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THE AFGHAN WAR

OF

1879–80,

BEING A COMPLETE NARRATIVE OF THE CAPTURE OF CABUL, THE SIEGE OF SHERPUR, THE BATTLE OF AHMED KHEL, THE BRILLIANT MARCH TO CANDAHAR, AND THE DEFEAT OF AYUB KHAN, WITH THE OPERATIONS ON THE HELMUND, AND THE SETTLEMENT WITH ABDUR RAHMAN KHAN.

By HOWARD HENSMAN,

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE *PIONEER* (ALLAHABAD), AND THE *DAILY NEWS* (LONDON).

WITH MAPS.

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Dedicated

TO

THE 72ND (DUKE OF ALBANY'S OWN)

AND

THE 92ND (GORDON) HIGHLANDERS,

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE GENEROUS HOSPITALITY
RECEIVED AT THEIR HANDS

IN

AFGHANISTAN.

577275

ADVERTISEMENT.

General Sir F. Roberts writes in regard to the letters now republished—

"Allow me to congratulate you most cordially on the admirable manner in which you have placed before the public the account of our march from Cabul, and the operations of 31st August and 1st September around Candahar. *Nothing could be more accurate or graphic.* I thought your description of the fight at Charasia was one that any soldier might have been proud of writing; but your recent letters are, if possible, even better.'

PREFACE.

THE interest aroused by the massacre of our ill-fated Embassy to the Amir Yakub Khan, the subsequent capture of Cabul, and the hard-won successes of our armies during the occupation of the city, can scarcely yet have passed away; and I have, therefore, ventured to republish the series of letters which, as a special correspondent, I wrote in the field. They are a simple diary of the war; and though in this form they may lack conciseness, they have at least the merit of such accuracy as an eye-witness can alone hope to attain. It was my good-fortune to be the only special correspondent with the gallant little army which moved out of Ali Kheyl in September, 1879. The Government of India had notified that "non-combatant correspondents" would not be allowed to join the force, the history of whose achievements was to be left to regimental officers, who might in their spare hours supply information carefully *visé*, to such newspapers as chose to accept it. So carelessly was this strange order issued, that Sir Frederick Roberts never received official intimation of its existence, and he welcomed me at Ali Kheyl on the eve of his departure for Kushi as, I am sure, he would have welcomed any other correspondent who had chosen to cross the frontier, and push on without escort and with their own baggage animals. I make this explanation in justice to General Roberts, upon whom the responsibility of excluding correspondents has been falsely thrown. Regarding the letters now republished, Mr. Frederick Harrison in the *Fortnightly Review* has been good enough to describe them as

"admirably written, with very great precision and knowledge." While not sympathizing in the least with Mr. Harrison's criticism of Sir Frederick Roberts's punishment of Cabul, in support of which criticism he mainly relied upon my letters, I am grateful for his estimate of my work. I can scarcely hope that all my critics will be equally generous.

I have carefully gone into details where military movements of importance had to be described, and the sketch maps can be relied upon as showing exact distances and positions.

HOWARD HENSMAN,
Special Correspondent of the *Pioneer*, Allahabad.

Cabul, *August*, 1880.

* * * * * *

The above was written when all was peaceful in Afghanistan, but the disaster at Maiwand once more threw the Cabul army into excitement, and General Roberts had to march to the relief of Candahar. This now historical march and the victory at Candahar on September 1st, are described in detail in Part II. of this volume.

H. H.

Allahabad, *November 1st*, 1880.

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE AFGHAN WAR

OF

1879—80.

PART I.

THE OCCUPATION OF CABUL—THE BRITISH BESIEGED AT SHERPUR—DISPERSAL OF THE TRIBES.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—The Cavagnari Mission—Yakub Khan's Evasion of the Gundamak Treaty—Turbulence of the Herat Regiments—Nakshband Khan's Warning—The Outbreak—Yakub Khan's Behaviour—Reception of the News in India—The Seizure of the Shutargardan, and Preparations for the Advance upon Cabul.

THE Treaty of Gundamak had for its chief object the direct representation of the British Government at the Court of the Amir Yakub Khan, and, in pursuance of the terms of the Treaty, Sir Louis Cavagnari, K.C.B., C.S.I., was received at Cabul, as Resident, on July 24th, 1879. Mr. William Jenkyns, of the Indian Civil Service, accompanied him as secretary to the Mission. An escort of twenty-five sowars and fifty sepoys of the Guides' Corps was the only means of protection at the Embassy's command, implicit faith being placed in the Amir's promise to guard the lives of his guests. Lieutenant Hamilton was in command of the escort, and Dr. Kelly, surgeon of the Guides, was the medical officer attached to the Mission. Including servants and followers, there were in all some 200 souls gathered in the Residency in the Bala Hissar from July 24th until the outbreak of the Herat regiments on the morning of September 3rd. It would

be out of place to describe at length the course of events which culminated in the Massacre, but from the tone of Sir Louis Cavagnari's letters there can be no doubt the Amir was never anxious to carry out to the strict letter the terms of the Gundamak Treaty. Taking the official diary sent weekly from Cabul to the Indian Government, it appears that every outward honour was paid to the Embassy upon its arrival, but that Yakub Khan was so suspicious of his Ministers and Nobles, that he told off men to watch the Residency. These spies furnished the names of all who visited Cavagnari without the Amir's knowledge. Then came rumours of petty chiefs having been punished for their friendship to the British during the late campaign, although one of the main points of the Treaty was directed against this very contingency.* The Amir always avoided reference to this subject, and as Sir Louis Cavagnari could not obtain direct evidence of the amnesty clauses being departed from, no redress could be obtained. Apart from palace intrigues, which are always rife in Cabul, there seemed no direct element of discord at work in the capital until the troops from Herat reached Sherpur Cantonment on August 5th. These regiments had not shared in the humiliation of the defeats suffered by the Cabul soldiery at Ali Musjid and the Peiwar Kotal; they taunted their comrades in arms with cowardice, and boasted of their own prowess; and their turbulence soon assumed a dangerous form. A ressaldar-major of one of our cavalry regiments, Nakshband Khan, an old and tried soldier, was spending his furlough at his village of Aoshahr, two miles from Cabul, and he seems first to have caught the alarm. When the Herat regiments marched, or rather swaggered, through the streets of Cabul, with bands playing, many of the soldiers abused the Kafir *elchi* (ambassador) by name, calling out to the populace, "Why has he come here?" and showing too clearly that their passions were dangerously excited. Nakshband Khan learned from a fellow-countryman in the ranks that the soldiers had been ordered so to shout in the streets. Full of this news, he

* Sirdar Sher Ali Khan Kandahari, Governor of Candahar, assured Sir Donald Stewart that Yakub Khan, from the first, never intended to pardon the chiefs who had aided us. Such a course of policy would have seemed madness in the eyes of every Afghan, said the Sirdar; not a man would have understood it.

went to our Envoy and warned him of the coming storm. Sir Louis Cavagnari was a man notorious for his disregard of personal danger: he was brave to a fault, and this turbulence among the Afghan soldiery scarcely shook his composure. "Never fear," was the answer to the Ressaldar; "keep up your heart, dogs that bark don't bite!" "But these dogs do bite; there is real danger," urged Nakshband Khan. The reply was characteristic of the man: he had taken up his post and nothing could break down his determination to remain at all hazards; he quietly said, "They can only kill the three or four of us here, and our death will be avenged."

This is the story as told by the Ressaldar, who can scarcely be romancing; but no word of the warning is given by Cavagnari in his letters to the Viceroy, all of which are full of sanguine hope even as late as August 30th. His last message was sent on September 2nd, and concluded with the words "All well,"—and this within twelve hours of the attack upon the Residency. He trusted altogether to Yakub Khan—for what could an escort of seventy-five men avail against an army?—and almost his last written words were: "Notwithstanding all people say against him, I personally believe Yakub Khan will turn out to be a very good ally, and that we shall be able to keep him to his engagements." This blind trust in the Amir was soon to be rudely broken down, for Yakub was found wanting even in willingness to save the lives entrusted to his care.

The story of the outbreak in the Bala Hissar, and the massacre of the Envoy and his followers, is written at length in the Blue-books. The tale is too well known to bear reproduction: the heroic struggle against overwhelming odds has, perhaps, rarely been equalled, for there were only four British officers and a handful of native soldiers to meet an army. Yakub Khan sat in his palace, vacillating and sullen, with the noise of the fight ringing in his ears, and the roar of the soldiery and the fanatical populace surging into his council-chamber: but he made no sign. There were councillors who urged prompt chastisement of the mutinous sepoys: there were regiments at Bala Hissar which *might* have loyally obeyed orders; but the man who had pledged himself to preserve our Envoy only took the cunning precaution of sending out

Daoud Shah, his commander-in-chief, to "remonstrate" with the armed rabble. It was like remonstrating with a tiger when the hunter lies at his mercy: like giving the word "halt" to the incoming tide: Daoud Shah was thrust back by the first men he met, but they used their bayonets tenderly, and his wounds were slight. And when it was all over, when the excited crowd roared through the Bazaar, with Cavagnari's head held on high, there seems to have come upon Yakub that fear of vengeance which he had hitherto thrust aside. Forty years before the body of another Envoy had been hung on the butcher's hooks in that same Bazaar; treachery had scored a success which promised to be lasting; but Pollock had come with a victorious army from Peshawur, while Nott fought his way from the south, and the Char Chowk was soon a heap of ruins. How soon would the vengeance of an outraged nation again fall upon Cabul?

Shortly after midnight of September 4th Sir Frederick Roberts, who was in Simla, engaged on the work of the Army Commission, was called up to receive a telegram. It was from the Kurram Valley, and conveyed the first news of the Massacre, which he then and there hastened to carry to the Commander-in-Chief. The shock was so terrible that men were paralyzed for the moment, but the next day the machinery of Government was put in motion, a council of war was called, and on the afternoon of September 5th the following instructions were sent to Brigadier-General Dunham Massy, then commanding the Kurram Field Force at the Peiwar Kotal*:—

"From the Quarter Master General in India to Brigadier-General D. Massy, commanding Kurram Field Force; dated Simla, 5th September, 1879.

"Move 23rd Pioneers, 5th Ghoorkas, and Mountain Train to Shutargardan, crest of pass; to entrench themselves there and await orders. Ten days' supplies."

In accordance with these instructions, Swinley's Mountain Battery of six 7-pounder guns, escorted by the Pioneers and Ghoorkas, moved upon the Shutargardan, which was occupied

* This telegram is of some importance, as showing the quickness with which the Viceroy and the military authorities recognized the necessity of seizing the Shutargardan before the Cabul troops or the local tribesmen could occupy the Pass in strength.

without opposition on the 11th of September. Colonel Currie, of the 23rd Pioneers, commanded this small force. The 72nd Highlanders and the 5th Punjab Infantry followed in a few days to secure the road between Ali Kheyl and the Pass, while the 7th Company of Bengal Sappers and Miners was ordered up from Shulozan (near Kurram) to improve the road beyond the Shutargardan. In the meantime, the following appointments had been made:—Colonel Macgregor to be Chief of the Staff to Major-General Sir Frederick Roberts, Commanding the Force; Brigadier-General Macpherson, C.B., V.C., to command the 1st Infantry Brigade; Brigadier-General T. D. Baker, C.B., to command the 2nd Infantry Brigade; Brigadier-General Dunham Massy, to command the Cavalry Brigade; and Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, C.B., V.C., to be Road Commandant. On September 12th General Roberts arrived at Ali Kheyl. On the 13th General Baker took command of the troops in the Shutargardan; which Pass, by the 18th of the month, was held by the troops which had moved up originally, together with the whole of the 72nd Highlanders and the 7th Company of Sappers and Miners. The position was strongly entrenched and every precaution taken against a surprise by the neighbouring tribes.

Having secured the Shutargardan, Sir Frederick Roberts cast about for means to complete his transport, it being intended to move 6,000 men upon Cabul with as little delay as possible. With the usual carelessness which marks the operations of Indian armies, and perhaps with a desire to curtail expenditure, the transport of the Kurram Valley Field Force had, upon Cavagnari's departure for Cabul, been allowed to dwindle down to insignificant proportions. There were in the Valley, when the news of the Massacre was received, only 1,500 mules, 500 sickly camels, and 800 pack-bullocks. These were just sufficient to enable the Commissariat Department to furnish supplies to the winter garrison of the Valley. Without loss of time all the available animals in Peshawur and near the frontier were ordered to be sent to Ali Kheyl, and eventually the army was provided with almost 2,000 mules, between 700 and 800 camels, and upwards of 600 bullocks.*

* On October 14th, at Cabul, the returns were:—Mules, 1,973; camels, 675; bullocks, 604; and 230 yabus (ponies purchased in Cabul).

The Gajis, Turis, and local Ghilzais were induced to send in animals with drivers, and this "local carriage" was of great service. Padshah Khan, the most influential of the Ghilzai chiefs, declared himself willing to aid us in the collection of supplies, and his friendship at this critical moment was all-important. On the 14th of September the Nawab Sir Gholam Hassan Khan, who had started from Candahar to join Cavagnari at Cabul, reached the Shutargardan. He had heard news of the Massacre and had turned off the Ghazni Road and made for our most advanced post. The fact of his non-molestation on the road proved that the Logar Valley was quiet, and this was confirmed by a reconnaissance on the 16th, when General Baker went as far as the Shinkai Kotal, half-way between Kushi and the Shutargardan. On the 22nd the Mangals to the number of 200 or 300, raided upon a small convoy carrying telegraph stores near Karatiga, east of the Pass, killed six sepoys of the escort (originally only eleven men), and twenty-one coolies and linesmen. They also succeeded in carrying off eighty-four mules. This showed that our convoys would probably be attacked daily, and General Baker ordered that no escort should be less than twenty-five armed men to 100 transport animals.

CHAPTER II.

Letter from the Amir—Baker's Advance to Kushi—Arrival of Yakub Khan in the British Camp—The State of Cabul—Excitement along the Line of Communication—Departure of the Last Convoy from Ali Kheyl—Narrow Escape of Sir F. Roberts—The Amir's Attempt to delay the Advance—Durbar at Kushi—The Advance ordered—Instructions to the Troops.

THE news of the preparations at Ali Kheyl and the Shutargardan reached Cabul very rapidly, and a letter from General Roberts to the Amir was also safely received. In reply Yakub Khan wrote as follows:—

"To General Roberts. I have received your letter of the 7th, and was much pleased. I fully understood what was written. Complete confidence was restored, and a sense of relief felt in the friendship shown by the Viceroy, as my prosperity found favour in

his sight. I am dreadfully distressed and grieved at the recent event, but there is no fighting against God's will. I hope to inflict such punishment on the evil-doers as will be known world-wide; and to prove my sincerity, I have twice written on this subject, and the third time by my confidential servant, Sher Muhammad Khan. I now write to say that for these eight days I have preserved myself and family by the good offices of those who were friendly to me, partly by bribing, partly by coaxing the rebels. Some of the Cavalry I have dismissed, and night and day am considering how to put matters straight. Please God, the mutineers will soon meet with the punishment they deserve, and my affairs will be arranged to the satisfaction of the British Government. Certain persons of high position in these provinces have become rebellious; but I am watching carefully and closely every quarter. I have done all I could to ensure the Nawab Ghulam Hussain's safety. I trust to God for the opportunity of showing my sincere friendship for the British Government, and for recovering my good name before the world."

The Amir's anxiety, or perhaps terror it should be called, had reached a climax at this time. On the one hand were the Sirdars who had thrown in their lot with the mutinous troops, and were trying to persuade him to raise a *jehad*, or religious war; and, on the other, General Roberts and his army, already on the move from Ali Kheyl. With the idea that he might save his capital from destruction, or, as was afterwards suggested, that he might delay our advance until the tribesmen had assembled at Cabul, Yakub Khan resolved upon throwing himself into the British camp, and claiming such protection as we could afford. Before doing this he sent two members of the Cabul Durbar to Ali Kheyl, viz., the Mustaufi Habibulla Khan and the Wazir Shah Muhammad, or, as we should describe them, his Chancellor of the Exchequer and his Prime Minister. They bore a letter in which their sovereign announced his intention of flying from Cabul and placing himself in General Roberts's hands. Before this took place, however, the advance from the Shutargardan had begun, General Baker having pushed forward the troops at his disposal in the following order.

On 24th September.—Four guns No. 2 Mountain Battery.

12th Bengal Cavalry. One company 72nd Highlanders. 5th Ghoorkas.

On 25th September.—F-A Royal Horse Artillery. Seven companies 72nd.

On 26th September.—Two guns No. 2 M. B. 23rd Pioneers. 7th Company Bengal Sappers. Six companies 5th Punjab Infantry.

On 27th September.—14th Bengal Lancers.

On 28th September.—One squadron 9th Lancers. 5th Punjab Cavalry. 92nd Highlanders.

On the 27th, Sir F. Roberts had moved his head-quarters from Ali Kheyl westwards, and on the same day the Amir, with a considerable escort, arrived at Kushi. He was received with every mark of respect, and a guard of honour, furnished by the 92nd Highlanders, was placed at his tent. His camp was pitched at a little distance from the British army.

Having joined General Roberts at Ali Kheyl on the evening of September 26th, I may take up the story of the advance from about that period. I will therefore give my letters as they were published at the time :—

ALI KHEYL, *28th September.*

The unexpected news of the arrival of the Amir Yakub Khan at Kushi last night has been received with general satisfaction, as affairs are much simplified as regards the military position. There has been much doubt all along as to the sincerity of Yakub's protestations, and it was not easy to determine the line of action when Cabul should be finally reached. But the Amir's authority has plainly crumbled to the dust in his capital; and, if not a fugitive, he must have come as a suppliant to us to reinstate him on the throne, at the same time that we avenge the Massacre of the Embassy. It seems far more probable, however, that he is a fugitive; for it is stated that Cabul is in a state of anarchy, which can only mean that the populace have fraternized with the mutinous troops and have driven out a sovereign who had made terms with the Kafirs. If this be really so, the fate of the city, in case any opposition is shown when our army moves forward, should be sealed. The only argument an Afghan understands is direct and severe punishment for offences committed, and the

punishment should now be dealt out without stint, even if Cabul has to be sacked. Not a man in the force that is now about to make the final advance would feel other than the keenest pleasure in seeing Cabul burn, for it is hopeless to expect an armed rabble, such as that which now holds the city, to show a steady front when General Roberts's army closes with them. They lack leaders to direct their movements, and though arms and ammunition may be plentiful in their midst, their organization is about equal to that of a European mob suddenly placed in power after a long period of strict government. Their capacity for mischief is as limited as that of any other rabble, for their future movements are all dependent upon outside influences. If left to their own will, they would probably split up into factions, of which the strongest would eventually sweep away all rivals; but when menaced by a stronger power, they must either dissolve, or by sheer doggedness attempt to dispute possession of that which they have gained. The Cabul mutineers are not of a type which "die but never surrender," and although they may risk a brush with the British forces, they will most likely seek safety in flight before any severe thrashing can be given them. It will be most aggravating if this proves to be the case, but until the Amir has explained in detail the course of events from the time of Sir Louis Cavagnari's death, an exact estimate of the position at Cabul cannot be arrived at. The conference which is sure to take place with Sir Frederick Roberts in a day or two will settle what course is to be taken, and it is to be hoped no undue tenderness will be shown in laying down the lines upon which the policy of the next few weeks is to be carried forward. By Wednesday at the latest a completely equipped force of over 6,000 men will be at Kushi, and on the following morning the march will begin. Sunday next should see the British troops encamped before Cabul, and then will begin the punishment of a city which is only connected in the saddest way with the expansion of our power in Asia.

Sir Frederick Roberts did not reach Karatiga, his first march from here, yesterday, without a warning that the tribes are determined to do mischief so far as lies in their power. The warning was conveyed in the practical way of his party being fired upon at Jaji Thana in the Hazara Darukht defile near the end of

the journey, and I am sorry to say Dr. Townsend was hit in the face, and is reported to be severely wounded. As the telegraph line has since been cut we have not been been able to learn full particulars of the attack, or with what loss the assailants were driven off. No other casualties occurred in General Roberts's party, but a detachment of the 3rd Sikhs, who were sent down from the Shutargardan to patrol the road, were not so fortunate. They were attacked by a large body of tribesmen and lost five men. There has been considerable excitement all along the line from Thull to Shutargardan during the last forty-eight hours, as reports of intended attacks by Mangals and Zaimukhts have been sent in by friendly villagers. The camps at Ali Kheyl, the Peiwar Kotal, Kurram, &c., are very weakly guarded now, as so many troops have been sent on, and this fact is evidently known to the tribes, who are bent upon mischief. It is impossible to foretell when an attack will be made; but so serious did the chance seem yesterday, of large numbers of the Mangals coming down in this direction, that the 67th Foot, who were to march to-day for Karatiga, have been detained. It was fully expected that the Peiwar Kotal would have been attacked last night, and as only two companies of the 8th Regiment were there, the chance of a smart fight was looked upon as certain. But nothing came of the alarm, so far as I can learn, and the post will be strengthened by men from Kurram, as soon as possible. The 31st N.I. must now be well on its way to the Valley, and as soon as it arrives, better arrangements can be made to protect the camps. The Mangals are said to have asked permission from a friendly tribe in the valley between this and Peiwar Kotal to pass through their territory, and this request can only have been made with a view to harass our communications. The camps are so large—having hitherto been garrisoned by considerable bodies of men—that with reduced strength commandants can scarcely be expected to guard every yard of *sungar** that has been raised for defence. With the 85th Foot and the 31st N.I. available for use from Kurram to the Shutargardan all would be well, but the date of their arrival here is uncertain. I do not think, however, that these petty annoyances will hinder the all-

* Breastworks built with stones, greatly in vogue in Afghanistan.

important advance upon Cabul, as General Roberts's army will be so equipped as to be able to operate independently for some time to come. It is too strong to fear anything that may be in front, and once on the move the reality of our progress to Cabul will present itself in very striking colours to the restless tribes. The efforts of the *moollahs*, who have unquestionably been at work for some time, may bring about results which will cause much trouble to our garrisons, but beyond this there is nothing to be feared. The ensuing winter will probably see an expedition on a large scale against the Mangals and Zaimukhts, for when once the passes are closed between this and Cabul there will be no necessity for stationary camps, and six or eight regiments, with a due complement of artillery, may march into the Mangal and Khost country, and once for all settle old scores with the tribes that have so troubled us. Nearer Thull the road is by no means safe, another man having been killed on the Kafir Kotal between our frontier station and the first post westwards. The cowardice of the assailants is so marked that the post bags and convoys are left untouched, though the escorts are very small. There seems at present no plan in the attacks that are made, though assemblies of 2,000 or 3,000 men are reported to have taken place among the more resolute sections of the Mangals. The Hazara Darukht defile is the favourite spot at which attacks are made, the difficulties of the road rendering rapid passage impossible. The 67th Foot march to-morrow morning for Karatiga, and if attacked in the usual place they will doubtless give a very good account of themselves. They are escorting ammunition and baggage, but even with these encumbrances they will have strength enough to handle very roughly any number of assailants.

KARATIGA, *29th September.*

Early this morning the final complements of the Cabul Field Force left Ali Kheyl, and they have now reached this post, which is near the foot of the Shutargardan. To-morrow they proceed to Kushi, and then the army which is to march upon Cabul *viâ* the Logar Valley will be complete. As early as three o'clock this morning the troops began to turn out in the upper and lower camps at Ali Kheyl, and as there was a large convoy to be mar-

shalled, all officers were busily engaged in putting things shipshape. Two companies of the 67th Foot were started off at an early hour and marched to Drekila, to which place half a dozen elephants, under an escort of two companies of the 21st P.N.I., had been sent the previous evening. Before daybreak the troops began to move out of Ali Kheyl. They consisted of the remainder of the 67th Foot, and the 21st P.N.I., G-3 Battery R.A., two Gatling guns, and details of various native cavalry regiments. In all there were about 1,300 men, and the convoy itself consisted of about 1,500 laden animals, camels, mules, bullocks, and ponies. Besides the baggage of the troops marching, there was a large quantity of ammunition being sent up, and it was a matter of no little anxiety to get all well forward. General Macpherson was in command, and among the other officers going on were Colonel Macgregor, General Hugh Gough, and Colonel Heathcote, Chief Transport Officer. It took about four hours to start the whole line, but once on the move little time was lost. The road lies up a river bed, and the stream had to be crossed and recrossed times innumerable. In many places nothing but a mere track over stones and boulders was forthcoming, and the pace was necessarily slow. The 67th men marched in such fine form, that halts had frequently to be called in order to enable the baggage animals to close up, for it was quite possible that an attack in force might be made upon the convoy by the Mangals. The occurrence of Saturday, in which five of the 3rd Sikhs were killed, and Dr. Townsend, of General Roberts's staff, wounded, has shown that the local tribes had come down; and it was not unlikely that they would attempt to cut so long a line as that which had to be formed between Ali Kheyl and Karatiga. Accordingly General Macpherson so arranged the escort that armed men were scattered from end to end of the convoy, in addition to there being a strong advanced guard of the 67th, and an equally strong body of the 21st P.N.I. in rear. On the troops from Ali Kheyl reaching Drekila—a post on the road overlooked by some curiously shaped peaks, rain-worn so as to resemble rudely an artificial fortification, with a suspicion of stunted minarets thrown in—the elephants were started off, and the main body of the convoy followed, the guns with their escort halting for an hour. Then the whole line

was again put in motion, and the Hazara Darukht defile was made for. This defile is certainly one of the worst that troops could ever hope to pass in the face of an enemy. The road still follows the river bed, which is shut in by steep hills clothed with fir-trees, offering splendid cover. The hills are so precipitous that it would be impossible in many places for men to scale them, and a handful of resolute soldiers could check an army with but little trouble. It was about Jaji Thana, two or three miles from Karatiga, that an attack was expected, and it was there that General Roberts had been fired upon, but singularly enough the greater part of the convoy had reached the camping ground before a shot was fired. Then a small party of tribesmen appeared, and though they succeeded in scaring a few sowars they retired very smartly when the escort opened fire. A company of the 5th N.I. doubled out of the post here when the alarm was given, but their aid was not needed. The whole convoy at the time I am writing (9 P.M.) is now safely encamped here, and early to-morrow it will move on to Kushi. The battery of artillery was to have made the Shutargardan this evening, but they arrived too late for the march to be attempted. To-night strong picquets are posted on the hills which command Karatiga on three sides, and we have made ourselves as comfortable as possible.

