military stores. To express the full confidence of the British Government in its power. To explain the facility of cutting off the supplies of the enemy, and withholding from them the produce of the country.

"To avoid a declaration of non-interference in case of the renewal of his attacks upon the Cis-Sutlejean states, and to manage that delicate question as well as I can. To show a disposition to accede to engagements of a strictly defensive nature if proposed; but to refer the question for the decision of Government, except in an evident emergency.

"To facilitate the Mission to Cabul and establish a preliminary intercourse with the Court, and to establish a channel of intelligence and communication to the westward. Not to announce the intended Mission to Cabul until after its departure from Dihlee, but to be prepared to remove from Runjeet Singh's mind any jealousy or apprehension. No objection to disclosing the object of the Cabul Mission after having disclosed my own, otherwise to attribute it to motives which cannot injure him.

"To collect and communicate every information regarding the political state of the country, also respecting those points which it is expedient to ascertain with reference to the march and supply of troops. To ascertain the routes through which it is practicable for an army to march from Persia to the Indus. To communicate information respecting the geography of the countries to the westward of that river.

"To discover the real disposition of Runjeet Singh towards the British Government, and to regulate my negotiations accordingly. To inquire respecting his resources, troops, government, dominion, relations with other states, &c., &c. To discourage Mehtab Kour and her mother *quoad* their plot. To do away the effect of Captain Matthews's proceedings. To inquire into the reported intrigue with Holkar and Amnut Rao."

To one of Metcalfe's aspiring temper, not the

least of the attractions of this new employment was derived from the considerations of the great extent of country over which he was to be permitted, under certain contingencies, to spread the network of his diplomacy. He already saw himself despatching emissaries to the Courts of Cabul and Teheran, and baffling the gigantic intrigues of Napoleon and Alexander throughout the whole expanse of Central Asia. But his enthusiasm was always tempered with sound good sense, and when he committed to writing, more for his own guidance than for any other purpose, his views of the course which it was expedient to pursue with reference to a correspondence with those distant Courts, there was nothing discernible in the paper but the workings of a plain, practical mind:

"It appears from the minute of the Governor-General and the instructions which I have received, that the Mission to Lahore will considerably precede that to Cabul, and his Lordship has expressed an expectation that I may have the means of facilitating the latter Mission, and of establishing a preliminary intercourse with the Court of Cabul. It is proper, therefore, for me to consider how I can best carry these instructions into execution.

"The uncertainty existing respecting the time at which Mr. Elphinstone will proceed on his mission, gives rise to some doubt regarding the proper plan for me to pursue. If any great delay were in contemplation, I should think it right for me in the first instance to endeavor to open a correspondence with the Minister of the King of Cabul of a general friendly nature, and to refrain from any communication of the intentions of Government to send an Envoy to Cabul until I had ascertained the disposition of the Court, and found a proper opportunity. In

this case, I should think it right to despatch a native agent to Cabul, with a letter to the Wuzeer, requesting permission for him to attend the Court on my part, for the purpose of sending me account of the welfare of his Majesty, and of establishing a medium of friendly communication. This is all that I should think it advisable to do at first; and I should expect that opportunities would occur of proceeding further in the course of the correspondence which would probably follow this introduction. I should not, if I were to act according to my own judgment, charge the native with any directions to sound the Ministers respecting the disposition of the King; nor should I make him acquainted with the views of Government, because I would not on any account put it into his power to commit the dignity of Government.

"In the case stated, it is supposed that there may be that interval between my arrival at Lahore and Mr. Elphinstone's departure from Dihlee, which would admit of a general friendly correspondence with the Court of Cabul previous to announcing the intention of Government to send an Envoy. But if Mr. Elphinstone is to proceed on his mission at an earlier period than has been supposed, the line of conduct above mentioned would not answer; and in that case it would, I think, be advisable, and most suitable to the character of the British Government, to announce its intentions in a dignified and open manner, by sending a native as the bearer of a letter directly to the Court. It is scarcely possible that the King of Cabul would wantonly insult the British Government by any improper reply to this notice; and the expediency of making this direct advance is considerably strengthened by the probability that a report of the intended Mission may reach Cabul before the desired intercourse can be opened with the Court. It is, however, probable, that the measures already adopted by Mr. Seton will lead to a correspondence, which may afford opportunities of announcing the Mission in a manner different from that above suggested.

"It may be a question whether it would be most advisable

to conduct the preliminary intercourse with Cabul through the Resident at Dihlee, or through Mr. Elphinstone, or through the Envoy at Lahore; at present I am instructed to turn my attention to the object as well as to the necessity of opening a communication with Teheran immediately after my arrival at Lahore; and it is, consequently, necessary that I should be accompanied by natives qualified to be employed in these important matters, either according to such particular instructions as I may hereafter receive, or according to the best of my judgment, formed upon the general orders which I have already received. This consideration induced me to request from Mr. Seton the assistance of Fyzut-oolla at Lahore; and with the same view, I propose to carry along with me Syud Jafier Khan, who was formerly employed by Colonel Scott on a mission to Nadaun. One or the other of these, whichever may appear to be best qualified, I propose to send without delay, if all things remain as they are, to Cabul, charged with a letter from myself to the Minister; and the other I intend to employ in opening the communication with Persia. It is not my intention to confine my endeavors to obtain intelligence of the state of the Court and country of Cabul to the mission of a native to Cabul with a letter. We ought, besides, to have secret news-writers, not only with the Court, but in Cabul, Cashmeer, Peshawur, Candahar, Moultan, Herat, and as far as possible in the interior of Persia."

Little time was lost in making the necessary preparations for the departure of the Mission. In the first week of August, Charles Metcalfe turned his back upon Delhi. The weather was unpropitious. It was the height of the monsoon. The heavy rains, and the bad roads, for a while impeded the progress of the Mission. After passing Kurnaul, the weather began to improve; but the travellers invariably found themselves either in a quagmire or a

pool. "The country," he wrote, "is so full of water, and the roads are so deep with mud, and the soil so soft, that it is difficult for cattle of every description to move. We have been under the necessity of taking a circuitous route, the direct road not being passable; and we have not been able to make marches of a greater distance than about ten miles daily." On the 22nd of August the Mission reached Puttealah, one of the chief places in the Cis-Sutlej states, and here the serious business of diplomacy commenced.

The Rajah of Puttealah received the British Envoy with profuse demonstrations of compliment and congratulation; and at a public interview, unexpectedly produced the keys of the fort, and requested Metcalfe to restore them to him as a gift from the British Government. He threw himself, he said, entirely on our protection—all that he had was at the mercy of the British—his government and his existence would cease without our support. But Metcalfe read at once the true meaning of this proposal, and answered that he was not authorised by his Government to perform any such ceremony, but that the British were his friends, and ever desired his prosperity; and that the keys could not be in better hands.*

On the 1st of September the Mission crossed the

* Soon afterwards, the chief told him that he had heard it was the intention of Runjeet Singh to cross the Sutlej and to seize Fureed-kôte, which was in the Puttealah dominions—an intention which was subsequently fulfilled. It was suggested, too, to Metcalfe, that it would be expedient for him to write to Runjeet to say that the British Government desired him to remain at Lahore to receive the Mission.

Sutlej.* At Puttealah they had been met by an agent despatched by Runjeet Singh with a letter of welcome and congratulation; but as they advanced into the Punjab, it became at every stage more and more obvious that that erratic Prince had little intention of remaining at home, either at Lahore or Umritsur, to receive the British Embassy in a becoming manner. It was reported, indeed, that he had crossed the river with the intention of making a descent upon the Puttealah territory; but this Metcalfe was slow to believe, and the Sikh agent who remained in his camp either was, or pretended to be, ignorant of the movements of his master. All doubts, however, were soon set at rest by the receipt of a letter from Runjeet himself, announcing his intention to receive the British Mission at Kussoor. Troops, it appeared, were assembling there from all quarters; but Metcalfe believed that the chief cause of the assemblage was a desire on the part of the Sikh chief to make a formidable display of his military resources in the presence of the British Mission.†

Metcalfe pushed on to Kussoor, which lay upon his road to Umritsur;‡ and upon the 10th of Sep-

* Before the Mission had reached the banks of the river, Metcalfe had despatched a confidential agent to Cabul with instructions to communicate all that was passing in Afghanistan, and to keep open the communications with Persia, to which country Malcolm was about to proceed at the head of a great Embassy.

† "Runjeet Singh's army is assembling from all quarters. Notwithstanding the reports that are in circulation respecting his intentions, I am inclined to suppose that his principal motive in collecting his forces at this period is a desire to make a good display of his military power before the British Empire."—[*Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, September 5*, 1808.]

‡ He seems to have had some misgivings at this time regarding the external appearance of the Mission at the Sikh Court—the clothing of his escort being in a most discreditable

tember he halted within a few miles of the Sikh camp, that the ceremonials of the reception might be arranged. On the following day, Runjeet's Prime Minister* and his chief military officer,† with a retinue of two thousand men, came out to conduct the Mission to the ground which had been marked out for their encampment, at a distance of less than a mile from the Rajah's tents.

"On the 12th," wrote Metcalfe to the Chief Secretary, "I paid my first visit to Runjeet Singh, accompanied by the officers attached to the escort. The Rajah met us on the outside of a large enclosure, and having embraced all the gentlemen of the Mission, conducted us within, where tents had been prepared for our reception.‡ As a compliment to us, the Rajah, from his own choice, used chairs at this meeting, partly collected from our camp and partly from his own, upon which he and the principal Sirdars present and the gentlemen of the British Mission were seated. This interview was prolonged by the Rajah beyond the usual time of visits of ceremony; but nothing of consequence passed at it. The Rajah did not enter much into

condition. He reported the circumstance to Government.

* The Dewan Mokun Chund.

† His adopted brother, Futteh Singh.

‡ Metcalfe was of opinion that Runjeet ought to have come out to meet the Mission, but this Runjeet declined. His representations, however, were not without some effect.

"It appeared to me," he wrote, "that the rank and dignity of the Government which I have the honor to represent, required that the Rajah should come out from his camp to meet the Mission, and I had it intimated to him that such was my expectations. He did not come into my wishes in that respect; but the references which I had occasion to make respecting the ceremonials, had a good effect, inasmuch as they produced a great change in them, for at first the reception was proposed to be in a style far inferior to that which has been observed."—[*Metcalfe to Edmonstone, September* 13, 1808.]

conversation, and made only two observations worthy of remark. One was an expression of regret for the lamented death of Lord Viscount Lake, of whom he observed that it would be difficult to find his equal, for that he was as much distinguished by his gentleness, mildness, humanity, and affability, as by his greatness as a military character. The other observation was in reply to one of his courtiers, who was remarking that the British Government was celebrated for good faith; upon which Runjeet Singh said that he knew well that the word of the British Government included everything." Presents were interchanged, and in the evening a salute was fired in Runjeet's camp in honor of the day, which he intimated to Metcalfe was regarded by him as a day of rejoicing.

In spite, however, of these declarations of friendship, the reception given to the British Mission had nothing of cordiality in it. Runjeet was plainly jealous and suspicious of the British Government. His better reason clouded by the false insinuations and the mischievous advice of councils of chiefs, who, from motives of self-interest, desired to embroil Runjeet with the Company's Government, he forbade all communication between the two camps, and for some time was unwilling to return the visit of the British Envoy. It was obviously his wish to enhance his own importance in the eyes of the assembled chiefs and the large body of troops encamped at Kussoor, by appearing to hold the British Mission of little account. "In brief," wrote Metcalfe, "it would appear that I am regarded as a dangerous

enemy to be guarded against, rather than as an Envoy from a friendly State charged with the most amicable duties."

But the decided conduct of the young Ambassador soon induced Runjeet at least to pay the British Mission the compliment of a visit. On the 16th Metcalfe received the Sikh with all honors. A suite of tents had been erected for the occasion, and a musnud in the Oriental fashion prepared for the Rajah's occupancy. But Runjeet, preferring the European style, seated himself on a chair, and still eschewing business, entered into familiar conversation with the British officers, principally on military subjects.* After the interview, he expressed a wish to see the manœuvres of the detachment of Company's troops composing the escort, and mounted on an elephant, watched the exercise of the sepoys with interest and seeming pleasure. He took his final leave, to all appearance, much gratified; and such had been the cordiality of his manner, that Metcalfe believed a favorable change had taken place in the feelings of the Sikh, and that the

* "He spoke with great respect of the British troops, and observed of the Mahratta army which he had seen in this country that it contained great numbers, but that it wanted union and command. He related the following anecdote, which happened when Jeswunt Rao Holkar was in the neighbourhood of Umritsur. A report was brought to Holkar that Lord Lake had crossed the Beeas in pursuit of him. Holkar immediately mounted his horse. The alarm spread through his army, and the whole fled to a considerable distance, leaving all their tents standing. It was pleasing to observe that this had made an impression on Runjeet Singh, and that he had no objection to mention it. He put questions concerning our favorite mode of fighting, the distance at which we erected our batteries in besieging, the distance at which our artillerymen could hit a target in practice, with others of a similar nature and tendency. He complained of the difficulty of introducing discipline among the people of the Punjab."—[*Metcalfe to Edmonstone, September* 17, 1808.]

business of the Mission would soon proceed without interruption. Great, therefore, were Metcalfe's astonishment and disappointment when, on the following day, he received a letter from Runjeet Singh, which he characterised in his official communications to Government as "an extraordinary instance of suspicion, hastiness, and disrespect." The letter, in its Eastern phraseology, contained the meaning here embodied in an English dress :

Translation of a Note from Rajah Runjeet Singh to Mr. Metcalfe, delivered by Misr Prebdial, Hukeem Uzeezoodeen, and Meean Imaum-ood-deen on the evening of the 17th of September, 1808.

"I never before at any time under any emergency, or in any place, have made so long a halt as I have now, solely in consequence of the friendship between this Government and the Honorable Company, which by the blessing of God has been increasing and improving from the time in which his Excellency Lord Lake came into this country to the present happy hour. My camp has remained in this place so long, in the expectation of your arrival. Thanksgivings to the Throne of the Almighty, this wish of my heart, that is, your arrival, and the pleasure of seeing you, has been obtained in a proper manner.

"Although it is difficult to feel satiety from the interviews of friends whose hearts are united, and although the times of meeting, however many, seem too few, yet affairs of State must be attended to. Consequently, I am about to march immediately for the settlement of certain districts. In my nation it is considered very auspicious to march on the first day of the moon; and my march is appointed for that day. Therefore be pleased to make the friendly communications on the part of the Right Honorable the Governor-General, with which, from his Lordship's letter, I understand you to be charged, in order that I may act accordingly. My anxiety cannot admit of longer expectation."

Outwardly courteous and complimentary as was this effusion, its uncourteous and uncomplimentary meaning peeped out from every sentence of it. "This extraordinary document," wrote Metcalfe, "gave me notice in a plain manner that I was expected to take my leave in three or four days. It was calculated to repel, whilst it professed to call for communications, and in, I suppose, an unprecedented manner, evinced a design to shut the door against all intercourse, and to put an end to the proceedings of the Mission, without even ascertaining in the slightest degree the object to which they might be directed." But Metcalfe believed that the obnoxious letter was hardly to be considered as the own act and deed of Runjeet himself. It was, he knew, the result of suspicions instilled into him by others; and he did not yet despair of bringing the chief, by good diplomacy—by conduct at once firm and conciliatory, into a more reasonable frame of mind. So he sent back the following letter in reply:

Translation of a Note from Mr. Metcalfe to Rajah Runjeet Singh, transmitted on the night of the 17th of September, in reply to that received from the Rajah on the evening of same day.

