in a manner sufficiently agreeable to the rajah himself, and which still further reduced the importance of the successor of Runjeet Sing. The rajah of Jummoo did not care to be simply the master of his native mountains; but as two-thirds of the pecuniary indemnity required from Lahore could not be made good, territory was taken instead of money, and Cashmeer and the hill states from the Beas to the Indus



were cut off from the Punjaub Proper, and transferred to Golab Sing, as a separate sovereign, for a million of pounds sterling. The arrangement was a dexterous one, if reference be only had to the policy of reducing the power of the Seiks; but the transaction scarcely seems worthy of the British name and greatness, and the objections become stronger when it is considered that Golab Sing had agreed to pay sixty-eight lacs of rupees, (£680,000,) as a fine to his paramount, before the war broke out, and that the custom of the East as well as of the West requires the feudatory to aid his lord in foreign war and domestic strife. Golab Sing ought thus to have paid the deficient million of money as a Lahore subject, instead of being put in possession of Lahore provinces as an independent prince. The succession of the rajah was displeasing to the Seiks generally, and his separation was less in accordance with his own aspirations than the ministry of Runjeet Sing's empire; but his rise to sovereign power excited nevertheless the ambition of others, and Tej Sing, who knew his own wealth, and was fully persuaded of the potency of gold, offered twenty-five lacs of rupees for a princely crown and another dismembered province. He was chid for his presumptuous misinterpretation of English principles of action; the arrangement with Golab Sing was the only one of the kind which took place, and the new ally was formally invested with the title of Muharajah at Amritsir, on the 15th March 1846. But a portion of the territory at first proposed to be made over to him was reserved by his masters, the payments required from him were reduced by a fourth, and they were rendered still more easy of liquidation by considering him to be the heir to the money which his brother Soochet Sing had buried in Ferozepore." The author then describes this influential Seik chief, in a note which he appends to the previous narrative: "In the course of this history there has, more than once, been occasion to allude to the unscrupulous character of Rajah Golab Sing; but it must not therefore be

CHAP. XVIII.
A. D. 1846.

Nature of the transaction with Golab Sing.

Its unpopularity with the Seiks.

Golab Sing, invested with the title Muharajah.

His character.



CHAP. XVIII

A. D. 1846.

The standard
by which to
try him.

Spirit of the
Seik soldiery.

Disbanding
of the Seik
army.

Confidence
in their
future des-
tiny

supposed that he is a man malevolently evil. He will, indeed, deceive an enemy and take his life without hesitation, and in the accumulation of money he will exercise many oppressions; but he must be judged with reference to the morality of his age and race, and to the necessities of his own position. If these allowances be made, Golab Sing will be found an able and moderate man, who does little in an idle or wanton spirit, and who is not without some traits both of good humour and generosity of temper."

The spirit of the Seik soldiery, however, was not broken by their reverses, though they had doubtless learned to acknowledge the superiority of British arms. But for such a formidable power to check this enthusiastic soldiery of the creed of Govind, it is difficult to conceive what might ultimately have proved the limits of their conquests. Their partial historian thus describes their deportment in the presence of their conquerors:—"While the governor-general and commander-in-chief remained at Lahore at the head of 20,000 men, portions of the Seik army came to the capital to be paid up and disbanded. The soldiers showed neither the despondency of mutinous rebels nor the effrontery and indifference of mercenaries, and their manly deportment added lustre to that valour which the victors had dearly felt and generously extolled. The men talked of their defeat as the chance of war, or they would say that *they* were mere imitators of unapproachable masters. But amid all their humiliation, they inwardly dwelt upon their future destiny with unabated confidence; and while gaily calling themselves inapt and youthful scholars, they would sometimes add, with a significant and sardonic smile, that the 'Khalsa' itself was yet a child, and that as the commonwealth of Seiks grew in stature, Govind would clothe his disciples with irresistible might and guide them with unequalled skill. Thus brave men sought consolation, and the spirit of progress which collectively animated them yielded with a murmur to the superior genius of England and civiliza-



tion, to be chastened by the rough hand of power, and perhaps to be moulded to noblest purposes by the informing touch of knowledge and philosophy." Such is the account furnished by the partial pen of a generous British soldier, of the hardy insurgents who assailed the north-western frontier of British India, and were thus hardly defeated, after repeated battles under the most undaunted of British generals. British arms were again triumphant. New additions were, temporarily or permanently, annexed to our Indian empire, forced on us by circumstances or necessity. New duties and cares helped to complicate the difficulties of our Indian policy, while sanguine politicians flattered themselves that the long-sought natural boundaries of Hindostan had at length been reached, and that the British soldier might now sheath his sword, unless as the weapon of defensive justice against aggression. What the final results of the first campaign in the Punjaub may yet prove to be, it is vain for the historian to speculate; but the view we have endeavoured to give of the singular race of armed zealots who constitute the Seik commonwealth, is alone sufficient to satisfy the reader that it would be folly to anticipate the reverses of a single campaign could suffice to reduce them to contented subjects, or peaceable and trustworthy allies. A much briefer experience than the least hopeful could have anticipated, served to show on how uncertain a tenure peace could be established with them.