It is unlikely, however, that any attempt will be made to harass us, as the Mangals received a severe castigation on Saturday. The explanation of the firing upon General Roberts and his staff on that day is very simple. A large party of tribesmen cut the telegraph wire near Jaji Thana, almost within sight of Karatiga fort, and then waited in ambush for the party sent out to replace the wire. This party was guarded by twelve of the 3rd Sikhs, and no sooner had they reached the point where the line had been cut than they were fired upon from a high wooded hill on their right. One sepoy was killed at the first volley, and while directing their fire to the hill the men were attacked in rear by some Mangals who had previously crossed the road. Four Sikhs were killed in all, and as the hills were swarming with men, a party of eighteen of the 92nd Highlanders, under Colour-Sergeant Hector Macdonald,* and forty-

* Received a commission for this and other acts of bravery.

five of the 3rd Sikhs were hurriedly sent out. The enemy were very strong, but the Highlanders got them well within range, and it is calculated that at least thirty were killed and many more wounded. They were driven over the hills in full retreat. Another large party fired a volley at General Roberts and his party, of whom Dr. Townsend was wounded. The General had only with him the head-quarters of the Cavalry Brigade, a squadron of the 9th Lancers and the 5th Punjab Cavalry, as he was riding hard to reach the Shutargardan, but very fortunately twenty-five men of the 92nd Highlanders, who had been sent from Karatiga to act as his advance guard, joined him near Jaji Thana. These and some dismounted Lancers held the Mangals in check until the 28th Punjab Infantry, on baggage guard in rear, came up and cleared the heights. To-day there was no large gathering, as I have said, but the narrow escape of our General made us extra vigilant.

CAMP KUSHI, 1*st October*.

The whole of the Cabul Field Force has passed beyond the Shutargardan, and to-morrow morning at eight o'clock the real advance upon Cabul begins. General Massy is now at Zerghun Shahr, eight miles from here, with the 12th and 14th Bengal Cavalry, two guns R.H.A., two companies of the 72nd Highlanders, and the 5th P.N.I. General Baker's and General Macpherson's brigades will join him, and General Sir F. Roberts and head-quarters, accompanied by the Amir and his retinue, will also start for this advanced camp to-morrow. The force will then be concentrated, and the three marches which remain to be made before Cabul comes in sight will take place without delay. Sunday, the 5th,* will see us before the walls of the city, but whether serious opposition will be encountered is quite a matter of conjecture. The latest news here is, that the four regiments sent by the Amir to quell the rebellion in Badakshan are returning in hot haste to Cabul, but their feelings are not known. It is only reasonable, however, to suppose that they are anxious to share in the display of hearty enmity against the British, and if this be

* This expectation was a very fair one at the time, but the inevitable transport difficulties occurred and the halt had to be called.

so, there will be about eleven regiments to be met, excluding artillery and cavalry, which do not count for much. At the outside there would be 5,000 regular infantry; and as our force consists of over 6,000 men of all arms, any opposition the mutineers may make cannot be of long duration. If they obstinately cling to Cabul and defend it according to the best of their ability, the city may perhaps take us some days to capture; but it would be fearful weakness on their part to allow themselves to be caged within walls from which there can be no escape. The Amir, who is still in camp here, had an interview with Sir F. Roberts this evening, and pleaded that nothing should be done hastily, evidently fearing that his capital stood a very fair chance of being destroyed. But the present temper of our policy runs directly contrary to all delay, and it was useless to urge that there were many waverers in Cabul who had not yet joined the mutineers, but who were deterred by fear from attempting to favour the cause of others—which in this case is the cause of an Amir who has thrown himself into the arms of a late enemy. Sir F. Roberts told the Amir distinctly that not even a day's delay would take place, and that to-morrow would see the whole army on the way to Cabul. In deference, however, to the Amir's wishes, a proclamation would be issued and circulated in advance, in which all liege subjects of the Amir would be asked to declare themselves, and due notice of punishment be given to such as continued rebellious. At this announcement the Amir and his nobles seemed much pleased, though its value may prove practically *nil*. If Cabul has not been sacked by the mutineers, but is still held by them, it would be a dangerous matter for the Amir's adherents to come out, as they would inevitably be cut down as traitors. As a test of the disposition of the citizens, it may be useful in deterring the soldiers from attempting to defend the place, as their position would be untenable were the feeling of the people shown to be against them. From all points of view it is obviously to the advantage of our policy that Cabul should be quickly occupied: on the one hand, to punish the mutineers severely, if, in the heat of their fanaticism, they resolve to fight; and, on the other, to prevent it being looted, if they consider it safer to load themselves with booty and make for some of the independent khanates.

As a sign of the times, it must be noticed that Wali Mahomed Khan* and his friends, who treasure up the traditions of Dost Mahomed's rule, have left Cabul in order not to be implicated in any actions of the rebellious troops, and are now at Zerghun Shahr. They form unquestionably a powerful faction in Cabul, and it will perhaps be a difficult matter to keep them from intriguing, if they see that Yakub Khan is suspected of treachery by the British. When General Roberts met Wali Mahomed yesterday, the Sirdar was most profuse in his professions of friendship; but it was plain that the friendship was dictated by self-interest. The turn of the wheel may, in Wali Mahomed's own opinion, throw Yakub Khan out of power, and a new ruler must be cast about for. Such a ruler would only govern under the shadow of our arms, and to meet us half-way before the crisis comes is a deep stroke of policy. How far it will succeed no one can yet tell, but our faith in the Amir so far is not sufficiently shaken to justify the countenancing of a pretender. Wali Mahomed was ordered to remain with General Massy in the camp at Zerghun Shahr, but to-morrow he and Yakub Khan may meet, and much discretion will be needed to keep up a show of amicable relationship between them. The story of the Massacre has yet to be sifted in all its details, and Wali Mahomed may be among the witnesses cited to give evidence. With Yakub Khan and his sirdars in Kushi, and Wali Mahomed and his followers only eight miles away, the position is a delicate one, and it will be interesting to watch its development.

From what I can learn, the following would seem to have been the order of things at the so-called Durbar on September 29th. At 11 A.M. Sir Frederick Roberts and the principal officers of his divisional staff (with whom was General Hills, C.B., V.C.), rode to that part of the camp where tents had been pitched for the Amir's use. The veteran Daoud Shah met the party, and after general hand-shaking conducted them into the durbar tent where the Amir was waiting. The usual formal ceremonies and inquiries were gone through, and Sir Frederick Roberts then left. At four o'clock in the afternoon the Amir with the heir-apparent and his sirdars returned the visit. A guard of honour of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders was drawn

* A son of Dost Mahomed Khan, and therefore uncle of Yakub Khan.

up to receive him; the band played, and every attention was scrupulously shown. There were many British officers from the various regiments present, who watched rather critically the display of ceremonial politeness which, as a matter of course, followed. The Amir was lost in admiration of his guard of honour, and he may well be pardoned for his earnest study of the men: the Gordon Highlanders are in physique and bearing perfect specimens of British soldiers. When the visit came to an end the Amir mounted his horse (one of those presented to him at Gundamak), and rode to his own camp, outside the British lines. The band of the Gordon Highlanders followed him and played before his tent, and directly afterwards he was visited by Generals Baker and Hills. Several officers also strolled down to the camp and found much food for amusement in the demeanour and costume of the 300 horsemen who form the escort of Yakub Khan. These include such novelties as mounted Highlanders, who ride madly about camp on the least provocation. At dusk a guard of the 72nd Highlanders, under a British officer, was mounted over the Amir's tent, and the same attention has been paid to him day and night since. It is a sign of our loving-kindness towards him, and of our deep anxiety that his personal safety should be assured. After having come to us as a guest, it would be the height of inhospitality not to show him all honour, whatever little accounts may have to be settled hereafter in our camp at Cabul.

The following order has been issued by Sir F. Roberts:—

"The Government of India having decided that the Kurram Field Force shall proceed with all possible despatch to Cabul in response of His Highness the Amir's appeal for aid, and with the object of avenging the dastardly murder of the British Representative and his escort, Sir F. Roberts feels sure that the troops under his command will respond to this call with a determination to prove themselves worthy of the sacred duty entrusted to them, and of the high reputation they have maintained during the recent campaign. The Major-General need address no words of exhortation to soldiers, whose courage and fortitude have been so well proved. The Afghan tribes are numerous but without organization, the regular army is undisciplined and whatever may be the

disparity in numbers, such foes can never be formidable to Her Majesty's troops.

"The dictates of humanity require that a distinction should be made between the peaceable inhabitants of Afghanistan and the treacherous murderers for whom a just retribution is in store, and Sir F. Roberts desires to impress on all ranks the necessity for treating the inoffensive population with justice, forbearance, and clemency. The future comfort and well-being of the force depend largely on the friendliness of our relations with the districts from which our supplies must be drawn; prompt payment is enjoined for all articles purchased by departments and individuals, and all disputes must be at once referred to a political officer for decision.

"The Major-General confidently looks forward to the successful accomplishment of the objects of the expedition and the re-establishment of order and a settled government in Afghanistan."

As regards the military position here, it is scarcely necessary to enumerate the regiments now on the ground, as, with the exception of those at Zerghun Shahr, under General Massy, all the troops detailed for the Cabul Field Force are now mustered ready for the march. The march of the 67th Foot, 21st N.I., G-3, R.A., and the Gatling guns from Karatiga to Kushi occupied two days, General Macpherson considering it wise to halt the 1,500 baggage animals on the Shutargardan last night and give them an extra feed, so as to prepare them for future hard work. This was an excellent idea, for the poor beasts are in the worst condition, and good food can alone make them equal to the heavy loads they have to carry. The Shutargardan is indeed a bleak wilderness even now, and the road which descends to the bed of the river would try the stamina of the best pack animals in the world. The thin line of the convoy was, however, worked safely down, and all day it wound its slow length along through narrow gorges, over the stony river bed, up the steep Shinkai Kotal (surely the most desolate spot in all the desolation of Afghanistan), and thence along the broad road traversing the open plain, which spreads out in stony barrenness from the foot of the mountains. There was a large amount of ammunition being brought up, and so jealous were we of the valuable boxes, that special guards were told off to all animals carrying them. But nothing was seen of any hostile

clansmen until late in the evening, when a few shots were fired, and some marauders succeeded in carrying off three mules. Taking into consideration the length of line of the convoy and the difficulty of the way, such a loss is most insignificant, although every brute that can bear a load is now of exceptional value. It is believed that the larger bodies of Mangals and independent Ghilzais who had assembled on the route have dispersed to their homes, and only stray robbers are now about. These, however are capable of much mischief. A syce was shot through the leg yesterday, and several camp followers have been cut up.

This camp will be broken up to-morrow, as all the troops are under orders to leave for Zerghun Shahr, and for the next fortnight or so no attempt will be made to keep up the line of communication between the advancing force and the old Kurram stations. Heliograms of course will be sent by Captain Straton's signallers, and the post will be carried as regularly as the conditions of the runner service permits, but beyond this we shall be in our own little world, self-contained, and self-supporting. As much local carriage as possible has been hired, and the influence of the Amir upon neighbouring villages has been freely exercised. Grain paid as tribute has also come in, and this has been handed over to the Commissariat, which has also purchased largely of all who are willing to sell. At present all is favourable to a rapid and successful advance. The days are clear and warm, and a bright moon renders night surprises impossible. The weather is so mild that the camp-followers can live in comfort without additional warm clothes being served out, and the whole force is very healthy. To say that the men are anxious to advance and are all in high spirits is scarcely necessary. They are too good material to need any such praise.

CHAPTER III.

The March to Zerghun Shahr—Proclamation to the People of Cabul—The Composition of the "Avenging Army"—March to Sufed Sang—Transport Difficulties—Hostility of Villagers—March to Charasia—Cavalry Reconnaissance—The Battle of Charasia—Defeat of the Afghans.

ZERGHUN SHAHR, *2nd October.*

THE camp at Kushi was all astir early this morning, for it was our first day's march, and the capacity of our baggage animals had yet to be tested. It is true we had only to march eight miles to Zerghun Shahr, where General Massy had been in camp for some days; but still there were large quantities of stores and ammunition to be moved. General Baker's Brigade was the first to move, and at eight o'clock they followed in the wake of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, which was ordered to cover their front and flanks. The greatest anxiety was regarding the baggage, but the arrangements were well made by the transport officers, and as the animals had an easy road to follow the march was a very satisfactory one.

With one or two exceptions the line was well kept, and the baggage reached its destination pretty rapidly. The 5th P.C. advanced as if in a country swarming with enemies, the advance guard being thrown out a mile in front, and flankers working on either hand over the stony hills which traversed the plain. Following the cavalry were F-A, R.H.A., a small party of signallers, the 23rd Pioneers, the 72nd Highlanders, No. 2 Mountain Battery, 5th P.I., one company Sappers and Miners, Baggage, Field Hospital, Engineer Park, 5th Ghoorkas (as rear-guard), and a few troopers of the 5th P.C. All the troops looked very fit, and they marched with an *élan* that could not be mistaken. The road taken was over the stony plain which extends for two or three miles on either hand, and the march was absolutely without incident. Zerghun Shahr was reached before noon, the troops halting for half an hour about four miles out, and the regiments filed off to their camping grounds on the open plain. The village

lies a few hundred yards to the west of the road, and is of very small dimensions. A running stream supplies the camp with water, the principle of the *karez* (the sinking of a continuous line of wells, connected by an underground channel, carrying the water to a lower level) having been largely applied. With the exception of the fruit trees in the village there is no vegetation anywhere to be seen, and the country is nearly a repetition of that previously passed over; bare hills looking down upon stony plains which do nothing but reflect the sun's rays upon unlucky travellers. The desolate aspect of everything is most distressing, but we are hoping for better things after another march.

To return to the march from Kushi: General Macpherson's Brigade left at ten o'clock, Sir Frederick Roberts and staff starting about an hour later. With them was the Amir and his Sirdars, who could not fail to be impressed with the compactness and fitness for any kind of work of the soldiers before him. Every effort was made, too, to keep the baggage animals well together under strong escorts, so as to show His Highness that our army was not careless on the march, and would not lay itself open to surprise. When such grand regiments as the 67th, 72nd, and 92nd are on the move, it is not likely there will be any slackness, for the men are of the old stamp, and know what discipline and smartness mean. The Amir upon arriving here was shown to his encamping ground, which is well away from that of Wali Mahomed, meeting between the two at the present juncture being studiously avoided. The camp is overrun with wild-looking Afghans, generally galloping at headlong speed without any special object in view, and but for the sturdiness of our sentries these mangy horsemen would invade the privacy of even head-quarters and brigade camps. Our soldiers bear them no goodwill, and usually return their look of insolent braggadocio with a frown which expresses a good deal. Tommy Atkins is on the whole a very honest sort of fellow, and his ire is now roused against these swaggering cowards, who were in Cabul when our Embassy was attacked, and would not raise a finger to aid the handful of men who perished. Poor old Daoud Shah is perhaps entitled to some little respect; but for the others contempt is almost too good. The Amir is our guest—a guest perhaps upon

whom a friendly watch is kept as a matter of precaution—and we cannot therefore give expression to our feelings very frankly, but if the Camp were canvassed the general opinion would be one of rather a strong kind as regards his vacillation and cowardice on the 3rd of September. However, he is now in the midst of an army which will soon be at the gates of his capital, and then he will have to sit down quietly until our policy is duly shaped—this time simply in accordance with our own aims, and utterly regardless of his protestations. He is now profuse in his thanks for the proclamation which is to go before us to Cabul; at the same time he is doubtful of its effect upon the mutineers. His tone might change, perhaps, if he could see any way out of his present difficulties other than that to be made by our bayonets.

The proclamation alluded to was dated October 2nd, and was sent off to-day to Cabul. It is as follows:—

"Proclamation to the People of Cabul.

"Be it known to all that the British army is advancing on Cabul to take possession of the city. If it be allowed to do so peacefully, well and good; if not, the city will be seized by force. Therefore all well-disposed persons who have taken no part in the dastardly murder of the British Embassy or in the plunder of the Residency are warned, that if they are unable to prevent resistance being offered to the entrance of the British army and to the authority of His Highness the Amir, they should make immediate arrangements for their own safety, either by coming into the British Camp or by such other measures as may seem fit to them. And as the British Government does not make war on women and children, warning is given that all women and children should be removed from the city beyond the reach of harm. The British Government desires to treat all classes with justice, and to respect their religion, feelings, and customs, while exacting full retribution from offenders. Every effort will therefore be made to prevent the innocent suffering with the guilty. But it is necessary that the utmost precaution should be taken against useless opposition. Therefore, after the receipt of this proclamation, all persons found armed in or about Cabul will be treated as the enemies of the

British Government; and further, it must be clearly understood that if the entry of the British force is resisted, I cannot hold myself responsible for any accidental mischief which may be done to persons and property, even of well-disposed people who may have neglected this warning.

"Signed, &c., F. ROBERTS."

Two sowars belonging to the 12th Bengal Cavalry, who were spending their furlough at Cabul, arrived here to-day, and report that the mutineers mean to fight. We have just heard of an unsuccessful attack upon the Shutargardan by Mangals and Ghilzais.*

The force is now concentrated, for the first time, for the march onward to Cabul. It is made up as follows:—

CABUL FIELD FORCE, OCTOBER 1879.

	British Officers.	Other Ranks.	
		British.	Native.
Divisional and Brigade Staff	60	—	—
F-A, R.H.A.	7	118	—
G-3, R.A.	7	137	—
No. 2 Mountain Battery	3	—	223
9th Lancers	4	118	—
5th Punjab Cavalry	7	—	325
12th Bengal Cavalry	6	—	328
14th Bengal Lancers	7	—	407
67th Regiment	18	686	—
72nd Highlanders	23	746	—
92nd Highlanders	17	717	—
5th Punjab Infantry	8	—	610
23rd Pioneers	6	—	671
28th Punjab Infantry	8	—	636
5th Ghoorkas	7	—	574
7th Company Sappers and Miners ...	3	2	93
Two Gatling guns	1	34	—
Total	192	2,558	3,867

There are about 6,000 "followers" and some 3,500 baggage

* The Shutargardan was held by the 3rd Sikhs and 21st Punjab Infantry with four guns of No. 1 Mountain Battery. Colonel Money of the 3rd Sikhs was in command.

animals. Fourteen days' supplies are being carried, with tea and sugar for two months. Lieutenant-Colonel B. L. Gordon, R.H.A., commands the artillery (twelve 9-pounder and six 7-pounder guns, with two Gatlings); and Lieutenant-Colonel Æ. Perkins, R.E., is in command of the Engineers. The Cavalry Brigade is of course commanded by General Massy; while the Infantry are brigaded as follows:—1st Brigade (General Macpherson), 67th, 92nd Highlanders, and 28th P.I.; 2nd Brigade (General Baker), 72nd Highlanders, 5th Ghoorkas, and 5th P.I. The 23rd Pioneers are not attached to any particular brigade.

SUFED SANG, ZAHIDABAD, *4th October*.

Yesterday the march was continued, and Macpherson's Brigade with the cavalry reached Sufed Sang in the evening, after a march of nearly fifteen miles. The same open plain was traversed, but there were more signs of cultivation as the Logar River, which was hidden from sight at Zerghun Shahr by a range of hills, was neared. Along its banks are villages scattered at short intervals, and the orchards of these form a very pleasant relief to the bare barrenness of the Ghilzai Hills on our right. The Logar River is spanned by a narrow bridge near Zahidabad village, but it was found impossible to get wheeled guns across it, and the ford adjacent to the bridge was not so shallow as it should have been, the villagers having turned a large volume of water into the stream from a neighbouring irrigation channel. This was the first sign of the latent hostility of the people in the Logar Valley, but as the *maliks* (headmen) of Zahidabad and the near village of Sufed Sang came in and paid their respects, we could do nothing in the way of punishment. The troops forded the river, the baggage being sent by way of the bridge. Some of the men were swept off their feet by the force of the current, but as the stream was only fifty or sixty yards in width, no lives were lost. The Prince of Bokhara, who is a refugee at the Amir's Court, met General Roberts at Zahidabad. He had followed Yakub Khan's example, and had fled from Cabul in the night. He reported that the troops were being incited to fight by certain disloyal Sirdars, but that no general rising of the people had taken place: the flight of the Amir had prevented any great tribal combination so far.

Our camping ground is in the midst of cultivation, and we are halted here to-day awaiting the arrival of General Baker's Brigade. Yesterday it was found that the carriage of the force was quite inadequate to carry all the stores and ammunition, now that the whole army had been concentrated, and accordingly General Baker was ordered to halt his brigade at Zerghun Shahr for the night and guard the Commissariat supplies and the Ordnance park. This he did by forming a rude sort of laager, within which the transport animals were placed. He was not molested during the night. The call upon the Transport of the Force to do double work was answered with great alacrity by Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Heathcote and the officers working under him. After the heavy march of fifteen miles the beasts were well fed and given a few hours' rest; but at one o'clock in the morning all the strongest camels were paraded and marched off to Zerghun Shahr. There they were loaded up, and with as little delay as possible began the return journey to Sufed Sang—forty-five miles in thirty-six hours.* On the previous evening some shots had been fired near the Logar Bridge, but no mischief was done; and we took but little notice of this expression of enmity, except to station strong picquets and warn the sentries to show extra vigilance. This evening, however, a determined attack was made upon the rear-guard, the villagers of Kuti Kheyl and other hamlets creeping up, under cover of darkness, and hiding themselves in *nullahs* and behind orchard walls. Fortunately they were badly armed, and although they kept up a desultory fire at close quarters, Major Stockwell of the 72nd Highlanders drove them off by firing volleys and by throwing skirmishers out to protect his left flank. As the rear-guard crossed the river the villagers grew bolder and followed them up pretty closely, but no baggage was lost; and a few companies being sent from camp to hold the bridge the firing died away, and now (10 P.M.) all is again quiet. The halt to-day has been of service in enabling us to get in a few supplies, but the transport difficulty is a serious one, as it is now clear only one infantry brigade can march daily, and the baggage animals must be sent back day by day to bring up the stores and reserve am-

* This will show the difficulties General Roberts had to contend with, even in the few marches from Kushi to Cabul. The transport train was, as usual, the weakest link in the chain, and everything had to be made subservient to it.

munition. To-morrow General Baker's brigade will move on to Charasia, and the 92nd Highlanders will probably be added to the regiments composing it. There is news to-day from Cabul to the effect that the mutinous regiments have not yet left, but are busy looting the arsenal in the Bala Hissar, wherein are stored many hundred rifles, and an enormous quantity of small-arm ammunition.

CAMP CHARASIA, *5th October*.

The village of Kuti Kheyl was chiefly responsible for the attack upon General Baker's rear-guard last night, and we have now a number of prisoners in our hands who were captured in that neighbourhood, and who are said to have been concerned in the skirmish. This morning (Sunday), before striking camp, a small force was sent out with two mountain guns. A squadron of cavalry surrounded Kuti Kheyl, and upon the 9th Lancers finally going in, several men showed fight. Three were run through, one just as he was levelling his piece at an officer, and five were captured; two of whom were wounded on the head with lance-butts. The *maliks* of the village were also brought in, but were released after receiving a warning as to their future behaviour. The five prisoners were sent on with the advanced guard here, and were tried this afternoon by drum-head court-martial. One of them was a sepoy of the Amir's, and he, with two others, was sentenced to death for being in unlawful rebellion against his sovereign. The other two were released, no doubt much to their astonishment.

As the march to Charasia was only a short one of six miles from Sufed Sang, we did not start until ten o'clock. Early in the afternoon the encamping ground was reached, and tents were pitched on the fallow fields which stretch to the foot of the hills on either side. The road followed a due northerly direction, through a cultivated tract of country, for about three miles, to some very low hills which traverse it at right angles, and near which is the village of Childukhteran.* On crossing these hills, a long valley lay stretched before us in the shape of a parallelogram; and at the farther extremity could be seen the village of Charasia, with its orchards stretching in front of it, with clumps of trees dotted

* Forty daughters.

farther to the west. Beyond was the mass of hills which shut in Cabul, and hinder any view of the city from the valley. The hills to east and west also close in; and the valley cannot be much more than two miles across. It is all under cultivation by means of irrigation channels. The hills overlooking Charasia are, first, a low range of a light-coloured slaty character, then a higher series of rocky heights, and in the immediate rear, forming the sky-line, is a precipitous range with four or five peaks standing out in bold relief. This range runs sharply down, on the east, to the road which leads direct to the old Cabul camping ground and the Bala Hissar, and, with another high range sloping similarly down on the other side of the road, forms the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, which, if held in strength, would be very difficult to force. Through this defile the Logar River passes into the Cabul Valley. Our encamping ground is south of the village, the head-quarters of Sir F. Roberts being a mile or more from the orchards. The ranges of hills east and west of us are very high and steep; but directly to our left front is only a gradual slope, over which lies the beautiful Chardeh Valley, filled with orchards, and apparently rich in cultivation. A road skirting the hills leads through the valley into Cabul. There is a third road among the hills immediately in rear of Charasia.

A cavalry reconnaissance to-day did not cause any of the enemy to show themselves; but perhaps to-morrow, when more ground is covered, there may be a different result. Emissaries from Cabul are said to have been in the Charasia village yesterday, and the difficulty we have had in getting supplies this afternoon is a proof of their efforts to influence the villagers against us. However, only a few shots have been fired at our cavalry, and we are resting in camp, which is protected by strong outlying picquets. To-morrow morning 1,500 baggage animals go back to Sufed Sang to bring up the rest of the stores, and this delay will cause us to halt here a day. General Macpherson, with the 67th Foot, 28th N.I., three guns, and a squadron of cavalry, has been left behind to take charge of to-morrow's convoy. He will draw in his camp as much as possible, as the affair at Kuti Kheyl has shown how badly disposed the villagers are towards us.

The Amir and Wali Mahomed have come in with us, but the

former does not seem to have—or will not exercise—control over the villagers we have to deal with. There is plainly much trimming of sails among them as to their immediate attitude, but we are wide-awake enough not to trust them in any way. In case of any check, there cannot be the least doubt that the groups which now watch us marching past would shoulder their *jhezails* and turn out to harass us on all sides. The men with us who know the local character best are strong in their assertion that until we have occupied Cabul we shall be annoyed by these tribesmen, who are loth to let long strings of baggage animals pass through their midst without trying to loot some of the riches they carry. Even to-day a kahar in charge of a mule-load of baggage was cut up. He had wandered from the road, and had made no sign when the rear-guard passed. Half a dozen men watched their opportunity, and when the coast was clear they killed the kahar and walked off with the mule and its burden.

The news that the regiments in Cabul looted the arsenal yesterday would seem to indicate that they mean fighting, and this intelligence is the best that we have had for a long time. The only way in which they can be punished lies in resistance when we advance; for, if they run away, it will be difficult to chase them all over Afghanistan, even if we were disposed to do so. The health of the troops is excellent, although the sun has laid up a number of men with fever. It is of the mildest kind and soon passes off.

CAMP BENI HISSAR, *7th October*.