"By the blessing of God the relations of friendship have been firmly established between you and the British Government, from the time when his Excellency General Lord Lake was in this country, and have been daily improved, particularly since the period when you wrote a very friendly letter to the Right Honorable Lord Minto, the Governor-General, congratulating his Lordship on his arrival in India. In consequence, when you formed the intention of visiting Hurdwar, in order

to bathe in the Holy Ganges, his Lordship deputed me for the purpose of receiving you with every respect, and attending you during your stay in that quarter. It happened that your intentions were postponed. The Right Honorable the Governor-General, wishing to display a signal mark of his friendship and regard, has now commanded me to repair to your Court to express the satisfaction with which his Lordship views the existing harmony and concord between the two states, and with a view to establish and improve the ties of intimacy and union. To-morrow I hope to have the honor of waiting upon you whenever you are at leisure, when I will make the communications with which I am entrusted by the Right Honorable the Governor-General, and present a letter which I have from his Lordship to your address."

This letter was not without its anticipated effect. Metcalfe was right when he believed that Runjeet had been led astray by the instillation of some falsehood with which the men by whom he was surrounded had poisoned his understanding. He had been told that Metcalfe was on his way to Cabul; and that the British Mission had not been despatched primarily and exclusively to his Court, but merely instructed to pay him a passing visit. But this lie was soon exploded; and Runjeet again began to regard the Mission with complacency. An answer was promptly returned to Metcalfe's letter; and it contained an eager invitation to the meeting proposed by the British Envoy:

Translation of a Note from Rajah Runjeet Singh to Mr. Metcalfe, received from Meean Imaum-ood-deen on the 18th of September.

[After compliments.] "In an auspicious and happy moment your friendly letter, most agreeable to my inclinations,

every letter of which refreshed my eye, reached me, and gave splendor to the unity and concord (subsisting between us). That which is written by your friendly pen respecting what has happened from the illustrious arrival of Lord Lake in this country up to your arrival, in order to confirm and improve the relations of intimate sincere friendship, which by the blessing of God have been so firmly established, and so manifestly displayed as to be known to all, collectively and individually; and the intimation which you give of your intention to visit me, and make me happy by the communications entrusted to you by the Right Honorable the Governor-General, have given me thousand-fold pleasure and joy.

"My desire to see you cannot be postponed from this day till to-morrow, and my inclination is impatient of delay, but in consequence of the season, and state of my constitution, I have this day taken medicine. To-morrow, therefore, at three o'clock in the afternoon, bring pleasure to your friend's house. Hukeem Uzeezoodeen will arrive with you at that hour and conduct you."

On the 19th of September, Metcalfe visited the Rajah, and, in the presence of the principal Sikh councillors, opened the discussion by accusing the Rajah of encouraging unjust and unworthy suspicions. This was denied. Evasive explanations of the offensive letter were given. And after a conversation conducted on both sides with the utmost good humor, it was determined that the propositions of the British Government should be received, when the Sikhs had held a council of state to determine upon their plan of operations. But this was manifestly reversing the order of things. So when subsequently a deputation waited on Metcalfe, to explain that the Sikhs could not determine upon the course they were to

pursue until they were informed of the nature of the propositions to be made to them, the British Envoy acknowledged the cogency of the assertion, and declared that he was willing on the following day to deliver the important message with which he was charged by his employers. It appeared to Metcalfe, indeed, that it was no longer desirable to keep Runjeet in ignorance of the real objects of his mission; for the mind of the restless Sikh might be diverted by thoughts of the Anti-Gallican alliance from other objects on which it was not expedient that he should dwell.

So on the afternoon of the 22nd of September, Metcalfe went unattended to Runjeet's residence, and there found the Sikh ruler surrounded by his principal councillors of state. "I opened the conference," wrote Metcalfe, reporting all its circumstances to the Supreme Government, "by stating that the friendship which had happily existed between the Rajah and the British Government, had induced the Right Honorable the Governor-General to depute me to communicate some important intelligence, in which the Maha-rajah's interests were materially concerned. I then mentioned that his Lordship had received authentic advices that the French, who were endeavoring to establish themselves in Persia, had formed the design of invading these countries, and of seizing Cabul and the Punjab—that his Lordship's first care was to give warning to the states which this intelligence concerned—that feeling the interests of the British

Government and those of the Rajah to be the same, his Lordship had commissioned me to negotiate with the Rajah arrangements for the extirpation of the common enemy, and had appointed another gentleman to be Envoy to Cabul for similar purposes with respect to that country, who would in a short time, with the Rajah's permission, pass through this country on his way to the place of his destination. I added, that these measures had been adopted by the Government in the purest spirit of friendship, and that it was evident that the interests of all the states in this quarter required that they should unite their powers in defence of their dominions and for the destruction of the enemy's armies.

"At the conclusion of this introduction," continues the young Envoy, "the Rajah and all present following him, made an exclamation of admiration at the friendly conduct of the Right Honorable the Governor-General in making this communication, and expressed without hesitation a ready concurrence in his Lordship's plans. The Rajah asked, how far the British army would advance to meet the French, and what force would be sent? I replied, that these questions would depend upon subsequent arrangements; but that it was our practice to seek our enemy, and that no doubt the Government would send an army beyond Cabul. With respect to the amount of the force, I observed, that would necessarily depend upon circumstances, but that such a force would of course be sent as would be

amply sufficient to destroy the foe. He asked if troops were ready to advance, and when the French might be expected? I said that the moment at which the enemy might be expected could not at present be ascertained—that it might be sooner or later—but that there was no doubt of the design, and that it behoved wise governments to be prepared to counteract it; and that our troops always are, and always would be, ready to advance.

"After expressing in animated terms his desire to co-operate with the British arms, his sense of the friendly motives which had led to the communications from the Right Honorable the Governor-General, his approbation of the plan of attacking the enemy before they could reach Cabul, and his satisfaction at the prospect of a close alliance with the British Government, which had long, he said, been the wish of his heart, now spoke in a whisper to Misr Prebdial (one of his councillors), who, in consequence, carried aside all the persons present except the Rajah, Kurreem Singh, Imaum-ood-deen, and myself. Whilst the gentlemen apart were deliberating in a whisper, the Rajah continued to converse with me, sometimes on subjects connected with the objects of my previous communication, and sometimes on general topics. He started the idea that the King of Cabul might throw himself in the arms of the French, and asked what would be done in that case? I said, in that case we must attack the King of Cabul as well as the French; but that it was improbable that he would be so blind to his own interests; for that the French invariably sub-

jected and oppressed those who joined them; plundered and laid waste their country, and overthrew the Government. In the course of this conversation I endeavored, in conformity to the instructions of the Supreme Government, to alarm the Rajah for the safety of his territories, and at the same time to give him confidence in our protection.

"The Rajah asked if all was right with Holkar? I said, 'Yes;' and that since the peace with him made in this country, he had continued on the most friendly terms with the British Government. 'But,' replied the Rajah, 'he is a determined rascal (*pucka hurumzadah*), and no trust can be reposed in him.' I answered, that when we were at war with him, we used to call him a great rascal; but as we were now at peace, we always spoke of him with the respect due to a friendly chief. The Rajah mentioned, that when in this country, Holkar prohibited his troops from plundering as long as Lord Lake's army was near to him, but let them loose on the country as soon as his Lordship had commenced his return to the British dominions.

"When the deliberations of the whispering council were concluded, the result was conveyed by Misr Prebdial to the Rajah's ears, and the Rajah delivered some order to him in the same manner; after which Misr Prebdial addressed me in a long speech, the substance of which was, that the Rajah concurred in everything that I had communicated, and particularly desired to have the closest connexion with the British Government; but that the business not being of slight consideration, but of the highest im-

portance, it was necessary to proceed with deliberation—accordingly, that the question would be fully discussed by the Rajah with those present, and that the result of their deliberations on that and other subjects should be communicated to me on the following morning. The Rajah said the same; and having enjoined profound secresy to all present, put an end to the conference."

The morrow came, and with the morrow a new light dawned upon the subject. To the Sikh councillors it did not appear, upon consideration of the whole matter, that they had much to apprehend from the rumored incursion of the French. The danger was at most something remote and conjectural. They hardly could bring themselves to believe that the counteraction of foreign influence in the countries of Central Asia was the real object of the Mission to Runjeet's Court. And if it were, they argued among themselves, the alliance which the British Government sought was mainly for its own advantage. Why then should not the treaty at the same time embrace objects more nearly and palpably advantageous to the Sikhs themselves? It was Runjeet Singh's earnest desire, at this time, to obtain from the British Government a recognition of his sovereignty over all the Sikh States on both sides of the Sutlej; and it was now intimated to Metcalfe that the Rajah suggested the expediency of including this and other provisions in the contemplated treaty. To all of this Metcalfe listened patiently; but he firmly replied, that he had no authority to give any such guarantee on the part of the Government which he represented

—that the alliance against the French was the first point to be arranged, and that the rest would be left for future consideration. But this was not a view of the case which the Sikh councillors were inclined to take. The interview, therefore, was not a satisfactory one; and nothing was settled except—the last resource of inconclusiveness—that the views of Runjeet Singh should be reduced to writing, and considered by the British Envoy.

I cannot follow in detail all the consultations—many of them mere profitless repetitions of inconclusive discussions—which day by day Metcalfe reported to the Supreme Government. The difficulties with which the young diplomatist contended were many and great. He soon perceived that in Runjeet Singh he had to deal with a man inordinately ambitious himself, and out of measure suspicious of the ambitious designs of others. Untainted by any objects of aggression as was this Mission to Lahore, it must be admitted that Runjeet's suspicions were not wholly without foundation. He had seen, within the space of a few years, the fairest provinces of Hindostan subjected to the yoke of the conquering Feringhee. If he had extended his dominions, our extension of territory had been far greater; and there was sufficient, at least in the antecedents of British conquest, to make him fearful of his independence, when he saw our battalions already approaching the banks of the Sutlej, and our diplomatists, the sure forerunners of our armies, beginning to spread themselves over all the countries of Central Asia. It is not strange, therefore, that one, by nature sus-

picious in the extreme, and wrought upon by evil councillors and treacherous adherents, should have regarded the advance of the British Mission with distrust. From the very first his suspicions had broken out into acts of open discourtesy. He had forbidden, as I have before said, all intercourse between the two camps. Supplies had been refused to the Mission. The native bankers were afraid to cash Metcalfe's bills. Runjeet's spies were continually in the British camp. The camp had been pitched on ground selected by Runjeet in the bed of a dry river, on whose banks the Sikh sentries were incessantly posted. Our messengers had been intercepted; our letters had been opened; and Metcalfe had excused himself to Government for submitting to many indignities which he pretended not to observe. He had certain great ends to accomplish, and he would not be arrested or turned aside by any obstructions but those of the greatest national import and significance.

But that which most embarrassed Metcalfe at this time was the unscrupulous course of territorial aggrandisement which Runjeet was determined on pursuing in the face of the British Mission. It was obviously his intention to turn to account what he hoped would be considered the implied sanction of the British Government to his conquests on the southern bank of the Sutlej. The suddenness of his movements baffled all diplomacy, and prevented all remonstrance. Thus on the 25th of September, just as the negotiations appeared to be in a favorable state, Runjeet suddenly, without intimation to the British Envoy, and without consulting his Minis-

ters, broke up his camp at Kussoor, and prepared to cross the Sutlej.* The primary object of the movement was the capture of the fortress and surrounding territory of Fureed-kote—a tract of country in the domain of the Rajah of Puttealah, one of the chief of the group of his Cis-Sutlej States;† but it was openly boasted in camp that the expedition was designed to accomplish the subjugation of the whole of the country lying between the Sutlej and the Jumna. And there were those who said that, this accomplished, some hostile movements against the British would certainly ensue.‡

Following the Sikh camp at a convenient interval of time, Metcalfe, on the 28th of September, again met Runjeet Singh. The interview was held on an island in the river. The confidential servants of the Rajah were present; and the manner of Runjeet himself was courteous and conciliatory. But there seemed to be a hopeless gulf between the two nego-

* Reporting this to Government, Metcalfe wrote: "I was disposed to augur well from the spirit of this conference; and great was my surprise on rising this morning to find that the Rajah's army was moving. Uzeezoodeen at the instant came to me and said that he had been sent by the Rajah to inform me that he was about to march to the river Beeas, and to request that I would march too. I answered that I could not march to-day; but that I would follow the Rajah as soon as I could. I expressed my surprise at the Rajah's moving so suddenly and without giving me any previous intimation, and I desired to know what were the Rajah's intentions, where he was going, and whether he would cross the river or not. Uzeezoodeen could give me no satisfactory information. I therefore desired him to bring me an answer on these points from his master, saying, that until I should obtain the information required, I could not say whether it would be proper for me to accompany the Rajah or not."—[*Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, Camp Kussoor, September* 25, 1808.]

† Fureed-kote was, however, at this time in the possession of rebels who paid no revenue to the Puttealah Rajah.

‡ Metcalfe reported, among other things, that there was "a story on foot to the effect that the Rajah of Bhurtpore had applied to Runjeet for aid against the hostile designs of the British, that his application had been backed by Holkar, and that Runjeet Singh had agreed to co-operate for the defence of Bhurtpore."

tiating parties, which it was impossible to bridge over. Metcalfe still asserted that he came for nothing but a defensive alliance against the French. "If the French invade your territory," he said, "you will profit greatly by the alliance. If they do not, you will not suffer by it." Reduced to this simple formula, the case was a convincing one; and Runjeet at first seemed to be staggered by it. But he clamored for the sanction of the British Government to the extension of his sovereignty over all the Sikh territories; and was eager also to introduce into the treaty a clause, pledging us not to interfere for the prevention of any hostilities that he might be pleased to carry on in the direction of Cabul. Such was the unvarying tenor of his discourse; and every new meeting only served to convince Metcalfe of the difficulty of persuading the Rajah to abandon a design which lay so very near to his heart.*

In the mean while, Metcalfe's letters, despatched with unfailing punctuality, and admirably lucid in all their details, were exciting much grave reflection in the Council Chamber of Calcutta. The

* Summing up the whole state of the case after the lapse of another month, Metcalfe wrote to the Supreme Government: "It appears to me that he wishes merely to have a treaty of perpetual friendship with the British Government to be maintained hereafter with his heirs and successors; that he is indifferent to the proposed alliance against the designs of the French, as the danger is not near nor perceptible to him—that to that alliance generally, however, he has no objection, although he wishes to make his agreement to it the means of obtaining concessions from the British Government; but at the same time he does not view without uneasiness the progress of the measures in contemplation, and the probability of the introduction of British agents in his territories, the disclosure of the actual state of his country, army, and resources, and other imagined consequences of opening the means of communication between the British Government and the disaffected chiefs whom he oppresses."—[*October* 20, 1808. *Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone. MS. Records.*]

seeming determination of Runjeet to extend his conquests on the southern bank of the Sutlej, excited in Lord Minto a very strong desire to arrest by force of arms the progress of the ambitious Sikh. The first minute which he wrote upon the subject, hinted at the expediency of instructing Metcalfe to intimate to Runjeet Singh, that if, pending negotiations, any advance were made towards our frontier, or if any interruption were at any time given to the Cabul Mission, it would be considered as a declaration of war.* But he was a statesman of a calm and dispassionate nature, and he recorded at the same time, that these were only his first hasty reflections, and that he would, "in the course of the day, collect more deliberately such thoughts on the general question as might appear worthy to be communicated" to his colleagues, and to the Envoy in Runjeet's camp. And the result of these subsequent deliberations, aided by a memorandum drawn up by Mr. Edmonstone was, that Metcalfe was instructed not to follow any course that would precipitate his abrupt departure from Runjeet's camp, but to protract his negotiations, and to avoid, if possible, such a rupture as would incite Runjeet to assume an attitude of open hostility.† These instructions Met-

* *Minute of Lord Minto, October 28, 1808.*—[*MS. Records.*]

† "I do not think," wrote Lord Minto, "that we should be justified, in point of policy, in breaking at present with Runjeet Singh. The point to aim at in our present transactions with the Rajah of Lahore appears to be, that we should keep ourselves as free as can be done without a rupture. I should on this principle rather wish to protract than accelerate the treaty. I feel the force of the observations contained in Mr. Edmonstone's note concerning the effect which is likely, or rather certain, to be produced on the mind of Runjeet Singh by the immediate close of Mr. Metcalfe's mission; and I should think it advisable, therefore, not to adopt that measure. Mr. Metcalfe should be particularly instructed not to hasten the nego-

calfe had anticipated. The course laid down for him was that which his own judgment suggested, and already he had entered upon it.