CHAP. XVIII

A. D. 1846.

Reflections
on the issue
of the war.



CHAPTER XIX.

War in Moulton and the Punjab.

Confident anticipations of peace—Sudden outbreak at Moulton—Acquirement of the district by Runjeet Sing—Its original inhabitants—Succession of Lalla Moolraj—Sirdar Khan appointed governor—Assassination of British officers—Alarming conspiracy at Lahore—Prompt measures of Lieutenant Edwardes—Native allies—Siege of Moulton—Junction of General Whish—Fall of Moulton—Battle of Chillianwallah—Doubtful nature of the results—Decisive victory of Gojjerat—Pursuit of the Afghans—Annexation of the Punjab—Consideration of British policy.

CHAP. XIX. THE campaign of 1846 closed with the total rout of the
A. D. 1848. Seiks, and their unequivocal submission to the supremacy
of British arms. The ceded provinces were occupied by
Confident anticipations of peace. British forces, and early in 1848, Viscount Hardinge,
who had returned from the scene of his civil and military
triumphs, declared that all danger of insurrection or disturbance in the Punjab was at an end. No combination of civil and military genius, however, could in so brief a period convert the wild Seiks of the Punjab into peaceable subjects or faithful allies. The Indian Mail of June 1848, once more announced that the note of war had sounded on the north-western frontiers of British India. The locality of renewed aggression and treachery was Moulton, the capital of a large tract of the same name, extending between the Indus and the Sutledge, to
Scene of renewed aggression.



the south of Lahore. The city of Moultan is a place celebrated of old for its great strength. Its more recent history exhibits the Seik not as the patriot defending his native soil, but as the aggressor subjecting neighbouring districts by his sword. After various unsuccessful attempts, extending over a long period, Runjeet Sing succeeded in taking Moultan, though not without immense loss. Here, as in so many other instances in our Indian wars, Britain appears only as a new and stronger power superseding a previous conqueror, whose right of possession is of the sword. The inhabitants of the province of Moultan consist chiefly of Jats, the descendants of the Scythian invaders of India, who offered a fierce resistance to the Mohammedan invaders, and, since their conquest by Mahmood of Ghuzni in 1026, they have repeatedly asserted their independence. Towards the close of last century, this province was nominally dependent on the Afghan empire, between which and Runjeet Sing repeated struggles took place for its possession. After the Seik rajah had been again and again foiled by the Afghan governor, Mozaffer Khan, he at length succeeded, in 1818, more by good fortune than skill, in gaining possession of the long-coveted place of strength, and annexing the province to his kingdom. By the treaty of 1838, Moultan was finally ceded by Shah Sooja to the ruler of the Punjaub, who committed it to the care of Sawan Mull, a subordinate governor, who held it by a species of feudal tenure, administering its affairs as a dependent of the Seik state. Sawan, who is described as a ruler of great ability and moderation, perished by the hands of an assassin in a durbar affray, in September 1844. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Lalla Moolraj, whose name so frequently occurs in the narratives of recent events on the frontiers of British India. Differences occurred between Moolraj and Lall Sing. One of the districts of his government was violently snatched from him by the rajah. Subsequently he was summoned to Lahore to settle his accounts, at all times a complicated and reluc-

CHAP. XIX.

A.D. 1844.

Capture of
Moultan by
Runjeet
Sing.Natives of
the province.Cession of
Moultan to
the Seiks.Lalla Mool-
raj.



CHAP. XIX tant proceeding in the East. He went under British guarantee, effected some sort of settlement, and returned in safety to Moultan; but negotiations were being still carried on, with the object chiefly of bringing the whole Seik kingdom under a uniform mode of government. These it was believed had, at length, been brought to a successful issue. Sirdar Khan Sing was appointed governor, and Mr Vans Agnew, assistant to the British resident at Lahore, was deputed to proceed, along with Lieutenant Anderson, to install the new governor in his office. No opposition was anticipated, and they were attended apparently by a force fit for little more than a guard of honour. The two British officers arrived at Moultan early in April 1848, and received from Lalla Moolraj the formal resignation of his fortress, &c. On the following day, while inspecting the fortress, Mr. Agnew was suddenly assaulted by assassins, and dangerously wounded. He was rescued by the new governor, and conveyed to a small fort outside the town. In the meantime, Lieutenant Anderson had been attacked in like manner, when riding in company with Lalla Moolraj, and was borne to the same fort, severely wounded. There a fire was opened upon them from Moultan, and three days after the Moultanese troops moved out to attack the fort in which they lay. The wounded officers resolved to hold out the fort in hope of relief. They sent out messengers to claim assistance from a neighbouring chief, of Bahawulpore, who retained his allegiance to the British. Had their garrison been faithful, these officers might have been able to maintain the fort till effectual aid reached them; but the Seik troops within joined the assailants without, and, flinging open the gates, both Lieutenant Anderson and Mr. Agnew were assassinated while vainly defending themselves against a host of assailants.