We are now encamped within a few miles of the Bala Hissar and the city of Cabul, the mutinous troops having yesterday been defeated and driven from the heights above Charasia, which they had occupied with the idea of barring our further advance. The details of the action are as follows:—At daybreak yesterday morning (October 6th) a strong working party was sent out to improve the road through the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, but before they had gone two miles from camp the cavalry patrol in advance reported that the enemy were in great strength on the hills, and had guns in position commanding the road. The working party consisted of the 23rd Pioneers, under escort of a wing of

the 92nd Highlanders and two guns of No. 2 (Swinley's) Mountain Battery; and upon the cavalry patrols being fired at and falling back, this party received orders to halt and act on the defensive. As the morning advanced it was seen that not only was the Sang-i-Nawishta held in force, but the hills beyond Charasia, from the Chardeh Valley to the Logar River, were crowned with armed men. It was plain that our farther progress towards Cabul was barred, and as there was only one brigade available for the attack the position was not an encouraging one. Fortunately the 92nd Highlanders had been detached from General Macpherson's brigade for the time being, and this gave us another British regiment to fall back upon. Sir Frederick Roberts deemed it wise to attack without delay, as to remain inactive before the mutinous regiments now facing him would probably encourage a general tribal rising, and instead of 10,000 we should have 50,000 men to deal with. Already the hills to right and left of the camp had a few white-clad men upon them, plainly sentinels sent from the near village to watch the progress of the fight and aid in the pursuit if our army were driven back. General Macpherson had to make his way from Sufed Sang to Charasia, and as his baggage train was seen stretching along the valley, the tribesmen grew bolder and opened a desultory fire upon the escort. This was the signal for many men to join the sentinels I have spoken of, on the hills, and so numerous did the gathering become that a squadron of cavalry was sent back to reinforce General Macpherson, who was further ordered to make all possible haste to Charasia.

In the meantime the camp was astir with preparations for the attack upon the enemy in front, and the men were full of enthusiasm at the prospect of meeting face to face the regiments which had brought about Cavagnari's murder. The following troops, under the command of Brigadier-General Baker, marched out of camp towards the village of Charasia about eleven oclock:—

Four guns of No. 2 Mountain Battery, under Captain G. Swinley, R.A.

Two Gatling guns, under Captain A. Broadfoot.

7th Company of Sappers and Miners, under Lieutenant C. Nugent, R.A.

72nd Highlanders, under Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. J. Clarke.

Six companies of the 5th Ghoorkas, under Major A. Fitz-Hugh.

200 of the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Captain C. McK. Hall.

This force was strengthened by 450 of the 23rd Pioneers, withdrawn from the road leading to the Sang-i-Nawishta defile; * while at the same time our right attack was also modified. Major White, of the 92nd Highlanders, assumed command in this direction, the troops entrusted to his charge being:—

Three guns, G-3, R.A., under Major S. Parry, R.A.

Two squadrons of cavalry, made up of detachments of the 9th Lancers, 5th Punjab Cavalry, and 12th Bengal Cavalry, commanded by Major Hammond, 5th P.C.

A wing of the 92nd Highlanders, under Major Hay.

100 men of the 23rd Pioneers, under Captain H. Paterson.

This force was to keep the enemy in play at the Sang-i-Nawishta by rapid artillery fire, and so to distract their attention that they would give time for our main attack to be delivered on their right, where they had no guns in position, and had not a narrow gorge to defend. The old tactics of turning their flank and taking their main line in reverse were to be followed; and knowing the Afghan inability, as a rule, to make a counter-attack, General Roberts weakened his right, so as to concentrate a strong infantry force for the outflanking movement over the hills overlooking the Chardeh Valley. Sirdar Nek Mahomed Khan (son of Dost Mahomed), who was in command of the Afghan troops, seemed to think we should make a determined effort to force the Sang-i-Nawishta Pass, and he had accordingly posted on the heights overlooking the road twelve guns, while three or four Armstrong-pattern breech-loaders were on the plain below. The enemy's disposition seemed to indicate that if we tried to force the Pass their guns would have held us in check, while their right was swung round to take us in flank, the series of ridges which they covered offering a good manœuvring ground for such a movement, while the undulating plain below, with its belt of trees round about Charasia, would have given excellent cover. The accompanying map will show the

* It should be noted that no cavalry accompanied General Baker. A similar mistake was made on several other occasions later on. Our infantry lacked the *immediate* support of cavalry to make defeats decisive.

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relative positions, and also make clear the strength of the defending force which was able to cover so much ground.

After leaving the camp, General Baker made for the village of Charasia, which consisted of a number of detached walled enclosures such as are common all over the country. There were numerous orchards and gardens adjoining these, so that his first movements were well concealed from the enemy, whose attention up to this point was directed chiefly to Major White's movements on the Cabul Road. Seeing how greatly he was outnumbered, General Baker took the precaution of occupying a strong walled enclosure on the outskirts of Charasia, and here he placed his reserve ammunition and his field hospital. The temper of the villagers was so uncertain that he telegraphed to General Roberts for another regiment of infantry to strengthen his reserves, and 100 men of the 5th Punjab Infantry hurried out at once and joined the hospital and reserve ammunition guard. The remainder of the regiment were sent out soon after, although this left the camp very weakly guarded, only 1,000 cavalry and infantry with six 9-pounder guns being left at head-quarters. However, as General Macpherson was coming up with his brigade, the risk was well worth running, as failure on General Baker's part might have meant disaster to the whole army. The 72nd Highlanders led the way out of Charasia, and bullets soon began to drop among their ranks while the enemy's picquets were seen to be retiring up the ridges. As the brigade pushed forward with the intention of outflanking the main line of hills lying between Chardeh and the Sang-i-Nawishta, their progress was checked by a strong position on their left front on which the Afghans had raised *sungars*, and from which they began to open a heavy musketry fire. Two mountain guns replied to this, and the 72nd extended in skirmishing order, one company under Captain Brooke-Hunt turning off to the left, while the main body of the regiment worked away to the front, the ground affording but slight cover. Captain Hunt's company scaled a hill 500 or 600 feet high, climbing over difficult rocks, which hindered their rapid advance. The enemy were exceedingly numerous on their extreme right, another and steeper hill enabling them to pour a heavy fire upon the company. Two more mountain guns and the Gatlings were

ordered to open fire upon this hill, and upon such bodies of men as were visible on the near ridges; but the Gatlings were in such bad order, owing to their defective make, that after a few rounds the drum "jammed" and they had to be taken out of action. Our true attack had now been recognized by Nek Mahomed and he hastened to reinforce his right; a stream of men was seen pouring along the rearmost ridges from the direction of the Sang-i-Nawishta, and standards borne by Ghazis began to thicken on our left. General Baker lost no time in pushing forward part of his reserves, in order to force their first position before it could be strongly reinforced. The 5th Ghoorkas, and 200 men of the 5th Punjab Infantry, doubled forward, while the enemy's fire increased in intensity. Captain Hunt's company was strengthened by two companies of the 5th Ghoorkas, under Captain John Cook, V.C.; while two more companies of Ghoorkas and 200 of the 5th P.I. joined the advanced skirmishers of the 72nd in the main attack. The skirmishing line was thus extended so as to outflank the left of the ridge, which the Afghans still clung to with great obstinacy, as it was the key of the position on their right flank. This was at 1.30 P.M., when our troops had been engaged for an hour and a half without having made much impression upon the enemy. With the strengthening of our advance success was soon declared: the hill on the extreme left, from which a flanking fire had been directed on our skirmishers, was carried in splendid style by the company of the 72nd and the two companies of the 5th Ghoorkas, while the other companies of the two regiments, by a series of gallant rushes, turned the enemy's left. At two o'clock our advanced line was enabled to direct a cross fire upon the 2,000 men who held the ridge, and who now showed symptoms of wavering. A general advance was ordered, and the 72nd, 5th Ghoorkas, and 5th P.I. were in a few minutes in possession of the Afghan's first line. But not without loss, for the enemy were chiefly armed with Snider and Enfield rifles, and their fire was rapid and continuous. Fortunately they had so little knowledge of the principles of musketry that their bullets mostly passed over our men's heads as the rush uphill was made. The 72nd Highlanders bore the brunt of the fighting, and their casualties amounted to thirty-six. They had on several occasions to cross open ground, and in spite of the

exposure they rushed forward with an *élan* that could not have been surpassed. Private MacMahon, one of their number, particularly distinguished himself on the left. Almost single-handed he scaled a hill on the crest of which was a *sungar* filled with men: loading and firing as he went, his coolness incited four or five Ghoorkas to follow him; and when he finally leaped into the *sungar* its defenders took to flight and were shot down as they ran. MacMahon is to be recommended by General Baker for the Victoria Cross, his gallantry having been observed by the General and his Staff as well as by the officers engaged in the attack. It was such incidents as these which caused General Baker to express his great satisfaction with the behaviour of the troops under his command.

After their first position had fallen into our hands, the enemy rallied on some low hills 600 yards in rear and re-opened fire, to which our mountain guns replied, while our men were resting on their arms. A company of the 23rd Pioneers, under Lieutenant Chesney, was thrown forward on the right, while two companies of the 92nd, under Captain Oxley, which Major White had detached to hold in check any flanking movement the enemy might attempt on General Baker's right, also came into action. The enemy's second position was attacked by the 72nd Highlanders and the 5th Ghoorkas, aided by the three companies just mentioned, and at three o'clock the Afghan right had been broken up, and their regiments were flying towards the village of Indikee. The mountain guns fired shrapnel into their midst, and the Gatling guns, for the few moments they were able to work, also did some execution, while volleys from the 72nd at long ranges caused the fugitives to hasten their flight. Major Stockwell, with a wing of the 72nd, followed them rapidly until he reached the open ground leading down into the Chardeh Valley, when his further advance was stopped by General Baker, as the turning movement along the ridge towards the Sang-i-Nawishta had to be made. The want of cavalry was here painfully apparent, as the retreating masses of the Afghans could easily have been overtaken, the sloping ground between Indikee and the hills being admirably suited for a pursuit. While Major Stockwell had thus been completing the defeat of the enemy's right, two companies of the 23rd Pioneers had gained

a footing on the main ridge itself, whence the enemy were rapidly retiring as they recognized that their line would in a few minutes be taken in reverse. General Baker swung round his left, ordered a general advance, and at 3.45 P.M. the ridge was in our hands without any serious opposition having been met with. Not that they had not shown great determination before, for bands of ghazis had made good their footing behind the *sungars* until our bayonets had forced them down. The 5th Ghoorkas were charged by a number of these madmen, but they met the rush by a counter bayonet charge and cleared all before them.

Leaving General Baker with the main body of his force sweeping over the high ridge in the direction of the Sang-i-Nawishta Gorge, I must now turn to Major White's movements on our right, where had been done one of the most gallant feats of the day. The feint in this direction had been turned into a successful attack, resulting in the capture of twenty guns, although our infantry numbered only a few hundreds, and our cavalry were unable to act. Skirting the east of Charasia, Major White found the enemy scattered about among the trees, and also holding the hills to right and left of the defile. The three guns of G-3 were soon in action, and a few shells well placed, with the fire of skirmishers thrown out among the trees and gardens, drove back the more venturesome of the enemy to the shelter of the *sungars* in the hills, and behind some boulders in the bed of the Pass. Our guns were then moved forward and made beautiful practice, the answering fire from the enemy's artillery being quite harmless. One of our shells struck an Afghan field-piece, dismounted it, and killed two of the horses standing near, while another struck a standard in a cluster of men. In fact, the 103 rounds fired by G-3 were of the greatest value in preparing the way for the infantry attack. This attack was led personally by Major White, who at the head of only fifty Highlanders charged the first hill on the right, where several hundred Afghans were posted. Our men went up with a rush under a severe musketry fire, and the enemy waited as if to receive them at the point of the bayonet. With such odds in their favour, and a *sungar* to aid them, European troops would have swept back the handful of men

attacking with scarcely an effort; but Afghan courage and steadiness are very limited. When the Highlanders were within five or six yards of the *sungar* the enemy turned and fled, and were shot in the back as they made for the next hill. The success thus gained was mainly due to Major White's personal gallantry, one striking instance of which may be quoted. Not caring to expose his men in a particularly steep bit of ground, which was enfiladed by a few Afghans well placed in rear of some rocks, he took a loaded rifle from one of the Highlanders and "stalked" the enemy single-handed. By cautious climbing he reached the rocks behind which they were concealed, and as he showed himself they jumped up and ran, no doubt in the full belief that the single figure they saw was only the leader of a number of others. One man stayed to fire, but missed his aim, and as he turned Major White shot him through the head. Unfortunately, he had no more cartridges with him, or some of the others would have fallen. This hill is to be called "White's Hill" in memory of his gallantry. The capture of this point enabled the guns to be advanced still further towards the entrance of the Pass, but Major White was not content. Having given his men breathing time, and being reinforced by another fifty men from below, he again went forward and captured two lower hills on the right, in the same grand style, and with only trifling loss. It was by these movements that he was able to send Captain Oxley with two companies well to the left, to co-operate with General Baker's Brigade. Six Armstrong guns fell into Major White's hands on the open ground below the hills; and when our turning movement in the Chardeh direction had been completed, and the enemy began to evacuate the main ridge, the cavalry were sent forward, and the infantry occupied the hills commanding the Sang-i-Nawishta Pass on the left. Here twelve more guns were captured in position, while the cavalry found two more abandoned on the road. The twenty guns brought out from Sherpur, therefore, to fortify the Pass have all fallen into our hands. Upon Major White gaining the ridge to the left he could see no further sign of the enemy, who had stampeded to the Bala Hissar. The cavalry could not follow as the Pass narrows, and the narrow paths beyond are not adapted for a body of horse charging. Our information was to

the contrary, it being stated that the road opened into a plain, and our cavalry being accordingly sent to the right to cut off the retreat of the enemy when driven towards Cabul by General Baker. As events occurred, the two squadrons would have been invaluable if they had accompanied the General. The progress of the brigade along the main ridge was very slow, as the ground was rugged and difficult; and it was not until nightfall that a junction was effected with Major White. The 23rd Pioneers and the 5th P.I. moved down into an open bit of ground beyond the Pass, while the 72nd Highlanders, the Ghoorkas, and mountain guns remained above, throwing out strong picquets over the range of hills. Major White's force bivouacked on the ground they had occupied when their last movement was made.

It is worth mentioning that two elephants, three camels, and 200 mules carrying stores, &c., were safely piloted over the precipitous hills which were taken, and the men were thus able to bivouac in comfort. Not the least important arrangement of the day was that of signalling. Captain Straton had parties of men with General Baker and Major White, and a third batch of signallers was sent to a high hill to watch the Chardeh Valley, and the movements of large bodies of tribesmen, who lined the crests of the range overlooking the camp from the west. Heliograms were exchanged between these points and the head-quarters camp, and General Roberts was kept fully informed of all that was happening in these directions. This focussing of all information upon a common centre enabled the General to make his dispositions with accuracy and effect: without the signallers dangerous delays might have occurred. The heliographing was so thoroughly well done that Sir F. Roberts complimented Captain Straton personally on the success of his arrangements. The only drawback was a succession of small sand storms, which swept across the camp and blotted out everything for the time being.

The attitude of the tribesmen in our immediate neighbourhood, *i.e.*, on the ranges of hills east and west of the camp, was one of expectancy modified by an earnest desire to harass our picquets by spasmodic firing. Their ill-will was first shown by firing upon the signallers on the hill, and the party had eventually to be withdrawn. Two guns were sent down and a few shells pitched

upwards, which caused these guerillas to withdraw to a safe distance. The convoy from our last camp at Sufed Sang, Zahidabad, was also fired upon, and General Macpherson had to throw out skirmishers to protect his baggage animals. At least some hundred men appeared on a high peak to the east of the camp, and fired upon a picquet of the 92nd who were on a lower level. A brisk fire was kept up for some time, and the enemy driven off to higher ground.* As they re-opened fire the R.H.A. were ordered to try a shot at the peak. The first shell dropped a little short, but the second burst on the point occupied, and the next instant it was quite clear, its late occupants running in disorder into the valley beyond. There were several of the Amir's soldiers among them, still wearing his uniform. The camp after this was left undisturbed: tents were struck at sunset in readiness for the early morning march which it had been decided to make to Beni-Hissar, just beyond the Sang-i-Nawishta Pass.

The enemy are believed, in this action, to have had 9,000 or 10,000 men on the ridges, including thirteen regiments of regulars. They left 300 dead on the field, but their total loss in killed and wounded must have been much greater. Our loss was twenty killed and sixty-seven† wounded, among the latter being Lieutenant Fergusson, 72nd Highlanders, bullet contusion, left leg, slight; Dr. Duncan, 23rd Pioneers, bullet wound in the chest, severe; and Captain Young, 5th Punjab Infantry, bullet wound in the left thigh, severe. Of the British Infantry regiments the 72nd lost three killed and thirty-four wounded; and the 92nd three killed and six wounded. Among our camp followers five dhoolie-bearers were killed and four wounded, returns which show that the *kahars* were well under fire in carrying off the injured.

* As I have, perhaps, scarcely done justice to this incident in my letter, I now quote the General's despatch on the subject:—"One party, bolder than the rest, caused so much annoyance to a picquet of the 92nd Highlanders, that it became necessary to dislodge them, and this difficult service was performed in a most gallant manner by a small party of the 92nd under Lieutenant R. A. Grant. Colour-Sergeant Hector Macdonald, a non-commissioned officer, whose excellent and skilful management of a small detachment when opposed to immensely superior numbers in the Hazara-Darukht defile, was mentioned in my despatch of the 15th instant, here again distinguished himself." Colour-Serjeant Macdonald afterwards received a commission in the 92nd.

† Seven of the wounded men afterwards died.

CHAPTER IV.

Effect of the Action of Charasia—Advance to Beni Hissar—Cavalry Reconnaissance—The Bala Hissar Deserted—The Sherpur Magazine Blown up—Attitude of the Amir—Operations of the 8th and 9th of October—Capture of Sherpur Cantonments—The Affair of the Asmai Heights—Cavalry Pursuit towards Ghazni—The Force moves to Siah Sung—Leaders of the Mutinous Regiments.

CAMP BENI HISSAR, *8th October*.

THERE can be little doubt that the action at Charasia has broken up the combinations against us, and that Cabul is now at our mercy. It cannot be too fully borne in mind that, but for the promptness with which General Roberts decided to attack, instead of allowing the enemy to gather strength by our own inaction, serious consequences might have ensued to our compact little army now within three or four miles of the Bala Hissar. Not that defeat was to be feared in any sense of the term, but that the slightest hesitation or check in our advance would have raised against us crowds of enemies whom we should have had to deal with in, perhaps, as difficult a country as could be fought over. It was a bold bid for all doubtful and wavering hearts to join them—this move of the mutinous regiments seven or eight miles out of Cabul right across our path; and if they had been allowed to hold the hills even for twenty-four hours, there can scarcely be a doubt that their numbers would have been doubled, and our loss in dislodging them proportionately greater than that which even now we have suffered.

I have described the position of our camp at Charasia in my last letter, and from this it would be seen that our best route to Cabul was by way of the Sang-i-Nawishta defile on our right front. At daybreak yesterday we moved out of Charasia camp, and at the mouth of the defile Sir F. Roberts was met by Major White, who explained the positions occupied by the enemy, and the action he had taken in dislodging them. The General congratulated him heartily on his success, and then passed on to where General Baker had bivouacked at the northern end of the defile. High hills shut in the road on either hand, the Logar River, here a

deep stream, also running to the right of the path, which at times is very rough. Two or three men had hidden themselves behind rocks on the steep hillsides to the east, and they now fired down as the troops filed along. Their shots were wide of the mark, and our men firing freely back soon silenced them. Rounding the corner of the hill on our left, we came upon General Baker's bivouacking ground, and here followed more congratulations; Sir F. Roberts hearing in detail from his Brigadier an account of the action upon the success of which so much had depended. General Baker with his brigade was left to keep open the Pass while the baggage and stores were passing through, and he remained there until this morning, by which time the ground at Charasia had been cleared.

In the next three miles to Beni Hissar the road runs among rich corn-fields, irrigated by the diversion of the stream, and the route to the Bala Hissar was followed by our troops until the ground fixed upon for the camp was reached. This was just under the walls of some gardens belonging to the Amir and his Mustaufi (Minister of Finance), where water was plentiful and trees afforded shade. While the Infantry were marching in, General Massy went forward with the cavalry through Beni Hissar village and into the fields beyond. The hills to the left shut out for a mile a view of Cabul, but after ten minutes' riding the Cabul plain was reached, and before us was the Bala Hissar and the fortified ridge running upwards and commanding it. The heights were crowned by a wall fifteen or twenty feet high, and the line of fortification could be seen following the sky-line, until the hill dipped down to the bed of the Cabul River to the north of the city. Again, the ridge rising on the left bank of the river presented a similar sight, the zig-zag wall being apparently endless. Our videttes rode out well towards the Bala Hissar, and, accompanying them, I had a good view of the fortifications, but could not see a single soldier lining the walls. All was deserted, and we knew that the mutineers, if they meant fighting, were not foolish enough to allow themselves to be caught in a trap such as the Bala Hissar would have proved. The small portion of the city that could be seen also lay as if abandoned by the inhabitants, and we made up our minds that the fortified camp at Sherpur,

lying over the low Siah Sung hills which blocked our view to the north-east, was the position taken up by the enemy for a final struggle with our force. The plain on which our cavalry reconnoitred was all under cultivation, rich fields of clover and lucerne relieving the general brownness of the land, the crops of which had been lately reaped. Cultivation extended as far as the eye could reach on the right, while on all other sides high hills blocked the view, the gigantic Hindu Kush lying away in the distance to the north, keeping sentinel over Afghanistan as impassively as the Himalayas look down upon Hindustan.

We returned to camp to speculate upon the chances of further fighting, and in the afternoon we had to listen to the many stories brought in by local friends of the Amir and merchants from Cabul, who came to pay their respects to Sir Frederick Roberts. In the evening the firing of heavy guns was heard in the direction of Sherpur, and it was surmised that the rebels were marking out ranges; but when a tremendous explosion succeeded it soon became known that the magazine at their fortified camp had been blown up, and it was then concluded that they were discharging guns before abandoning them. Accordingly this morning we are not astonished to hear that Sherpur Camp is deserted, and a force of cavalry is now going out under General Massy in search of the enemy. This force I am accompanying, as it is most probable some of the fugitives—if the regiments have really decamped—will be overtaken. To-morrow we move camp to the Siah Sung ridge directly overlooking Cabul.

The attitude of the Amir is not altogether satisfactory, and he is plainly afraid that the soldiery will make a stand in the city, and that Cabul will be stormed and destroyed by our army. He assured us that we should not meet with any resistance at Charasia, and yet it is now believed that Nek Mahomed visited him in our camp, told him of the force ready to fight, and appealed to him to desert the British and head a national rising. All Yakub Khan vouchsafed to tell the General was that the Bala Hissar was no longer in the possession of people whom he could trust, and that his own family had been moved into the city. He now confidently explains that the mutinous regiments have dispersed, and that we have nothing more to expect in the way of opposition.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 10*th October.*

The force of cavalry sent under General Massy on the 8th instant, to cut off the retreat of the enemy, who was said to have abandoned Sherpur entrenched camp after blowing up the magazine on the previous evening, was made up as follows:—102 men of the 9th Lancers, 140 of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, 260 of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, and 220 of the 14th Bengal Lancers,—in all 722 lances and sabres. I accompanied this force, which left Beni-Hissar camp at eleven o'clock in the morning, passed through the village adjoining, and then took its way across the Cabul plain (leaving the Bala Hissar and the city on the left) to the Siah Sung ridge, on which we are now encamped. This was easy going for the horses, who were pushed on rapidly until the ridge was crested on the extreme right, and a gradual descent led us towards Sherpur. Soon the level plain lying north of Cabul was reached, and rich cultivation was passed through, the ground being everywhere intersected by watercourses and irrigation channels. The Cabul river, at this season a shallow streamlet only a few yards broad, was crossed, and on our right, at a few hundred yards' distance, was the long line of wall, with bastions for heavy guns at regular intervals, which marked the fortified camp of which we had heard so much. Our scouts found it quite deserted, and their first prize was a heavy gun which had been dragged some distance across the fields, no doubt with the intention of using it in another position. There were no guns at the embrasures in the bastions; but General Massy had the good luck to find seventy-five pieces of various calibre parked within the walls. These guns were in very good order, but little damage having been done to them. There was not much ammunition left with them, the Afghan troops having carried off a large quantity; while the magazine itself had been blown up to prevent the remainder falling into our hands. The guns included four English 18-pounders, one English 8-inch howitzer, and two Afghan imitations of this weapon; and forty-two bronze mountain guns (3-pounders) with part of their equipment.

This fortified camp of Sherpur is built at the base of the low, stony Bemaru hills, running for about two miles at a slight angle

to the general direction of the plain itself. It has only three sides fortified, the hill in rear being quite sufficient to shield it from attack in that quarter, as an open plain stretches away to the hills of the Koh-Daman and Kohistan. The main wall is about a mile and a half long, with three strongly-guarded entrance-gates, and from each extremity the fortification is carried at right angles till it reaches the ridge in the rear. There is a fourth gateway on the western flank. The plan followed throughout is a thick mud wall (25 feet in height) built with bastions for guns, and a low parapet to shield troops manning the outer wall. The entrance-gates are lofty structures, with comfortable quarters on either side for officers, and are so wide that four or five men could ride through them abreast. They are each defended by a curtain built in the same way as the outer wall. Inside the cantonment is an open space quite clear of buildings, exactly answering to an English barrack-square, and on this 20,000 men might be paraded with room to spare. To the right, on the hillside, is the small village of Bemaru, with the usual flat-roofed houses, burnt brown by the sun, and with but little sign of life in it. The novel feature in this cantonment is the arrangement of the barrack-rooms. At about 20 feet from the outer wall, and parallel to it, is built a range of rooms, extending along the three sides of the place. Each room would hold at a pinch twenty men, and there are some hundreds of these dormitories, which are snug enough even for a variable climate such as this. Along their front is a narrow verandah-like space, pucca brick pillars and arches supporting the flat mud roof, which rests on strong beams and unhewn poles. This arrangement has a very pleasing effect when viewed from within the cantonment, the regularity of the arches and their supports grouped in threes before each room, with a wider span then following, giving the appearance of a long colonnade. Broad staircases lead at certain intervals to the roof of the barracks, which would give a second line of musketry fire in resisting any attempt to storm. Open spaces are left at rare intervals between the rooms to admit of the passage of men and guns to the outer wall. Altogether this fortified camp could, if properly victualled and garrisoned, be defended for an indefinite period against any force without

artillery. The water supply is from streams diverted from the fields and carried by low culverts underneath the walls; but if this were cut off, wells, no doubt, could be sunk to supply the deficiency. From the absence of trees and the utter barrenness of the space enclosed by the walls, with the stony hills in the rear, the place must be insufferably hot in summer, though at this time of the year it would be much better than tents. When our cavalry rode through the gates into the middle of the cantonment there was no sign of an enemy, and it must have been deserted many hours before. A few cartridge papers were lying about, and the rude fireplaces of the men were still black with smoke; but beyond this nothing could be seen. In one or two places an attempt had been made to burn the barracks down, but the fire had not obtained sufficient power over the timbers for this to be accomplished. Doors and loose woodwork had been looted by the villagers, who claimed to have put the fire out; but their story was a very questionable one. People were passing freely through the place as we entered, but they did not show much interest in our proceedings. In the north-west corner the wall had been partly blown down, and the ruins of the magazine were strewn in every direction.