Having thus resolved to gain time and to amuse Runjeet, whilst they were maturing their plan of ultimate operations, and waiting to see what might be written down in the ever-fertile Chapter of Accidents, our statesmen at Calcutta began to take larger views of the whole question, and to consider whether it would be expedient to yield to the solicitations of the Rajah, or to maintain the independence of the Sikh chiefs on our side of the Sutlej. Lord Minto at once determined that the question was one which he was justified in deciding upon the grounds of immediate policy, rather than upon any abstract principles; and after weighing the consequences of the adoption of either course—each being beset with its own peculiar difficulties—he resolved that the interests of the British Government demanded that the aggressiveness of Runjeet Singh should be stemmed, and that the lesser chiefs between the Sutlej and Jumna should be supported. But this object was not to be gained by mere passive resistance. "A consequence of our refusing our assent to Runjeet's proposal," wrote Lord Minto, "must be the necessity of our affording open and immediate protection to the Sikhs, and employing a military force for that purpose. For to declare that we

tiation for which he was originally deputed. For this there are never wanting sufficient means. It will be proper, of course, to suspend negotiations until Runjeet Singh has given us satisfaction on the point of his present operations by actually re-crossing the Sutlej."—[*MS. Memoranda of Lord Minto.*]

do not consent to the proposed conquests, and at the same time to look on whilst they are achieved, is a contradiction calculated alike to alienate the Sikhs and to provoke the enmity of Runjeet Singh. That we should advance," he added, "a body of troops to the Sutlej, and take part in that river in concert and connexion with the principal Sikh chiefs, I should not think in itself a disadvantage, but in our present circumstances the reverse."* The Governor-General did not conceal from himself that this measure might precipitate an open collision with Runjeet, but he was prepared to abide the result.

In the mean while, Runjeet Singh, having taken possession of Fureed-kote, was dragging the British Mission hither and thither, still evidently desirous that its presence should seem to sanction his aggressive proceedings, until Metcalfe demanded that the Rajah should name some fitting place where the Mission might remain encamped until Runjeet had completed his operations, and was in a position again to give himself uninterruptedly to the pending negotiations. After much further discussion leading to no result, and some wild propositions at which Metcalfe only laughed,† it was agreed that the

* *MS. Memoranda of Lord Minto.*

† Among others was a proposition to the effect that Metcalfe should return to Calcutta, taking with him one of the Sikh chiefs as Runjeet's Wakeel (or agent), and finish the negotiations at the Presidency. This Metcalfe treated as a "humorous proposal." Another scheme put forth by the Sikhs was that two treaties should be drawn up—one according to Runjeet's wishes, one according to our own—and that the latter should be held in pawn until redeemed by the ratification of the former! It was with reference to one of these conferences (on the 24th of October) that Metcalfe wrote that the confusion produced by the eagerness of eight Sikh councillors to declare their opinions was almost sublime. "I beg you," he said, "to conceive an assemblage of nine persons, in which eight are endeavouring by all manner of means to obtain a particular point

British Mission should halt at Gongrona, a place between the Sutlej and the Jumna, about twenty miles south-east from Loodhianah, until Runjeet had done his work. The Sikh army was now moving upon Umballah, and thus bringing itself into dangerous proximity to our own frontier-station of Kurnal.*

A lull in the more strenuous activities of the Mission enabled Charles Metcalfe not only to take a comprehensive survey of past transactions, to clear up in his letters to Government any uncertainties or obscurities which his previous communications might have presented, and to draw up elaborate reports on the character of Runjeet Singh and the resources of his country,† but also to devote some time to his private correspondence. In the middle of November he had received the distressing intelligence of the death of his aunt Richardson, to whom he was deeply attached. Some letters written by him at this time to his afflicted uncle, and to his

from one — the Ministers being all eager to display before their master their zeal in the cause, their skill and acuteness; and the picture will completely represent the conference, which was preceded by a present of a horse from the Rajah's stable. There was little argument on either side. The subject had been repeatedly discussed, and nothing new remained to be said."

* At one of the conferences between Metcalfe and the Sikh Ministers, the latter had been asked whether he considered that Kurnal belonged to the British Government.

† There is an amusing passage in one of these reports relative to Runjeet's appreciation of artillery, and the means by which he contrived to scrape his ordnance together. "The Rajah's attachment to guns," wrote Metcalfe to Government, "and his opinion of their weight, are both so great, that he will never miss an opportunity of obtaining a gun. If he learns that there is a gun in any fort, he cannot rest until he has taken the fort to get at the gun, or until the gun has been given up to him to save the fort. He immediately dismounts the gun from the wall and drags it after him, as an addition to his field train. He boasted to me once, that he had made the Rajah of Puttealah give him a fine gun, which the Rajah wished to rescue for 20,000 rupees."

"dear and now, alas! only aunt," Mrs. Monson,* express the strength of his grief. He was eager at first to know, whether his "dear dear aunt in her illness ever thought of him? With her mind," he added, "occupied by thoughts of her children and her beloved sisters, I cannot expect that she did." But all thoughts of his own sorrows passed away as he dwelt on the sufferings of the husband and sister, and prayed that they might be comforted and sustained by Him, who alone has power to wipe away all tears from our eyes. "May the Ruler of all things," he wrote to his uncle, "give you patience and fortitude to support you under the heavy pressure. 'And now, Lord, what is my hope, truly my hope is even in thee. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek succour but of thee, O Lord? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours.'"†

Whilst Metcalfe, thus halting at Gongrona, was dividing his thoughts between his public business and his private sorrows, Runjeet was extending his dominion over the more helpless of the Cis-Sutlej chiefs. Many of them, unequal to resistance, acknowledged that they were his subjects, that they held their possessions only by virtue of his grant, and contributed their guns to the Rajah's collection; whilst others obtained temporary immunity for

* Mrs. Richardson and the Hon. Mrs. Monson, then widow of Colonel Monson, of whom Charles Metcalfe said, "he was always an affectionate uncle and kind friend to me," were sisters of Lady Metcalfe.

† *November*, 1808, *Camp Gongrona.*—In this letter Metcalfe says: "If my mission should soon end, which is possible, I shall endeavor to join you at Banda to share your sadness."

themselves by aiding him in these acts of spoliation.* But he still had time to think of the British Mission, wrote courteous letters to Metcalfe, "evinced a desire to be friendly and conciliatory;"† and was sincerely desirous to protect the Mission against any inconvenience that might result from the turbulent character of the people surrounding their camp.‡ Before the end of November, the restless chief had sent back his infantry and his guns to Gongrona, and purposed, after a friendly interview with the Rajah of Puttealah, to make his way to Umritsur and Lahore, and there to rest himself in the lap of pleasure after the fatigues of war and the anxieties of public business.

* "Including," wrote Metcalfe to Government, "those chiefs who have attended him in this expedition, his sovereignty has been completely acknowledged by all the Sikh chiefs with two exceptions"—the Rajah of Puttealah and Thanesur.

† "Being informed that Gongrona was not a pleasant situation, he wrote to me," said Metcalfe, "in the most civil manner, to request that I would move to another place, which was ascertained to be better; but finding Gongrona sufficiently agreeable, I did not think it necessary to move."

‡ "It happened," wrote Metcalfe, "that in taking the air one evening I was fired upon from a village by mistake. This trivial circumstance was reported to the Rajah and magnified. In consequence, he gave orders to the commanders of his infantry and guns, on detaching them from Shuhabad on their return to the Punjab, to attend me, and wrote to me to desire that I would cause them to plunder and destroy any village that had behaved in a disrespectful manner. After thanking him for his kindness, I requested him to forgive a fault which had proceeded from inadvertency and the divided state of the country." This humane interference, however, had not at first the desired result. In a subsequent letter Metcalfe wrote: "The Rajah's infantry and guns have been at this place for some days. As they were sent by the Rajah for the avowed purpose of destroying certain villages which had been represented to him as having behaved in a disrespectful manner to me, I endeavored to prevent their advance, but did not succeed, as Kureem Singh, the possessor of the tents of Gongrona, had a strong interest in persuading them to come on. On their arrival I had some difficulty in preventing their attacking the villages. The commanders informed me that they had positive orders to plunder the villages, and put to death the inhabitants. I saw their instructions under the seal of Runjeet Singh giving orders for their guidance, and even laying down the plan of attack, and giving intelligence of the force that they might expect to be opposed to them. Fortunately, the Rajah had written other instructions desiring them to obey my orders, which have enabled me by positive commands and written injunctions to restrain them until the result of my reference to the Rajah may be known."

It was at this time that Metcalfe learnt the results of the deliberations which had been held in Calcutta at the close of the preceding month. The Chief Secretary communicated to him that Lord Minto had determined to resist Runjeet's efforts to subjugate the Cis-Sutlej States, and that henceforth these petty principalities were to be under British protection. The letter which announced this important intelligence was followed by a communication to the same effect to Runjeet himself, sent through the Delhi Resident, couched in the ordinary language of diplomatic flattery, but sufficiently unmistakeable in its import and decided in its tone. The ambitious Sikh was now called upon to arrest his career of conquest in the country between the Sutlej and the Jumna, and to surrender the places which he had recently wrested from the petty chiefs. But Metcalfe, still anxious to achieve the objects of his mission without violence, and believing that Runjeet was already on his way back to the capital, determined to delay the communication of the Governor-General's resolution, in the hope that the Rajah's withdrawal from the scene of his recent conquests might appear rather a spontaneous act upon his part than one forced upon him by the implied menaces of the British Government.* The uncertainty and

* *Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, November* 27, 1808.—"When I received your instructions of the 31st of October, I had every reason to expect the instant return of Runjeet Singh to Lahore from his own communications to me, as well as from general opinion and actual appearances. His infantry and guns, which generally form his advanced guard, were encamped in this place, which is within a forced march from the Sutlej; and the Rajah himself was lightly equipped with the seeming and avowed intention of advancing. Under these circumstances, it appeared to me that if the Rajah should immediately re-cross the Sutlej with his army, and remove

the impulsiveness, which marked Runjeet's, conduct, rendered Metcalfe, however, sceptical of the real intentions of the Rajah; and doubting whether he would return immediately to his capital, he wrote to him that he desired an interview at Eesroo, which lay on the road to Umritsur. The request was readily granted, but before the appointed time Runjeet had once more changed his resolution. He was tired of business. He was eager again to enjoy the delights of the wine-cup and the Zenana. He had exchanged turbans as a token of amity with the Rajah of Puttealah; and he had now little else to do. So he wrote to Metcalfe proposing a meeting on the Sutlej. But before the British Envoy had reached the banks of the river, Runjeet had again changed his mind, and was moving in hot haste on the wings of love to Umritsur. His confidential physician-minister, Uzeezoodeen, was left behind to invite Metcalfe to follow him; and on the 10th of December the British Mission arrived at the holy city.*

his troops from all positions menacing to the safety and independence of the chiefs whom it is the intention of Government to protect, one of the most important objects of my instructions would be obtained without any immediate interruption of amicable negotiation, and time would be gained for the execution of the arrangements destined for the defence of this country."

* *Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, December* 11, 1808.—"On the 29th ult. Runjeet Singh sent me a polite letter, informing me that he would be at Eesroo to meet me on the 1st of this month. On the day fixed I received a letter from him containing his excuses for not being at Eesroo; and proposing a meeting on the Sutlej. Before I reached that river he had continued his march with surprising rapidity to Umritsur, where he arrived almost unattended in two or three days. He left Uzeezoodeen to invite me to follow him to Umritsur. Runjeet Singh, in everything that he undertakes, is impatient; but the cause of his extraordinary impatience on this occasion was a desire to see his favorite mistress Marar, from whom he has been separated for nearly three months. In her arms he has been resting after the fatigues of his campaign."

The delay had not been without its uses. The instructions despatched to Metcalfe by the Supreme Government at the end of October, and the letter to Runjeet Singh sent through the Delhi Resident, had been of a more peremptory and decided character than Lord Minto upon further consideration considered it expedient to confirm. The letter to the Rajah had now been modified into a communication less menacing in tone, and containing a less undisguised exposition of the intentions of the British Government. And when Mr. Edmonstone forwarded a copy of it to Metcalfe, he wrote a private letter explaining to him Lord Minto's wishes regarding the future conduct of his negotiations:

MR. EDMONSTONE TO MR. METCALFE.

"Calcutta, November 7, 1808.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Mr. Seton may perhaps have transmitted to you an English copy of a letter to Runjeet Singh, and have led you to expect instructions corresponding with the tenor of it. Further consideration, however, has suggested a change in some part of the proposed system of proceeding, and occasioned an alteration of the letter. I send you a copy in its amended form. Your instructions will follow speedily, and the letter itself. You will see that it is wished you should remain; and I will state in very few words what is intended. Government is satisfied that Runjeet Singh will never be the cordial friend of the British Government; an engagement with him for co-operation would be mere waste paper. His character, conduct, and views are such as to render it for our interest that his government were subverted. But we shall do nothing to promote that object. It would hardly be justifiable to do so; at the same time, it is desirable not to be embarrassed with engagements which might compel us to assist him against internal

rebellion. Our object must be at present to remain as free as possible without breaking with Runjeet. It is not, therefore, desirable to accelerate the negotiation. The longer it is kept in suspense the better; and on the plea of awaiting the result of your report to Government that he has withdrawn his army, disclaimed any interruption to the Cabul Mission, and treated you as an accredited Minister of a great State ought to be treated, you can properly and plausibly suspend the conclusion of engagements. Though I apprehend from your despatch No. 29, just received, that you may have gone too far under your former instructions to admit of this course.

"Troops will be sent to the frontier as was at first announced in the letter to Runjeet; but it is now thought best to suspend any notification to him of this arrangement, so you are to know nothing of these matters.

"As it may be of importance that you should know the general outline of the intended proceedings as soon as possible, I write this hurried letter, which will answer the purpose until the instructions can be completed.

"I remain, with great regard and esteem,

"Yours most sincerely,

"B. EDMONSTONE."