Sirdar Khan Sing appointed governor.

Reception by Moolraj.

The British representatives assaulted.

Attempts to maintain their position.

Their assassination.

It was believed for a time that this violent outbreak was entirely referrible to some temporary and accidental misunderstanding with the Seik soldiery, and was unconnected with any organized plan of opposition to esta-



lished rule, or to any designed hostilities with the British. Long experience, however, suffices to prove that the more recent acquisitions of our Eastern empire resemble in their most quiescent state rather the stillness of a powder magazine than the calm of the unvexed sea. A single spark suffices for the explosion, and it is scarcely possible to calculate how far its effects may extend. Amid their most sanguine hopes this was not overlooked by those at the head of affairs in India; but the scene of danger was remote from means of defence or supply, the warm season was at hand, when active operations are scarcely possible, and rumours of the instability of affairs at Lahore, and of the equivocal fidelity of the Rajah Golaub Sing, furnished grounds for the deepest apprehension. The confidence expressed by Viscount Hardinge in the peace of the Punjaub was based doubtless to a considerable extent on the admirable military arrangements made by him previous to his departure. At Lahore these were rendered fully available by the vigilance of the British officers in charge. The troops all along the frontier were commanded to hold themselves in readiness for immediate action. Officers absent on leave were ordered to join their troops without delay, and every precaution was taken to guard against surprise. The wisdom of such precautions soon became apparent. The outbreak at Moulton was followed by the discovery of a conspiracy of the most alarming character at Lahore, having for its object the massacre of all the British officers, the expulsion of our whole troops from the Punjaub, and a revolution in the Seik government. Attempts had been made, not without some slight success, to seduce the Sepoys from their allegiance. On the discovery of this, the British resident, Sir Frederick Currie, directed certain native officers, whose fidelity could be relied upon, to fall in with the plans of the conspirators, by which means the whole plot was disclosed. Three native corps, it was found, had been tampered with, but only a small number of the men had yielded to the temptations by which they

CHAP. XIX.

A.D. 1848.

Precarious
peace of
India.Grounds for
confident
expectation
of peace.Precautions
adopted.Alarming
conspiracy
at Lahore.Mode of its
disclosure.



CHAP. XIX

A. D. 1848.

Extent of
the plot.False confidence of Lord
Hardinge.Lieutenant
Edwardes.Faithlessness
of Dewan
Khan Sing.Maharaj
Sing.Lieutenant
Edwardes on
the Indus.

were assailed. Undoubted proofs, however, were discovered of persons of the highest rank being privy to the plot, by whom the fakeers had been employed to use their influence over the Sepoys in seducing them from their fidelity. It was at the very time that the Indian papers were filled with the accounts of this abortive conspiracy at Lahore, that the mail from England reported the speech of Viscount Hardinge, in which he stated "he had no apprehension for the tranquillity of the Punjab!" So impossible is it for the most experienced statesman to anticipate the changes which a few months may effect on the state of our Eastern empire.

The indomitable courage and skill of a British officer of youth and inexperience, sufficed at this critical juncture to do more for the safety of the British empire than all the experience and foresight of the civil and military rulers of India. It speedily became apparent that the zeal of Dewan Khan Sing, in the defence of the unfortunate British officers deputed to accompany him to his new government, was altogether assumed, and that he was in league with the conspirators in Lahore and elsewhere, by whom a scheme had been matured for overpowering the British, and expelling them from the country. In the neighbourhood of Lahore, a Gooroo, or priest, named Maharaj Sing, had raised the standard of revolt, and speedily collected a numerous force of the disbanded Seiks, among whom he enjoyed a reputation for great sanctity. By this means the British forces at Lahore were prevented attempting any movement upon Moulton, and every successive mail brought news of fresh difficulties or alarms, tending still further to confound the speculations of the most experienced politicians as to the extent, or probable issue, of this new revolution in the Punjab. At this time Lieutenant Edwardes was stationed on the Indus with a force consisting only of one regiment of infantry and 300 sowars, with two guns. His duty was the collection of the land-tax due to Moolraj, and the occupation of Leiah, a town situated on the