It was upon arriving opposite Sherpur Cantonment that we sighted the enemy; the Asmai Heights to the left, overlooking the old Afghan quarter of Cabul, being crowded with men. We were 3,000 or 4,000 yards away, and at that distance they did not consider us worth a shot, though their guns could be distinctly seen. A halt was called, the cavalry forming up at the farther end of the cantonment; while General Massy heliographed back to Sir F. Roberts the news of the enemy having been found occupying a position of strength. We were told, in reply, that General Baker was leaving Beni Hissar with infantry to attack the heights, and we accordingly hurried on, skirting the hills and passing through grain-fields and meadows, with here and there a country villa in its fertile garden surrounded by huge walls. Our object was to reach a break in the hills and to pass over into the Chardeh Valley, so as to cut off the enemy from taking the road which leads to Ghazni, Bamian, and Turkistan. We worked round almost on the arc of a circle, of which Cabul might be the centre,

keeping the ridge occupied by the enemy at first on our left rear, then on our left, and, finally, on our left front, when we galloped through the break we had been making for, near the village of Aoshahr, and faced round towards Cabul itself. The rich Chardeh Valley was all before us, and we passed down into it, and could then see the disposition of the men General Baker was to attack. We had learned that they numbered three regiments and had eleven guns in position, and this information was fairly accurate. They had 2,000 regulars, besides 700 or 800 untrained men who had joined them, and had twelve guns. Videttes were thrown out right across the plain, and a rapid reconnaissance made. An old ressaldar of Fane's Horse, who was accompanying us as guide, stated that three roads led from the valley and united to form the chief road to Bamian. The 5th P.C. were accordingly sent well on to the right to block the road there; two squadrons were sent back into Sherpur plain to watch a path leading down from the hills in that direction; another squadron returned a mile and a half to Aoshahr, so as to prevent the fugitives escaping along the crest of the hills down the dip we had passed through; while the General and Staff remained in the open with the rest of the cavalry, including the 9th Lancers. We had mounted signallers with us, and heliographic communication was opened with the high Takht-i-Shah Peak overlooking the Bala Hissar Ridge. Captain Straton thence signalled down that the enemy's working parties had been strengthening their *sungar* on the Asmai Hill, and that some of General Baker's troops were on the same side of the ridge as ourselves. We could see the enemy distinctly on the hillside, and at its foot was their camp, made up of forty or fifty tents. These were close to the village of Dehmazung, half-hidden by orchards, and a gun was slued round and pointed at us as soon as we appeared. The 9th Lancers withdrew 1,000 yards just as the enemy fired a few shells at our videttes. The shells buried themselves in the soft ground and never exploded. We could not push farther forward, as deep watercourses cut up the fields at every few score yards, and the rows of closely planted willow-trees along these would have broken any cavalry formation. In the various villages, too, large bodies of the enemy were gathered, who could have shot our horsemen down from the towers and walls without

at all exposing themselves. A narrow road to the left led along the foot of the hills to the enemy's camp, but only three men could have gone abreast, and it was commanded on the left and front by the guns, and on the right by the troops in Dehmazung, underneath the walls of which it passed. At a quarter to four we heard the first gun fired, and from that time to dark we watched for the infantry attack to develop. Some of the 92nd Highlanders were seen to our right centre among the trees of a village a mile from Dehmazung, and a small party of the 9th Lancers was sent by General Massy to open communication with them. These found the enemy swarming in the orchards they had to pass through, and after being fired upon from several walls they had to return. The mountain guns with General Baker, posted upon the high ridge commanding the Bala Hissar, were shelling the Asmai Heights lined by the enemy, whose guns returned the fire shot for shot. Having twelve guns to General Baker's two mountain guns, they had much the best of it, though the range was so long that little real damage was done on either side. The ridges upon which this shell practice was going on form the defences of Cabul from attack from the Bamian direction. Running up from the Bala Hissar, and following every dip and rise of the hillside, is a strong wall ten or twelve feet high, pierced for musketry. This wall is continued at right angles along the crest of the Sherderwaza Ridge and down the precipitous hillside of the gorge through which the Cabul River runs. It ends a few yards from the broken arches of a bridge spanning the stream—at this time reduced to very small dimensions, by being largely drawn upon for irrigation purposes in the Chardeh Valley—but begins at once on the opposite side of the river. A strong tower, with a base of stones fifteen feet high, raised on the solid rock, is the starting point on this, the northern side of the river, and the wall zig-zags up just in the same way as that in continuation of the upper Bala Hissar. The line of fortification extends along the hill top, and then turns down for some distance along a spur facing towards Sherpur. On the crest of this ridge (the Asmai Heights), three white standards were flying near the guns of the enemy, who had one heavy piece on the summit, the report of which made the bark of the mountain guns sound quite contemptible. The line of fire on both sides

was at right angles to the bed of the Cabul River, the shells flying over the gorge and bursting on the opposing heights. From our position in the plain below we could watch the artillery and judge pretty accurately as to the fall of the shells, and it was annoying to see that as it was "end-on" firing, the enemy were receiving but little injury. Their policy was plainly to hold on till nightfall and to attempt to escape under cover of darkness; and as the sun sank slowly behind us, it became obvious that unless the infantry attack was soon delivered, they would succeed only too well. Our chagrin was great that there were not guns with our cavalry, as we could see men in little clusters of 50 or 100 lying under the lee of the rocks on our side of the ridge, perfectly sheltered from General Baker's shells. General Massy had applied for horse artillery before leaving Beni Hissar; but it was reported that the country he would have to pass over was cut up by deep irrigation channels which would hinder the guns from keeping up with the cavalry. It was decided therefore not to send out artillery. With a couple of R.H.A. guns we could have made the enemy's camp and the hillside quite untenable, and the 2,800 men gathered there would either have had to come down into the plain, where our cavalry would have chosen their own ground to charge them, or to take refuge in Cabul city, which they could easily have reached. An old native officer, a Cabuli, who saw service in the Mutiny, was much struck with our plan of cutting off the retreat; and when he saw the cavalry debouch into the Chardeh plain, he said in his fervent thankfulness:—"God has delivered these *budmashes* into your hands even as the Embassy was delivered into theirs." And it certainly did seem as if these three regiments, which were said to have been chief in the attack upon the handful of men under Sir Louis Cavagnari in the Bala Hissar, were about to be exterminated. But night fell, and still our infantry attack was not delivered. General Massy ordered his vedettes and the chain of cavalry to be maintained until it was quite dark, so as to induce the enemy to believe the cordon would be maintained during the night; but he would not run the risk, in such an awkward country, of his men being shot down in detail. He therefore withdrew them eventually within two or three of the rude forts in the plain and waited for daylight. It seemed almost hopeless to intercept

in the darkness men who had a valley six or seven miles across, with hills on either side, to escape by. That they did escape is now a cause of much heartburning in the force. If, like Joshua, we could have made the sun stand still, say, for only two hours, the day would have been as grand a success as the 6th at Charasia; as it was, it can only be looked upon as one of great disappointment to all concerned.

The only troops available for despatch with General Baker were 320 of the 92nd Highlanders, two companies of the 72nd Highlanders, and seven companies of the 23rd Pioneers. With these were two mountain guns and one Gatling. The road up to the ridge commanding the Bala Hissar and the passage over the Kotal down into the Chardeh Valley were so difficult, that although this force moved out of Beni Hissar at noon, it was a quarter to four before the mountain guns got into action, and it was some time later before the 92nd Highlanders reached the village to the west of Dehmazung. The enemy were in greater force than was expected, and as the 92nd men were unsupported, they were ordered to wait for reinforcements before making any attack. They were directed to take up a position on a spur of the Sherderwaza Heights, parallel to the Cabul River, and this they did without loss, although the enemy opened fire from two breech-loading field-pieces in their camp. The shells and round shot were pitched too high, and greatly amused our men. Marksmen were posted at sheltered points, and their aim was so good that the Afghans soon retired from these two guns, leaving them in the open. The two companies of the 72nd were at this time on the hillside nearest to Beni Hissar, and the 23rd was in reserve. A gun in the tower I have mentioned fired occasionally, and the Gatling was tried at this; but the drum hitched after a few rounds, and the gun had to cease firing. General Baker had made up his mind to attack the instant his reinforcements—consisting of a wing of the 67th, two companies of the 5th Ghoorkas, and four more mountain guns—arrived. These, however, did not reach him until half-past five, and it was then quite hopeless to think of storming the heights in the dusk. The troops accordingly bivouacked where they stood, and a very cold night they had of it. General Macpherson arrived at 6.30 A.M. with the remainder of the 67th, the

28th P.N.I, and four horse artillery guns on elephants. He started with some infantry and guns to follow General Massy.

There is no doubt the enemy began evacuating their position as soon as it was dark; and when a strong patrol crept into their camp at midnight they found all had fled. Guns, tents, camp equipage, &c., fell into our hands. Seven bodies were found buried on the heights, and three others were lying on the rocks. Whether the fugitives carried off others, we have no means of telling. There were no casualties on our side. General Baker sent information to General Massy of the flight of the enemy, and the cavalry started off on the Bamian Road at 5.30 A.M., but only one small party of twenty-one was overtaken on the Kotal-i-Takht. These took refuge on a low hill and fought desperately, the good luck of surrounding and shooting them down falling to the 5th P.C. The single combat between Rahmat Ali, a native officer, and the leader of the party, was a pretty piece of business. The Afghan tried to escape on a fast pony, but was overtaken by Rahmat Ali, who, after warding off two blows from his opponent's *tulwar*, got well down upon the man's head. Unluckily his sword snapped at the hilt, but the blow had knocked the fugitive off his horse, and he was pistolled before he could recover himself. It was the hardest day's work the cavalry have had for a long time, over thirty-six miles being covered in the day. The men were without food both days they were out, but they behaved splendidly, not a grumble being heard. For instance, the 9th Lancers started on the morning of the 8th, after having received one loaf to every three men. They carried no food, as only a reconnaissance was intended, and at night some sheep were killed for them, and they tried to eat the flesh after roasting the animals whole. They had nothing but their swords to use in cutting up the carcases, and they found it quite impossible to eat the flesh; so on the 8th they went supperless to bed. On the 9th they were in the saddle from 5 A.M. to 9 P.M. (when they reached this camp), and the pursuit and return were made in such quick time that again there was no chance of their getting food. Horses and men of all the regiments out with General Massy were quite exhausted when they at last reached their quarters here. Some score of horses were lost on the road, having literally died in harness. There was no slackness

in the pursuit when once it began, but the enemy had too great a start to be overtaken, and it now seems probable they dispersed to the hills and made for their homes, many doubtless taking refuge in the city. One piece of experience was certainly gained, and that was that the villagers about Cabul are hostile to us almost to a man. Five of them belonging to Aoshahr were made an example of by Colonel Ross, of the 14th Bengal Lancers. They treacherously fired into the Lancers, after having salaamed to them as they passed. The ruffians were captured with their guns still in their hands, and were shot without further parley. It is only by such severity, and by taking no prisoners in action, than any impression can be made upon the Afghan mind. Such prisoners as are brought in are tried by a military commission, and the great majority are shot. There is just a fear that too much leniency may be shown, as the work is rather distasteful to British officers; but as we are an "avenging army," scruples must be cast aside.

The army moved into this camp yesterday afternoon. It was only about a four miles' march from Beni Hissar, and the 72nd were left in charge of all stores that could not be got off by the transport animals in the day. On the night of the 8th there was some lively firing by small bodies of *budmashes*, who tried to shoot down men on picquet and sentry duty; but, as is usual, the bullets did no mischief. Last night there was news of what threatened to be a better organized attack by local villagers and tribesmen. Mounted sowars, it seems, were sent round to the tribes in this neighbourhood asking them to gather in force and to attack the camp, as much loot could be got, and only a few men had been left in camp. The exemplary severity we have shown in shooting all the men caught in arms against us, deterred the villagers from combining together, and no attack was made. The 72nd had drawn in their camp well under the walls of a garden overlooking the ground, and had formed a kind of laager with flour bags, &c., but not a shot was fired all night. The 72nd were ready for any number of assailants, and from behind their barricades of flour bags they would have read the Afghans as sharp a lesson as the Zulus received when trying to storm the mealie redoubt at Rorke's Drift. The whole of the stores were brought in here to-day. The 5th Ghoorkas hold the ridge overlooking the

Bala Hissar, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry are in the Sherpur Cantonment, to prevent the barracks there being destroyed by the local peasants for the sake of the woodwork and other material. In two or three days we shall probably move into the Bala Hissar, in which five months' provisions are to be stored. The city is quiet, and the camp is quite thronged with petty traders, who bring in food, clothing, &c., for sale, and move freely among our troops. Sir Frederick Roberts inspected the Sherpur Camp and the captured guns to-day, but no movement of troops took place. In a short time a small force under General Gough will march back to the Shutargardan to re-open communications in that direction, pending further news of the Khyber Force, whose advance seems to be very slow owing to transport difficulties.

Cabul itself is quite open to us now, and we can enter it whenever we choose. The guns captured on the Asmai ridge were six field-pieces and six mountain guns. Two field-pieces were also found in camp, and an immense store of ammunition. Thirty camels, four elephants, and several mules and ponies also fell into our hands.

It is now well established that the leaders of the mutineers are the Amir's most trusted friends. Kushdil Khan, who was sent specially by him to meet Cavagnari at Shutargardan, was a prominent leader both at Charasia and on the heights yesterday. Mahomed Jan, a general in Yakub's army, and of some importance among the powerful Wardak section of the Southern Ghilzais, is also mentioned. There is no doubt of concealed action among the Amir's officers, and unluckily none of the leaders have been taken. Sirdar Nek Mahomed Khan is really the head of all. It now appears that only one quarter of the magazine in the Bala Hissah was looted, and there are now in that fortress about twenty-six guns in perfect order and several rockets, old presents of the Indian Government. Nawab Khan, colonel of artillery, came in yesterday to know what orders General Roberts had to give about them, and was told they were to remain there for the present. No one can suppose any captured guns will be given to the Amir, who is still with us.

It was rumoured that 800 sepoys had kept together in a body, but this story is now said to be false, all having dispersed except

100 who escorted their leader, Mahomed Jan, towards Turkistan. The three regiments at Ghazni are reported to be only five miles out of that place, while four days ago our force from Candahar was at Makr, four long marches from Ghazni. The enemy has been extremely well informed of all our movements, though their source of information cannot be absolutely fixed upon. Regular news was probably given by some of the Amir's retainers, who see all that goes on in our camp.

The political situation shows no development; the Amir coinciding in all that is done, now that the flight of the mutineers has removed his apprehension of Cabul being sacked. If the attack on the 8th had been made earlier in the day, the only outlet for Mahomed Jan and his 2,000 troops would have been to Cabul itself.* The city would then of course have been taken by storm, and, as Sir Frederick Roberts said in his proclamation, we could not have been held responsible for the consequences. At present the strictest orders prevail against any one entering the city, which perhaps even now may harbour many mutineers.

CHAPTER V.

Visit to the Residency—Description of the Bala Hissar—The Ruins of the Residency—Probable Plan of the Attack and Defence—The Amir's Palace—Formal Occupation of the Bala Hissar, and Proclamation to the People of Cabul—The Punishment of the City—Arrest of the Amir's Ministers—Text of the Proclamation.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 11*th October.*

TO-DAY Sir Frederick Roberts and his Staff visited the ruins of the Residency within the walls of the Bala Hissar. The visit was

* General Massy's withdrawal of his patrols was severely criticized, and capital was afterwards made out of it by the military authorities in India. As showing how utterly helpless the troopers would have been in the darkness to check an enemy, I may quote my own experience. On the morning of the 9th I rode from General Massy's force to join General Baker, taking an Afghan guide and two sowars as escort. Innumerable watercourses had to be jumped, and both sowars were left behind in the ditches. My horse had nearly to swim one stream, and the strain and toil of climbing up the banks were such that I lost even the felt *numdah* from under my saddle. The willow-trees lining the stream were also great obstacles to horses and men, even in daylight.

made quietly and unostentatiously, only a sufficient escort being taken to guard against such accidents as a ghazi running amuck, or a handful of quondam rebels making an attack upon the leader of the army that has punished them. There is so much of historical interest attaching to the fortress which guards Cabul, and this interest has been so intensified by late events, that all of us who rode from Camp yesterday were full of expectation as to what we were likely to see. Following for half a mile the Jellalabad Road, lined on both sides with closely-planted trees, we turned sharply to the left when nearing the city, and were soon underneath the walls of the Bala Hissar itself. The shallow bed of the moat supposed to surround the city is nearly dry, and the road runs only a few yards from the foot of the rock against which the walls are reared. The masonry is crumbling to decay, but there are still signs of great stability in it, and the natural features of the ground have been so utilized that a precipitous face of 30 or 40 feet is presented to any enemy. This is on the eastern side to the right of the entrance-gate, just where Shere Ali's palace, with its zenana, tops the wall. The road rises some 10 or 12 feet to the gate itself, which must once have been of enormous strength, as solid masonry 20 feet thick still remains. Here, again, there is evidence of ruin, the inner supports having crumbled away and the defensive position overhead lost its protecting parapets. The lower Bala Hissar once entered, one comes upon the usual narrow winding lanes and commonplace mud buildings of all eastern cities. The place looks filthy and uncared for, and the doorways leading to the courts of the tumble-down houses give a view of squalor and dilapidation suggestive of worse to follow. The few shops are miserable specimens of their kind, and their owners are in keeping with the general associations of the place. There is nothing better to describe than dust, dirt, and dreariness, on every hand; and even the small square, where a few guns were standing in front of a dozen dirty tents used by the gunners, gave as little idea of the interior of a fortress as a few grains of sand would of a desert. Six field-pieces and as many mountain guns were parked in the square. This was part of the artillery-quarters, and a few gunners with a trumpeter were standing near the guns. The men wore no uniform and looked like unwashed coolies. They

saluted as Sir Frederick Roberts rode up, and the trumpeter welcomed us by blowing monotonously for several minutes upon his instrument.

It must be more than thirty-five years since British infantry marched through the filthy streets of this much-vaunted citadel; and our only regret was that they had now entered it so peacefully. Sir Frederick Roberts was accompanied by the Mustaufi, the Wazir, and Daoud Shah, the Commander-in-Chief. After a few minutes' stay in this square, we retraced our steps and entered a narrow lane with a high wall on the right, shutting in the Amir's garden. On the left were the stables in which the horses of the Royal household were tethered in the open air, rude bins being made in the mud walls on a pattern which is common where Afghan cavalry are quartered. The lane led to the high ground on which the buildings assigned to Sir Louis Cavagnari and his companions stood. From this the city could be seen lying at our feet, to the north.

Our first view of the Residency was of the rear wall, still intact, but blackened on the top where the smoke from the burning ruins had swept across. At each angle where the side walls joined were seen the loop-holes from which the fire of the little force on the roof had been directed against the overwhelming numbers attacking them. Every square foot round these loop-holes was pitted with bullet-marks, the balls having cut deeply into the hard mud plaster. The western wall, which faced towards the Upper Bala Hissar, commanding it, was scarred with these marks, proving only too well how severe had been the fire from the higher level occupied by the mutineers in the Arsenal. At this end the Residency was of three stories, but the present wall does not indicate the height of more than two, the upper part having collapsed when the fire obtained a mastery over the building. A lane six or eight feet wide runs between this wall and the buildings on the right in which the Guides were quartered. Plans hitherto published have made the Residency and these quarters one block; but this is a mistake; they were quite distinct.

Riding along the lane we came to the southern end of the Residency, built upon the edge of the wall looking towards Bâni Hissar, and here were two graves marked by neatly-piled stones in

Mussulman fashion, each with its head-stone, but no inscription. Whether any bodies are buried beneath remains to be seen; it is suspected these neat mounds may have been raised as "a blind." The Kotwal stated that two *sahibs* were buried there, Lieutenant Hamilton and Mr. Jenkyns; but this does not coincide with the story told by Taimus, a sowar of the Guides, who says the bodies were buried some distance to the west of the Residency. Passing through a narrow gateway, half-blocked with rubbish, just in rear of these graves, we entered the main court of the Residency, and were soon thoroughly able to appreciate the fate of its defenders. The southern end on our right hand was standing untouched, and consisted of rooms built on wooden pillars so as to form a kind of oblong pavilion. The mud basement is three or four feet from the ground, and the whole structure, except a few partition walls and the roof, is of wood, and, from the dryness of the climate, very inflammable. It is neatly whitewashed, and the upper rooms, being open on both sides, must be cool and pleasant. These were Sir Louis Cavagnari's quarters, and from them the rich Cabul plain beneath can be seen stretching away to the Tezin Hills. The courtyard of the Residency is about 90 feet square, and at its northern end, where formerly stood a three-storied building like that I have just described, are nothing but the bare walls, blackened and scarred by fire, and a huge heap of rubbish, the ruins of the walls and roof which fell in as the woodwork was destroyed. Portions of the partition walls still remain, jutting sullenly out from the mass of *débris*, and these only serve to make the place more desolate. The whitewashed walls on the left are here and there bespattered with blood, and on the raised basement on which the building stood are the remains of a large fire, the half-charred beams still resting among the ashes. The ruins are still smouldering. Whether, as suggested, any bodies were burned there, is still an unsettled point; but in one room into which I went there can be no doubt fire had been used for such a purpose. The ashes were in the middle of the chamber, and near them were two skulls and a heap of human bones, still fetid. It would seem as if a desperate struggle had taken place in this room, the blood-stains on the floor and walls being clearly discernible. The skulls are to be examined by surgeons, as it is possible they may be

those of Europeans. The Residency was looted so thoroughly, that not even a peg has been left in the walls. In Sir Louis Cavagnari's quarters the windows overlooking the Bala Hissar wall have been torn out even to the sashes, and a few bits of glass on the floor alone remain of them. The chintz hangings and purdahs have been stripped away, a fluttering bit of coloured rag on a stray nail being the only sign of such cheerfulness as these once gave. Bare cross-poles and rafters, floors rough with dirt and defiled with filth, staring white walls with here and there a bullet-mark—such are the once comfortable quarters of our Envoy. The view over the Cabul plain is still as peaceful as when poor Jenkyns described it so enthusiastically; but all else is changed. The one consolation is that a British army is encamped within gunshot of the walls.

It is still difficult to make out the point at which the mutineers obtained entry into the Residency buildings, unless it was by a hole in the eastern wall, a little to the right of a small doorway leading to a lower range of houses adjoining. Round this hole are scores of bullet-holes, and their direction seems to show that the defenders on the roof fired down as the men streamed in, in the vain hope of checking them before they could rush forward and set fire to the woodwork. Once the lower part of the three-storied building was in flames, nothing could save the brave men on the roof, as all retreat was cut off. We viewed the scene of desolation for some time from the roof of Sir Louis Cavagnari's quarters; and General Roberts gave orders that nothing should be disturbed until careful sketches had been made of the interior of the Residency and its surroundings. Careful excavations for bodies will also be made among the ruins. It is absurd to talk of the Residency being a safe place for a garrison; it is commanded completely from the walls of the Arsenal in the Upper Bala Hissar, and also from the roofs of some high houses to the south-west. In addition, houses closely adjoin it on the eastern side; and an attacking party sapping the walls would have perfect cover in this direction the whole time: this may account for the breach in the walls through which I have suggested the mutineers made their rush. Riding into the quarters occupied by the Guides' escort, on the western side of the lane, I found but few bullet-

marks on the walls. Facing was a high door firmly closed and seemingly uninjured; but on going into the Sikh quarters on my right, and following a broad passage which turned at right angles towards the wall, a huge breach was visible. This was where the Afghans had blown in the gate after Lieutenant Hamilton's noble, but ineffectual, efforts to check them. Three times he charged out, killing many men with his sword and pistol, but what could one hero do against a mob of fanatics? No doubt when it was seen that a breach was made the Guides withdrew to the Residency proper, and there made the last stand, first in the courtyard guarding the doors and afterwards on the roof.

On returning we stayed for a short time in the Amir's garden, where fruit and tea were served to us. Afterwards we visited Shere Ali's palace on the wall near the gate. Two or three dark passages had to be traversed before a staircase was gained which led to his State rooms. Persian carpets of value were spread in two rooms, in the second of which hung gaudy glass chandeliers, while on the ground (as if purposely placed out of harm's way) was a collection of glassware of sorts showing all the colours of the rainbow. A few cheap prints, including one of the Czar Alexander, hung on the walls, and on a chair near was a *Graphic* folded so as to show a portrait of Cavagnari. On taking this up I came across a diary of Sir Louis Cavagnari's, which seemed to have been used chiefly for recording lists of visits and visitors. The book was handed over to Major Hastings. Two or three maps of Central Asia were also among the papers; but it is doubtful to whom they belonged.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 12*th October*.

This morning the first formal declaration of our occupation of Cabul was made by the troops taking possession of the Bala Hissar, followed by a durbar, at which the terms imposed upon the city were announced. As I have before said, there was nothing to hinder us marching into the fortress the day after the battle of Charasia, for our cavalry videttes were within 200 yards of the walls, and not a sentry could be seen within the fortifications. They had been abandoned in hot haste by the mutineers, who had first of all drawn off to the Sherpur cantonments and

thence betaken themselves to the Asmai Heights, from which they fled on the evening of the 8th. But there was no occasion for haste: our camp on the Siah Sung Ridge dominates the city, and we could have shelled it at our leisure if any signs of discontent, or an armed rising, had been observed. Besides, in dealing with Afghans, there is always the element of treachery to be considered, and it was not impossible that mines might have been laid ready to be sprung if we occupied the place precipitately. The explosion of the magazine at Sherpur, on the night of the 7th, had shown the desperate character of the men we were fighting against, and it was well to be on our guard against any surprise. It is impossible to say what vast stores of gunpowder may be hidden in the Upper Bala Hissar, where the Arsenal buildings are situated; and until we have thoroughly examined the godowns and vaults within the walls we are in the position of "playing with fire," which may at any moment pass beyond our control. Sir F. Roberts's visit to the ruins of the Residency yesterday went off quietly enough, and the fortress seemed deserted, save for the few Afghan residents in the houses within the outer walls; but a few reckless men may still lurk about waiting for an opportunity to work serious mischief.