On the evening of his arrival at Umritsur, Metcalfe, taking with him the Governor-General's letter, visited Runjeet Singh. But the Rajah was in no mood for business. He was in the midst of a riotous career of self-indulgence. Instead of attending to the affairs of State which had called the British Envoy to his presence, he sent for his dancing-girls; and soon afterwards, the wonted strong drinks were introduced. In vain did Metcalfe call the attention of the Rajah to the business on which he had come; in vain did he speak of the Governor-General's letter of which he was the bearer. Runjeet was willing to

receive the letter, but he was not prepared to read it. "The evening was devoted to mirth and pleasure." The Rajah was in a genial humor—full of cordiality towards his English visitor; familiar in manner, friendly in speech. Metcalfe, with right diplomatic address, entered into the spirit of the scene, within the limits of becoming hilarity; and when he took his departure, it was obvious to him that the Rajah and his friends were "incapacitated for business."*

But Runjeet Singh, drinking and revelling with the unopened letter of the Governor-General beside him, was as a man singing and dancing upon a loaded mine. Whether he had any suspicion of its actual contents, and was disinclined to mar the pleasurable excitement of the life to which he had now temporarily abandoned himself, content to live in the rapture of the present moment, and to lull all corroding anxieties to rest, can be only matter of conjecture. But the morrow passed away, and still Metcalfe heard nothing of the effects of the letter. So he wrote the Rajah a note under his own hand, of which the following is a translation; a note giving no uncertain sound, but clearly and decisively stating the stage to which the discussion had now been brought, and the dangers which stared the Sikh in the face:

Note transmitted by Mr. Metcalfe to the Rajah of Lahore on 12th December, 1808.

"I duly communicated to the Right Honorable the Governor-General the proposition brought forward by the Maha-rajah respecting the country between the Sutlej and Jumna, and fully explained all the views of the Maha-rajah on that

* *Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, December* 11, 1808.

point. I have now received his Lordship's commands to state his sentiments in reply.

"His Lordship has learned with great surprise and concern that the Maha-rajah aims at the subjection of chiefs who have long been considered under the protection of the power ruling in the north of Hindostan, and is more especially astonished to find that the Maha-rajah requires the assent of the British Government to the execution of this design.

"By the issue of a war with the Mahrattas, the British Government became possessed of the power and rights formerly exercised by that nation in the north of Hindostan.

"At that time the Maha-rajah had no claim on the country between the Sutlej and Jumna. In an early period of that contest a communication was received from the Maha-rajah by the late Lord Lake, which proposed to fix the Sutlej as the boundary between the British Government and his; which is a clear proof that the Maha-rajah in those days was well aware that the country in question was dependent on the power paramount in the north of Hindostan.

"Since the British Government has come into this situation, it has relieved the chiefs between the Sutlej and Jumna from tribute, and that degree of subserviency which they were used to pay to the Mahrattas, and has allowed them to carry on their own concerns without interference or control. But this liberality on the part of the British Government was meant for benefit of these chiefs, not for their injury. It was never ... ded that the forbearance of the British Government should be taken advantage of by another power to oppress and subjugate those whom the British Government wished to protect and relieve.

"In reply, therefore, to the Maha-rajah's requisition, it is hereby declared that the British Government cannot consent that these chiefs should be subjugated by the Maha-rajah, or any other power; and it is hereby announced that those chiefs, according to established custom, are, and will remain, under the protection of the British Government.

"Exclusive of these considerations, which are sufficient to demonstrate the just principles by which the determination of the British Government is swayed, there are circumstances in the conduct of the Maha-rajah in bringing forward his proposal, which would, in any case, make it impossible to comply with it.

"The British Government sent an Envoy to the Maha-rajah to give him information of a great danger, and to offer the assistance of the British Government to repel it, and made certain propositions to the Maha-rajah, which were particularly calculated to promote his interests. The Maha-rajah, for reasons which are not discernible, did not receive those propositions with the same confidence and cordiality with which they were made, but in reply brought forward a demand for the assent of the British Government to the subjugation of chiefs connected with it, and made a compliance with that demand the condition of his assent to the friendly propositions of the Governor-General. It would be unworthy of the dignity of the British Government to comply with any demand so brought forward.

"Besides this, the Maha-rajah, instead of making a reference to the British Government on this subject, and waiting for a reply, proceeded to execute his intention of subjugating the chiefs, and taking the country which were the objects of the reference, thus apparently endeavoring to secure his object whether the reply should be favorable or not.

"In making the reference, the Maha-rajah showed that he well knew that without the consent of the British Government he had no right to invade the country between the Sutlej and the Jumna, for if this had not been the case, there would not have been any necessity to make the reference. It was, therefore, peculiarly inconsistent with the respect due to the British Government, and an improper return for the friendly confidence which that Government had reposed in the Maha-rajah, to proceed to seize the object of his requisition without so much as waiting for a reply.

"This is quite contrary to the established practice amongst states, which requires that when one power makes a reference

to another it should await the result of that reference. This principle is so clear, and according to the rules of common respect so indispensable, that it is surprising that the Maha-rajah should not have attended to it. I have repeatedly endeavored to impress it on the Maha-rajah's mind, but without success.

"Moreover, the Maha-rajah proceeded to execute his plans without giving any notice to me, and although he carried his arms close to the confines of the British territories, never made any candid communication to me of his designs, but sometimes even assigned a different intention from that which afterwards appeared.

"In addition to these circumstances, the Maha-rajah's behaviour towards me, the representative of the British Government, was in other points neither consistent with the respect due to a friendly state. The Maha-rajah will find in his own breast an explanation of this observation, and his recollection will point it to the facts which have caused it. It is unnecessary in this place to particularise them; suffice it to say that they constituted a violation of the rules established for the intercourse between states.

"Under all these circumstances, even if the Maha-rajah's demand had been in itself unexceptionable, it would have been impossible to comply with it.

"I am directed by the Right Hon. the Governor-General to protest against the invasion of the country between the Sutlej and the Jumna, in the name of the British Government; and further, to declare that the British Government cannot acknowledge any right in the Maha-rajah to any territories that he may have taken possession of situated between the Sutlej and the Jumna since the first reference of this question to the British Government.

"Moreover, the Governor-General feels himself authorised to expect, and entertains no doubt, that the Maha-rajah will restore all the places that he has taken possession of since that period to the former possessors, and will confine his army to the right bank of the Sutlej, since he can have no object in maintaining

it on the left bank, except to overawe and subjugate the ch. situated between that river and the Jumna, who are now d. clared to be under the protection of the British Government.

"In expressing these sentiments, I am directed to inform the Maha-rajah that the British Government is desirous of maintaining the most amicable relations with his Government, and wishes that the friendship subsisting between the two states may daily improve and increase. The British Government desires no country for itself. It has enough, and its only ambition is to improve the territories which it possesses, and to promote the happiness of its subjects. It wishes to live in amity with all mankind. It cannot consent to the subjugation of chiefs who are closely connected with it, and have claims on it for protection. At the same time, it entertains the most friendly designs towards the Maha-rajah, with whom, notwithstanding the just causes of complaint which the Maha-rajah's conduct has afforded, it is anxious to cultivate the relations of intimate and cordial friendship.

"I trust that the Maha-rajah will duly appreciate the friendly sentiments of the Right Hon. the Governor-General, and meet them with reciprocal cordiality and confidence, so as to give an assurance that for the future the rights and privileges of the representative of the British Government shall be respected according to the established usage between states, and that the intercourse between the two Governments shall be carried on in the spirit of mutual confidence and friendship."

Of this unmistakeable communication Metcalfe's confidential moonshee was the bearer. It was soon apparent that the contents of the Governor-General's letter were utterly unknown to the Rajah, who on perusing the Envoy's note seemed to stagger under it, as though under the influence of a "sudden shock." But it was a shock of a salutary nature. It seemed to sober him. He spoke of the commu-

ication more humbly and more reasonably than, judging by his foregone behaviour, there was any ground to expect. He appeared sensible of the impropriety of his conduct towards the Mission, and believed, or pretended to believe, that the determination of the British Government had been forced upon it by his want of courtesy towards its representative, rather than by his bearing towards the petty states. And he indulged the hope that a more favorable reply to his demands would speedily be despatched to his Court.

The following day was fixed upon for an interview with the British Envoy, but it brought, after the old fashion, only excuses for delay. The Rajah had determined to proceed at once to Lahore, and he invited Metcalfe to accompany him. It was evidently Runjeet's object to gain time. Other thoughts were distracting his mind. There were dangers and difficulties bristling at his own door. He had hoped for a little while in the arms of his favorite mistress to forget all of royalty except its sensual delights. But that which was to have been to him only a source of refreshment and repose, became the exciting cause of unexpected trouble and alarm. His favorite was a Mussulmanee dancing-girl. It may have been in the plenitude of her Mahomedan zeal—or it may have been in the mere wantonness of power—that either by force or persuasion, she had recently converted a Hindoo to the faith of Islam, or at least subjected him to its external ritualities. The act, from whatever feeling it may have resulted, threw Umritsur into a ferment of excitement. The

shops of the holy city were closed. The priests of the great temple issued their manifestoes, and forbade the people, under a ban of excommunication, to open them and return to their wonted business. The houses of the Mussulmanee dancing-girls—in expiation of the offences of one of their tribe—were plundered by the outraged Hindoos. There was a great strife between the Temporal and the Spiritual power; and the former was worsted in the encounter. So Runjeet was fain to withdraw himself from the scene of turmoil, and to make his escape to Lahore.*

And thither Metcalfe speedily followed him. But the change of scene did not induce a change of conduct. Runjeet still maintained a cautious silence, and "found fresh excuses for delaying his answer to the demands that had been made upon him" by the British Government. At length, on the 17th of December, just as the Envoy was writing a letter, peremptorily calling upon the Rajah to declare his intentions without longer delay, a message of invitation came from the Sikh, and Metcalfe proceeded to his presence. But even then the old reserve was upon him. Runjeet appeared careworn and thoughtful, and little inclined to address himself to affairs of State. His troubles had followed him from Umritsur to Lahore. The Hindoos were thronging round the walls of his palace, and sitting *dhurna* at his gates.† He was ready, therefore, with more excuses, and eager for more delay. He told Metcalfe

* *Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone*, December 14, 1808.

† To sit "*dhurna*" is to sit in fasting and prayer at a man's door —an expressive kind of practical curse.

that "his attention had been much engaged by the disturbances at Umritsur and Lahore; that he had had to dismiss his chiefs and followers to their homes; that several of those with whom he was in the habit of consulting were absent, and that, to say the truth, after four months' campaigning he felt an inclination for some rest."* And all that Metcalfe, pressing him sorely, could extract from him was the old promise that he would see him, and make "a full communication on the following day."

But with the new day, after the old fashion, came new excuses. Runjeet's Ministers had tried to reconcile Metcalfe to the eccentricities of their chief; but the English gentleman had answered with becoming firmness that, although the eccentricities were sufficiently apparent, he could not admit that they furnished any justification for his conduct. In vain they pleaded that Runjeet had never been habituated to control—that flushed with continual success he had ever regarded himself, and himself alone, as the arbiter of his conduct—that he was a man of a headstrong and ungovernable nature, and that some allowances ought to be made for him. Metcalfe was not to be driven from the position he had taken up. The business in hand, he said, was an affair between two states, and no considerations of personal character should be admitted in justification of conduct which violated the rights and lowered the dignity of the Government which he

* *Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, December* 18, 1808.

represented.* And he desired the Sikh Minister to inform his master that he was surprised at the repeated excuses he had received, and impatient of further delay. But in spite of this, on the following morning, Runjeet's confidential advisers again appeared before Metcalfe as the bearers of further excuses, and to request one more day's delay. Everything, they announced, was in train for the conclusion of the business, and now, at last, procrastination was at an end.† There was, indeed, no longer a pretext for evasion; and so, on the morning of the 20th of December, the long-delayed conference appeared to be on the point of accomplishment. But instead of meeting the Rajah himself, Metcalfe met only a large assembly of his councillors. There was a long and animated, but an unsatisfactory debate. The young

* The passages in Metcalfe's correspondence descriptive of this scene merit quotation. "I asked," he wrote to the Chief Secretary, "what explanation I should offer to my Government for the delay which had taken place on the part of the Rajah. Imaum-ood-deen begged me to bear in mind that the Rajah, from the earliest age, had been without control; that his disposition had, in consequence, become ungovernable; that he had throughout life acted according to his pleasure; that God had prospered all his undertakings; that he had acquired a habit of acting without reference to the inclination of others; and that allowances ought to be made for these considerations. I observed that the Rajah's eccentricities were evident enough, and that I had been often amused by them; that they would, indeed, be very entertaining if they did not interfere so much with important business; but that I could not state them to my Government to account for the Rajah's conduct, as any consideration for them would be inadmissible. The British Government, I remarked, could only judge of the Rajah by his acts, and if these were improper, could not think of justifying them by any reference to his education. I pressed upon the attention of Imaum-ood-deen that it was necessary for the Maha-rajah to reflect that every matter pending was between Government and Government; and that it was indispensable that he should lay aside the notion that he might act according to his own pleasure without regard to the rights and dignity of the British Government."

† One of the excuses advanced by Runjeet was founded on the absence of a councillor—Mith Singh—in whom he professed great faith. This man had been summoned to Lahore, and was now in attendance on the Rajah.

English statesman had a host of antagonists, but he was more than a match for them all. He told the Sikh chiefs that the plan which the British Government purposed to pursue was conceived in a friendly spirit, and to be prosecuted in a friendly manner; but that the determination which had been announced was fixed and irrevocable, and that it were well that this should be understood by their master.*

The object of this preliminary conference was plainly to sound Metcalfe. But the councillors retired carrying with them nothing that was likely to soothe the apprehensions of their chief. And when, at last, on the following day, the British Envoy met Runjeet himself, all that the wily Sikh could do was to repeat oft-refuted arguments, and to put unprofitable questions. The Rajah asked why we called upon him to withdraw from the left bank of the Sutlej—why we demanded that he should restore the places he had already captured? And Metcalfe answered plainly and firmly, with undeniable logic, that the British Government intended to take those princi-

* "I was pressed," wrote Metcalfe, "to say distinctly whether the demands of the British Government were meant to be made amicably or not. I replied that that question was answered by so many circumstances that I wondered it could be put. Why, I asked, was I here? Why had the Governor-General addressed a friendly letter to the Rajah? Why had I given in a long explanatory note? Why had the Maha-rajah expressed his satisfaction at the contents of these communications, and observed that friendly remonstrances could not be produced without regard? Of course I said the demands that I had presented were made with friendly intentions. In order to prevent the construction that might be assumed that my consent would be obtained to a protracted discussion of the respective rights of the British Government and the Rajah of Lahore to political supremacy in the country between the Jumna and the Sutlej, and to convince all present that it would be in vain to agitate that question, I declared decidedly that with respect to the demands that I had made I must persist in them, and could not relax in any degree: that the orders of my Government were final, and that I would not exercise any discretion."

palities under its protection—and how could they be protected when the Rajah threatened them with his armies, or had absolutely brought them under his rule? But still a decisive answer was not to be elicited. In general terms the Envoy was told that an arrangement would be made honorable to both nations; but Metcalfe saw plainly that no arrangement was likely to be made without an appeal to arms.

A crisis, indeed, was now fast approaching. It has been seen that the British Government had announced to Metcalfe its intention of moving forward a body of troops to take post upon the Sutlej. This announcement had not yet been made to Runjeet; but the time for a full revelation of our intentions seemed now to have arrived. It was doubtful, indeed, whether rumors of the threatened movement had not already reached the Sikh ruler, for he was collecting troops, seemingly in anticipation of a coming struggle. It appeared expedient, therefore, to Metcalfe to warn the military authorities of the probability of resistance being offered to the demands of the British Government. So he wrote the following letter to the Commander-in-Chief, setting forth the grounds on which he based his belief in the likelihood of a speedy collision:*

"*To his Excellency Lieutenant-General George Hewitt, Commander-in-Chief, &c., &c., &c.*

"Lahore, December 3, 1808.