left bank of the Indus. "Hearing of the affair at Moul-
tan, and finding himself exposed to risk, many of his
Seik soldiers deserting him on learning the rumour of a
general rising, he crossed the river into the Deerajat,
whence he wrote to the Khan of Bhawulpore, to make a
demonstration which should prevent Moolraj from exe-
cuting any design against him or Colonel Cortlandt, who
commanded the garrison of Dhera Ismael Khan. The
Khan lost no time in making preparations to act. A
party of 300 horse had been left by Lieutenant Edwardes
to complete the collection of the revenue at Leiah, where
they were attacked, on the 18th of May, by 400 Moul-
tan horse, with ten zumbooruks (light field-guns), who were
completely defeated, with the loss of their guns. Mean-
while, Colonel Cortlandt, with his force, amounting to
about 4000 men, quitted Dhera Ismael Khan, and pro-
ceeded to the southward by the base of the mountains,
being joined on his way by a Beloochee chief named
Melah Khan, with 100 of his tribe, who were sent to take
the fortress of Sunghur, a place to the west of Attock,
which surrendered after six hours' fighting, the garrison
retreating upon Moul-
tan. Another Beloochee chief, named
Kora Khan Khosa, soon after joined the colonel, who de-
spatched him with 800 of his tribe, horse and foot, against
the fort of Dhera Ghazee Khan, the second city in the
province. The Beloochee chief seems to have executed
his orders with great zeal, expedition, and success. He
marched his men along the skirt of the hills, sending for-
ward a messenger to the commandant of the fort with a
summons to give it up. The Seiks, however, resolved to
fight for the place. They went out to give battle, and
were defeated; the fort was surrendered, and the karder
slain. Colonel Cortlandt (who appears to have expected
that the Beloochees would have only amused the garrison)
found the business over when he came up. He occu-
pied the town, where Lieutenant Edwardes joined him on
the 20th of May, and on the morning of that day another
engagement took place between the British forces and

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A. D. 1842

Fidelity of
the Khan of
Bhawulpore.Defeat of
Moul-
tan
horse.

Native allies

Attack of the
fort of Dhera
Ghazee
Khan.Capture of
the fort by
the Beloo-
chees.



- CHAP. XIX. the Moulthanese insurgents, who were routed with great slaughter, their chief, Chatur Mull, being killed, and another chief, Lunga Mull, taken prisoner."
- A. D. 1848.
- Junction of Edwardes' and Cortlandt's forces.
- Censures of the press.
- Anticipations of easy victory.
- Strength of Moulthan.
- Influence of success on native alliance.
- Lieutenant Edwardes effected a junction with Colonel Cortlandt's forces, by which a body of about 7000 men was placed under their joint command. With this force considerable success was achieved, and it was confidently anticipated for a time that these young officers, at the head of such a small and irregular force, were to bring the rebellion summarily to a close, and re-annex Moulthan to the Punjab, ere the British resident or the commander-in-chief could adopt any definite line of policy for the suppression of this unexpected outbreak. The press as usual were as severe in their criticisms on the tardy operations of the commander-in-chief, as they afterwards were on his supposed rashness and indiscretion. The "Friend of India" censured in the severest terms "the tame conduct of the chief authorities," and predicted that there would be no Moulthan laurels but for Edwardes and Cortlandt. None more worthy indeed could be achieved. The gallant lieutenant, now advanced to the rank of a major, led the British troops and their allies under the very walls of Moulthan, after twice defeating a force greatly superior to them in numbers. But the fortifications of Moulthan were such as bad defiance to the efforts of an irregular force, with no other artillery than a few light field-pieces. Major Edwardes at once perceived his inability to make the slightest impression on the fortress with the troops under his command, and he accordingly despatched a messenger to the British resident at Lahore, for reinforcements and heavy artillery. Meanwhile the position of the British force in the neighbourhood of Moulthan was somewhat critical. The hold he had upon his native allies had owed much of its force to his own tact and the success which had hitherto attended his operations; and to the latter cause also may be ascribed the successive junction of Shere Sing and other Seik chiefs, at the head of about 10,000 men.



Such allies, however, were a source of far more apprehension than confidence to Major Edwardes. Many of the Seiks were known to be disaffected, and he was obliged to watch their camp, situated about a mile from his own, with scarcely less jealousy than that of Moolraj. His suspicions of his Seik allies proved only too well founded. Their defection speedily turned the scale against him, and he was obliged to take up a new position, at a much greater distance from the stronghold of Moolraj. But though it was no longer to be hoped for that the gallantry of this British officer would prove sufficient to counteract the deep-laid plots and machinations of the Seiks, the check he had given at so critical a period was productive of the most important results. Much valuable time was gained. The cautious deliberations of those at the head of affairs were carried on while he held the enemy at bay, and by the time it became obvious that the most decisive measures were indispensable, they were ready to forward to his aid a force capable of coping with such difficulties. On the 21st December 1848, General Whish at length effected a junction with Major Edwardes, in the neighbourhood of Moulton, by which he found himself at the head of an efficient force, amounting to 15,000 British troops, and 17,000 allies, and with 150 pieces of ordnance, nearly half of which were of the largest calibre. The result became no longer doubtful. After one of the most obstinate and gallant defences on the part of the enemy ever recorded in the annals of Indian warfare, the city of Moulton was yielded to the British commander, and its citadel occupied by a British garrison, though not till the principal powder magazine of the defenders, containing nearly a million pounds of powder, had been blown into the air, and their principal granary and stores had been burned.