This morning all the troops in camp paraded at eleven o'clock and marched down with bands playing to the Jellalabad Road, which they at once lined on either side. The men were arrayed in their gayest uniforms; and although many were worn and travel-stained, the general appearance of all the regiments was very smart and soldierlike. At noon word was brought to Sir F. Roberts that all was ready, and, accompanied by his Staff and Brigadier-Generals Massy, Macpherson, Baker, and Hugh Gough, and Major-General Hills, he rode down the Siah Sung Ridge, and took the road to the Bala Hissar. The cavalry lined the road for the first half-mile nearest to camp, the lances of the 14th Bengal Lancers glittering among the branches of the trees until they merged into the line of sabres of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, who looked none the worse for their late hard ride on the Bamian Road. Two rows of crimson turbans marked where the 5th Punjab Cavalry were drawn up; while the handful of 9th Lancers, gorgeous as on a parade at home, closed the cavalry array. First

in the Infantry line were the scarlet coats of the 28th Native Infantry, contrasting vividly with the dull *khaki* uniform of the 23rd Pioneers—as fine a fighting and working regiment as ever drew batta. The mountain guns were next in order, looking down each other's muzzles from either side of the road; while flanking them were the 5th Punjab Infantry, well known for good service on the frontier. The 7th Company of Sappers and Miners, stalwart men, bestrapped with spade and shovel, were then passed; while near them were the two Gatling guns, quite overpowered by their neighbours, the nine-pounders of G-3 Battery of Royal Artillery, which made themselves heard with good effect at Charasia. The Highland regiments, forming two living walls stretching far away towards the city, were the great representatives of British Infantry; the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, kilted and gaitered, resting on the 72nd, more warmly clad in tartan trews. Nothing could exceed the splendid form in which these regiments turned out, the bronzed and bearded faces of the soldiers showing that but few "six-year men" were in their ranks. The F-A Battery of Royal Horse Artillery was drawn up in a field just off the road, ready to fire the salute, and the post of honour next to the gate was assigned to the senior regiment, the 67th Foot, a well-set-up body of men, equal to any amount of work. On the ridge above the fortress we could see the dark figures of the 5th Ghoorkas, six companies of which had moved down and occupied the Upper Bala Hissar. As the General rode slowly down the long line of troops, the trumpets of the cavalry brayed out a *fanfare* and the band of each infantry regiment played right heartily, the men presenting arms with automatic precision. A halt was called just below the entrance to the Bala Hissar; and as the Union Jack was run up over the gateway by some red-jackets of the 67th, the first gun, of the royal salute of thirty-one, was fired by the Horse Artillery. At the same instant the opening bars of the National Anthem were heard as the bands struck up, the shrill pipes of the Highlanders ringing out above the din. The sight was a most impressive one, the sun lighting up the double line along which 4,000 bayonets sparkled, and throwing into bold relief the darker forms of men and horses where the cavalry were drawn up. In the background were the brown slopes

of the Siah Sung Ridge, crowned by the white lines of tents which marked our camp, then almost deserted. Only a few spectators from the city clustered on the road from the Lahore Gate, and watched the spectacle, the mass of the people remaining sullenly within the walls.

The smoke of the first three or four guns had not cleared off when the company of the 67th nearest the gate faced round, and followed by their band, marched into the Bala Hissar—the first British regiment that had entered its narrow streets since 1842. (It is worthy of record that the "quick-step" played by the 67th is the same as that of the ill-fated 44th Regiment, not a man of which escaped to tell the tale of the disastrous retreat from Cabul which Pollock avenged.) Following the band, General Roberts and his little train of mounted men rode into the fortress, and took their way through its narrow streets to the Amir's garden under the walls of the Upper Bala Hissar. At either end of this garden, which is now merely a neglected wilderness, are two of the ordinary wooden native pavilions, the one to the south containing what is called the "Audience Chamber." This is approached by a flight of dirty wooden stairs, and is about twenty feet above the ground-level. The chamber is quite open on the side facing the garden, so that a crowd below could be addressed from it, and it also gives a good view over the city, with its background of high hills. The room was soon filled with the gay uniforms of the General and his staff and such officers as were not on duty with their regiments, and then the Durbar began, the Cabul Sirdars crowding in at a signal, and pressing forward to make their salaams to their latest conqueror. It was intended that the Amir should have accompanied General Roberts into the Bala Hissar; but at the last moment he pleaded indisposition, and was excused.* His eldest son, the heir-apparent, was sent instead. He is a child of five or six years of age, with a monkey-ish cast of face, which not even the glitter and colour of his *bizarre* coat and hat, gorgeous in green and gold, could soften or render at all prepossessing. The youngest was of little account, being squeezed against the wooden frameword of the pavilion by

* It was not made known until afterwards that Yakub Khan had placed his resignation in the hands of Sir F. Roberts.

the greasy Sirdars, who could not control themselves in their eagerness to pay their respects. The General was not at all cordial in his reception of them; and it was not surprising, for a more servile or repulsive audience could not have been selected. Scarcely a face was visible that was not stamped with the marks of sensuality, and where age had softened these, it had replaced them by deeper lines of cunning and deception. There was a look of subdued malice in one or two faces, mingled with expectant fear of what terms were about to be imposed upon Cabul. The full figure of Daoud Shah, the late Commander-in-Chief, stood out prominently from the *bunniah*-like crowd about him, and, both in figure and bearing, he contrasted favourably with the sirdars. He was clothed simply in a long grey coat, belted at the waist; while the perspiring crowd of his fellows boasted garments of silk and beautifully-dyed clothes, some of the coats of many colours being so startling as to make one almost colour-blind. There was one thin red line, however, which never moved; it was that formed by some twenty men of the 67th, who, with fixed bayonets, were standing to "attention" at the back of the narrow room, stolid sentinels at their posts. Below, the rest of the two companies were formed up, and the band played some lively "troops,"—the airs played at the trooping of the colours. When these came to an end, a little space was cleared about the General, who read out the Proclamation, by which the punishment of Cabul was made known. It was translated, sentence by sentence, by the *munshi* of Major Hastings, Political Officer, and was listened to in perfect silence, the only token of approval being given by an old ressaldar of Hodson's Horse, now enjoying his pension among his native orchards of Cabul. This man, with his breast decorated with medals earned by service in India, cried out emphatically "*shabash!*" when one or two sentences meting out punishment to the rebels were read, and it was clear all his sympathy was with us; for, with a true soldier's instinct, he could not forgive the cowardice of the attack upon the Residency by an armed rabble, bent upon taking the lives of a few men who were their guests. The sirdars seemed relieved when they heard Cabul was not to be destroyed, and the disarmament of the population and the fine that had to

be paid must have appeared to them small punishment so long as their city and fortress were left untouched. When the Proclamation had been read through, they were summarily dismissed, the Wazir, the Mustaufi, Yahiya Khan (father-in-law of the Amir), and his brother, Zakariah Khan, also, being asked to stay, as the General wished to speak to them. They doubtless thought they were to be consulted on questions of high policy, but their chagrin was great when they were told they would have to remain as prisoners until their conduct had been thoroughly investigated. They would be confined in separate rooms with sentries over them, and beyond one servant they would be forbidden to communicate with any of their associates. The Mustaufi fell to telling his beads at once, and the others appeared in a very wholesome state of fear. It was a startling surprise to them after all the smooth-sailing of the past few days, and they are now at leisure to ponder over their double-dealings with the British authority. This bit of by-play having been successfully got through, General Roberts left the audience chamber, and in a few minutes rode back to camp, the 67th cheering him right heartily as he passed out of the garden. The long line of bayonets, sabres, and lances was traversed at a gallop, and Siah Sung camp reached in a few minutes. The 67th moved into the Bala Hissar and encamped in the Amir's garden, and thus the first day of our triumph over Cabul ended as happily as it began. Yakub Khan's tent was removed during the day to the head-quarters' camp, a guard of honour from the 72nd Highlanders keeping strict watch over it.

The following is the full text of the Proclamation :—

PROCLAMATION TO THE PEOPLE OF CABUL BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS, K.C.B., V.C.

DATED BALA HISSAR, CABUL, 12*th October*, 1879.

"In my Proclamation of the 3rd October, dated Zerghun Shahr, I informed the people of Cabul that a British army was advancing to take possession of the city, and I warned them against offering any resistence to the entry of the troops, and the authority of His Highness the Amir. That warning has been disregarded. The

force under my command has now reached Cabul, and occupied the Bala Hissar; but its advance has been pertinaciously opposed, and the inhabitants of the city have taken a conspicuous part in the opposition offered. They have therefore become rebels against His Highness the Amir, and have added to the guilt already incurred by them in abetting the murder of the British Envoy and of his companions—a treacherous and cowardly crime, which has brought indelible disgrace upon the Afghan people. It would be but a just and fitting reward for such misdeeds if the city of Cabul were now totally destroyed and its very name blotted out. But the great British Government is ever desirous to temper justice with mercy, and I now announce to the inhabitants of Cabul that the full retribution for their offence will not be exacted, and that the city will be spared. Nevertheless it is necessary that they should not escape all penalty, and that the punishment inflicted should be such as will be felt and remembered. Therefore such of the city buildings as now interfere with the proper military occupation of the Bala Hissar, and the safety and comfort of the British troops to be quartered in it, will be at once levelled with the ground; and further a heavy fine, the amount of which will be notified hereafter, will be imposed upon the inhabitants, to be paid according to their several capabilities. This punishment, inflicted upon the whole city, will not, of course, absolve from further penalties those whose individual guilt may be hereafter proved. A full and searching inquiry will be held into the circumstances of the late outbreak, and all persons convicted of bearing a part in it will be dealt with according to their deserts. I further give notice to all, that, in order to provide for the restoration and maintenance of order, the city of Cabul and the surrounding country to a distance of ten miles are placed under martial law. With the consent of the Amir, a military Governor of Cabul will be appointed to administer justice, and to punish with a strong hand all evil-doers. The inhabitants of Cabul and of the neighbouring villages are hereby warned to submit to his authority. For the future the carrying of dangerous weapons, whether swords, knives, or firearms, within the streets of Cabul, or within a distance of five miles from the city gates, is forbidden. After a week from the date of this Proclamation, any

person found armed within these limits will be liable to the penalty of death. Persons having in their possession any articles whatsoever which formerly belonged to members of the British Embassy are required to bring them forthwith to the British Camp. Anyone neglecting this warning will, if found hereafter in possession of any such articles, be subject to the severest penalties. Further, all persons who may have in their possession any firearms or ammunition formerly issued to, or seized by, the Afghan troops are required to produce them. For every country-made rifle, whether breech or muzzle-loading, a sum of Rs. 3 will be given on delivery; and for every rifle of European manufacture, Rs. 5. Anyone found hereafter in possession of such weapons will be severely punished. Finally, I notify that I will give a reward of Rs. 50 for the surrender of any person, whether soldier or civilian, concerned in the attack on the British Embassy, or for such information as may lead directly to his capture. A similar sum will be given in case of any person who may have fought against the British troops, since the 3rd September last, and has therefore become a rebel against the Amir. If any such person so surrendered or captured be a captain or subaltern officer of the Afghan army, the reward will be increased to Rs. 75; and if a field officer to Rs. 120."

Copies of this Proclamation, printed in the Persian and Pakhtu character, will be extensively circulated in Northern Afghanistan.

CHAPTER VI.

The Entry into Cabul—Description of the City—Its Commonplace Features—Sullenness of the People—The Order against Intrigues with Afghan Women—Precautions against Fanaticism—The Bazaars—Subjection of the City—Capture of Twelve Guns on the Ghazni Road—Explosion in the Bala Hissar—Death of Captain Shafto—Destruction of Munitions of War—Attack on the Shutargardan—Return of Captured Ordnance.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 13*th October*.

CABUL has been spared, so far as regards the wiping out of its name by the destruction of the city; but to-day it has had to suffer the humiliation of seeing our troops march triumphantly through its streets, and to feel, for the first time for many years, that its freedom has passed away. The terms of the proclamation, read by Sir F. Roberts in the Bala Hissar yesterday, have been made known to the turbulent populace; and though they have not so far thought fit to surrender their arms, they are wise enough to keep them all out of sight for fear of consequences. Our troops paraded this morning at ten o'clock, and by eleven the cavalry had begun to enter the Lahore Gate to clear the way for the General and his Staff. I described very fully the appearance of the little army yesterday when the Bala Hissar was taken possession of, and there is therefore no need to dwell upon their bearing to-day. They were as smart and fit as any martinet of the old school could have wished, and their steady march through the narrow streets and bazaars was as imposing as the spectacle of the previous day. A circuit of the city had to be made; and by the time the cavalry were well on their way back to the starting-point, the last of the infantry filed in. Following closely on the heels of the 14th Bengal Lancers, the Major-General commanding rode through the Lahore Gate, and, turning off soon to the left, took the street leading to the Chandaul Bazaar, the Hindu and Kizilbash quarter of Cabul. General Macpherson, at the head of the First Brigade, led the infantry; and General

Baker, with the Second Brigade, closed the procession. Of course, the 67th and 5th Ghoorkas were absent, as they are now garrisoning the Bala Hissar. There was no artillery brought in, as the streets are so tortuous and the bazaars so narrow, that it would have been difficult for the guns to have worked through. We have not much artillery with us; and, accustomed as the Cabul people are to seeing large parks, our three batteries would not have impressed them.

There has been for so many years such a peculiar interest attaching to the name of Cabul, that one naturally expected to be struck with the appearance of the city; and it was therefore disappointing to find nothing in its features remarkable or impressive. Viewed from the ridge in which we are now encamped, the town presents a mass of mud walls and flat roofs, with trees and gardens scattered among them, and belting them on the north and east with rich verdure. To the west the bastions and walls of the Bala Hissar, and the double line of fortifications about the Arsenal, stand out in bold relief; the steep hills to the north and south, with the open gorge through which the Cabul river runs, forming an imposing background. Apart from these there are no distinctive signs to distinguish the place from any other Eastern city; in fact, it lacks the tall buildings, mosques, and minarets which many a centre of Mahomedan fanaticism boasts. The strong wall which once guarded it and made it a place of strength has crumbled away, or been broken down, and in its place are the wretched mud structures called houses, in which it pleases the citizens to live. There is one landmark, the tomb of Taimur Shah: its low dome standing out in solitary state, and only noticeable by reason of the dead level of dreariness which surrounds it. The Cabul River is now dwarfed to a shallow streamlet which a child could wade, and the paltry bridges of masonry which span it are half ruinous, and of a style which any Western engineer would despise. The fact that there is a river at all is only patent when we come suddenly upon it; and though it may in flood-time swirl along with some attempt at dignity, it is now beneath contempt. The broad current which roars by Daka, and finally swells the Indus above Attock, would be angered if it could see its parent stream crawling so sluggishly along that even a *dhobie's* stone

might turn it from its course. It is not at Cabul a river to be proud of, however much it may fertilize the valleys through which it runs. It is practical and commonplace, and the latter epithet applies with some little reserve to Cabul itself. There is not the overwhelming interest aroused as one traverses its streets that might be reasonably anticipated; and the picture of its teeming life and swarming bazaars has certainly been overdrawn. I do not mean to infer that its streets are deserted and its stalls forsaken. There are 23,000 houses and some 70,000 people within its bounds; but there is no greater sign of active commerce than Peshawur and half a dozen other cities of Northern India present to a stranger. As it is far from civilization, and is the first and last stage between Central Asia and India, accordingly as the current of trade sets in either direction, it has drawn to itself merchants of varied nationality, and become an exchange where trafficking in Eastern and Western goods goes on side by side. In one stall the silks of Bokhara and indigenous products of the Khanates are packed side by side with the cloths of Manchester; while in another Sheffield cutlery and "Brummagem" goods are the near neighbours of the rudely-made iron-ware and roughly-finished jewellery of native artificers. That the bazaars are full of goods of all kinds, from diamonds to *dhoties*, and from *kabobs* to cabbages, is quite true, but it all seems petty trading, and the stalls, if numerous, are small and insignificant-looking. The city feeds as it trades—in its bazaars; and the picturesque view of a silk-merchant's shop is marred by its association with the masses of meat on the butcher's stall adjoining, or the incongruous grouping of the filthy goods of a clothesman near by. And yet when once the feeling of disappointed expectations has been overcome, there is much to notice and criticise, both in the people and the place. Our ride through was necessarily a hurried one—it is never good policy to make long halts when traversing for the first time the streets of a conquered city—and apart from the above comments, which I have set down, as they are the general impressions left upon my mind after a hasty visit, I will try to give a rough sketch of Cabul, such as we saw it to-day. That it was seen under abnormal circumstances should, of course, be steadily kept in mind.

After entering by the Lahore Gate, wide enough to admit two horsemen abreast with comfort—the gate is nothing more than the usual tall wooden framework let into the dilapidated mud wall—we entered a dirty, ill-kept street, and followed it for a short distance until it branched off right and left, to the Char Chowk, or chief bazaar in the Afghan quarter on the one hand, and to Chandaul on the other. We took the latter road to the left, the dead walls of the houses shutting in all but the immediate view. Little gaps on the left, where side passages had been made, enabled us to see the wall of the Bala Hissar, in places only forty or fifty yards off. It looked strong and menacing when compared with the city itself. Leaving the fortress behind we turned to the right, and were soon in a narrow, but well-kept, bazaar. The stalls, raised two or three feet from the ground, were filled with articles such as one always meets in native Indian cities, varied occasionally by heaps of grapes, melons, apples, and fruit and vegetables of the kind which the gardens about produce so lavishly. This was the Hindu quarter, and the stall-owners watched us ride past with every expression of satisfaction, salaaming smilingly, and no doubt praying that the English *raj* might now be established and last for ever. These Hindus have had rough times to endure when their Afghan masters have played the tyrant, and they now see an era of safety and rupees before them which shall repay them for all their past sufferings. The bazaars continued for a considerable distance, and Hindu faces with their caste marks were replaced after a time by a new type, which showed that we were among the Persian residents, the Kizilbashes,* who form so large a proportion of the population. They are, as a rule, orderly and well-disposed, and, being keen traders, are glad to see us as their neighbours. Traversing the main street of Chandaul, we left the bazaar and came to a better class of houses, all, however, gloomy and uninviting to look at, the high courtyard walls hindering any view of the interior. There were crowds of men and boys at every street-corner and gateway, and at intervals we caught sight of a white-robed figure veiled from head to foot, out of which a pair of eyes just glanced for a moment to look at the cavalcade, and were then hidden by a deft movement of the hand or

* Literally, "Red-heads," from the colour of their turbans.

a turn of the head. On house-tops or at narrow windows high above the street, similar figures looked down, feminine curiosity proving too much even for the restraint which controls life in the zenana. With such faint glimpses we could form no idea of the charms of the women of Cabul; against indiscretions with whom, by the bye, we have been solemnly warned in the following order issued by our General:—

"Sir F. Roberts desires general officers and officers commanding corps to impress upon all officers under their command the necessity for constant vigilance in preventing irregularities likely to arouse the personal jealousy of the people of Cabul, who are, of all races, the most susceptible in all that regards their women. The deep-seated animosity of the Afghans towards the English has been mainly ascribed to indiscretions committed during the first occupation of Cabul; and the Major-General trusts that the same excellent discipline, so long exhibited by the troops under his command, will remove the prejudices of past years, and cause the British name to be as highly respected in Afghanistan as it is throughout the civilized world."

There is another version of this old story, that the indiscretion was all on the side of the Afghan ladies; and it is to be hoped the order will be translated into Persian for their benefit. Until this is done, the virtue of our brave soldiers must tremble in the balance, the conjugation of *amo* in Persian being described as the most fascinating step in Eastern philology—when the teacher is draped in a *yashmak*.

From Chandaul we passed through one of the usual gates, and, crossing the Cabul River by a narrow masonry bridge of three small arches, rode along a path in the western suburbs of Deh-i-Afghan skirting the bed of the stream. Several gardens filled with fruit trees, but otherwise much neglected, were passed, and some houses of sufficient size to warrant the belief that their owners were men of importance. The handsome villas Cabul is said to be proud of were certainly not to be seen. Re-crossing the river by another bridge not far from Taimur Shah's tomb, we entered the Afghan quarter of the city, the route lying through the Char Chowk, so called from the four small squares with drinking fountains which are found at about equal distances along the

bazaar. The place was crowded with people, from gaudily-dressed merchants to poor, ill-clad Hazara coolies (the Hazara *log* are the hewers of wood and drawers of water all over Afghanistan), and there was much diversity of costume and character. No sign of resentment was shown towards us; but a sullen silence was maintained, and the villainous faces seen from time to time caused many of us to wish that a little decimation, or some equally healthy operation, had been performed among these ruffians. The side-streets were more crowded than in the Chandaul quarter, and a sharp look-out was kept for any fanatical attempt to run amuck among us. The lances of the General's escort and the rifles of the orderlies on foot were ready for an emergency; a bloodthirsty little Ghoorka among the orderlies having hitched his *kookrie* round so as to have it handy. But no *ghazi* or *budmash* appeared anxious for martyrdom, and we wended our way onwards peacefully. Not an arm of any kind was carried by any person in the crowd, and the armourers' shops were quite empty; the grindstones, on which many a *chura* and *talwar* has been sharpened, were lying idle on the ground. This turbulent populace has been cowed by our prompt march upon their city, and as the Afghans heard behind us the shrill shriek of the pipers and saw the Highlanders in their kilts stepping along in easy confidence, they must have known their time had gone by. Of course, all trade was suspended while the march was going on, and the stall-keepers looked far from pleased at our intrusion. There was none of the impulsive salaaming we had been received with in Chandaul, and many stood up almost defiantly as if to vindicate their claim to be considered the salt of the earth. What lay behind in the thickly-packed houses on either side of the bazaar none of us could say,—General Hills, the new Governor, may soon know; but we could quite believe from the scowling faces seen in the side-streets that fanatical hatred against us was still alive, if for the time it was held in check. When we proceed with our work of disarmament, perhaps it may flash out; and then who knows that a repetition of Pollock's policy may not follow, and the Char Chowk be blown to the four winds of heaven.

The bazaar is covered in at some height above the stalls, which

can be numbered by the hundred; and is very narrow and cramped. It would be impossible to describe in detail the arrangement of the shops; but the most attractive were certainly those of the silk merchants, whose goods, with their brilliant colours and fine texture, were openly displayed. Richly-braided caps and coats; boots elaborately worked in gold and silver; cutlery and cloths, both English and native; sweets, fruit on every hand in huge heaps, grain, spices, saddles, harness for mules and camels, piles of blankets and felt *numdahs* of wonderful patterns, and scores of other articles that I cannot set down, succeeded each other as stall after stall was passed; and a further medley was formed by the heaps of parched gram and *chupaties* (flat unleavened cakes), plates of horrible stews and greasy-looking messes which were exposed for sale. Next a butcher's shop full of meat curiously cut up and hung about in admired disorder, would be a *kabob* stall, the keeper of which would be cooking his dainty morsels in the open air, and tempting passengers to try his savoury little sticks. In all the small squares which I have before mentioned as giving the name to the bazaar, groups of men were lounging or squatting about the tank in the middle of the open space, and here, doubtless, much of the bartering with strangers and merchants from a distance is carried on. The buildings in the squares are more pretentious than elsewhere, rising to a height of three or four stories, and their fronts and chief doorways are handsomely ornamented.

Our ride through was soon over, and we arrived at the street where we had turned off to Chandaul in about an hour and a half from the time of entering the city. Only one mosque was passed on the way, just as we were leaving the Char Chowk, and the voice of a *moollah*, shrieking "Allah-il-Ullah," and perhaps cursing us under his breath, could be heard within the courtyard, rising over all the din made by our horses as they stumbled over the rough ground. Whatever fanaticism there may be in Cabul—and that it is highly fanatical historical events have only too sadly shown—it is clearly under a cloud now; and as long as we remain in the Bala Hissar, with a force ready for all contingencies, it can never make much headway. Our march through having been happily ended, Sir F. Roberts drew rein outside the Lahore Gate, and

watched the infantry brigades file out with bands playing and colours flying. Thus ended our second and final triumph in the humiliation of Cabul, and now there lies before us the work of detection and punishment of those who shared in the massacre of our Envoy. That there are many in the city all our information leads us to believe, and we are not likely to let them escape.

It is reported that nine regiments are marching down from Turkistan to Cabul, and are even now at Charikar in Kohistan. Two squadrons of the 12th Bengal Cavalry go out to-morrow to reconnoitre the road. Two fatal cases of cholera occurred to-day; generally, however, the force is in splendid health. Too liberal indulgence in fruit may possibly have been the cause of the cholera. Brigadier-General Gough will start in a few days, with a small force, for the Shutargardan, whence he will bring on supplies. The 14th Bengal Lancers have captured twelve guns (six 9-pounders and six mule guns) on the Bamian Road, which were abandoned by the Ghazni Regiments. The horses had been taken away. So far we have heard nothing of the Khyber Force, which is supposed to co-operate with this division, and our letters are still sent to the Shutargardan.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 16*th October.*

We had begun to settle down to a quiet life in camp here after our full-dress parade through the Bala Hissar and the city, and after all our late excitement a little rest was very welcome; but we have been suddenly shaken into action by such an untoward event as the explosion of the vast stores of gunpowder in the Cabul Arsenal, in the neighbourhood of the 67th Regiment and the 5th Ghoorkas, who were garrisoning the fortress. It was announced, while we were marching here from Kushi, that the rebels in Cabul had plundered the Arsenal and looted the magazine, but this was found afterwards to be only partially true. They had certainly carried off many rifles from the Arsenal and several thousand rounds of ammunition, but there was still left munitions of war sufficient to have supplied all Afghanistan. A systematic examination, under the direction of Captain Shafto, of the Ordnance Department, was set on foot immediately our troops went into garrison in the Bala Hissar, and the result was the discovery of some millions of cartridges, Enfield and Snider, of

English and Afghan make, and some 150,000 lbs. of gunpowder, besides valuable stores, such as could be useful to an army engaged in active warfare. Daoud Shah, the late Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army states, there is at least 1,000,000 lbs. of gunpowder hidden in the place. The Arsenal was little worthy of its name; there were no regular workshops, no foundry and but little machinery, the building being merely made up of a score or more of godowns (sheds) arranged under the strong walls of the upper part of the Bala Hissar, on the hill immediately overlooking the Residency and the Amir's pleasure-garden, where the Durbar was held by Sir F. Roberts. In these godowns there was none of that care and precaution taken, such as is insisted upon in English arsenals and magazines. The gunpowder was chiefly stored in huge earthen gurrahs and dubbers (such as ghee is usually carried in), and in many instances these had been tilted over and loose powder scattered on the ground. Bits of iron, stray caps, and friction tubes for artillery lay about in dangerous proximity to these, and Captain Shafto had to display the greatest caution in examining the place. There was no magazine proper to speak of; though one godown, which was looked upon as specially worthy of the name, had in it 410 jars of about 150 lbs. each, or over twenty-seven tons of gunpowder. This was a little detached from the other godowns, and was looked after carefully, as the effect of such a quantity of powder exploding would be terrific. The Arsenal walls face to the four points of the compass, that on the north looking over the city, while the eastern wall frowns down upon the lower Bala Hissar, and commands the whole of the houses below. The walls are of great thickness at the base, arising out of the solid rock, which runs down precipitously on three sides, while to the west it rises gradually until it forms part of the narrow spur joining the fortress to the high ridge above. On the eastern side, just at the foot of the rock, is built the Amir's pavilion with its oblong garden, some one hundred yards in length, which I described in one of my late letters. About this garden are clustered houses of all kinds, and at the base of the rocky hill on the north are also dwelling-houses. The Guides' quarters, the Residency, and some high buildings are near the south-eastern corner, past which a road leads up to the gate of the Arsenal in its southern wall.