"SIR,— . . . . It is known to your Excellency that the subjugation of the country between the Sutlej and the Jumna is the

* The commencement of the letter is omitted, as it contains only a recitation of facts with which the reader is already acquainted.

favorite object of the Rajah's ambition. His pride is so much concerned in maintaining that object, that I have no hesitation in offering it as my opinion that nothing but a conviction of the absolute impossibility of disputing the point with us with the smallest hope of success would induce him to assent to our demands.

"It must be supposed that that conviction is impressed on his mind, and it is difficult to conceive that he would be so rash as to encounter the perils of a contest with the British power.

"Several considerations, however, exist, in my opinion, to oppose the conclusion that he certainly will not offer resistance to our projected arrangements. His rooted jealousies will lead him to suspect that the arrangements which Government has now resolved to adopt are only preliminary to a more extensive design of conquest in the Punjab, and he may think it not more dangerous to be overcome in a struggle, than to submit quietly to the result, inevitable, perhaps, in his view of the increasing expansion of our influence. He may be induced, by his ideas of honor, to suppose that it will be more creditable to be reduced by a war with a superior power than to yield his favorite object without a struggle. His knowledge of the moderation of the British Government towards a fallen enemy may diminish in his sight the ultimate dangers of a contest; and a certain degree of confidence which he reposes in his fortune, and a belief in the infallibility of predestination, may afford some encouragement to his elated mind to incur the hazard of a war.

"The delay which he still makes does not appear to me to afford any certain indication of his disposition; because, although he might intend to assent ultimately to our demands, he would naturally wish to try the effects of procrastination and negotiation; and although he might be determined to resist them, he would still wish to gain time.

"I understand, however, that he has issued orders to collect troops; and under the circumstance of his delaying to make any satisfactory reply to our requisitions, this step, unaccompanied by any explanation, cannot bear any favorable interpretation.

d, it appears to me to be offensive, and I shall think lf authorised to require an account of it. Even this mea re, however, may proceed more from fear and suspicion than rom a determination to oppose us.

"With reference to all the considerations stated in this despatch, I think it my duty to submit to your Excellency's notice my opinion that actual circumstances do not afford sufficient ground to entertain a confident expectation that Runjeet Singh will assent, without opposition, to the arrangements which Government has determined to adopt.

"I shall transmit to your Excellency the earliest intelligence of any decisive turn that may take place in the Rajah's conduct.

"I have not yet announced to him the resolution adopted by Government to advance a detachment towards the Sutlej; but I propose to make that communication this day, and perhaps the result of it will enable me to offer to your Excellency some more certain information.

"I have the honor to be, with great respect,

"Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

"C. T. METCALFE."

Having despatched this letter, Metcalfe's next care was to intimate distinctly and decisively to Runjeet Singh that the British Government purposed, without further delay, to advance a military force to the banks of the Sutlej. The game was now nearly played out. On the 22nd of December the British Envoy and the Sikh Rajah were again face to face. The communication was made. Runjeet told his attendant chiefs to consider of the matter; and, under the influence of self-control such as he rarely exercised, fell into friendly conversation with the English gentleman. Several questions were asked concerning the British detachment—what would be its strength?—where it would be posted—

whether at Loodhianah, or what other place? all of this Metcalfe answered, that the details of movement were matters of future consideration. A hint from the consulting chiefs here drew the Rajah aside. A brief conversation between them ensued. Then Runjeet, having ordered Uzeezoodeen to state his opinions to the British Envoy, left the room, mounted his horse, and with what appeared to Metcalfe "surprising levity," began prancing about the court-yard of his residence.* There was good reason afterwards to think that this was less an indication of levity than of the strong feeling which was working within him.

Whilst Runjeet was caracolling about the court-yard, Uzeezoodeen delivered his master's message. It was not a conciliatory one; and it was not given in a conciliatory manner. The Rajah, he said, had flattered himself that the intercourse between the two states would be conducive to his welfare; but

* Metcalfe's words are: "On a hint from the party aside, the Rajah withdrew to join them; and after a consultation, sent them to me with a message, and proceeded himself with surprising levity to mount his horse and prance about the court-yard of his residence." I am the more particular in giving the exact words of the writer, inasmuch as that this story has been variously narrated, and has obtained, perhaps, a wider currency than any other incident in Metcalfe's life. The current version of the story is this, which I find in a leading article of the *Times* newspaper, written in December, 1839: "When these terms were propounded to him, Runjeet, after a short and futile attempt to overbear the British Ambassador, rushed out of an apartment, an elevated summer-room, in which the conference had taken place, and in an incredibly short space of time, Sir Charles Metcalfe saw him on horseback, at the head of his immediate suite, galloping in the most furious manner over the plain below. When he had thus digested his spleen he returned, and after telling the Envoy that he always took this extraordinary anodyne under extreme vexation, expressed his determination to submit implicitly to the requirements of the British Government." This story is so much more striking and picturesque than that which I have given in the text, that I have been really sorry to substitute the homelier version which I have found in Metcalfe's own handwriting, written on the day after the incident occurred.

of this, in reply to a friendly application, he received a message of so extraordinary a nature, he did not know what to make of it. What was the use, it was asked, of a small post on the Sutlej? — surely such a demonstration would not deter the French from advancing. To this Metcalfe replied, that all idea of deterring the French was out of the question—that he had made certain distinct propositions to the Rajah, and that he called for an answer equally distinct. The decided tone in which he spoke was not without its effect on the Sikh councillors. Runjeet had by this time dismounted and seated himself in another chamber, where Uzeezoodeen and his associates waited upon him with Metcalfe's message. What passed there can only be conjectured. The consultation was a long one; and when the Ministers returned, their bearing was strangely altered. They spoke now with an affable manner, and in a softened tone. They said that the plan of advancing a British detachment to the banks of the Sutlej would not be opposed by the Rajah, if it were done in concert with him, and in a friendly manner. The answer was, that if the requisitions of the British Government, from which the Envoy would on no account recede, were complied with, everything would be done in a friendly manner. Again the councillors sought the Rajah; and again, after a protracted consultation, they returned to the room where Metcalfe was quietly awaiting them. The answer they brought back was more satisfactory than he could have anticipated even in his most sanguine mo-

ments. The Rajah, they said, was confident of our friendly intentions, and agreed to all our proposals. "And so," wrote Metcalfe, "the demands that I had presented, respecting which I had not been able for a fortnight to procure the least answer, were now treated as if they were mere trifles with which there was not the smallest difficulty in complying."

But these were mere idle words—vague generalities meaning nothing. On the same evening a deputation waited on Metcalfe to inform him that the proposal to advance troops to the Sutlej was so extraordinary, that the Rajah could not give any definite answer to the requisitions of the British Government until he had consulted with his chiefs; that he therefore purposed to proceed on the following day to Umritsur; and that he requested the British Envoy to follow him there. At this, Metcalfe, wontedly so calm in his outward demeanor, fired up with becoming indignation. He thought, with the prophet of old, that he "did well to be angry." He denounced the conduct of the Rajah as mere trickery to gain time—trickery often repeated and now well understood. He declared that such conduct was disrespectful in the extreme to the British Government; that if the Rajah determined to march, in the midst of the negotiation, he could not control him; but that against such a proceeding he earnestly and indignantly protested.

The remonstrance was not without its effect. The precipitate movement to Umritsur was abandoned; and the negotiations were resumed. But there was still the old system of chicanery at work—still the

old excuses and the old delays. Foiled in his attempts either to overbear or over-reach Metcalfe in oral discussion, Runjeet now resorted to epistolary communication. First of all he attempted a compromise; but the young English statesman was resolute to submit to no half-measures. He called for the fulfilment of the requisitions of the British Government without stint or reservation; and his unshaken firmness ere long achieved the desired victory. Little by little, Runjeet, not without fresh displays of procrastination and evasion, yielded to the demands of the British Envoy. He saw that the announcement of the intended advance of a British detachment was not an empty menace. Metcalfe, it has been seen, was in communication with the Commander-in-Chief, whose head-quarters were in Saharunpore; and under instructions from his Excellency, a detachment had been ordered for service on the banks of the Sutlej. This detachment was placed under the command of the fittest man in the army that could have been nominated for the performance of such a duty. It was placed under the command of Colonel David Ochterlony. Early in January it was ordered to advance.

The first service to be performed by this force was the expulsion of the Sikh troops from Umballah, where a considerable body had been for some time posted. But the Rajah promised to withdraw his men to his own side of the river, and desired Metcalfe to consider it as done. But Performance, in this case as in others, lagged far behind Promise; and Metcalfe, weary of all this falsehood and fraud,

came to the determination that the time had come for his departure from Runjeet's Court, if the state of the military preparations on the frontier seemed to warrant so decided a step. But it was now the policy of both parties to temporise. Runjeet was collecting troops, and eager to gain time. General Hewitt was making his dispositions, and eager also to gain time. Metcalfe was recommended to temporise; and by delay the war was averted. Awed by the resolute bearing of his antagonists, the Sikh began slowly and reluctantly to fulfil the conditions demanded by the British Government. On the 6th of January, one of Runjeet's chiefs was despatched to Umballah to recall the troops posted there, and to make restitution of the place to its rightful owner.

In consequence of this, negotiations were resumed at Umritsur, to which place the Court and the Mission quietly proceeded in the middle of January. Presuming on what he had done in the way of concession, Runjeet demanded that now a treaty of general amity should be concluded. But Metcalfe pointed out that other conditions were yet to be fulfilled; that if Umballah were restored, Kheir and Fureed-kote were not; and that he demanded the cession of all the territory acquired since the arrival of the Mission. It would take long to tell how Runjeet promised and broke his promises; and how from day to day the restitution of these places was delayed; how the Sikh continued to demand a treaty, and how the British Envoy called for the fulfilment of the conditions necessary to the attainment of what he sought. The month of January

passed away; and the month of February passed away. Military preparations on both sides were advancing; but still Metcalfe remained at Runjeet's Court—still the negotiations appeared every morning to be approaching a favorable issue, and still every evening it was clear that these appearances had been most delusive.*

It was whilst affairs were in this state that an incident occurred which awakened Runjeet to a sense of the danger which he would incur by a collision with the British troops. At the end of February, the annual festival of the *Mohurrum* was celebrated by the Mahomedan sepoys of Metcalfe's escort. It is the custom of the followers of the Prophet to spend upon this great occasion considerable sums of money on the construction and decoration of gigantic cars, called Tazeeahs, which are paraded about for several days in a noisy, obtrusive manner, to the great delight of all true Mahomedans, who pride themselves upon the grandeur of the ceremony, and are little disposed to be stinted in their demonstrations. Now the Mussulman sepoys of Metcalfe's escort, according to the custom of their sect, made a

* Among other complaints that Runjeet made, was one to the effect that Metcalfe treated him like a Jageerdar (or pensioner). "He (Runjeet) observed (to Hafoozoodeen) on my note, that when he made any proposal, I replied that I had no authority; but when I brought forward my own proposals, I issued my commands to him as authoritatively as if he were only a Jageerdar."—"Considering," wrote Metcalfe, "the efforts which I have always made to conciliate the Rajah—considering the patience and forbearance which I have exercised from first to last in my communications with him—considering that I have been barely acquitted by my own Government of the fault of carrying moderation to a disgraceful length—and considering, moreover, that the late proceedings at this Court have put my patience to a severer trial than it had ever before undergone, I did not expect this charge from the Rajah."—[*Mr. Metcalfe to Mr. Edmonstone, January* 4, 1809.]

Tazeeah at the appointed time, and paraded it about, with the usual ceremonies, in the neighbourhood of the Mission camp. For three or four days this went on without interruption; and then Metcalfe was informed that the display of the Tazeeah gave great offence to the priests of the great temple of Umritsur. Had he known this before, he would have prohibited the celebration of the festival, however unpopular the prohibition might have been to all the Mahomedans in his camp. As it was—as the ceremonies were now nearly over—he contented himself with giving orders that they should be performed for the future in the most noiseless and unobtrusive manner, and that the Tazeeah should not be any more paraded about in public. All this was done in concert with Runjeet Singh, who condemned the bigotry of the priests; and it was hoped that no evil consequences would arise from this periodical display of Mahomedan zeal. "I did everything that could be done," said Metcalfe, reporting the circumstances to Government, "to prevent any offence being taken, except destroying the Tazeeah itself. That could not be done without exciting great indignation among the Mahomedans; and I had a right to expect that within the precincts of the British camp my attendants would be protected by the Government in the free exercise of their religion."

Still further to prevent the possibility of a collision, it was agreed between Metcalfe and Runjeet that the former should restrain the sepoys from going into the town, and the latter should prevent the people from entering the Mission camp. The

English gentleman performed his part of the compact; the Sikh ruler did not. On the morning of the 25th of February a party of religious fanatics—half-soldiers, half-devotees—known as Akalis, marched out of the town, with drums beating and colors flying, followed by a surging rabble, intent upon the plunder of the British Mission. As they neared our camp, the escort, headed by Captain Popham, was drawn up in front of it, whilst Metcalfe sent out some persons to parley with the excited Sikhs. Still, however, they continued to advance in the same menacing attitude, and presently opened a brisk fire on the British camp. It took immediate effect. Our men were dropping in the ranks. There was now no time to be lost. Popham proposed that he should advance upon his assailants; and with Metcalfe's sanction he attacked them. The movement was a spirited and a successful one. The Sikhs were soon flying in confusion, and seeking shelter under the walls of the town.

The disturbance was immediately known to Runjeet, who rode out to the British camp, and exerted himself to quell the tumult. But all his endeavors could not quiet the fanatics. A party of Akalis again assembled and marched out of the town, threatening another attack on the Mission. During the rest of the day, and all through the night, they continued in force upon the plain; so Runjeet sent out a body of his own troops to protect the British camp from further outrage. On the following day it was removed to a greater distance from the town, where it remained unplundered and unmolested,

whilst the ceremonies of the Mohurrum were prosecuted to the end in the quiet manner originally intended.

The blood that was shed upon this occasion was not shed in vain. Runjeet, who had before seen our sepoys in the exercise of mimic war, now saw them in the stern realities of action. He learnt, for the first time, what was their temper—what was their steadiness, what their discipline in actual warfare. This little handful of British soldiers had routed a vastly superior body of Sikhs; and Runjeet began to ask himself how, if the people of Hindostan, drilled in the English fashion, could do such things, the English themselves must fight; and how it would fare with him, if he were to meet many thousands of them on the banks of the Sutlej, supported by their far-reaching guns.

So, although this disturbance of course afforded a pretext for some further evasions and delays, Runjeet, beset by obstinate doubts and painful self-questionings, soon came to the conclusion that a war with the Feringhees was an event not much to be desired. But still it was not in the nature of the man to proceed to the performance of his past promises in a plain, straightforward manner. The old shifts, however, could not serve him much longer. Our military preparations were advancing; and already our attitude was an imposing one. Ochterlony had taken post on the Sutlej, and had issued a proclamation, declaring all the Sikh states upon the left bank of the river to be under British protection.*

* The proclamation bears date February 9, 1809.

A strong body of troops, under General St. Leger, was ready to move forward to his support. Nor was it only his confidence in these military preparations which, at this time, impelled Metcalfe to assume a bolder tone in all his negotiations. The great object for which he had been despatched to Lahore had now ceased to exist. The whirligig of Time had rendered an anti-Gallican alliance with the rulers of the Punjab a matter of small concern to the British-Indian Government.* It little mattered now whether Runjeet were our enemy or our friend. From the path of the British Envoy this change in the state of our European politics cleared away a jungle of difficulties and perplexities. He had now only to support the dignity of the great nation which he represented; and he was not slow to recommend the most decided measures, even to the extreme one of the invasion of the Punjab. It was with no small delight that he flung behind him the thought of all further compromises and concessions, and prepared to give the signal for the immediate commencement of war.