CHAP. XIX.
A. D. 1848.

Faithlessness
of the Seik
allies.

Important
results of
Lieutenant
Edwardes'
gallant
deeds.

Advance of a
competent
force for the
siege.

When the citadel of Moulton had at length fallen into the hands of the British, one of the first acts of the victors was to pay a graceful though vain tribute to the remains of those who had been the first victims of Seik

Tribute to
the assassinated British
officers.



CHAP. XIX

A.D. 1849.

The burial.

treachery. The proceeding is thus narrated by an officer who bore a part in the sad rites, with which the conquerors sought to repair the wrongs already so signally avenged:—"On the evening of the 26th, I joined in a very pleasing, though melancholy ceremony. The burial-place of Mr. Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson had been discovered, and it was determined to exhume the bodies, and move them to the fort. The grave was opened under the superintendence of one of their most intimate friends, and the bodies were found to be in a sufficient state of preservation to be identified. A carrying and funeral party, with the band of the fusiliers, to which regiment Lieutenant Anderson formerly belonged, attended, with a large portion of the officers in camp, and moved off from the Hedgah, near which the bodies had been found, at five o'clock, and, *entering the fort by the breach*, the coffins were deposited in a grave which had been prepared in the highest part of the fort. The chaplain was in attendance, and read the funeral service in a most impressive manner."

Coincident
operations in
the field.

While the united forces under General Whish were breaching the walls of Moulton, and reducing Moolraj to the desperate position which at length compelled him to capitulate on the 21st of January 1849, and to yield up the ruined city and its shattered but still strong and formidable fortress to the British general, the commander-in-chief had to withstand a still more formidable resistance in the open field. Notwithstanding the dear-bought experience of the former Seik campaign, the commander-in-chief was found at this second outbreak of the turbulent soldiery of the Punjaub fully as unprepared as before. It was not indeed to be expected, that an establishment was to be kept along the banks of the Sutledge, ready to take the field at a moment's notice; still the knowledge acquired of the character and motives of the Seik revolutionists during the previous war, was such as showed the necessity of constant watchfulness and preparation for war, so long as British forces

Unprepared
state of the
British.



occupied any portion of the territory of the disciples of Govind. CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1849.

After the lapse of a considerable period of painful suspense, the Indian Mail of February 1849, brought to England confused rumours of a decisive battle having

Rumours of a battle.

been fought, which successive publications of demi-official information tended only more effectually to clothe with doubt and apprehension. During the interval between the arrival of the succeeding mails in March, the most painful anxiety prevailed. Reports were circulated that the British forces had sustained a total defeat, the most extravagant rumours were believed, and a state of feverish excitement prevailed, which required far more acceptable news than the most flattering narrative could convey of the doubtful victory gained by the British arms on the banks of the Jelum. "Our narrative of the sanguinary battle of Chillianwalla," says the Indian Mail of March 5, 1849, "which, though termed a victory, might by a not very partial historian be described as a defeat, must be compiled from the details furnished by writers on the spot to the various public journals, which are unanimous in their condemnation of the general.

Reports of defeat.

'Not, since the destruction of the garrison of Cabul,' says the Bombay Times, 'has so heavy a catalogue of blunders and misfortunes been carried home from India as that which the present mail conveys; we have, for the first time since 1842, to give particulars of the annihilation of half regiments, from the sheer mismanagement of the commanding officer.' The Bombay Telegraph believes "the opinion to be almost universal, that the terrible slaughter during the engagement is attributable, in a great measure, to the want of forethought, judgment, and tactical skill on the part of the commander."

Dissatisfaction expressed at the result.

Blame attached to Lord Gough.

Lord Hardinge was no longer present to control the impetuous hardihood of Lord Gough, and the public, however willing to overlook the rashest daring when it is successful, are little inclined to charity or even to reason, when it leads to loss or to defeat. Lord Gough had been

Partiality of public opinion.