The outer walls of the fortress are less than one hundred yards away, facing over the Cabul plain, the strong bastions giving them the appearance of great stability. The 5th Ghoorkas were in tents near the south-west corner of the Arsenal, and had luckily moved a little distance away this morning, as the wall looked suspiciously weak. The whole of the 67th Foot were encamped within the walls of the Amir's garden, and had in their custody the Mustaufi and four other prisoners now awaiting trial. The two Gatling guns were with the troops in the Bala Hissar. In order that a just idea may be formed of the two explosions which occurred, and the probability of a third greater than all, which we are now expecting, I give below a list of the godowns and their contents furnished to me by Captain Shafto two days ago. He had examined up to that date seventeen godowns, and their contents were :—

GODOWNS IN THE BALA HISSAR ARSENAL.

No. 1.—Copper sheeting, punches, rolling machines.

No. 2.—15 sacks of Enfield copper caps, 87 jars of powder, many friction tubes.

No. 3.—42 dubbers of powder.

No. 4.—410 big jars of powder,

No. 5.—190 ditto

No. 6.—Full of rope and *chuts* (nets for carrying guns and straw on baggage animals).

No. 7.—Hemp, thread; paper, Russian foolscap; 52 jars of powder, filled cartridges, 3 skins of loose powder, cartridge-boxes.

No. 8.—Gun cartridges, wax lubricators, &c., 103 dubbers of powder.

No. 9.—150 jars of powder: charcoal, saltpetre, sulphur, &c.

Total: 1,000 jars of powder, each 150lbs. = 150,000lbs.

Nos. 10, 11, 12.—Filled with rope, *chuts*, mussucks, shelves for axes and spades, wood for tent-pegs and timber; godown full of shot and shell and bullets; and small room full of plates of lead piled up to the roof.

No. 13.—Boxes of percussion caps and a vast number of Enfield cartridges: boxes marked "Ferozepore, 1857,"

Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17.—Boxes of Snider cartridges, English and

Afghan pattern, about 520,000 from Dum-Dum in perfect order. Also Enfield cartridges, old iron, and lead.

There were therefore some millions of cartridges and nearly seventy tons of gunpowder, besides stores of highly inflammable character in these few godowns, and these have nearly all been destroyed.

The first intimation we, in camp on Siah Sung Ridge, received of the explosion was a dull report, which would not have attracted much attention but for a huge column of smoke which rose from the Bala Hissar several hundred feet in the air, and plainly showed something was wrong. It was a beautiful sight, as the silvery column with the sun lighting up its soft edges slowly spread itself out; but there was little time to admire it, for we trembled for the fate of the brave little Ghoorkas who were so near the Arsenal. The smoke settled over the lower Bala Hissar and the city, obscuring all the buildings; and as it slowly drifted away the Arsenal became visible, with its outer wall, facing us, still standing, but lighted up from inside by little sheets of flame and sudden rushes of smoke, which proved that gunpowder was still exploding. There was then no doubt that some of the godowns Captain Shafto was inspecting had been blown up, and General Roberts at once sent messengers to inquire into the extent of the disaster. Riding down to the Bala Hissar, we were not long in learning, so far as was known, what had occurred. The road leading upwards past the Residency was blocked by the rubbish of the upper part of the southern wall of the Arsenal, which had been blown outwards; and the explosions, which could distinctly be heard, were all near the south-eastern bastion, the very point, it may be added, from which a murderous fire was poured upon Sir Louis Cavagnari and his companions by the mutineers. In the Amir's garden the tents of the 67th were covered thickly with dust, and every pane of glass in the pavilions had been shattered, though the buildings themselves were quite intact. The men had been marched out as quickly as possible into the square adjoining, and with faces, beards, and helmets grey with dust, they looked as if some shadowy change had came over them. Colonel Knowles, who was in command of the regiment, had tried to send working parties up to the Arsenal; but they could not force a way, and he had soon to

think of the safety of his own men, as he learnt that only a small portion of the powder had exploded, and that at any minute the larger stores might ignite. The explosion, as heard in the garden, was described as a smart shock, mistaken at first for an earthquake: this idea was soon dissipated, as a darkness equal to that of the darkest night blotted out everything, and showers of bullets, stones, cartridge-cases, and burning rubbish fell into the garden. Two or three beams of timber were also blown down; but, happily, no one was injured beyond a signaller. This man was with a sentry on the roof of the pavilion in which the Mustaufi, the Wazir, the Kotwal, and two others were confined, and he was seen to jump three or four feet down to a lower roof as the explosion occurred. Nothing more was seen of him until his dead body was found on the stones below. The sentry escaped uninjured. The men, once the danger was appreciated, were quickly on the alert, and the gates were guarded in case of any attempt to rescue the prisoners. No such attempt was made, and leaving all their kits behind the men filed out towards the gate. In the by-streets I came across two or three Ghoorkas with faces bleeding from wounds inflicted by falling bullets and stones, but their only anxiety seemed to be for their comrades above. Of these I am sorry to say the subadar-major, four havildars, and sixteen men are missing.* Twelve were on guard in the Arsenal, and the others were counting out the pay of the men which had been drawn this morning. They were buried under a wall which the force of the explosion broke down. Anxious inquiries were also made for Captain Shafto, who had been seen in a powder godown, but all inquiries proved fruitless. His pistol, with the stock blown off, was found in the Amir's garden; and as he has not since appeared, there can be little doubt he was killed.

The order was given for every person to leave the Bala Hissar in anticipation of another explosion; and after riding out to see if the outer wall of the fortress had been injured, I returned to watch the people turning out. It was a mixed throng of soldiers, camp-followers carrying the ammunition boxes, and frightened inhabitants hurrying to the gate. The soldiers marched steadily and

* The casualties were proved to be eventually twelve killed and seven wounded: among the former were the subadar-major and the four pay-havildars.

with the unconcern of men equal to the occasion, a few on fatigue duty working heartily in seeing the ammunition safely out. One man was dragging a Gatling gun which rattled over the rough stones and drowned many of the other noises; while others were keeping back such suspicious Afghans as wished to return to the place, no doubt in the hope of loot. Women draped in white, many with children in their arms, made hastily for the gateway, their lords and masters carrying a few *rezais* (quilted bed-covers), to make them comfortable hereafter. The *yashmak* hid the faces of these refugees, but they were quite safe from molestation, and this they seemed to know, as they mixed freely with the throng and passed out to seek refuge with friends elsewhere. Dr. Bourke, with a strong party of dhoolie-bearers, was sent down from camp, and after trying to get them up to the Arsenal past the garden, he worked round outside to the southern wall. A difficult path led up to the ramparts, and a few Ghoorkas made this more passable by breaking down a portion of the wall. Drs. Bourke, Duke, and Simmonds, with two European soldiers and some Ghoorkas, went up this way into the fortress and succeeded in rescuing five wounded men. They approached to within thirty or forty yards of the burning godowns, but the explosions were so frequent that they had soon to withdraw. No more wounded men could be found, and nothing was seen of those who were known to have been on guard. The place was then deserted except for a few mulemen who obstinately kept with their animals on the walls as far as possible from the Arsenal.

The 67th formed up just outside the Bala Hissar gate, but by order of General Roberts they were withdrawn still farther away on the Jellalabad Road. We then watched for the next explosion, and it came at a quarter-to-four. The report was terrific, a dense black column of smoke, fivefold as great as the first, shot upwards, out of which burst a few flashes as live shell exploded. This time the smoke sank in almost solid masses upon Cabul, and with it fell large stones, beams, and bullets in profusion. A little group of Afghans with two sowars and some European officers and soldiers were standing near the Bala Hissar gate. Through this was blown a shower of stones with terrible force; four men (Afghans) were killed on the spot, the two sowars and a fifth

Afghan being badly hurt. This must have been 300 or 400 yards from the Arsenal. The panic in the city was very great, the shops being shut and the streets deserted. Several of the inhabitants are reported to have been wounded by falling bullets, and this has given rise in their minds to the idea that we have destroyed the Arsenal purposely. When we have examined what is left of it, perhaps we may take that course in earnest.

All this evening we have been watching from camp the burning of the Arsenal and listening to the constant explosions and the incessant firing of cartridges, the reports of which as they exploded singly or in little groups from the heat could be distinctly heard. As I am writing now (2 A.M.) these reports are still heard, and vivid flashes are seen on the hillside: a third explosion has just occurred, but it was not so great as the others. The largest store of powder is supposed to be still untouched, but whether it will explode is doubtful; if it does, Cabul will, indeed, be shaken to its foundations. Nothing is known as to the cause of this disaster. Our regret is not much for the Bala Hissar, which many of us would delight to see destroyed, but for the brave fellows who are now lying dead within its walls, scarcely a stone's throw from the still smouldering ashes of the Embassy. Search will be made to-morrow for Captain Shafto's body.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 18*th October*.

There seems to be a very general opinion in camp that the explosion at the Bala Hissar was not due to any accident, but was intentionally brought about by some of the enemy who had trusted to our occupying the place in force. Captain Shafto, who was examining the war material stored in the godowns which have been destroyed, was careful to a fault in all his work; and it is argued that so great an explosion could not have occurred unless preparations had been made for it beforehand. Further, it is believed that the powder which did the mischief was lodged in vaults below the open ground within the walls; and of the existence of these vaults we were quite in ignorance. The mode in which so large a quantity of gunpowder was stored was safe enough under ordinary conditions, the large earthern jars and dubbers exposing a minimum of open surface—just at the mouth—to the action of

any inflammable material. Several officers, who had just left Captain Shafto, state that where he was engaged there was not sufficient explosive material of any kind to have done more than purely local damage; whereas the shock felt was terrific. Information by the Amir and Daoud Shah has since been volunteered that the place was vaulted, and that a tower, which still stands untouched, was full of gunpowder. Even as it is, the three largest godowns examined by Captain Shafto have escaped, and as these contain many tons of powder, and were considered the largest magazine, it is plain that the loss of life, regrettable as it is, might still have been much greater. If treachery has been at work, there has been some bungling, for the explosion of the one large godown filled with 410 jars, each weighing 150lbs., would have sufficed to have killed nearly every living person within a radius of a quarter of a mile, or even more. As it was, the second explosion at a quarter-to-four burst open the outer gate of the Bala Hissar, and on the road beyond several persons met their deaths. The mud walls and roofs are dented and broken by the huge stones which showered thickly upon them and were driven down from the Arsenal with terrific force. Beyond two tents belonging to the 67th Regiment being burnt in the Amir's garden, there was not much damage done to property outside the Upper Bala Hissar, the height of the hill on which it is built diverting the shock upwards. It has now been decided that the Bala Hissar shall be destroyed,* and Cabul thus rendered a defenceless city. The old respect which was paid to it must inevitably disappear when its citadel and defences are swept away; and this must put a new feature upon the political situation in Afghanistan. What the political state now is it is most difficult to say, for the Amir still remains in our camp, and the numerous sentries guarding his tent seem to point to his presence being absolutely required in our midst until we have decided upon whom the blame of Sir Louis Cavagnari's death is to rest. The trial of the five sirdars now in custody has not yet commenced; but evidence is accumulating, and when once the Commission begins to sit, witnesses will not be wanting.

To return to the only excitement we have had since the fight

* This intention was, unfortunately, never carried out owing to the outbreak in December.

on the Asmai Heights on the 8th. Early yesterday morning it was observed that the fire in the Upper Bala Hissar had died out, and that only a smoking heap of rubbish marked the spot where the explosions had occurred. Half the southern and western walls of the Arsenal had been thrown outwards down the hillside, and within was a chasm in which cartridges still exploded, though only faintly, as if in protest at being ignominiously smothered under crumbling walls. It was by means safe walking in such near proximity to half-consumed boxes of cartridges; and as there was the off-chance of a jar of powder going off at any moment, the risk was proportionately increased. Besides, there might be vaults loaded with powder, and Sir F. Roberts very wisely ruled that the lives of his soldiers were too valuable to be endangered in such a neighbourhood. It was, however, necessary that search should be made for the poor fellows who had been killed; and, accordingly, a number of the city people were impressed and made to work upon the ruins. Dry earth and rubbish were thrown down upon the smouldering embers, and the three godowns filled with powder were banked up with mud and made as fireproof as possible in the time. *Kahars* from the ambulance corps were also sent up, and in the afternoon they discovered Captain Shafto's body and the charred remains of the Ghoorkas. They had all been buried under the falling walls. The loss to the regiment of the subadar-major and four pay-havildars is very serious; while we all deplore poor Shafto's death, as he was a universal favourite. He was buried with military honours this morning; the 67th furnishing the firing party.

Yesterday afternoon a strong wind swept across the ridge for several hours, and in the evening the fire in the ruins broke out afresh and blazed up till long past midnight. Small explosions occurred from time to time, showing that much powder was still buried and ready to ignite. Fortunately, the wind dropped about ten o'clock, or the remaining godowns might have been burnt down. To-day valuable stores of poshteens and warm clothing, enough for many hundreds of men, were come upon, and these have been carried into camp by fatigue parties without delay. They will be of immense service, as warm clothing for the followers is much needed. The troops, also, are not too well pro-

vided for; but now European and sepoy alike can be made comfortable for the winter. It is already bitterly cold at night, and it has been decided to move us all into the Sherpur Cantonment, where are already barracks equal to accommodating 3,000 or 4,000 men. Huts will also be built below the Bemaru Ridge, which forms the fourth side of the fortified parallelogram, and the Bemaru village will be cleared of its inhabitants. All the houses therein will then be available for our army of followers, who are always the greatest sufferers when snow falls and frost sets in. This ridge on which we are now encamped is very exposed; and as the sun is still powerful in the day, the health of the men will be sure to suffer unless they are protected against the cold wind which rises as the sun sets.

There is but little news of military moment just at present. From the Shutargardan we hear of another attack by 3,000 Mangals and Ghilzais; but three companies of the 3rd Sikhs and the 21st P.N.I. scattered them in the most admirable manner, charging up hill at the *sungars* and carrying them with the bayonet. This hand-to-hand fighting is far better than pitching shells at long ranges, as it teaches these ruffians the material our men are made of. There were only 300 sepoys engaged, but they were more than enough. The gallant way in which they took the *sungars* and bayoneted forty of the defenders on the spot has given us all, from the General downwards, unqualified satisfaction. There is grand fighting material still to be found in many of our native regiments, as Colonel Money's two engagements on the Shutargardan have clearly proved. General Gough, with the 5th P.C., the 5th P.I., and four mountain guns, left Cabul yesterday for the Shutargardan to bring down all the supplies accumulated there, and to close the line by way of Kotal for the winter. Snow may now fall at any time at such an altitude as the Shutargardan, and it behoves us to clear out the post before further difficulties are added to what is already a very difficult bit. General Gough may be molested on his march, as the districts of the Logar swarm with robbers; but it is unlikely any organized attack will be made upon his party, whatever attempt to loot his convoy may be attempted upon his return journey. As he will bring back the head-quarters and a squadron of the 9th Lancers, the

3rd Sikhs, and the mountain guns now on the Shutargardan, he will be able to defend his charge without fear of consequences. If, as we learn this afternoon, the Mangals have occupied the heights in force, and have cut off even the grass-supply of Colonel Money's little garrison, General Gough's arrival may be most opportune, and the tribesmen may receive another sharp lesson. Sixty headmen of the Gajis, Turis, Mangals, and other tribes between here and the Shutargardan have come in at Sir Frederick Roberts's request. The General pointed out to them how utterly useless resistance was to the British, as exemplified in the fall of Cabul, and this they acknowledged, promising to keep their followers in good order and not to molest us.

As we shall soon be moving into our winter quarters, I send you a complete list of the guns captured up to date :—

ORDNANCE CAPTURED.

		Nature of Ordnance.	Calibre.	English.	Afghan.	Charasia, 6th October.	Sherpur, 8th October.	Heights above Cabul, 9th October.	Bala Hissar, 19th October.	Ghazni Road, 14th October.	Total.
Smooth Bore.	Bronze.	Guns	12 pr.	—	4	—	4	—	—	—	4
			9 pr.	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	2
			6 pr.	1	16	—	—	—	17	—	17
			3 pr.	—	51	—	42	—	3	6	51
		Howitzers	8 in.	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	2
			12 pr.	—	5	—	—	—	5	—	5
		Mortars	8 in.	—	6	—	—	—	6	—	6
			5½ in.	1	6	—	—	—	7	—	7
	Iron.	Guns	24 pr.	—	2	—	—	—	2	—	2
			18 pr.	4	—	—	4	—	—	—	4
		Howitzers	8 in.	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	2
Rifled Guns.	Iron.	Breech-loading	20 pr.	—	6	—	6	—	—	—	6
			12 pr.	—	6	—	6	—	—	—	6
			9 pr.	—	14	1	—	—	7	6	14
			8 pr.	—	6	—	—	6	—	—	6
			6 pr.	—	22	10	6	—	6	—	22
			4 pr.	—	11	—	—	5	6	—	11
		Muzzle-loading	7 pr.	—	26	—	-	—	26	—	26
		Steel Muzzle-loading	8 pr.	—	21	6	5	10	—	—	21
		Grand Total	—	8	206	20	76	21	85	12	214

CHAPTER VII.

Execution of Five Prisoners—The Kotwal of Cabul—His Proclamation to the People—Nek Mahomed and the Amir—Aghir Khan's Crime—The Moollah Khwaja Nazir and his Attempt to raise a *Jehad*—Effect of the Executions upon the People—Preparing Winter Quarters—Dispersion of the Tribes at the Shutargardan—Execution of Afghan Officers—The Course of Justice—Stern Reprisals necessary—Afghan Fanaticism—Hostility of the Mass of the People—The Position of the Amir—Political Problems.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 20*th October*.

TO-DAY we have had the satisfaction of seeing marched out to execution in the Bala Hissar five prisoners, more or less directly concerned in the events of the last few weeks, whose guilt was very clearly established in our eyes. As might have been expected, it has been no easy matter to collect evidence in Cabul, many witnesses being afraid of after-consequences if they bore testimony to the conduct of men under suspicion. We have not notified in any way what is to be the duration of our stay here, and once our protection over our well-wishers is removed, their fate may be readily imagined. There is no one who cherishes revenge more fervently than an Afghan, and every witness would be marked down by the kinsmen of those against whom he had appeared. By a little judicious management, however, in which Hyat Khan, Assistant Political Officer, has been chief agent, pretty full evidence has been obtained without publicity, and after being carefully sifted, it has been submitted to the Military Commission,* of which General Massy is President, as the various prisoners implicated have been brought up. Yesterday this Commission had before it five prisoners, all of whom it sentenced to death by hanging, and to-day this sentence was carried out. The terms of the proclamation issued by General Roberts from Zerghun Shahr left no outlet of escape for all such persons as were concerned in the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his com-

* The members of the Commission were Brigadier General Massy (President), Major Moriarty, Bengal Staff Corps, and Captain Guinness, 72nd Highlanders.

panions, or who offered armed resistance to the British troops advancing with the Amir under their protection. Death was the penalty incurred in either case; assassination being the one offence, and treason against their lawful sovereign the second. This dual mode of dealing with offenders was no doubt due to the inference that those who chose to fight against us must have so far committed themselves in prior events as to make them in technical term "accomplices after the act." To aid and defend a murderer is to participate in his crime; and the leaders at Charasia and on the Deh-i-Afghan Heights, though nominally only accused of high treason against Yakub Khan, were really guilty of abetting the men who had fired the Residency and slaughtered its inmates in the early days of September.

In the attack upon our Embassy and in the after-tumult and organized resistance to our troops, it was known that the city people had borne a prominent part, and it was therefore necessary that one of their leaders should be made to suffer for their offences. Accordingly, the Kotwal, or chief magistrate of Cabul, was arrested immediately after the proclamation of Sir F. Roberts had been read in the Amir's garden, and he was the chief personage among the five tried yesterday. The evidence against this man, Mahomed Aslam Khan, was that after the Residency had been stormed, he ordered and superintended the throwing of the bodies of the Guides over the Bala Hissar wall into the ditch below, where they now lie in a deep hole covered over with stones and rubbish. This was his active participation in the first series of events, and there was no doubt the influence his position gave him was exercised in every way in favour of the mutineers, and that he made no effort to control the city rabble. When it became known in Cabul that our forces were encamped at Charasia, he showed himself most active in organizing measures to drive us back. On the night before the fight, when all the fanatical passions of the soldiery and the populace were excited to the utmost, he issued a proclamation in which all faithful Mahomedans were called upon to assemble and march out to do battle against the British. This was circulated throughout the city and neighbourhood, and brought in many recruits; while, to keep the ill-organized army up to its work, he gave Rs. 1,000 to the bakers to cook food for the troops.

This they were to carry with them to the Charasia Heights. The police were further employed to turn out, in the early morning of October 6th, all faint-hearted citizens who shirked the duty imposed upon them of meeting our army. With a boldness that seemed almost like bravado, Aslam Khan did not seek safety in flight when we encamped before Cabul, but actually acted as our guide, when Sir Frederick Roberts visited the ruins of the Residency. He explained very vividly all that took place, and even pointed out the grave of the Guides below. His defence before the Commission was, that the bodies were thrown over the wall by his people without his knowledge; and that in respect of the proclamation, he issued it at the instigation of Sirdar Nek Mahomed Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the rebels, who said the Amir had given orders to that effect. There was just a colourable excuse in this, as it is now established beyond doubt that Nek Mahomed visited the Amir in our camp the night before Charasia. The Amir was really a puppet in the hands of the men then about him, and it is quite on the cards that they authorized Nek Mahomed to use his name freely; and that in this way the proclamation was published. The double dealing of the Wazir, the Mustaufi, and Zakariah Khan and his brother, have since come to light, and they are now under arrest awaiting trial, though sufficient evidence to hang them is not yet forthcoming. It is an ill-return on the part of the Amir's retinue that the freedom granted to them on the march to Cabul should have been thus abused. The messengers we allowed him to receive and despatch in all good faith seem to have been merely emissaries of the mutineers preparing a trap in which to destroy our force. That Nek Mahomed should be in our camp on the 5th and fight against us on the 6th, in command of 4,000 or 5,000 troops, was the outcome of our generosity towards Yakub Khan, whom we treated as a guest instead of a prisoner. He himself is so weak-minded and helpless, that one hesitates to accuse him of direct treachery. But the case is very different with his most trusted ministers, who are now in safe custody in the quarter-guards of our British regiments. Nek Mahomed is a fugitive, and it is doubtful if we shall ever capture him, unless he is ill-advised enough to try conclusions with us in the winter months; but if he is ever caught, and can be tempted

to make a clean breast of it, the truth of the whole business in which he was the leading spirit will be made clear. It is only bare justice to Yakub Khan to give his own version of Nek Mahomed's interview with him. The Amir states that he entreated Nek Mahomed to return and order the dispersal of the mutinous regiments then in the Bala Hissar: to forbid the city rabble from showing any resistance to us; and to issue a warning against any one appearing armed in or near Cabul. This is the Amir's statement, and until Nek Mahomed is forthcoming, it must be looked upon as trustworthy.

The second prisoner, if lowest in rank, seems to have been most intimately connected of the batch with the revolting scenes following the Massacre of the Embassy. This was Aghir Khan, chowkidar of Mundai, who was sworn to as having carried the head and shoulders of one of the English sahibs from the smoking ruins of the Residency to the ridge on which stands the Upper Bala Hissar, overlooking the city. This was on the morning after the place had been sacked, and it was generally believed that it was Sir Louis Cavagnari's head that was carried along. Aghir Khan's defence was, that he took the head with the intention of preserving it until the British should come; but that on reaching the ridge the Kotwal's people seized it, and that he could not learn what afterwards became of it. His story was quite unsupported, and the man's general demeanour and known character were all against him. A more ruffianly-looking face could scarcely be found in the whole of Afghanistan, which is very prolific of such growths.

In this outbreak of fanaticism in Cabul, it was quite impossible that the *moollahs* could remain quiet, their known hatred to foreign intrusion being always a dangerous element in local politics. One of the five prisoners was Khwaja Nazir, a priest of great influence, who preached a *jehad*, collected large numbers of his most fanatical followers, gave them a standard, and sent them out to Charasia. The fourth man tried was Sultan Aziz, a Barakzai, son of the Nawab Mahomed Zaman Khan, ex-Governor of Khost. Being related in blood to the reigning family, it was all the more significant that SultanAziz and his father should have fought at Charasia, after being leading spirits in arming the mob which flocked into

the Bala Hissar on the evening of the 5th October. The fifth and last prisoner was Kaisruh Khan, ex-General in rank and Superintendent of Army Clothing: he played a similar part to that of Sultan Aziz. All five prisoners were condemned to death by the Commission, and this sentence was confirmed by the Major-General Commanding. This morning they were marched out of camp at half-past nine, under escort of a company of the 92nd Highlanders, a fatigue party following with picks and shovels as grave-diggers. There was very little ceremony observed, and only a few Cabulis from the city looked on as the men were escorted towards the Bala Hissar gate. Two scaffolds had been raised, the Kotwal being honoured with a special rope outside the door which young Hamilton so gallantly defended, and which was eventually battered in by the fire of the field-piece dragged up by the mutineers. The other four were hanged on a scaffold built in the court-yard, round which the Guides had been quartered. With the usual apathy of Mahomedans, the men did not seem to appreciate their fate, and gave no trouble when told to mount the scaffold. They were buried in a rudely-dug grave near where they were hanged, and the gallows still remain ready for any other prisoners who may be considered worthy of death. The news of the execution is said to have had a healthy effect upon the city, it being now made clear to the populace that our old, absurd mode of dealing with assassins as if they were saints, has no longer a place in our policy. However distasteful the office of hangman may be, it has to be filled; and in the present case our army is but taking the place of the executioner by pressure of circumstances. The mutineers had not the courage to defend the city they had incriminated by their acts; and having spared the city, all that remains for us to do is to punish such of the rabble whose guilt is brought home to them.

There have been few changes in camp beyond a reduction in the number of regiments encamped on Siah Sung Ridge. The 5th Ghoorkas, 23rd Pioneers, and F-A, R.H.A., are now in Sherpur cantonments busily engaged in hutting themselves. The place is so filthy that a systematic cleansing and fumigating process is being instituted by Dr. Porter, in chief medical charge. The floors of the rooms are being scraped to a depth of three or four inches, and new floors laid down, while the wholesome influence

of whitewash is also being brought to bear upon the walls. Our troops are very healthy now—no cholera has been reported for a week—and it would be absurd to risk the chance of typhoid fever and kindred diseases by neglecting ordinary sanitary precautions. The barracks are expected to prove very comfortable quarters for the winter, as it seems plain we shall have to stay here for four or five months. Since the capture of the twelve guns, abandoned so hastily on the Ghazni Road, we have heard no more of regiments marching down upon Cabul, and for the present at least the enemy may be looked upon as non-existent. From the Shutargardan, too, we hear of the dispersion to their homes of the Mangals and Ghilzais who have worried Colonel Money so persistently, and perhaps there may now be a chance of our fortnight's post reaching us. It will be the last from that direction, as it has been resolved to trust in future to the Jellalabad route. What is the reason of the slow advance from the Khyber? This is what every one is asking, and the answer is generally brief enough: "Want of transport."