* These altered circumstances were duly announced to Runjeet. Writing, subsequently, a letter of recapitulation, Metcalfe said: "Immediately after I had the honor of receiving your despatch of the 23rd of January, I informed Runjeet Singh, at a conference which I had with him, that I had been instructed to intimate to him that authentic intelligence had been received of the French having suffered repeated defeats in Europe from his Majesty's armies and those of his allies; and of their being in embarrassments, which would render impracticable the prosecution of those hostile projects against this country, against which it was the object of my mission to provide—that, consequently, there was no necessity for the conclusion of the treaty which I had formerly proposed, or for any specific engagements between the two states, who were already bound by the relations of amity and friendship." The announcement had not much effect upon Runjeet. Metcalfe was obliged to acknowledge that "the Rajah did not express the disappointment which he had expected."

But awed by the proximity of an event which must have overwhelmed him in disaster and disgrace, and for ever checked his career of ambition, Runjeet was now fulfilling slowly and reluctantly the behests of the British Government. In the early part of March, Kheir was restored to its legitimate owners; and now the restitution of Fureed-kote alone remained. A series of incidents of the most trivial character delayed the accomplishment of this; but it was plain to Metcalfe that the Rajah really designed to fulfil his promise, though he was thwarted by the trickery or the contumacy of those who, perhaps, desired to embroil him in a war with the British. In January he had talked vauntingly of discussing the restitution of Fureed-kote with his chiefs, at the head of his army on the banks of the Sutlej. But he was now, in March, again abandoning himself to pleasure, and rather suffering by his remissness, than really designing or desiring, the delays which obstructed the fulfilment of his promise.

From this pleasant forgetfulness Metcalfe roused him by a missive, which flashed the sunlight into his sleeping face. "The Maha-rajah," he wrote to him on the 26th of March, "is revelling in delight in the Shalimar gardens, unmindful of the duties of Friendship. What Friendship requires is not done; nor is it doing. I entertained a great desire and hope that the relations of Friendship might be firmly established through my mediation. I have nothing now remaining in my power but to require leave to depart. I, therefore, in the name of the British Government, require my dismissal, and trust

that the Maha-rajah will furnish me with a proper escort to conduct me to the British armies, and prevent any aggression on the part of the Maha-rajah's army on the way."

To this Runjeet replied that the delights of the garden of Friendship far exceeded the delights of a garden of roses—that the demand of the British Envoy for an escort would certainly excite great surprise—and that what he desired should immediately be done. And steps were certainly taken to do it. But just at the point of consummation, new difficulties supervened. A dispute arose about the grain in the fort; and the party sent to hand over the place to its old legitimate owners, retired without accomplishing their object. But Runjeet saw that any further obstructions would work grievously to his detriment. Metcalfe had written to General St. Leger desiring him to expel the occupants of Fureed-kote, and hinted to the Rajah that there was yet time to prevent this display of force. Throughout the whole of these protracted negotiations, no such potential argument had been used, though Runjeet now protested against it. "I must observe," he wrote with a hypocritical *naïveté* which is very diverting, "that when matters are settled in an amicable and friendly way, to talk of armies and such things is neither necessary nor pleasing to my friendly disposition." But the "talk of armies" effected at once what might, by dallying in the "garden of Friendship," have been long delayed; and on the 5th of April, Metcalfe wrote to the Chief Secretary, "I have the honor to inform you, that

Fureed-kote was finally surrendered to the right owners on the 2nd instant."

So now, after long delays and repeated evasions—after a systematic display of the most pitiful tortuosity, which now excited the anger and now the contempt of Metcalfe, and rendered necessary the exercise not only of consummate ability and address, but of the highest patience and forbearance—all that the British Government demanded was done by the Sikh ruler. And then came the question of the treaty. Whilst on the banks of the Sutlej time was being wasted in the manufacture of difficulties about the surrender of Fureed-kote, on the banks of the Hooghly Lord Minto and his councillors were discussing the expediency of concluding engagements of general amity with Runjeet Singh. At first it seemed advisable to them, now that the danger of European invasion had passed away, not to encumber the Government with any treaties which might embarrass their future proceedings. But they subsequently considered, that in the event of all our requisitions being complied with by the Sikh chief, it might be in some sort an act of justice to him to grant the treaty which Metcalfe had led him to expect, and which he urged the Supreme Government to allow;* whilst at the same time, no great harm could result from it if it were unencumbered with

* This intention was first announced to Metcalfe in a private letter from Mr. Edmonstone, dated March 14, 1809: "Your letter of the 15th of February was received on the 11th, and it was yesterday resolved to grant a treaty to Runjeet Singh of general amity, containing, however, some conditions respecting his troops on this side the Sutlej. I had occasion to draw up a Memorandum on the subject, and to state in substance the same arguments which I found so ably stated in your letter No. 69, which did not arrive till to-day."

inconvenient details. In accordance with these more mature considerations, instructions were sent on the 13th of March to the British Envoy, giving him authority to conclude a treaty with the Rajah, and forwarding to him the following draft:

"*Draft of a Treaty between the British Government and the Rajah of Lahore.*

"Whereas certain differences which had arisen between the British Government and the Rajah of Lahore have been happily and amicably adjusted, and both parties being anxious to maintain the relations of perfect amity and concord, the following articles of treaty, which shall be binding on the heirs and successors of the two parties, have been concluded, by the agency of C. T. Metcalfe, Esq., on the part of the British Government, and of [ ], on the part of Rajah Runjeet Singh.*

"Art. 1. Perpetual friendship shall subsist between the British Government and the State of Lahore; the latter shall be considered, with respect to the former, to be on the footing of the most favored powers, and the British Government will have no concern with the territories and subjects of the Rajah to the northward of the river Sutlej.†

"Art. 2. The Rajah will never maintain in the territory *which he occupies* [occupied by him and his dependents]‡ on the left bank of the river Sutlej more troops than are necessary for the internal duties of that territory, nor commit or suffer any

* In the preamble of the ratified treaty it runs: "By Rajah Runjeet Singh on his own part, and by the agency of Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, Esquire, on the part of the British Government."

† In the original draft of the treaty in Mr. Edmonstone's handwriting, there is this addition to the first article: "And on the other hand the Rajah renounces all claims to sovereignty over the Sikh chiefs to the southward of that river, and all right of interference in their concerns." But this passage was subsequently erased; it was of too general a character; for the Rajah, as the next article intimates, still held certain tracts of territory, acquired before the arrival of the Mission, on the left or southern bank of the Sutlej.

‡ The words in brackets were inserted by Metcalfe in the place of those printed in italics.

encroachments on the possessions or rights of the chiefs in its vicinity.

"Art. 3. In the event of a violation of any of the preceding articles, or of a departure from the rules of friendship [on the part of either state],* this treaty shall be considered to be null and void.

"Art. 4. This treaty, consisting of four articles, having been settled and concluded at [ ], on the [ ] day of [ ],† Mr. C. T. Metcalfe has delivered to the Rajah of Lahore a copy of the same in English and Persian, under his seal and signature, and the Rajah has delivered another copy of the same under his seal and signature, and Mr. C. T. Metcalfe engages to procure, within the space of two months, a copy of the same duly ratified by the Right Honorable the Governor-General in Council, on the receipt of which by the Rajah the present treaty shall be deemed complete and binding on both parties, and the copy of it now delivered to the Rajah shall be returned.

"N. B. EDMONSTONE,
"Chief Secretary."

On the receipt of this draft, all his demands having by this time been complied with, Metcalfe informed the Rajah that he was prepared to conclude a treaty of general amity with him. Runjeet received the announcement with undisguised delight. The treaty, he said, would silence and shame those who had been endeavoring to persuade him that the British Government entertained hostile designs against the Sikh territories. There was no room now for any further chicanery. Runjeet had nothing

* These words were inserted by Metcalfe at the request of the suspicious Rajah. It is remarkable that Cuningham, in his history of the Sikhs, gives the treaty, as ratified, without Metcalfe's insertions, which Government approved and adopted.

† At Umritsur, on the 25th of Feb.

to gain by delay; so on the 25th of April, 1809, this treaty was concluded at Umritsur; the blanks in the de[illegible]tive title being filled up with the name of Runjeet Singh himself.

The business of the Mission was now fully accomplished;* so Metcalfe prepared to return to the British provinces. "I have this day," he wrote on the 2nd of May, "made my first march from Umritsur towards the British territories, having finally taken leave of Runjeet Singh. The departure of the Mission took place with every essential mark of attention and respect on the part of the Rajah. He visited me on the 28th ultimo, and received an entertainment at my tents preparatory to our separation. I visited him on the 30th, accompanied by the gentlemen attached to the Mission, and took leave publicly with the usual ceremonies. Both these meetings were convivial and pleasant; and the Rajah's behaviour was particularly friendly and agreeable. At his particular request I remained yesterday at Um-

* It may be mentioned here that Government had originally intended that the advanced detachment should be withdrawn from the banks of the Sutlej. But on the earnest representations both of Metcalfe and Ochterlony the occupation of Loodhianah was continued, and from that time it became a frontier post. It may be doubted, however, whether this would have happened but for an accidental circumstance which caused Government to delay the withdrawal of the troops. Writing to Metcalfe privately on the 28th of May, Mr. Edmonstone says: "We have heard of the defeat of the King of Cabul's army in Cashmere, and anticipated Mr. Elphinstone's awkward situation. You will learn from Mr. Seton what has been done at Peshawur, and what has been ordered. This is an unfortunate turn of affairs, but the advantages of the Mission will not have been entirely lost. I have written officially to head-quarters about leaving the detachment at Loodhianah until Elphinstone shall have passed, as its presence may possibly countenance his journey through the Punjab; although I should think the Commander-in-Chief would not remove the post until he heard of the ratification of the treaty, notwithstanding the intimation contained in my last letter that the conclusion of the treaty would afford a favorable opportunity for the removal of the detachment."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

ritsur, and saw him once more in a private interview, at which his conversation was principally composed of expressions of anxiety for the permanent maintenance of friendship between the two states."

At this time Runjeet Singh was in the very flush and vigor of life. He lived for thirty years afterwards; but the treaty which he and Metcalfe signed at Umritsur was never violated during his supremacy in the Punjab either by the English or the Sikhs. For a little while doubts and misgivings on either side may have overshadowed the relations subsisting between them; but confidence was soon established, and Runjeet learnt to respect the nation which could send forth such representatives as the youthful Envoy who had measured himself with him so bravely and so cunningly during the six months spent at his Court. It is hard to say in how great a degree the long peace, which was maintained between two warlike and extending states in provocatory proximity to each other, is to be attributed to the firmness and address so conspicuous in the dealings of young Metcalfe with the wily and unscrupulous ruler of the Sikhs. But it would be impossible to read this account of the first Mission to Lahore, imperfectly as it sets forth all its incidents,*

* The contents of this chapter are derived from a vast mass of correspondence, which might have filled some volumes, principally Metcalfe's narrative letters, by no means diffusely written—and although this chapter has extended to a length which is disproportionate to the space of time over which the history extends, I have been compelled to exclude much which would have illustrated both the difficulties of Metcalfe's position, the address with which he encountered them, and the strange character and conduct of the man who, perhaps of all the princes and chiefs of India, made the name most familiar to English ears. It was during these six

without appreciating the difficulties with which he had to contend, and the consummate ability with which he overcame them. He had numbered at this time but twenty-three years. Yet the dreams of the Eton cloisters were already realised. He had "prescribed terms;" he had "concluded a peace."* What would he have accomplished at this stage of his career if he had returned to England, and entered "Lord Grenville's office?"

It need hardly be added, that Metcalfe's conduct at Lahore was approved and applauded by his employers. He was sustained and encouraged throughout by the praises of the Supreme Government, conveyed to him in the letters of the Chief Secretary; and he said that he was abundantly rewarded. In private and public letters alike, his zeal and ability were warmly commended. One sample of each will suffice. Writing privately to Metcalfe on the 27th of December, Mr. Edmonstone said, "I can add nothing material to the expressions already conveyed to you in an official form of the favorable sentiments which Government entertains of your general conduct in a situation perhaps as delicate, difficult, and responsible as any public agent was ever placed in. I can assure you that Government is perfectly satisfied of the difficulties and embarrassments which encompassed you, and admits that the course of conduct which you pursued was countenanced by the spirit of your instructions. . . . . Upon the whole,

memorable months that Metcalfe's reputation was made. This was, indeed, the turning-point of his career. He went afterwards straight on to Fame and Fortune. And the biographer can hardly, therefore, lay too great a stress on such a passage of his life.

* See *ante*, page 62.

your mind may enjoy all the satisfaction—a satisfaction which you, indeed, must amply merit, that can arise from the conviction that Government entertains the highest opinion of your zeal, ability, judgment, and exertions." And when the work was done and the treaty was exchanged, these commendations took official shape, and, taking a retrospect of all the past circumstances of the Mission, the same high functionary thus finally announced to the departing Envoy the admiration with which the Supreme Government contemplated his entire conduct: "During the course of your arduous ministry at the Court of Lahore, the Governor-General in Council has repeatedly had occasion to record his testimony of your zeal, ability, and address in the execution of the duties committed to your charge. His Lordship in Council, however, deems it an obligation of justice, at the close of your mission, generally to declare the high sense which he entertains of the distinguished merit of your services and exertions in a situation of more than ordinary importance, difficulty, and responsibility, to convey to you the assurance of his high approbation, and to signify to you that the general tenor of your conduct in the arduous negotiations in which you have been engaged has established a peculiar claim to public applause, respect, and esteem."

CHAPTER IX.

[1809—1811.]

TRANSITION YEARS.

Approbation of Lord Minto—Metcalfe's Visit to the Presidency—Meeting with his Brother—Appointment to the Deputy-Secretaryship—Voyage to Madras—Return to Calcutta—Appointment to the Residency at Scindiah's Court—Letters from Lord Minto and Mr. Edmonstone—Translation to the Delhi Residency—The Foundation of Charles Metcalfe's Fortune.

THE admiration which Charles Metcalfe's conduct at the Sikh Court had excited in the breast of the Governor-General was not now to be suffered to expend itself in a few stereotyped phrases of official commendation. It was not a mere formal demonstration; it was a living reality, and was likely to become an abiding one. Lord Minto desired to know the man who had done such great things for his government. He was interested in the personal character of the young statesman, and was eager to communicate with him face to face. So it happened that Metcalfe had scarcely reached his old home at Delhi, when a private letter from the Chief Secretary came with the intimation that the Governor-General desired to see him at the Presidency. "I am autho-

rised o inform you," wrote Mr. Edmonstone, "that you are perfectly at liberty to proceed to Calcutta. The Governor-General, indeed, is desirous of being personally acquainted with you, and of having an opportunity of conversing with you on the affairs in which you have been so long and arduously engaged. But it will be proper that you should apply officially for leave to come to the Presidency. You need not, however, await the answer. This intimation you may consider as sufficient authority. Favor me with a line of application on your receipt of this, and set off as soon as it may suit your convenience."* Little time was lost after the receipt of this letter; Metcalfe was soon upon his way to Calcutta. There were others whom he desired to see there beside the noble Lord at the head of the Government. Theophilus Metcalfe, with his wife and little daughter, had come round from China to Calcutta in the early part of the year, for the benefit of Mrs. Metcalfe's health, and Charles was eager now to embrace his brother and sister and make the acquaintance of his little niece. Public and private considerations, therefore, both urged him to make all speed to the Presidency. He had reached Delhi on his return from the Punjab on the 6th of June. The 8th of July found him in Calcutta.