CHAP. XIX. compelled, as in his former campaign, to manœuvre instead of fight, from the want of an effective force and sufficient supplies. On the 5th of January, the British forces under his command lay encamped at Janiki, within a day's march of the Seik army, under Shere Sing, which had taken up a formidable position at Moong, on the left bank of the Jelum. Lord Gough had at one time intended to wait the fall of Moultan before he attacked the Seiks, but he found reason to dread the unfavourable effects which his inactivity was calculated to exert on that portion of the natives whose co-operation and neutrality depended solely on his success, while it afforded Shere Sing an opportunity of largely augmenting his army. Accordingly, on the 11th of January, the British forces left their encampment at Janiki, and marched in the direction of the Seik camp. Shere Sing's forces were found to be intrenched in a position of great natural strength, which they had still farther secured by works of formidable extent. The commander-in-chief is affirmed to have hastily changed his plan of operations, and to have perilled the safety of the whole British forces by ordering an attack on the enemy's camp about two hours after noon, when it had been previously resolved to defer all active operations till the following day. The ground was impeded with jungle, which concealed the Seik matchlock men, and afforded them an immense advantage. The British forces were compelled to storm batteries at the bayonet's point, most advantageously posted on steep heights, and still farther protected by artificial works. Darkness put an end to the engagement, leaving the British in possession of the field of battle. But their loss had been terrible. Nearly an hundred officers were killed or wounded; 2269 troops, including nearly 1000 Europeans, were disabled, or left dead on the field, while whole troops had been compelled to give way before the determined front of the enemy, and the deadly fire of their artillery. Such a questionable victory sufficed to overshadow the triumphs

Position of
the Seik
army.

Sudden
change of
plan by
Lord Gough.

Formidable
nature of the
Seik camp.

Severe loss of
the British.



at Moulton, and to increase the anxiety and apprehension with which the overland mail was anticipated in England.

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A. D. 1849.

Meanwhile the fall of Moulton had released a large body who were pressing forward to reinforce the army of Lord Gough, while the total inaction of Shere Sing proved that the bloody field of Chillianwallah had paralyzed the movements of the Seiks even more than it had crippled the available resources and damped the exulting anticipations of the British.

Reinforcements consequent on the fall of Moulton.

Victory, however, had not deserted the British arms in India. Another interval of feverish suspense elapsed, and then came the unofficial reports, followed after a comparatively brief interval by the despatches of the commander-in-chief, announcing the triumph of Goojerat. The Seik army estimated at 60,000 men, with fifty-nine pieces of artillery, and a powerful auxiliary force of Afghan cavalry, had been completely routed. "Their ranks broken; their position carried; their guns, ammunition, camp-equipage, and baggage, captured; and their flying masses driven before the victorious pursuers from mid-day to dusk." Fifty-three pieces of artillery left in the hands of the victors, along with the camp, baggage, magazines, and a vast store of ammunitions, abandoned by the flying Seiks, abundantly testified to the triumph which had at length dissipated the apprehensions of thousands, who waited with anxious dread the announcement of the first despatch that should narrate the proceedings subsequent to the dear-bought field of Chillianwallah.

Victory of Goojerat.

Spills of the victors.

The victory of Goojerat proved to be complete and decisive. Once more the van of the British army had maintained its ground on this remote border of British India until reinforcements could be brought up, and supplies forwarded to the point of attack, and then trying the strength of the opposing power on a well-fought field, victory had unequivocally declared for the conquerors of the East. The fruits of this battle were the entire surrender of the Seik army, including their com-

Decisive character of the victory.



CHAP. XIX. mander, Rajah Shere Sing, his father, Chuttur Sing, his
A. D. 1849. brothers, and most of the principal Seik sirdars and
chiefs. Forty-one pieces of artillery, the whole that re-
mained uncaptured by the British, were at the same
time unconditionally surrendered, and the remains of the
conquered army, to the number of 16,000 Seik soldiers,
laid down their arms in the presence of the British
troops. The principal scene of this act of surrender by
the vanquished was a place called Hoormuk, at one of
the principal fords of the river, across which their
broken ranks had fled in dismay before the final charge
of the victors of Goojerat. At this spot the Seik soldiers
crossed and delivered up their arms, passing through the
lines of two native infantry regiments appointed for this
duty. Each of the Seiks received a rupee to subsist him
on his return home, in addition to which they were per-
mitted to retain their horses.

Surrender
of Seik artill-
ery and
arms.

Measures
against the
Afghans.

In the general order of the governor-general, with
which he accompanied the welcome despatches announc-
ing the result of the campaign, he adds: "But the war
is not yet concluded; nor can there be any cessation of
hostilities until Dost Mohammed Khan and the Afghan
army are either driven from the province of Peshawar,
or destroyed within it." The most determined measures
were accordingly adopted against the Seik allies who still
remained in arms. But the greatest apprehension of the
victors was that they should escape them by flight, there
being little reason to apprehend that any Afghan force
would alone withstand the British arms on the open
field. On the evening of the same day on which Major-
general Sir Walter Gilbert superintended the disarming
of Shere Sing's army, he pushed on by forced marches
towards Attock, in hopes of overtaking the Afghans
before they could succeed in crossing the Indus. In
this, however, he failed. The Afghans were already
across the great river, and the impatient general pushing
on with his staff, and accompanied only by a small
escort, beheld them from a neighbouring eminence