CAMP SIAH SUNG, *23rd October.*

Yesterday two ressaldars of the Afghan cavalry, who were proved to have been in the Bala Hissar during the attack upon the Embassy, and to have shared in the after-events, were marched out to execution in the Bala Hissar. When told they were to suffer death ignominiously by hanging, they showed no alarm, answering merely "It is well." This indifference to death stands these men in good stead; for, if found guilty, they are executed within twenty-four hours, thus leaving them only a very short time in which to consider the awkward termination of their careers. As a little trait of character it may be mentioned that one of these ressaldars, a fine portly man, picked out the stone from his signet-ring during the night, his pride no doubt prompting him to destroy the stone sooner than it should fall into infidel hands. It may be that he found means to convey it away secretly to his friends; but so close a watch is kept upon condemned prisoners that this seems unlikely. Ten o'clock is the hour at which men are generally hanged; and now, daily, a little crowd

of soldiers, camp-followers, and traders from the city gathers near the 72nd quarter-guard, from which starts the road down the ridge. The soldiers, in shirt-sleeves and with the favourite short pipe in their mouths, betray but faint curiosity, looking upon the culprits with hearty contempt, and only regretful that they have not had to meet them in fair fight. "If we'd been the French," I heard one man plaintively say, "there'd have been more than two or three." No doubt there would; but our mode of warfare with men, compared with whom the Arabs of Algeria are gentlemen, is very different to that followed by the generals of Napoleon III. The few Afghans who watch the little company of British infantry marching down with the prisoners in their midst are almost as much attracted by the bayonets of our men as by the presence of their unlucky countrymen; and they soon turn back to our tents to mulct us in rupees by sharp bargaining in poshteens (sheep-skin coats), furs, carpets, and Russian chinaware. The two ressaldars stepped out boldly enough to keep pace with their escort; and whatever their feelings may have been, they concealed them stolidly enough. They looked less brave when standing pinioned, with the rope about their necks, facing the ruins of the Residency; and not one on-looker felt the least pity for them, for the shot-marked walls on every side call up bitter memories and silence any thought of mercy. Our Black Assize is a very small one so far; for the majority of the leaders have escaped, and we have to content ourselves with the small fry. Even as it is, men are remanded from day to day if the evidence is at all faulty, and the Military Commission are careful to avoid jumping to conclusions. To-day a sepoy of the 1st Herat Regiment was hanged; and as he was caught in the city by a Kizilbash, it is expected that more of his companions are still hidden within the walls. With a temerity that showed his desperate case, this man had his rifle and ten cartridges with him, but he made no show of resistance. The difficulty of obtaining evidence is gradually disappearing, the Kizilbash who handed the sepoy to General Hills, Military Governor of Cabul, coming forward openly and stating all that he knew. It is to these Kizilbashes that we shall have greatly to trust in examining into the details of the Massacre, as the city people are all against us. Being semi-independent, and

forming a powerful section among themselves, the Kizilbashes have less to fear, than others, from any measures of revenge that may afterwards be taken against them; and if we can once get them to speak openly, our work will be greatly simplified. Of the secret combination which Kushdil Khan, Nek Mahomed, and the other influential chiefs about the Amir's person promoted, it will be far more difficult to take up the threads; but there is still some hope of tracing the conspiracy to its source. As the investigation proceeds, and the various statements forthcoming are dovetailed into each other, it will become plain upon whom the chief guilt is to rest. There are still several prisoners to be tried, and each day adds its little quota of evidence against the large class of "suspects."

There will no doubt be exception taken to the course Sir F. Roberts is pursuing, and political capital may be made out of it;* but unless the mission of the army now before Cabul is to be a failure, there is no option but to follow out to the end the lines of policy laid down. The murder of our Envoy and his escort was, as the Proclamation in the Bala Hissar of October 12th sets forth, "a treacherous and cowardly crime, which has brought indelible disgrace upon the Afghan people," and there is but one punishment for treachery and cowardice of this kind. If daily executions are to be the rule for the next few weeks, they can only be those of isolated persons who may fall into our hands; and their death is a very small atonement for the crime in which so many participated. The city rabble is unpunished; the Herat regiments have escaped; and if we are nominally in possession of Northern Afghanistan, that possession means very little to the ruffians we have to deal with. They will pocket our rupees and thrive upon us as long as we remain; and the instant we take our departure, their arms, now hidden, will soon be furbished up again for future mischief. Apart from this view of the case—which is, of course, only taken as regards the discontented and fanatical part of the nation more nearly concerned in the events of the first week in September—there are two other considerations which have to guide us in all that we are doing. The first is that our presence is not desired by any Afghan of

* This expectation proved only too well-founded.

spirit in the country, and the second and far more serious is that we have on our hands and are proclaiming ourselves the protectors of a sovereign who has scarcely a vestige of power. Of our position towards the Amir Yakub Khan I will speak presently; but the sullen submission of the people can more readily be disposed of. Whatever despot has governed Afghanistan his subjects have always preferred to suffer under his rule than to submit to ouside interference; and this jealousy of foreign intruders has always been a stumbling-block in our dealings with Amirs in days gone by. We have had to calculate not only upon the sincerity of the ruler, but upon his capacity for controlling the fanaticism of his subjects. Up to the Treaty of Gundamak, we blindly believed that such capacity could exist. Now, after being roughly undeceived, we have taken for a time these subjects under our immediate control, and we find them submitting to superior force, but yielding in no way cordially to their fate. We can trust them while an army is among them, but our acts are only looked upon as temporary, and not the least active assistance can be counted upon in our search after those whom we have come to punish. The people will give supplies when each village is visited by a purchasing party, strongly escorted by our cavalry; but otherwise they would gladly let us starve sooner than open their grain-stores for our benefit. The few days on which we had to fight, every villager who thought he could do so with safety to his own skin pulled trigger upon detached parties of our men; and if the headmen are now coming in, seeing Cabul is at our mercy, it is because they dread a visitation from our troops. They are as insincere in all their protestations of friendship as forty years ago; but we put the proper value now upon their promises, and are strong enough to punish them if occasion arises. Such is the attitude relatively of our army and the people: the only sign we give of our supremacy being by keeping a tight hand upon Cabul itself, and by hanging such of our prisoners as participated in its crime.

Our relations with the Amir are on a very different footing, though it would puzzle a Russian diplomatist to say what is the basis of our policy. It is a mixture of suspicion, forbearance, and contempt. Once Yakub Khan had thrown himself upon our

protection and disowned the acts of the mutineers, his personal safety was assured, and this, no doubt, was his first aim. But how much further did he mean to go? That he heartily desired his turbulent regiments to be punished one can well believe, and that he schemed to save Cabul from the fate it had courted is quite possible; but unless an accomplice in their acts, he could not have expected that his most trusted ministers and kinsmen would be arrested and himself confined to our camp. Here he must see our suspicion peeping out: but, then, mark our forbearance. In our proclamations rebellion against the Amir has been cited as worthy of death; we are living upon tribute grain collected as due to him; the citizens of Cabul have been declared "rebels against His Highness," and our Military Governor of the city is "administering justice and punishing with a strong hand all evil-doers" with his "consent." This is one side of the picture, and these acts are the direct outcome of our efforts to re-establish something like order after the anarchy which prevailed when we began our march upon the capital. There is nothing of contempt in them; it is merely laying the foundation for replacing the Amir on his throne more securely for the future. Our forbearance is further shown by the consideration displayed towards his subjects: nothing is taken that is not paid for—and, in most instances, exorbitantly paid for—and there is not the slightest affectation of treating the country through which we pass as conquered territory. But there is another side of the picture where new aspects appear and some anomalies crop up. The Amir's authority is proclaimed as justification for many of our acts; and yet at the same time we loot his citadel, and seize upon, as spoils of war, all guns and munitions of war which for a few weeks only had passed out of his hands into those of the rebels. Did he, by abandoning his capital and its defences, lose all right and interest in the cannon which guarded them, in the ammunition collected for years past in the Bala Hissar, and in the very clothing prepared for his regiments? Apparently he did, for the two hundred and fourteen guns now in our camp are looked upon as captured from an enemy who used many of them against us; the untold quantity of gunpowder which the explosion of the 16th untouched is to be destroyed; and our camp-followers are masquerading in the warm

uniforms of Afghan Highlanders. This is the feature of contempt in our policy. Our war, unlike that of last year, is against the subjects of the Amir, and not against the Amir himself; and, so far as we have gone, we have assumed the functions of the sovereign in their fullest sense, using his name only to smooth away difficulties that would otherwise have to be overcome by force. This assumption has had to be made for the simple reason that Yakub Khan is too weak and vacillating to exercise the authority which we have so ostentatiously recognized, and his ministers too corrupt to be trusted near his person. But beyond the immediate exercise of military power in Cabul and its neighbourhood, we can do nothing. There is no responsible Government which could take out of our hands the task of hunting up the men who have been guilty of treachery and murder; and as our first duty is to our dead Envoy and not to the living Amir, it follows that our present work is that of judges and not of king-makers. That work has to be done, and we are doing it unflinchingly, and until it is completed, the Amir must be content to accept his position as a sovereign in leading strings. By the time we have dealt with all the culprits that can be captured, the cloud of suspicion now resting upon Yakub Khan will either have deepened or been dissipated, and our second duty of punishing or aiding him under his difficulties will then have to be fulfilled. The drift of evidence seems now fairly in his favour, *i.e.*, he was not involved in the work of Nek Mahomed and Kushdil Khan; and taking it as most probable that he will finally be convicted of nothing worse than weakness, it will remain with us to say if he is again worthy of our trust. With his army dispersed, and his artillery (which goes for so much in the eyes of Asiatic nations) in our hands, the only semblance of power he can derive will be reflected from our arms—if we reinstate him in good faith. And if his weakness is held as our justification for reducing him to the rank of a political pensioner, comfortably housed in India, are we to fit out his successor with new war-trappings, which may at any moment be seized by mutinous regiments and turned against us at the first opportunity? More unlikely things have occurred than this; but unless our army carries back with it to India the trophies it now boasts of, there will be sad disappointment in every mind.

I have dwelt with great pertinacity upon the political side of the Afghan question as it is developing under the walls of Cabul, because our late successes may have overshadowed the great problem which has now to be worked out, viz., what are the future relations between India and Afghanistan to be? From what I have written, a fair judgment may be formed as to whether the sanguine view, that the line of policy laid down in the Treaty of Gundamak still remains good, can be consistently maintained. The arrest of the Mustaufi, the Wazir, and their two intimate friends, has raised the revolt in Cabul far above the level of a local *émeute* of discontented soldiers.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Line of Communication with the Kurram Valley—Hostile Action of the Tribes—Skirmish on the Surkhai Kotal—Defeat of the Tribesmen by the Shutargardan Garrison—The Enemy Reinforced—The Garrison Surrounded—Serious Complications—The Shutargardan relieved by General Charles Gough.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, *24th October.*

THERE is one great consolation for the troops who did not share in the advance upon Cabul, and that is, they have not been allowed by the tribes in our rear to rest in peace at the stations guarding the Kurram line of communication. General Gordon at Ali Kheyl, and Colonel Money at the Shutargardan, have had their hands very full indeed during the past few weeks; Mangals, Ghilzais, and their allies considering it a grand opportunity for attack. The bulk of our army was too far ahead, and had too important a mission to fulfil, to send back reinforcements; and no doubt these mongrel tribesmen believed they would have it all their own way. I hear that they called upon the Shinwaris and Khugianis on the northern slopes of the Safed Koh to come over and join in the rare chance that was presented of cutting up our troops; but the ill-timed zeal of the Mangal *moollahs* spoiled the whole arrangement. They gave out that we had been defeated at Cabul, and further promised their fanatical followers that bullets

and bayonets should leave them unscathed for a few days if they would only attack the handful of infidels then left at their mercy. Accordingly Ali Kheyl was attacked, and the result of the fighting in that neighbourhood was the complete dispersal of the tribesmen. At one time the situation seemed so full of peril that General Gordon made up his mind to abandon the Shutargardan, Colonel Money having informed him that he was surrounded on all sides, his forage cut off, and his water-supply threatened. Such a step would, of course, have only been resorted to in the last extremity, for a force retiring through the Hazara Darukht defile, followed by swarms of our enemy, confident that their success was assured, might have ended in a disaster. But there were at the Shutargardan two splendid fighting regiments, well-officered and in perfect trim, and their stubborn resistance kept the enemy in check until it was too late for them to profit by our difficulties. During the worst period at the Shutargardan, General Hugh Gough, with the 5th Punjab Cavalry, 5th Punjab Infantry, and four mountain guns was on his way thither to bring down supplies and close the communication, as it was no longer needed; and a welcome flash from Captain Straton's heliograph informed Colonel Money that help was at hand. The Mangals and their allies seem to have had earlier information, for they had already begun to disperse, though their stray shots into camp kept the garrison alive, and cost them something in the way of chargers and baggage animals. The abandonment of the post in the face of an enemy far superior in number was thus happily avoided, as well as the ill-effect it would have had upon every tribesman from Thull to Cabul. It is believed here that there was a tendency to exaggerate the danger at Ali Kheyl, and that undue importance was attached to the attack there; but we are loth to think that General Gordon would have recalled the two regiments from the Shutargardan merely to strengthen his own post. Such a step might have brought about a really serious conflict, as it would have been too glaring an admission of weakness not to have been appreciated by the neighbouring tribes. Of the earlier fighting at the Surkhai Kotal on the 14th, we have now full accounts from Colonel Money, which I give below.

On the 13th instant information was brought into the camp at

Shutargardan that the Machalgu Ghilzais were assembling in force, and would probably appear near Karatiga and the Surkhai Kotal, on that side, for the purpose of blocking up the road to Ali Kheyl and molesting our picquet on the Kotal. That mischief was on foot was proved by the telegraph wire to Ali Kheyl being cut at nine o'clock the same evening. The next morning Colonel Money, in sending the usual relief of 90 men to the picquet, ordered Major Collis, commanding the 21st P.N.I., to take two companies of his regiment and two guns of the Kohat Mountain Battery, and see what was occurring. He was further to attack and disperse any bodies of tribesmen who might have assembled, to detach a party to bring up ammunition left at Karatiga, and to repair the telegraph wire. On arriving at the Kotal, Major Collis found the picquet already engaged with a large body of Ghilzais, who had attacked at daybreak. His first step was to seize a hill on the right commanding the Kotal, which the enemy had failed to occupy. Fifty sepoys under a native officer were soon swarming up this, and in the meantime Captain Morgan opened fire with the mountain guns upon *sungars* filled with men, on a hill to the east. The shells were well pitched, and the enemy were so shaken that when 50 rifles of the 21st P.N.I., under Captain Gowan, and a similar number of the 3rd Sikhs under Lieutenant Fasken, went in at them with the bayonet, they abandoned their *sungars*, leaving several killed and wounded on the ground. The tribesmen then attacked on the south of the position, and came under fire of the 50 men first sent up to occupy the hill, commanding the Kotal. A company of the 21st P.N.I., under Lieutenant Young, was detached to strengthen this point, and at the same time a welcome reinforcement of 100 of the 3rd Sikhs under Major Griffiths arrived. One company of these doubled over the open, and got in rear of 600 of the enemy whom Captain Gowan and Lieutenant Fasken were driving back, and soon the hills to the north were all cleared. But on the south there were still 2,000 men to be dealt with; and as they were showing a bold front, Major Griffiths judged that a combined movement must be made against them as soon as the two companies returned from pursuing the 600 men they had scattered. The advanced company of the 21st P.N.I. under Lieutenant Young was bearing the brunt of

the enemy's fire, and Major Collis was left on the Kotal with instructions to proceed to their relief along the crest with his two companies when they returned, their right being protected by 100 of the 3rd Sikhs and two guns. Major Griffiths took the guns to the 3rd Sikhs, but on rounding the shoulder of the hill he found that it would be dangerous to wait any longer, as the enemy were growing bolder every minute. The company of the 21st P.N.I. under Lieutenant Young accordingly charged along the ridge and captured two standards, while the 3rd Sikhs under Lieutenant Cook (with whom as volunteers were Captain Turner, Political Officer; Captain Waterfield, R.A.; Captain Nicholson, R.E.; Lieutenant Fisher, 10th Hussars; Lieutenant Sherstone, Aide-de-camp; and Mr. Josephs, Superintendent of Telegraphs) came to close quarters on the slope below. The enemy retreated till they reached a spur running at right-angles to the ridge on which they had raised more strong *sungars*. The sepoys soon found themselves checked in their rush, the 21st getting into broken ground commanded by the main *sungar*, while the Sikhs had to halt at a ravine, the opposite side of which was bare of cover and swept by the fire of the Ghazis. Captain Waterfield, having shot down a man with his revolver, was himself shot through the thigh directly afterwards, and was pluckily removed out of danger by Lieutenant Cook. The mountain guns were brought into action again over the heads of the troops, as Major Collis was still waiting for his two companies to come up; but the enemy seeing so small a number of men opposed to them, charged out of the *sungars*, sword in hand, at Lieutenant Young's company; and, though checked by a hot fire, secured a good position from which to repeat the manœuvre. Just in the nick of time Major Collis arrived with his two companies, and three shells having been dropped right into the enemy's advanced position, he led the 20th straight at the *sungars* and cleared the ridge in fine style. The enemy fought most pluckily, hurling stones at our men as they went up to the *sungars* and leaping out to meet them; opposing their short swords to the sepoys' bayonets. Their numbers were, however, of no avail against the splendid form of our gallant fellows, and after a short hand-to-hand struggle they broke and fled towards Spegha. They were pursued for over a mile, and the

mountain guns harassed them still further. Their number was calculated at between 3,000 and 4,000, and they were beaten in fair fight by 150 of the 21st P.N.I. and 100 of the 3rd Sikhs, aided by two mountain guns. Forty of their dead were counted on the ground, and their total loss is estimated at 200 killed and wounded; while our casualties were only two killed and Captain Waterfield and seven sepoys wounded.

Meanwhile, a little affair had been going on at the Shutargardan itself. When Colonel Money had sent off Major Griffiths to reinforce the Surkhai Kotal, he took precautions for his own safety by ordering up two companies of the 21st P.N.I. with a mountain gun to the ridge which overlooks the Shutargardan camp. The move was a wise one, for the enemy were on the other side within fifty yards of the crest, and were only driven back with difficulty. They gathered together again and made a second attempt, but were again unsuccessful. Their persistency induced Colonel Money to proceed with two companies of the 3rd Sikhs and the fourth mountain gun to the ridge, and he was able from this point to watch the fight at the Surkhai Kotal. Seeing that Major Griffiths was hotly engaged, he sent Jemadar Sher Mahomed (the native officer who did such gallant work at Karatiga on the 27th of September) with a company of the 3rd Sikhs to make a diversion on the enemy's flank, and when the tribesmen fled, this party doubled down upon them, and after killing eight and wounding several others, joined in the general chase.

It was altogether a brilliant skirmish, this defeat of so large a body of the enemy at the Surkhai Kotal; and we hope to give the 3rd Sikhs an ovation when they march in here with General Hugh Gough in a few days. The 21st move back to Ali Kheyl.

The garrison had, after the skirmish, to bear a siege which came about in this way:—On the morning of the 14th it was found that the main body of the enemy still held the position they had taken up after being driven off the Surkhai Kotal. A wing of the 21st Punjab Native Infantry was sent with orders to attack if they moved towards the Kotal, and a company of the 3rd Sikhs went to the Karatiga Fort to bring up the stores and ammunition left there. The fort was found to have been thoroughly looted. Allahaddin, a brother of Padshah Khan, the Ghilzai chief, reported

that the enemy had been largely reinforced, and said from 10,000 to 17,000 men had assembled, the whole country being in arms. Colonel Money therefore wisely resolved to draw in his defences under cover of night. The Surkhai Kotal was abandoned on the 15th. News of 300 or 400 regular soldiers of the Amir's army, armed with Sniders and Enfields, joining the tribes was given soon afterwards. The enemy showed in such numbers southwards of the ridge and to the south of the camp that the outlying picquet was withdrawn and fell back upon the strong picquet posts near the camp. On the 17th the enemy occupied the road from Karatiga to Kassim Kheyl, and cut off the grass-supply. Their numbers were so great that reasonable anxiety was felt about an attack, so our men worked at strengthening the defences, and Captain Nicholson, R.E., laid down wire entanglements at weak points to check any rush. In the evening Allahaddin brought in the *jirgah* who proposed some absurd terms of surrender,* but they were sent back with a hint to go to Cabul and settle terms there. The garrison had only regimental ammunition with them, and this had been greatly reduced by the action of the 14th. The mountain guns also having a small number of rounds, Colonel Money resolved to husband his ammunition and act on the defensive, as he did not know when he might be relieved. On the 18th the enemy showed in still greater force, and pushed to within 300 yards of our outpost picquets, and cut off the water supply. On both the 17th and 18th, they had kept up a incessant fire into the camp, but with little result. On the 19th, when matters looked very serious, the heliograph was seen flashing at Kushi, and Colonel Money learnt that General Hugh Gough was there with two regiments and four guns. Upon this he knew he was safe, and after sending skirmishers down towards the springs on the Kushi Road he got his guns into action and shelled the enemy's line with common shell and shrapnel right heartily. The shells soon silenced the opposition musketry fire, and the tribesmen

* An officer wrote at the time:—"In the evening the enemy sent in five confidential men to say that, of course, we must now give in, that two regiments could not hold out an hour, but they were willing to allow us to leave the Shutargardan and to provide us with carriages and hostages; we to be at liberty to retire to Ali Kheyl or to Cabul, and for this consideration we were to pay them two lakhs. Poor Allahaddin Khan was at his wits' end."

gradually drew off, not a man being left at evening. Their loss is estimated at 100 killed and wounded. Our casualties were seven men wounded. The enemy had brought 200 of their women to witness the final successful attack, but they were all disappointed. General Gough occupied the Shinkai Kotal on the evening of the 19th and reached the Shutargardan next day in a snow-storm. His arrival was the signal for the dispersion of all tribes.

CHAPTER IX.

Camp Life at Cabul—Afghan Costermongers—Curiosity of Villagers—The Hazaras—Surrender of Firearms—City Traders—The Purchase of Transport Animals—Peaceful State of the Country—The Abdication of the Amir—His Reasons for the Step—Assumption of the Government by the British—General Roberts's Proclamation—Arrest of the Amir—Progress of the Inquiry into the Massacre—The Murder of Abdul Karim—Military Executions—Seizure of Treasure.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, *25th October.*

OUR lines are cast in pleasant places just at present; for, apart from the political puzzle which some of us study, and which I have already tried to explain, there is nothing to disturb our equanimity. We have a high and dry encamping ground, from which we can travel down at our leisure, either citywards, to explore the mysteries of Cabul and ponder over the Bala Hissar, now rapidly being cleared out; or else down into the Cabul plain, to exercise our horses on the racecourse, or over the water-channels which everywhere intersect the fields. The view on every side is an impressive one, for the mountains which keep watch and ward over Cabul are very picturesque, rising abruptly from the fields below, and seeming to shut us out securely from the petty world beyond. News of that outer world has been very scant of late, and it is with ill-concealed impatience that many of us turn eastward to where the Khurd Cabul and Jugdulluck Hills hide the long valley up which the Khyber column is crawling with tortoise-slowness. There comes no heliographic flash down to cheer us, and one might as well consult the impassible Hindu Kush itself. But there is a pleasanter outlook westwards.

Through the gorge in rear of the city we catch a glimpse of the Chardeh Valley, a very Eden of fertility, and in the far background is the high range of mountains forming the sky-line towards distant Turkistan, over which we have gorgeous sunsets that more than atone for the chilliness which creeps over Siah Sung Ridge as the day closes. We have the sharp air of the early morning to brace us for routine work that must be gone through, and such genial warmth all day as to make the shade of our tight little tents seem almost superfluous. Whatever of cold and discomfort there may be in store for us, we are comfortable enough now, though perhaps the air bites shrewdly at midnight to the sentry at his post. His outlook is chiefly for thieves who may think there is loot to be got in our camp; but we seem to have frightened the people into honesty, for robberies are unknown. Our camp is thronged with petty traders, and in convenient spots are little bazaars for our soldiers and camp-followers, to whom they are a rare boon. Fruit in abundance is exposed most temptingly: grapes, apples, pears, and pomegranates being sold so cheaply that a few pice will buy sufficient to satisfy even a soldier's appetite; while melons of a flavour and succulency almost unknown to us poor dwellers in Hindustan are piled together in profusion. The usual curry-stuffs and native delicacies are ranged alongside these edibles; and occasionally some delicious beetroot or a gigantic cabbage nestling in a heap of bright-skinned onions tempts a *khansamah* doing his day's marketing to halt and haggle in a lordly manner until a fair bargain is struck. The Afghan "coster" is not an easy personage to deal with, for he has learnt the value of our rupees, and is determined to make the most of the present opportunity. In our canvas streets there is all day long a busy stream of men and boys eagerly selling wares from the city and surrounding villages, and if so inclined we could spend hours in making casual purchases. In the early morning villagers with their simple produce of fowls, ducks, pigeons, eggs, jars of milk and clotted cream—the latter particularly good—come sauntering in and pass away their time in intently gazing at our strange freaks in the way of early "tubs" or substantial breakfasts. Their livestock slung across their shoulders, or carelessly carried head downwards, appears quite a secondary consideration, until they

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are pounced upon by some *bon-vivant*, who thinks life is not worth living if it is merely to be sustained by commissariat rations —now, alas! minus their redeeming feature of wholesome rum. Once the villager sees a bargain may be made, he wakes up suddenly to the fact of having something to sell, and in the *patois* of the country explains the number of rupees or annas he requires. That he does not get them need scarcely be said, as his first prices are exorbitant; but after some pantomimic action, or by calling in the aid of some Pathan sepoy near at hand, terms are arranged, and with the silver bits stowed away mysteriously in his waistcloth the innocent native wends his way to another part of the camp, there to dispose of more of his stock. When he has got rid of his little store he does not, as a conscientious husbandman should, go quietly home, but hangs about our tents with a face full of inquiry and amazement. He pushes his curiosity at times almost to impertinence, perhaps with the philanthropic idea of giving us a few wrinkles as to the proper mode of living in this part of the world; but at the first sharp word he "moves on" a few paces, and turns his attention to some other feature of our local life. That he is poor and strictly dishonest there can be no reasonable doubt; but his poverty will pass away if we stay long at Cabul, and his dishonesty will be covered with the cloak of simplicity as long as military law prevails. This class of peasant who comes into our midst is not of the usual bloodthirsty Afghan type; and he comes too, without arms, for our proclamation against carrying weapons is now widely known, and whatever he may be on his native heath, when his tribe is on the war-path, he looks inoffensive enough now.