But before the journey had been accomplished Lord Minto had ceased to disturb himself about the countries lying between the banks of the Sutlej and the base of the Hindoo-Koosh. Dangers more press-

* *MS. Correspondence, Calcutta, May* 28, 1809.

ing and more palpable than any that had been looked for in the direction of Central Asia, were now threatening the British-Indian Government from the southern part of the Indian peninsula. The Coast army was in a state of feverish excitement —almost, indeed, upon the borders of absolute rebellion. It was not a revolt of the soldiers, but of the officers of the Madras army. The abolition of certain privileges by which the higher grades of the service had been long suffered to enrich themselves, had caused great dissatisfaction, which subsequent circumstances had aggravated, until the civil and military authorities were in a state of open and violent antagonism. The power of the Governor, Sir George Barlow, was set at naught seditious meetings were held; inflammatory resolutions were passed; and the entire government of the Presidency, under the convulsions that had arisen, seemed to be hovering upon the extreme verge of dissolution.

In this state of affairs, it appeared to Lord Minto that his presence upon the scene of these disturbances was necessary to their extinction. So he determined at once to proceed to Madras. But he did not forget Charles Metcalfe, whom he had invited to visit him in Calcutta. It occurred to the Governor-General that he could not, upon this painful expedition to the Coast, take with him any one more likely to be of service to him than the sometime Envoy to Lahore. So, on the 15th of July, the Chief Secretary wrote to Metcalfe that the Governor-General in Council had been "pleased to

appoint him Deputy-Secretary to the Right Honorable the Governor-General during his Lordship's absence from the Presidency."*

After a brief sojourn in Calcutta, rendered interesting to him by the presence of Theophilus and his family, Charles Metcalfe, accompanying Mr. Edmonstone, left the Presidency on the 5th of August, to proceed down the river to join his ship. On the 9th, the Governor-General embarked. The voyage from Calcutta to Madras occupies a week or a month, according to the season. In the month of August, when a vessel bound for the southern coast meets the south-west Monsoon in the Bay of Bengal, the passage is seldom made under the latter period of time. So it was not until the 11th of September that, after a tedious, zig-zag voyage, rendered comfortless by continual rain and baffling winds, Lord Minto was enabled to announce his arrival at Madras.

Of this visit to the Southern Presidency the records are but scanty. The ministerial capacity in which Charles Metcalfe acted at this time afforded no opportunities for independent action, and the incidents of the Madras disturbances of 1809 scarcely belong to the career of the Bengal civilian. His residence on the Coast was not distasteful to him. "You know Madras well," he wrote to his aunt, Mrs. Monson, on the 13th of November. "In some respects I like it better than Calcutta." He appears

* His salary was fixed at 2000 rupees a month—the same amount that he had drawn on the Lahore Mission.

to have spent some time in Mr. Cassamajor's house,* and to have greatly enjoyed the society of a family that has never been wanting in amiable and attractive members. At the close of the year he visited Mysore ;† and at the commencement of 1810, having returned to Madras, he received the afflicting intelligence of the death of his sister-in-law, to whom he was sincerely attached. "Poor Theophilus," he wrote on the 10th of February from the Ameerbaugh, where he was residing with the Governor-General, "has lost his darling wife, who was really one of the most sensible, the most amiable, the most virtuous of women. I received accounts of this afflicting event about a month ago. Theophilus goes home with his sweet little daughter, and will be with you almost as soon as this letter." There was no more observable, as there was no more beautiful trait in Charles Metcalfe's character, from very early boyhood to the close of his career, than the depth of his sympathies—

> He could afford to suffer
> With those whom he saw suffer.

And when he wrote strongly of the afflictions of others, it was because he felt them strongly himself.

On the 12th of May, Lord Minto held a farewell

* Mr. Cassamajor was at this time a member of the Madras Council.

† He went there, I believe, to visit his old friend Arthur Cole. I have before me a letter from Lord Minto to Metcalfe, dated "Madras, December 14, 1809," and endorsed, "Answered from Mysore, December, 1809." In this letter the Governor-General says: "I hope you have by this time afforded another proof of your diplomatic powers by making my peace with Mr. Cole, and that he will not have proved implacable in the hands of one who gained the tender affections of Runjeet Singh."

levee at the Ameerbaugh, and afterwards crossed the surf, with his suite, on his way to the *Modeste* frigate, which was to convey him to Calcutta.* The Monsoon was now all in his favor, and after a pleasant passage of a week's duration, he ascended the steps of the Chandpaul Ghat, the chief landing-place of Calcutta, and was welcomed back by the members of council and the chief officers of the staff. A very few days after this, Charles Metcalfe left Calcutta by dawk, on his way to Banda, whence he was to take the shortest route to Scindiah's camp. He had been appointed to act as Resident at the Court of Dowlut Rao Scindiah, in the place of Mr. Græme Mercer, who had signified his wish to be relieved from the duties of his office, in order that he might proceed to England by the first ship of the ensuing season.

It was with no great elation of spirit that Metcalfe travelled northward to join his appointment. And there was nothing in the environments of the Residency to give him pleasure after his arrival. It is true that he had not now, as ten years before, to pitch his camp upon a plain, sickly with the foul odour of decaying corpses. The Court had recently been removed from Oujein to Gwalior; and the times were as pacific as they are ever wont to be in native states, where domestic anarchy is so often the succedaneum for foreign war. Whether it were that there was nothing in the state of public affairs to evoke his energies, or whether there were any per-

* It would appear, however, from a memorandum in a private account-book which I have chanced upon since this was written, that Metcalfe left Madras on the 8th, and reached Calcutta on the 15th of May.

sonal circumstances which rendered his situation disagreeable to him, I do not distinctly know; but he spoke of it with evident distaste in his letters to his family, and all his after-references to it were in the same strain.*

But this second residence at Scindiah's Court was not destined to be of long continuance. At the commencement of the following year—1811—an opportunity, of which Lord Minto was eager to avail himself, occurred for the translation of Charles Metcalfe to the Delhi Residency. A Governor was to be found for Prince of Wales' Island, and the appointment was offered to Mr. Seton. In anticipation of his acceptance of it, the Governor-General wrote the following letter, in a style of pleasant familiarity, more complimentary to the recipient than if it had been couched in language of the most labored panegyric:

LORD MINTO TO MR. METCALFE.

"Calcutta, February 20, 1811.

"My dear Sir,—You may possibly have already heard, although it is yet in the Secret Department, that an offer has been made to Mr. Seton of the government of Prince of Wales' Island; and although it might be thought that he would consider his present situation the most eligible of the two, I have some reasons for supposing that he will be inclined to accept the proposal. In that event, I shall with (or without) your

* Of the eight or nine months which Metcalfe spent at Scindiah's Court in 1810-11, the records are remarkably scanty in comparison with those which illustrate all the antecedent and all the subsequent epochs of his life. The deficiency is, however, of but slight importance; for he was then merely in a transition-state, and nothing occurred which had any noticeable influence either upon his character or his career.

consent, name you to the Residency of Delhi. I know your martial genius and your love of camps; but besides that inclination must yield to duty, this change will appear to fall in not inopportunely with some information and some sentiments conveyed in your letter to me of the 3rd instant. If you ask my reasons for so extraordinary a choice, I can only say that, notwithstanding your entire ignorance of everything connected with the business of Delhi—a city which, I believe, you never saw; and with Cis and Trans-Sutlejean affairs, of which you can have only read; and notwithstanding your equal deficiency in all other more general qualifications, I cannot find a better name in the list of the Company's servants; and hope, therefore, for your indulgence on the occasion.

"I fancy that you must have given me a sly bite, for I am going campaigning myself, and expect to embark about the 3rd or 4th of March for Java, touching at Madras, where I hope to get on board the *Modeste*. It is so difficult to anticipate the important, but delicate points likely to arise in the prosecution of this enterprise, and it would be so impossible to decide them satisfactorily without information, which cannot be obtained at a distance, that I am satisfied I should acquit myself imperfectly of this duty, if I did not approach, or rather convey myself to the very scene of action. My absence cannot be shorter than six months, and may be somewhat more. . . .

"Believe me ever, my dear sir,

"Most sincerely and affectionately yours,

"MINTO."

After the lapse of a few days, in the interval of which Mr. Seton's answer had been received, Lord Minto wrote again to Charles Metcalfe on the subject of the Delhi Residency, in a graver and more business-like style:

LORD MINTO TO CHARLES METCALFE.

"Calcutta, February 26, 1811.

"My dear Sir,—I have received Mr. Seton's answer. He accepts the government of Prince of Wales' Island *with the proviso* that the appointment is to be considered temporary, and that he shall be at liberty to return to Delhi when the particular emergency which now invites him to the eastward shall have passed away. That emergency is the proposed conquest of the Dutch settlements in Java. But I conceive the services of Mr. Seton at Prince of Wales' Island will continue to be very important some time after the object has been accomplished at Java; for, considering the great distance of Calcutta, I confess I should wish, that whoever is charged with the administration of our new territories, should have the benefit of communicating intermediately with Mr. Seton, and obtaining such advice as his on the many novel and delicate affairs likely to arise in the first period of our connexion with a new and extensive country. I should, therefore, conjecture, that he may be absent from Delhi at least one year. I dwell upon these circumstances, as you will perceive that they affect your situation, and that your appointment to Delhi cannot be depended upon as so permanent as I understood it was likely to be at the date of my last letter. I trust, however, that you will feel no disinclination to accept it under the circumstances which I have described. I am anxious that the temporary nature of the arrangement should be known to the parties alone who are concerned—I mean to Mr. Seton, and the few whose new appointments must be understood by themselves to be temporary. I propose that, in the event of Mr. Seton's return to Delhi, you should resume your present mission; that your successor (Richard Strachey) should return to the Foreign Settlements, and so on; with the condition, however, that if anything more eligible than your present office should open during the interval,

it shall be reserved for you, if no particular obstacle should stand in the way.

"As I propose to sail on the 7th of March, if possible, and your answer to this letter cannot be received at Calcutta so soon, I shall leave your appointment at Delhi behind me, to be published when your acceptance arrives. It will be absolute, as you collect from this letter, in form; and nothing conditional or provisional will appear upon the face of it. If Mr. Seton should return, it will be time enough to explain the particulars which attended your appointment.

"I have now to thank you, my dear sir, for your friendly felicitations on the reduction of the French Islands; and being assured, as I am, of their sincerity, I hope you will believe that your kind concern in these events and in any influence they may have upon my credit, is, next to the public benefit, one of the greatest and most sensible pleasures I experience on the occasion.

"Believe me ever, my dear sir,

"Sincerely and affectionately yours,

"MINTO."

The offer was accepted. But the acceptance had been already assumed; and before Metcalfe's answer was received, he had been formally appointed to act as Resident at Delhi. And now the Chief Secretary congratulated him on the distinction, and intimated his belief, that the new incumbent would soon be permanently appointed to the honorable post:

MR. EDMONSTONE TO MR. METCALFE.

"Calcutta, March 22, 1811.

"MY DEAR METCALFE, — I am just favored with your letter of the 10th instant. You will have found that your acceptance of the Residency at Delhi has been presumed. His Lordship, indeed, did not inform me that your appoint-

ment was to be suspended until the arrival of a reply to his proposition. I congratulate you sincerely on this highly proper and merited distinction. You are, of course, aware, that Seton is to be allowed to resume his place; but by your present appointment you have got a *lien* upon it, which must secure your future permanent succession; and that, too, at no great distance of time; for Seton will not certainly remain long in the country. I join you in congratulations on our success at the Mauritius. The expedition to the eastward is in forwardness. But the season is against us; and it will be months before we can reach the place. Although our work is slow, I trust, however, it is sure. . . .

"Most sincerely yours,

"N. B. EDMONSTONE."

So Charles Metcalfe proceeded to Delhi,* and Mr. Strachey, who had accompanied Elphinstone's mission in the capacity of Secretary, was appointed Resident at Scindiah's Court.

It was during the period embraced in this brief chapter, that Charles Metcalfe laid the foundation of the fortune which he subsequently amassed. Whilst

* The grounds of Metcalfe's selection for this important post were stated officially by Lord Minto in a minute, which he recorded under date Feb. 25, 1811, and in which, after speaking of Mr. Seton's eminent services, he says:

"I should be unwilling to withdraw Mr. Seton from the duties of the Residency at Delhi which he has discharged with such distinguished ability and success, and with such eminent advantage to the public, if I were not convinced that the gentleman whom I propose to be his successor possesses qualifications which bear a strong affinity to those of Mr. Seton, and that under his superintendence our important interests in that quarter will continue to be conducted with undiminished success.

"The gentleman whom I propose for the situation is Mr. Metcalfe. His long personal experience and agency in the political concerns of that quarter, especially in the affairs of Lahore, and in the actual duties of the Residency, combined with his approved talents, judgment, and discretion, his conciliatory manners and firmness of character, qualify him in a peculiar degree to be the successor to Mr. Seton; and I am persuaded that the charge of the extensive and important affairs of that Residency could not be transferred to more able and efficient hands."

at Madras, not being overwhelmed with business, he determined to begin keeping accounts of his pecuniary transactions, with undeviating regularity—and he determined, moreover, to save money. With such "good intentions" as these, the hell of financial embarrassment is too frequently paved. All men at some period of their lives make these wise resolutions; but few have constancy to keep them. From this time, however, Charles Metcalfe kept, I believe without intermission, a minute account of his receipts and disbursements. He was the most liberal and most generous of men—but he died in possession of a fortune which would have creditably sustained the peerage he had won.

At the beginning of 1810, when he had just completed his twenty-fifth year, he wrote on one of the first pages of a new account-book—"I commence this account with a determination to lay by, henceforth for ever, a sum equal to 100*l.* per mensem, to lay the foundation of a fortune. I have 2000 rupees per mensem. I find by calculation, that my expenses are at present 1200 rupees per mensem,* and I mean to save 800=100*l.*" The system which he adopted was a very simple and intelligible one; and it is curious to trace its working. "It is my intention," he wrote, "at the end of every month to enter a report on the result displayed by the accounts of

* To account for this expenditure, which is by no means inconsiderable when it is remembered that Charles Metcalfe was a single man, and a member, I presume, of Lord Minto's family at the time, I should mention what he himself has recorded, that he had left "an establishment of servants at Calcutta and another at Delhi." He had been unwilling that his dependents should suffer by his absence, and still retained many of them in his pay.

that month, in order that I may see how far the plan I have laid down for myself succeeds. Now, therefore, I proceed to the Financial Report for the month of February. The amount expended in this month is as follows. . . . . But before I note it down, I will lay down an outline of my plan for the examination of the result of each month. I take first the amount of my salary, which is at present 2000 rupees. From this I deduct the amount of all expenses that I am aware of having occurred. From the balance then left I deduct 100*l.*, or 800 rupees, to form a fund which is to make my fortune, and which I will term the 'Accumulating Fund.' The amount which remains after these deductions is to form a fund for contingent expenses, which I will call the 'Contingent Fund.' If the Contingent Fund increases, and is more than equal to meet all the demands that may come upon it, then I may consider my finances to be in a very prosperous state; and when it is safe to do so, I may apply the surplus of the Contingent Fund as an increase to the Accumulating Fund. On the other hand, if the Contingent Fund should be unequal to meet the demands upon it, then I must of necessity draw upon the Accumulating Fund, and my scheme will have failed."