Pursuit of
them by
Walter Sir
Gilbert.



busily engaged in the destruction of the bridge of boats by which they had effected their timely passage. The sight of the British staff filled the flying enemy with new apprehensions, as they had believed the British to be still two days' march behind. The artillery was speedily brought to bear upon them, and fifteen of the best boats forming the bridge were secured. By means of this the British troops were passed across the Indus, and negotiations were entered into with the Khyberries to obstruct the retreat of the Afghans through the dreaded defile of which they were the guardians. But the Indus was rising. Its deep and rapid flood retarded the passage of the cavalry and artillery indispensable for the pursuit, while fear urged on the retreat of the flying foe, who were struck with such panic at the sudden appearance of the British at the passage of the Indus, that they abandoned their baggage in order to accelerate their flight. By this means, Dost Mohammed Khan succeeded in reaching Dukka, on the western side of the Khyber Pass, and thereby escaping the vengeance he had provoked by his junction with the rebellious Sikhs.

With the flight of the Afghans beyond the Khyber Pass the war was at an end; but new measures were requisite to guard against the renewal of similar outbreaks of the restless and daring Khalsa. Within the brief period that had elapsed since the summary recall of Lord Ellenborough, experience and necessity had overthrown every theory of British policy in India. One critic, in summing up the record of events of the previous year, at the time when only the first steps in the new war beyond the Sutledge had transpired, remarks: "A year barren of events, although a tame and unattractive period to readers of history, is a propitious one to good rulers, especially rulers of such a country as India. The want of time, and opportunity, and political quiet, to digest plans of improvement, has been the ready and unanswerable excuse of every governor of India since the administration of its affairs has been transferred to our

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A. D. 1849.

Passage of
the Indus.Impediments
to the pur-
suit.Escape of
Dost Moham-
med Khan.Close of the
war.Difficulties
of Indian
rule.



CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1849.

Obstacles to permanent peace.

Recent governor-generals.

Overthrow of Lord Dalhousie's plans.

Questionable security of the Indus as a boundary.

hands from those of the Moguls. The fault is not theirs ; it is the vice, or rather a misfortune, inseparable from the circumstances of British rule in India in relation to the native powers, which clothe it with progressive (or, as some say, aggressive) attributes, that a stationary policy is not only irreconcilable with the security of our Indian empire, but impracticable, and the intervals of suspension of war and conquest are few and brief. The last three governors of India furnish examples which the next three may be compelled to follow.

“ Lord Ellenborough, Sir Henry Hardinge, and Lord Dalhousie, proceeded to India with visions of peace, of prosperous revenues, and of the realization of benevolent schemes of social benefit for the people of India. The first was, upon his arrival, immersed in the perils and perplexities of the Cabul outbreak and the Mahratta campaign. The second was most unwillingly forced by a Seik invasion into a war, first of defence and then of conquest, beyond our frontiers. Lord Dalhousie, in like manner, has been compelled to desert the seat of government, where he was busied with plans of domestic improvement, and to enter upon projects which, from the magnitude of the preparations, appear to embrace the conquest of an extensive territory, the cost of which will exhaust the present and pledge the future revenues of India, postponing every scheme of local and general improvement and moral amelioration which demands an outlay of money. Should our presage be correct, and the British empire be extended to the Indus, that ‘forbidden’ river, conveniently termed the ‘historical boundary of India,’ will not be a final boundary any more than the Sutledge has been ; the expansion of our line of frontiers, bringing us into contact with new neighbours, jealous of our greatness or alarmed at our proximity, will involve us in fresh quarrels, and we shall be led onward, until, as Baron Hugel predicts, we reach Herat. This is the condition of our existence as a ruling power in India ; and critics of our administration there, instead of expos-



ing its imperfections, and proclaiming the vast amount of what has not been done to ameliorate the people, would be more just if they compared what has been accomplished with the time and means at our command,—in snatches of repose, broken by sudden political explosions, which engross the attention and the energies of the government, amidst the financial incumbrances created by an increasing expenditure, which cannot be met, as in other countries, by increase of taxation.” The result has proved the justice of these remarks. By a proclamation of the governor-general of India, dated March 30th 1849, the Punjaub is declared to be a portion of the British empire in India; and the same official document thus enters on the defence of British policy:—“For many years, in the time of Maharajah Runjeet Sing, peace and friendship prevailed between the British nation and the Seiks. When Runjeet Sing was dead, and his wisdom no longer guided the counsels of the state, the sirdars and the Khalsa army, without provocation and without cause, suddenly invaded the British territories. Their army was again and again defeated. They were driven with slaughter and in shame from the country they had invaded, and at the gates of Lahore the Maharajah Dhu-leep Sing tendered to the governor-general the submission of himself and his chiefs, and solicited the clemency of the British government. The governor-general extended the clemency of his government to the state of Lahore; he generously spared the kingdom which he had acquired a just right to subvert; and, the maharajah having been replaced on the throne, treaties of friendship were formed between the states. The British have faithfully kept their word, and have scrupulously observed every obligation which the treaties imposed upon them. But the Seik people and their chiefs have, on their part, grossly and faithlessly violated the promises by which they were bound. Of their annual tribute, no portion whatever has at any time been paid, and large loans advanced to them by the government of India have never

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1849.

Grounds of
annexation of
the Punjaub.Clemency of
the British.Faithlessness
of the Seiks.



CHAP. XIX been repaid. The control of the British government, to which they voluntarily submitted themselves, has been resisted by arms. Peace has been cast aside. British officers have been murdered when acting for the state; others engaged in the like employment have treacherously been thrown into captivity. Finally, the army of the state and the whole Sikh people, joined by many of the sirdars in the Punjab who signed the treaties, and led by a member of the regency itself, have risen in arms against us, and have waged a fierce and bloody war for the proclaimed purpose of destroying the British and their power. The government of India formerly declared that it desired no further conquest, and it proved by its acts the sincerity of its professions. The government of India has no desire for conquest now; but it is bound, in its duty, to provide fully for its own security, and to guard the interests of those committed to its charge. To that end, and as the only sure mode of protecting the state from the perpetual recurrence of unprovoked and wasting wars, the governor-general is compelled to resolve upon the entire subjection of a people whom their own government has long been unable to control, and whom (as events have now shown) no punishment can deter from violence, no acts of friendship can conciliate to peace. Wherefore the governor-general of India has declared, and hereby proclaims, that the kingdom of the Punjab is at an end; and that all the territories of Maharajah Dhuleep Singh are now and henceforth a portion of the British empire in India."

CHAP. XIX
A. D. 1849.

Their final
outbreak.

Honesty of
British
policy.

Necessity for
abolishing
Sikh inde-
pendence.

Justice of
British
rule.

The wonted justice of British rule tempered the policy thus forced upon it. The maharajah has been treated with due consideration of his rank, the property of all who had not forfeited their rights by their own conduct, has been respected, and the utmost care has been taken to preserve to all the free exercise of their religion. What the final results of this new annexation to our Indian empire may prove to be, it is vain to speculate. Whether the Indus, "the historical boundary of India,"



shall prove a barrier against foreign aggression and a limit to British acquisition, remains to be seen; but many years must elapse, even under the most peaceful sway, ere the diverse races and creeds of British India can be reconciled, and the vast peninsula consolidated into one kingdom, united by the safe bonds of mutual confidence and the sense of a wise, just, and benignant rule. Experience has heretofore overturned every speculation. The first campaign in the Punjaub was regarded by many, whose judgment was worthy of confidence, as final; few perhaps will venture to pronounce the same of the second, notwithstanding the apparent finality of its results.

CHAP. XIX.
A. D. 1849.

Time indispensable to consolidation

Such is the history of the latest and perhaps the most critical struggle which Britain has yet been compelled to engage in, in order to maintain the integrity of her Indian empire. The disastrous struggles in Afghanistan are altogether insignificant, when compared with a war thus waged on terms so nearly equal, and yet so hardly brought to a triumphant close. When we take into consideration all the circumstances of the former campaign, we can readily account for them. The real strength of the Afghans was shown in their final retreat from the Punjaub. They are indeed formidable in their native fastnesses; but this arises more from the natural features of the country, than from the skill of their brave but undisciplined bands. Even in their strongholds and amid their terrible passes, British arms, under proper and skillful leaders, found no difficulty in coping with them, and on a fair field they proved how little apprehension could be excited by them, even though greatly outnumbering their opponents. But the Seiks are altogether different. Their bravery is fully equal to that of their opponents. Their skill and discipline is not greatly inferior, and it can hardly be questioned, that under European leaders, and with the same unanimity which their patriotic devotion to the commonwealth of Govind inspired in their first contest with the British, the mercenaries of our

Reflections suggested by the war.

Comparison of the Afghans and Seiks



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CHAP. XII

A.D. 1849.

Earnest
desire for
peace in
India.

native army could be little relied upon in a similar struggle. Britain, however, longs to lay aside the weapons of the conqueror, and to consolidate her Eastern empire by arts of peace. Time alone, however well employed, will bind the native Hindoo to the British sceptre by the only safe ties, those of mutual interest and the confidence of mutual justice. The necessity of this is acknowledged. All the efforts of British rulers are now directed to render our sway in India alike beneficent and just. Should they succeed in accomplishing such a purpose, it will be a more noble and lasting victory than the proudest triumph of British arms; and it is only by converting the devotion of the Seik foe into the patriotism of the British subject, that a safe, a lasting, and a beneficial peace shall be secured on the north-west frontiers, so long the source of anxiety and apprehension to the British rulers of India.

THE END.

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