For the first two or three months the result was satisfactory. He regularly set aside the stipulated 100*l.* for the Accumulating Fund, and at the end of March he found that he had 982 rupees, or something more than 100*l.* in the Contingent Fund. So he wrote in his account-book, under date April 1,

"The account for March presents a favorable prospect of the practicability of the scheme which I have laid down for myself." It was so encouraging, indeed, that a few days afterwards he sent off 200 rupees for the purchase of tickets in the Calcutta Lottery.* Those were days when most men entertained hopes of growing rich *per saltum* through the agency of these Presidency Lotteries, and some had so much faith in them that they dispensed altogether with the slower process of hoarding money. It was on account of this purchase that Metcalfe was now obliged to record that the April results were not as favorable as those of March. "The account for April," he wrote, "though not so favorable as that of March, still shows a progressive increase both in the Accumulating and Contingent Funds. But heavy expenses are coming on in May, the prospect of which is alarming." In this month of May he passed from Madras to Calcutta, and he had extraordinary expenses to meet at both places. The system had not been sufficiently long in operation—the Contingent Fund was not sufficiently full—to bear such a strain upon it. So at the end of the month, having found that nothing had been added to the Accumulating Fund, and that there was a deficiency of 106 rupees on the Contingent Fund, he wrote in his memorandum-book: "The plan with which I set out at the beginning of the year has

* "*April* 12.—Wrote to Calcutta for two tickets in the Lottery to be drawn in July. The damage will be 200 rupees." I do not observe in the July Memoranda any entrance under the head of *Lottery* on the receipt side of the account.

thus been shown to have failed, and a deficit has arisen to the amount above stated."

In thus declaring the failure of his scheme he was a little too candid. The result was not to be fairly estimated after an experiment of only a few months. One extraordinary item, entered in this month of May, was sufficient to cover the entire deficit. It is an item at which he had no need to blush, although it disturbed, for a time, his financial projects, and impelled him to record that he had failed—"*Subscription for the benefit of Dr. Reid's family*, 1000 *rupees*." In those days it was no uncommon thing for some well-known and highly-esteemed member of society, carried off suddenly by one of the diseases of the country, to leave a wife and family behind him in a state of utter destitution. Nor was it an uncommon thing for the friends and acquaintances of the deceased—and many who were neither friends nor acquaintances—to raise a subscription for the benefit of his family, sufficient to send them to England, and to keep them from want for all the rest of their days. It was to one of these subscriptions that Charles Metcalfe had now subscribed 1000 rupees. If he had not subscribed it he could have added the monthly 100*l.* to his Accumulating Fund, and retained a small balance in the Contingent one.

But the failure—if it were one—was soon redeemed. He had scarcely recorded it when he discovered that he was richer than he had supposed. He received his Account-current from his Agents, and it appeared from the state of it that he could make

good the deficit of which he had spoken, and set his system at work again. At the commencement of the mercantile year there was a balance in his favor, which, after deducting the amounts belonging to his Accumulating Fund, and the payments he had since made on the Contingent account, still left him for present purposes more than 15,000 rupees. "This last remainder," he wrote, "I shall at present throw into the Contingent Fund, but when my accounts (with Government) come to be settled, I expect that it will be all absorbed." There was money owing to him on the other side, and as all that he wanted was a little floating capital, his system was soon again in successful operation. Month after month he added 100*l.* to his Accumulating Fund; and at the end of the year, with 1200*l.* to his credit on this account, he had a balance of 2000 rupees in the Contingent Fund to commence the year without misgivings.* From this time he went on steadily, adding to his savings—sometimes spending more than the amount of his salary, but never more than his income. Money brought high interest in those days, and the Accumulating Fund soon became productive.

I need not pursue any further the history of Charles Metcalfe's accumulations. I purposed only to show how he set about the work; and the little which I have exhibited of his system is not without

* It had at one time reached 5000 rupees. But his salary at Scindiah's Court was less by 500 rupees a month than it had been at Lahore and Madras. In the December account, too, there were some extraordinary disbursements. Among others, "Paid at Madras—remainder of subscription to a masquerade given in January last, 1500 rupees."

both interest and instruction. There is one remark, however, which ought to be made in this place, for it is necessary to the right understanding of the fine character which I am attempting to illustrate. Even at this early period of his career, when his accumulations were but scanty, he was a ready lender to men less fortunate or less prudent than himself. There are many still living—and many have passed away—who have tasted largely of Charles Metcalfe's open-handed kindliness; and some who owe all their success in life to his seasonable intervention in their behalf. As he grew older he did not grow more worldly-wise. But it was an abiding source of consolation to him, that although now and then his generosity may have been misplaced, it fell for the most part on good soil, and fructified in gratitude, if not in reformation.*

* In the entries of the year 1810 there is the sum of 2711 rupees (about 300*l.*) lent to Lieutenant C——. The name, with characteristic delicacy, is only thus initialised in the account-book. At the end of the year Metcalfe wrote: "Cash lent or advanced is hereafter to be put down as an inefficient balance, and not as a disbursement. The money lent, therefore, as per August and November, 1810, accounts, to Lieutenant C——, is now to be brought into an Inefficient Fund." As years advanced, the Inefficient Fund amounted to some thousands.

CHAPTER X.

[1811—1814.]

THE DELHI RESIDENCY.

Duties of the Resident—Metcalfe's Opinions of his Position—Letters to Mrs. Monson—Appointed Permanently to the Residency—Drawbacks and Annoyances—The Royal Family of Delhi—Removal of Metcalfe's Assistants—Letter from Lord Minto—Expenses of the Residency—Censures of the Court of Directors—Metcalfe's Defence—Administration of the Delhi Territory.

So Charles Metcalfe, now at the age of twenty-six, found himself the incumbent of an appointment coveted by the oldest officers of both Services—an appointment which, in respect of its importance, its responsibility, and its distinction, was not exceeded by any other in India below the seats at the Council-boards of Government. The duties of the Delhi Resident were onerous and complex. The Residents at other Courts were simply diplomatists. They were bound to confine themselves to the political duties of their situation, and to refrain from all interference with the internal administration of the country in which they resided. But the Delhi Resident was at once a diplomatist and an administrator. It was his duty not only to superintend the

affairs of the pensioned Mogul and his family, but to manage the political relations of the British Government with a wide expanse of country studded with petty principalities, ignorant alike of their duties and their interests, and often in their ignorance vexatious in the extreme. It was his duty, too, to superintend the internal government of all the Delhi territory—to preside over the machinery of revenue collection and the administration of Justice, and to promote by all possible means the development of the resources of the country and the industry and happiness of the people. He addressed himself to his work with a brave resolution. He might, perhaps, have taken deeper interest in it, if he had been more certain of his tenure of office—if he had believed that he would remain to see the results—but he could not have labored more zealously or more diligently in his vocation. The return of Mr. Seton to Delhi was always probable; sometimes it seemed almost certain. And there was something dispiriting in this. For the longer Charles Metcalfe sojourned at the imperial city, the more attached he grew to the place and to the people, whilst the Residency at Scindiah's Court, to which he would have returned, had no attractions for him. But whatever might be the event, his professional success was now an established fact; and only Death could interpose itself between him and the great goal of Fame and Fortune.

He had social duties to perform as well as those of diplomacy and administration. The Resident was a great man—he had a Court of his own, and a large

monthly allowance from Government to support it in a state of becoming splendor. He kept open house. He had what was called a "Family"—all the officers attached to the Residency, with their wives and children, were members of it. In the Resident's house all passing travellers of rank found ready entertainment. Hospitality here put on its best apparel. The new Delhi Resident was just the man to carry himself bravely as the representative of the British nation at an Eastern Court. His liberality was of the best kind. It was Charles Metcalfe's nature to give freely; he was bountiful without ostentation, and no man ever left his house without carrying with him a grateful recollection of the kindliness and the geniality of his host, and cherishing it as one of those pleasant memories which he would not willingly let die.

But it may be doubted whether Charles Metcalfe was happy at this time. He was naturally of a cheerful disposition, and he had too much mental occupation to dwell long or frequently upon the necessary drawbacks of his situation. But there were times when he thought that for even his brilliant position he had paid somewhat too dearly; and when he took up his pen to discourse with some member of his distant family, the old clouds which had gathered over him during the first years of his Indian residence began to overshadow him again, and he spoke doubtfully of the apparent advantages of his present, and the promises of his future life. In the following letter to his Aunt he dwells feelingly upon the darker side of even the most successful Indian

been
career. His cousin, William Monson, an
intended for the Indian Civil Service, but n
only child, and his mother, with a wise a
which it will be seen Charles Metcalfe high
mended, subsequently determined to detain L
home:

CHARLES METCALFE TO THE HON. MRS. MONSON.

"Delhi Residency, September 10, 1811.

"MY DEAREST AUNT,—I have had the pleasure of receiving your letter of January 7. So far am I from condemning you for resigning William's intended appointment to this country, that I decidedly think you have done that which is best calculated to promote his happiness and your own, by keeping him at home. My father, I conclude, will blame you; for he thinks nothing equal to an appointment to this country. I confess that my ideas are different. Why should you make yourself and William miserable by parting never perhaps to meet again? Why doom him to transportation from everything dear to him? What is there in India to recompense for such sufferings? Fortunes, as you justly observe, are not made rapidly. Take my situation. I have been more than eleven years from England; and it will be certainly more than eleven years before I can return. In these twenty-two or twenty-four years the best part of my life will have passed away—that part in which all my feelings will have been most alive to the different sensations of happiness and misery arising out of different circumstances. I left my father and mother just as I became acquainted with them as a man. I have not once had their cheering smile to encourage my labors in my profession. When I return, should they both be alive—which I pray to God that they may be—I shall, indeed, have the happiness of attending on

* The present Lord Monson, to whom I am indebted for these letters and much other valuable assistance rendered to me in the course of my preparation of this Memoir.

their

to l years; but, alas! how much cause shall I have tl t I was doomed by my fate not to see them from s boyhood to those of their extreme old age? But nat they should not be alive, and when one considers father must live to be eighty to allow me to see him it is enough to make one tremble, though I still hope. Sup- I say, that they should not be alive, what will then be my on? The thought is too horrible to dwell upon. See sters? I left them children. I shall find them old women -married, perhaps, into families which will not care one farthing about me, and whose habits it will not suit me to associate with. Take the worst, and what a melancholy situation I may be in when I return to England! Where will be my connexions, my friendships, and even my acquaintance? Unknown in society, and even shunned as being an Indian, I certainly will never push my way into the society of fine lords and ladies, who may turn up their noses and think me highly honored by being in their presence.

"Neither will I ever fall back and take up my post in the ranks of Indian society. I recollect what it was, and know what it is, and that society will not suit me. I shall not be able to afford to spend all my income on dinners and balls, houses, coaches, and servants. Money was made for better uses, and, by God's grace, I hope to apply mine to some of them. A dull, solitary life, is the one that I shall, most likely, taking all chances, be obliged to pursue. And what shall I have gained by making so many sacrifices? Money—and not more, perhaps, than I might have gained (I allow not probably) by a profession in England. And it must be remembered, that I have been uncommonly fortunate in my present profession. So you see, my dear Aunt, I think you perfectly right. Do not suppose from the above, that I am unhappy or discontented. I have long since reconciled myself to my fate, and am contented and as happy as one far from his friends can be. I do not allow unpleasant thoughts to enter my mind, and if I do not enjoy what is beyond my reach—the inexpressible pleasure of Family

Society—I at least am always cheerful, and never unhappy. My father did what he thought best for me; and it is satisfactory to me to reflect, that my career in India, except as to fortune, must have answered his expectations. It has been successful beyond any merits, that I am aware of, in myself. I hold now, as Resident at Delhi, a situation which I consider without exception in every respect the highest in the country beneath the members of Government; and I do not wish to quit this situation until I quit India.

"I hope to lay by at the rate of 3000*l.* per annum, which in twelve or fifteen years ought to be enough to enable me to live at home in the plain manner in which I mean to live as an Old Bachelor; for, you must know, that I have no thought of *ever* marrying, as I shall never have money enough for it, unless I consent, which I will not do, to spend the whole of it on what is termed *living*. In that case, I should be poor in the midst of thousands. Then only can I consider myself rich when I have the command of money to gratify such inclinations as may arise. . . . . .

"I am ever, my dear Aunt,

"Your attached nephew,

"C. T. METCALFE."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Delhi Residency, November 16, 1811.

"MY DEAR AUNT,—From circumstances which are likely to last as long as I remain at Delhi, I am now so overloaded with business that I can never get rid of it before nine o'clock at night. This will account to you for my not writing oftener. I am obliged to let my family dine without me in order to write this; but the pleasure of communicating with you is not to be lost. . . . . R—— has some idea of going to England, but I do not conceive that it will be fulfilled. An old Indian takes a long time to determine to quit his emoluments, and put his foot on board a ship for England. Many is the

Indian who dies of staying 'one year longer' in the country, like the gentleman on whose tombstone is inscribed,

> Here lies Mr. Wandermere,
> Who was to have gone home next year.

I hope that this will be neither R——'s case nor mine. . . .

"I am likely to return to Scindiah's camp, for Mr. Seton threatens to return to Delhi. He is now Governor of Prince of Wales' Island; but he accepted that appointment on condition, that if he should not like to keep it, he might return to Delhi. In his last letter to me, he announces his intention of availing himself of that condition; and I shall be obliged to turn out for him, to my great regret. I shall be no loser in a pecuniary way; but I consider the Residency at Delhi infinitely superior to that in Scindiah's camp.

"I expect, or rather hope, that Theophilus will marry before he quits England. He is calculated for marriage, and requires it, I think. For my part, I shall never marry. My principal reason for thinking that *I positively* shall never marry, is the difficulty of two dispositions uniting so exactly as to produce that universal harmony which is requisite to form the perfect happiness that is indispensable to make the married state desirable. But little do I know what is to befall me. . . . .

"Ever most affectionately yours,

"C. T. METCALFE."

A few more passages from letters written to the same much-respected correspondent during the first years of his residence at Delhi—passages illustrative of the feelings with which he regarded his position in India—may be given in this place. They show how little he had ceased to yearn after home—how little time had impaired the strength of his domestic affections:

". . . . . To-morrow will be Christmas-day, when all friends meet at home. I have a party of fifty to dine with me, among whom I cannot reckon one real friend. What a blank it is to live in such a society! I have lately been overwhelmed with visitors—Sir George and Lady Nugent,* Colonel and Lady Charlotte Murray, and twenty others of the same party, have been my guests for eight or ten days. They are gone. I found them all very pleasant. But I often wish that I had some cottage to retire to, where I might live in obscurity and uninterrupted solitude for a time. I feel myself out of my element in attempting to support the appearance which attaches to the situation I hold."—[*Delhi, December* 24, 1812.]

". . . . Tom† is arrived. . . . . Poor fellow! He has a long time before him; but, perhaps, not longer than I have. It is not improbable that I may remain eighteen or twenty years more. . . . . I cannot say that I approve of the plan of sending children out to India for all their lives. There is no other service in which a man does not see his friends sometimes. Here it is perpetual banishment. There was a good reason for sending sons to India when fortunes were made rapidly, and they returned home. But if a man is to slave all his life, he had better do so, in my opinion, in his own country, where he may enjoy the society of his friends, which I call enjoying life. . . . . Do not suppose that I am discontented, and make myself unhappy. It is my fate, and I am reconciled to it. The time may come, if ever I am able to set myself down at home with a comfortable fortune, when I shall confess that my destiny was a favorable one, and shall be able to look back to past annoyances with composure. But can anything be a recompense to me in this world for not seeing my dear and honored father, from the days of my boyhood to the day of his death—and, perhaps, the same with regard to my mother?

* Sir George Nugent was the new Commander-in-Chief.

† His younger brother, Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe, who had come out to India in the Company's Civil Service.