Among our other visitors are the Hazaras: the hewers of wood and drawers of water, as they have been called, of all Afghanistan. Their Mongol type of face, beardless and with the true slanting eyes of their race, is noticeable at once among the Jewish-looking Afghans whom they serve so well. Sunburnt, and with many coats of dirt upon them, they look the real labourers of the land; and as their stalwart backs are generally bent under heavy loads of firewood or huge sacks of forage, it can be seen they are no drones. They are always very intent upon their work, never loitering or wonder-struck; and in this respect they resemble the Ghoorkas.

TO VIEW
ANNOTATIONS

They are good-humoured and happy enough, and any stray salutation cast to them is always answered by a smile and a nod of their felt-crowned heads, as if kindness were too rare not to be acknowledged. Sometimes their burdens are very different from those just mentioned, for they come staggering in with a score of matchlocks or Enfield rifles on their backs which their village *maliks* have sent in to be bought up and destroyed by the Sirkar. This bringing in of arms has been quite a feature of camp life, it being by no means unusual to meet a file of these men, each laden with the guns that are to be given up. They are thrown down, and counted by soldiers told off for the duty, and the idlers from the city gather round to stare at our contemptuous examination of the weapons. As most of the guns are loaded and even doubled-loaded, it is somewhat risky to meddle with them; but curiosity prompts us to look down muzzles and cock triggers in a most reckless way. The Sniders are safe enough to handle, as the breech can be opened and any cartridge withdrawn; but with the others it is different. Tower-marked Enfields rest side by side with the old two-grooved Brunswick rifle; while Cabul-made smooth-bores and imitation Enfields are mixed with jhezails and the "Brown Besses" the Indian Government gave away so lavishly in the days of their foolishness. We are destroying these arms—locks, stock, and barrel—except in the case of such Sniders as seem really serviceable. The Afghan Snider is by no means a badly-made weapon, and the cartridges from the Bala Hissar Arsenal are equally good. The latter are of a kind known as solid-drawn, with strong bases, and if recapped can be used several times with perfect safety. Where machinery and skilled mechanics are scarce, this is, of course, a great consideration. We do not find many cartridges delivered up, and it seems a pity that a small price was not fixed upon powder and lead so as to make disarmament more complete. There are thousands of good rifles still scattered over the country, in the hands of the Amir's soldiers; and, in the future, ammunition will be greatly in request, now that the Bala Hissar has fallen into our hands. A few swords, bayonets, and knives, have come in, but they are of no account. We have received over 3,000 rifles and guns of the different kinds mentioned, and more will, perhaps, be given up.

Far removed from the villagers and the Hazaras are the more pretentious city traders, who bring poshteens, furs, native cloth, chinaware, old coins, Bokhara silks, Persian carpets, jewellery, and precious stones for sale. They are mostly Kizilbashes and Cabul-born Hindus, many of whom have travelled far and have seen most of the cities of Central and Western Asia. As traders they are as keen as Jew pedlars: as visitors they make themselves as much at home as our intimate friends. To bargain with them is an exercise in chicanery that would quicken the wits of a Shylock: to listen to their soft flattery as they extol the benefits of British rule is to believe that we are the finest race in the world. The chicanery is glossed over and hidden by the soothing praises of our benevolence, and the crimson-turbaned Kizilbash or caste-marked Hindu, who has sat himself on our stool or squatted in our tent is enriched accordingly. We buy furs that would cost us less in Peshawur, and silks that, perhaps, have never seen a Bokhara loom, and think we have done well in our bargaining; whereas, most likely, the worthy traders have netted excessive profits. It is the old story of our rupees filling the coffers of the people we have come among as conquerors, and of our pride forbidding us to acknowledge it. And yet we enjoy the chaffering with these rascals, and find an amusement in making them turn out their pockets. From one will be produced a rare fox-skin, from another a Russian tea-cup and saucer (made in England, but stamped with the Moscow dealer's name); from a third a little packet of diamonds or turquoises—the latter often of a beautiful colour, but marred by flaws. Then the rings on the man's finger are taken off and examined, the owner fixing a price that is almost prohibitive on each stone; or a curiously-worked belt and pouch is unbuckled at our insistance, and appraised in the usual way. And so on to the end of the chapter. But Kizilbash or Hindu is more than a match for the Western Kafir; and one is tempted to believe that the Caucasian is really "played out" as far as astuteness in trading goes. Perhaps we may be more successful in dealing with the genuine Afghan in the city bazaars which we are now beginning to visit.

Besides the mercenary bartering that wiles away our leisure, there is plenty of stir and excitement in our camp life. *Maliks*

and chiefs from a distance are met in little knots, seeking out the political officers, or waiting upon the commissariat officers to enter into contracts for food supply; gaily-apparalled horsemen come to show off the graces of their Turcoman steeds; while ragged urchins on *yaboos*, the strong ponies peculiar to the country, ride here and there in easy confidence, halting occasionally to exchange opinions on local affairs. Near the head-quarters of the 1st Brigade is quite a little horse-fair, where General Macpherson passes in review some hundreds of *yaboos* daily, and purchases largely for transport purposes. The noisy, chattering crowd is densest here, and the *yaboo* fights are numerous, each pony choosing his nearest neighbour as a fit object of attack. Near by is the Amir's tent with its little cluster of attendants' *pals* about it, and a sentry from a guard of Europeans stationed over them pacing smartly to and fro. At times a few prisoners with an escort of sepoys are marched past on their way to the tent in head-quarters, where the military commission sits which is to try them; or on "execution days" a company of Europeans swing past with one or two men in their midst, and take the path down the ridge to the Bala Hissar, where the gallows is waiting ready. On the circular bit of raised ground, at the western end of the head-quarters' camp and overlooking the city, is a little party of signallers near a large brass field-piece captured at Sherpur, and now used as a time-gun. The heliograph flashes up in response to one on the Bala Hissar ridge, which is speaking to Kushi, and we know that news is travelling to and from the Shutargardan. In the evening one of the bands plays on this natural band-stand, around the flag-staff which is reared in the centre, and with the last strains of "God Save the Queen" our day closes, the flag is furled, and we pass into the warmth and comfort of our snug little tents. Beneath all this surface of visible camp-life is the steady current of routine work which goes on unceasingly and smoothly, no outside influences acting as disturbing agents. Our men are healthy and contented; their wounded comrades are doing well; supplies are coming in abundantly; and, looking down upon Sherpur, we see that warm winter quarters are being got ready; so all, apart from political questions, is rose-coloured.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, 28*th October.*

This morning only did it become publicly known that Yakub Khan had abdicated the Amirship, the newspapers brought in by the mail from India giving all beyond General Roberts and his immediate advisers their first news of the occurrence. It was, of course, on account of possible mischief ensuing if the abdication were made known and the Government afterwards refused to accept it, that secrecy was observed regarding the Amir's act; and, singularly enough, while people in India and England have been speculating as to the probable consequences of the step, we on the spot have been in happy ignorance of the under-current of events. The incidents of the abdication were as follows:—October 12th was the day appointed for the Proclamation in the Bala Hissar, at which the Amir had been ordered to attend. At six o'clock in the morning of that day he left his camp below the Siah Sung Ridge, and went with only two servants to Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer, and asked for an immediate interview with General Roberts. In a few minutes he was ushered into the General's tent, and at his request a private interview was granted. Yakub Khan was greatly excited, and he abruptly announced his intention of resigning the Amirship. His life, he said, had become so miserable that he could no longer endure it. Sir F. Roberts at once asked him to consider what he was saying, as abdication was a very serious step. The Amir persisted in saying that his mind was made up; he had intended to resign at Kushi, but was persuaded by his Ministers not to do so. Now he would sooner be a grass-cutter in the British camp than remain Amir of Cabul. He earnestly wished that his resignation should be accepted; and, for himself, he was ready to go to India, London, Malta, or wherever the Viceroy should choose to send him. General Roberts again requested him to reconsider the matter, and placed a tent at his disposal near head-quarters. At ten o'clock, the hour fixed for falling in for the procession to the Bala Hissar, the Amir again visited the General, and announced that his decision was fixed: he wished to resign at once. Sir F. Roberts replied that he himself could not accept the resignation without having consulted the Viceroy, and he asked the Amir to

let matters remain *in statu quo* until an answer could be received from Simla, the British authorities in the meantime carrying on the Government in the Amir's name. Yakub Khan agreed to this without further parley, but asked permission to absent himself from the Bala Hissar that morning, as the excitement and trouble he had undergone had made him ill. He would order his eldest son and all the principal sirdars to attend and hear the Proclamation read. He was accordingly excused, and the same afternoon his tents and those of his personal attendants were moved to the head-quarters. He knew nothing of the contents of the Proclamation of October 12th, and was quite unaware of the intended arrest of his Ministers. Such were the circumstances attending his abdication.

Up to this afternoon it was believed that the ex-Amir was acting in good faith, but within the last few hours we have had reason to change our opinion. Since the entrance into the Bala Hissar, on October 12th, Yakub Khan has been living in a large tent close to head-quarters, and has had about him a little army of servants, whose tents also have been pitched about that of their master. He was reported to be much happier in his mind now that his scheming Ministers had been removed from about his person, and once or twice he had shown himself among us in the evening, walking with General Roberts up and down the row of tents in which the Staff are lodged, and listening with much delight to the band playing near. The restraint placed upon him after he had come voluntarily into our camp from among his own people on the lower slope of the Ridge, was merely that a guard of twenty European soldiers was stationed over his tents, while two sentries paced before them night and day. This was his "guard of honour" nominally, though if he had tried to escape they would instantly have become his gaolers. It was most important that we should have him with us while we were examining into the guilt of the various persons concerned in the Massacre; for if once he had been a free agent, he would probably have been made an instrument of intrigue by such men as the Mustaufi and the Wazir. This was proved by the episode of Nek Mahomed's visit to him at Charasia the day before the action of the 6th, the commander-in-chief of the rebel army returning to Cabul and pro-

claiming that the Amir had ordered all men to resist the British force. Thus was there every reason to keep him under fairly close surveillance, as the scattered units of his disbanded army are still capable of doing harm if once gathered together. In my letter of the 23rd I pointed out very fully the anomalous position we were occupying here: proclaiming the Amir's authority on the one hand, and appropriating all his stores and munitions of war on the other. This was, of course, written without knowledge of what had occurred on the 12th; and, viewed in the new light that has now scattered the political darkness here, the anomaly at once vanishes. Yakub Khan had voluntarily cast away all power and responsibility, and the only course remaining for Sir F. Roberts was to assume the discarded authority and take every means to secure order in Cabul. The clearing out of the Bala Hissar and the appropriation of all that it contained, except Yakub Khan's personal property, now stands out as merely an ordinary taking-over of effects surrendered to us, and not the spoliation of a sovereign whose authority we were re-establishing. We could not, in fact, have done otherwise, unless we had waited for a declaration of the ministerial policy at home, and the delay might, perhaps, have had mischievous results.

Now it is all plain-sailing. We know what our course is to be, and we can follow it out consistently. Yakub Khan as Amir was merely a puppet; and government through such a medium is always unsatisfactory. Now his position is simplified—and simplified, too, by his own act—though his future position in life not a man in camp can foreshadow. The proclamation accepting his abdication was received here from Simla by cypher telegram on the 26th; and to-day a translation of it was issued to the chief sirdars of Cabul, who cannot mistake the meaning conveyed in the following terse sentences:—

"I, General Roberts, on behalf of the British Government, hereby proclaim that the Amir having of his own free will abdicated, has left Afghanistan without a Government. In consequence of the shameful outrage upon its Envoy and *suite*, the British Government has been compelled to occupy by force of arms Cabul, the capital, and take military possession of other parts of Afghanistan. The British Government now commands that all Afghan authori-

ties, chiefs, and sirdars do continue their functions in maintaining order, referring to me whenever necessary. The British Government desires that the people shall be treated with justice and benevolence, and that their religious feelings and customs be respected. The services of such sirdars and chiefs as assist in preserving order will be duly recognized; but all disturbers of the peace and persons concerned in attacks upon the British authority will meet with condign punishment. The British Government, after consultation with the principal sirdars, tribal chiefs, and others representing the interests and wishes of the various provinces and cities, will declare its will as to the future permanent arrangements to be made for the good government of the people."

Judging from internal evidence, this Proclamation bears the stamp of the home Ministry, and it has been hailed with unbounded satisfaction by all among us who have been fearing a repetition of the old shilly-shally policy which has had such disastrous results. The Government has now committed itself to a distinct policy which can be proclaimed throughout Afghanistan, and our duty now is to wait until "the principal sirdars, tribal chiefs, and others representing the interests and wishes of the various provinces and cities," have been made aware of what has occurred. Messengers will be sent with copies of the Proclamation to them; and they will no doubt be invited to come to Cabul, and hear the "will" of the British Government. It is no longer a question of the "wishes" of the Viceroy of India, but a distinct assertion of our newly-acquired power in Afghanistan.

To-day has been marked, also, not only by the issue of the Proclamation, but by a new change of front on the part of Yakub Khan. Whatever his fears or suspicions may be, or whatever guilty consciousness he may have of participation in the Massacre, he has withdrawn so far from his position of the 12th—when he said he would willingly go wherever the Viceroy might deport him: to India, London, or Malta—that he has contemplated flight to Turkistan. Such, at least, is the information generally believed to have been received; and the action taken this afternoon proves that he has so far committed himself as to jeopardize his future freedom. About five o'clock his tent was isolated by the removal of all those of his servants pitched about it: his guard was increased

to forty British soldiers, and instead of two sentries there are now four pacing to and fro with fixed bayonets. A fifth sentry is within the tent itself, and the ex-Amir is as close a prisoner as he can be made. Four personal attendants only are now allowed to him, and these, also, are under guard. His food will be examined carefully before it is passed to his servants, and every possible precaution against outside information being conveyed to him will be taken.

CAMP SIAH SUNG, *30th October.*

Since the issue of the Proclamation and the close confinement of Yakub Khan to his tent two days ago, there has been no further development of the situation, and it seems as if we should quietly wait here for the winter in order to allow events to develop themselves without further demonstration of our force. We have Cabul city and its guilt to deal with; and though there are few outward signs of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the Massacre of our Embassy, there is a steady stream of work running on, the results of which have yet to be declared. This has been done chiefly by Colonel Macgregor, aided hitherto by Hyat Khan, Assistant Political Officer, who ferrets out persons likely to give evidence; and now that Dr. Bellew (the third member of the Commission) has arrived, still further progress is being made in unravelling the complicated web of falsehood which has been drawn about the occurrence. Sixty witnesses have been examined privately; and, as each one is quite in ignorance of what has been said before, the truth of the various stories told can be tested by the comparisons drawn between the testimony of the friends and enemies of Yakub Khan. Such of his late confidential advisers and adherents as have come under cross-examination have generally injured his cause by affirming too much; and plausible stories have been concocted to divert attention from his shortcoming in not affording material aid to Sir Louis Cavagnari. Much, for instance, has been made of the little flash of energy he showed in sending Daoud Shah and thirty men to remonstrate with the mutineers; and it has been asserted that the determined attitude of the rabble was proved by Daoud Shah being bayoneted and all his escort killed. But when this episode is looked closely into, and a little independent evidence is taken, it becomes appar-

ent that Daoud Shah had merely a few attendants with him, and none of these were killed; while he himself was by no means so maltreated as he would have us believe. There is another incident, too, which assumes a new complexion when carefully examined. Soon after the Massacre, Yakub Khan put to death Abdul Karim, a powerful Kohistani chief, whose English proclivities were very pronounced. The explanation of this act, as given by Abdullah Gyaz (a confidential adviser of the ex-Amir, arrested yesterday) is that Yakub Khan sent that chief from his palace to remonstrate with the troops, and that, instead of carrying out his orders, he gave direct encouragement to the mutineers, and urged them to continue their attack on the Residency. Upon Abdul Karim's return to the palace, Abdullah Gyaz affirms, Yakub Khan was informed of his treacherous disobedience, and, after the Massacre had taken place, ordered that he should be executed. This story is so utterly improbable that it is scarcely worth consideration; but its falsity has been proved very directly, as the name of every man of importance who went near the mutinous troops has been obtained from various sources, friendly and otherwise, and Abdul Karim has never before been mentioned in the list. The inference that suggests itself is that the wire-pullers about Yakub Khan were distrustful of Abdul Karim, whose honesty of purpose and known sympathy with the English rendered him a dangerous personage in their eyes, and on the principle that dead men tell no tales, they induced the Amir to sanction his execution. He probably knew too much, and was put out of the way before he had an opportunity of using his knowledge. In an investigation, such as that now going on, it is only possible to shape out conclusions by inference, for even such witnesses as profess unbounded friendship towards us lie so circumstantially to serve their own ends, that very little reliance can be placed on them. It is not as if a long period had elapsed since the events took place: the occurrence must still be fresh in the minds of everybody: but there is such a tendency to intrigue now that our power is established in Cabul, that distrust is bred in our minds in an increasing ratio as the evidence accumulates. There is no bottom to the well in which Afghan truth was sunk ages ago, and it is disheartening to sound it now. The ex-Amir's partisans have lied hon-

estly enough to shield their master, while he was still protected by us; but now that he is a nonentity, and all semblance of power has passed from him, there may be a change in their attitude. They have a certain rude idea of faithfulness to their salt; but when they see their Chief arrested without a word of warning, after being allowed to move freely among us for weeks, their fortitude may not be equal to the emergency, and they may seek to purchase their own safety by voluntary disclosures. For these we must wait.

In the mean time the smaller fry are being dealt with by the Military Commission, under whose orders eleven prisoners have been hanged. The order of procedure is that the case against men under arrest is fully gone into by Colonel Macgregor, aided by Hyat Khan; and when the evidence and witnesses are ready, the prisoners are "committed," so to say, to the Commission, just as in ordinary criminal inquiries they would be passed from the Police Magistrate to the Assize Judge. There is no unseemly hurry or vindictive haste displayed in the inquiry. All goes on systematically and deliberately; and before the Commission the men under arrest are allowed to hear all that has been stated against them and to give such explanation as they desire. If there then appears new matter for inquiry, they are remanded from day to day; and no effort is spared, in common fairness to them, to test the truth of their statements. If found guilty, they are condemned to death; but even then the sentence is not carried out without reference to a third source of authority—that of Sir Frederick Roberts himself. If he approves the finding, he signs the order for execution, and the Provost-Marshal has then to fulfil the duty of his office without delay. But if there seem doubtful points strong enough to be yet a third time considered, the sentence of death is held in suspense; and even now we have in our quarter-guards men in this stage, with the halter dangling before their eyes. It will be seen that nothing can be fairer than the course taken by Sir Frederick Roberts to punish such as deserve death for their past actions in the early weeks of September; and in the face of it there is none of that reckless blood-spilling which we may get the credit for. In our Assize the old line—

"And wretches hang that jurymen may dine—"

is unknown: and if there is grumbling occasionally at the pains taken to convict prisoners instead of hanging them on mere suspicion, it is all the more creditable to our Chief and his Commissioners that no attention is paid to it. To-day two men were marched off to execution who richly deserved their fate. The one was the *jemadar* of the rascally Kotwal of Cabul, himself hanged on the 20th. Like the Kotwal, he was most servile in offering aid to us *after* our arrival, and, on the night of the 8th, acted as a guide to some troops marching up the Bala Hissar Bidge, in connection with the action against the rebels on that day. The second prisoner was a Mahomedan resident of Cabul, in whose house a box, marked "Cabul Embassy," was found by a searching party of the 28th Regiment. He could give no explanation of how he came by the box, except the colourless one that it had been placed in his rooms by an enemy. Several guns and swords were also found in his house; and, nothing in his favour being forthcoming, he was sent to execution. The guilt or innocence of the confidential friends of Yakub Khan, who are now prisoners, is still a question of doubt; but none are arrested without justification, and their cases will undergo the usual scrutiny.

There is a probability that the taking of Cabul may not be so barren as we first thought in the matter of loot. The city itself having been respected, there was not much to get out of the Bala Hissar beyond warlike stores and ammunition. But to-day the news has been made known that a vast store of treasure is hidden in houses belonging to Yakub Khan, or his near relatives living within the walls. Our treasure-chest has sunk very low of ate by reason of the enormous purchases made by the Commissariat, which has to provide five months' stores for the army. Carriage was so scarce when we marched up from Ali Kheyl, that only a few lakhs were brought up, and poverty is staring us in the face. Such expedients as giving bills upon India to Hindu and Kizilbash merchants in Cabul, or in receiving from Wali Mahomed and his sirdars many thousands of Bokhara gold *tillahs* (worth Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 each), or Russian five-rouble pieces said to be worth Rs. 11-8, though nobody really knows their legitimate market value—such expedients could not last long; and as nothing has been done to exact the fine imposed upon the Cabulis, it was clear that specie

would have to be raised from some source yet untouched. It is said that Yakub Khan, on assuming the Amirship, appropriated many lakhs of rupees which his father had given to the mother of Abdullah Jan, Shere Ali's favourite son, and these he had cleared out of the Bala Hissar, and, with other property of value, had hidden in the city. A little party of British soldiers filed off to the house indicated by our informers this morning, and the officer in charge of our treasure-chest (Major Moriarty) and Lieutenant Neville Chamberlain, Assistant Political Officer, had soon their eyes gladdened by bags and boxes of gold coins, besides finding on all sides rich silks, brocades, and other portable property of enormous value. About eight lakhs in gold were secured, and native rumour affirms that before the examination comes to an end, a million sterling may be unearthed. Boxes innumerable have still to be opened, and our spies are firm in their assurance that the value in coin and precious stones alone is eighty lakhs of rupees. To-morrow the examination of the place will be continued, and it is hoped another good day's find will be the result. This prize-money, for no doubt it will be considered as such, if it is confiscated, will be a just reward for the energy and dash our commander and his troops have shown in the capture of Cabul; and even if it is found necessary to use the money now for our immediate wants, the debtor and creditor account should be carefully kept in view of future distribution. Such scandals as that of Delhi and Kirwee need not be repeated in the case of Cabul.*

* It has since been ruled that the treasure is not to be considered prize-money. Abdur Rahman, upon his accession to the Amirship, was given 19½ lakhs of rupees, of wich 9½ will appear in the accounts as "refunded to the Afghan Government." This was the sum found in Cabul as detailed above.

CHAPTER X.

The Force moves into Sherpur Cantonments—Building Winter Quarters—The Sirdar and the Soldier—A Trying Climate—General Macpherson starts for Jugdulluck—Arrival of Stores from the Shutargarden—The Khyber Line of Communication—Various Routes to Jugdulluck—The Luttabund Kotal—The Chinari Route—The Khurd Cabul Defile—Its Difficulties Exaggerated—General Macpherson marches to Sei Baba—Reception of the Shutargardan Garrison—Padshah Khan dismissed to his Home—Death of Allahaddin.

SHERPUR CANTONMENTS, *1st November.*

THE scattered camp on the Siah Sung Ridge, though well situated from a military point of view, and extremely healthy and dry, involved such heavy duties for the troops, that it was resolved to move into these cantonments sooner than was originally intended. The reserve Commissariat stores were all sent here; and as a large quantity of food had also to be kept at Siah Sung, there was double guard-duty to be done; and this in addition to such work as furnishing a picquet on the Bala Hissar Heights, a strong guard in the city, another over the Amir's tent, and a third to watch the excavations in the Residency and the Arsenal ruins. Besides all these, the European regiments had nearly every day to send a company to guard prisoners on their way to execution, while the cavalry were out on escort duty with Commissariat officers, buying up food, forage, and firewood. All these multifarious duties resulted, technically, in giving the men only two nights a week in bed; and as after sunset the cold makes itself felt very sharply, the work became very trying. The 5th Ghoorkas and 23rd Pioneers, too, were separated from the rest of the force, being sent down here to build their winter quarters, the barracks built by Shere Ali not being equal to accommodating all the regiments. Under these circumstances it was thought best to move everybody to Sherpur—except, of course, such regiments as were to move out towards Jugdulluck for the purpose of opening up communication with the Khyber Force. We struck our tents on Siah Sung Ridge yesterday morning at nine o'clock, and we are here encamped on

the cultivated fields which the three walls of the cantonment enclose. The change is one for the better, as all duties are lightened, picquets only being wanted on the Bemaru Heights, which shut us in on the north side. A few sentries at the five large gates, and others scattered about the camp, are all that are required; and orders can be transmitted to regiments or brigades in a few moments, as all are within the line of walls. Some thousands of masons, carpenters, and Hazara coolies are busily engaged under our Engineer officers in plastering, whitewashing, and making generally comfortable the long rows of rooms once intended for the Afghan army, while blocks of rooms are also being built in the open for such regiments as have not had quarters assigned to them in Shere Ali's barracks. The foundations of a pretentious palace had been begun by our late enemy at the foot of the Bemaru hills, and three sides of this had been raised some six or seven feet high—good, solid masonry, well cemented together. Mud buildings, with wooden framework, are being raised on both sides of these walls by the Ghoorkas; and as they work with their customary earnestness in things great and small, they will soon be under first-rate shelter. The Pioneers are building their barracks a little higher up the Ridge to the north-east, but only one company is now engaged on them, the regiment being away on service with General Macpherson, who has started eastwards to join hands with General Charles Gough's Brigade, now somewhere near Gundamak, on the Khyber side. Wood in abundance, from the houses in the Bala Hissar, has been brought in; and in the matter of doors and windows, Cabul *mistris* are hard at work all day, turning them out by the score. There is much to be done yet before we are all housed for the winter, and the camp-followers and kahars have yet to be provided for, it being found impossible to clear out the Bemaru village for them, as the inhabitants are more numerous than were at first supposed, and they would have difficulty in finding shelter in Cabul or the villages about. Bemaru, which is embraced within the line of fortifications, will, therefore, remain undisturbed, for the present. If Bemaru could be turned into a large bazaar it would be a great gain, as the Cabul bazaar is a mile and a half away; and when snow is on the ground, such a distance cannot be travelled daily by our

sepoys and followers without much discomfort. With native troops, and even European soldiers accustomed to Indian stations, a bazaar is almost a necessity, as little additions to the men's rations and clothing can be picked up in it—all tending to keep them more contented and in better health. It is needless to say that stringent rules will be framed against the vending of native liquors; but these are most unpalatable, as a rule, and are not likely to be much in request. A mixture of strong Hollands gin and fusil oil, flavoured with turpentine, may give you some idea of Afghan arrack, but it must be tasted to be fully appreciated. We have been so long without rum, that a few strong stomachs have been found equal to grappling with it when largely diluted with water; but, as a "dram," it would choke off a highly-seasoned Dutch skipper. Then, as food is good and plentiful, there is not the demand for strong liquor that there might otherwise be. Besides, hard work keeps the soldiers from that idle lounging which is such an incentive to drink. One little incident, however, while I am dealing with this matter of drinking, is worth mentioning. Some casks of Commissariat rum were left, too temptingly unguarded, near one of the British regiments; and a toper, who had scarcely seen a dram since the fight at Charasia, yielded to the temptation. As a consequence, he was soon under arrest. In the bustle of camp-life, there is but little accommodation for prisoners; and the lucky Highlander—we have had no "lucky Ghoorka" yet as at Jellalabad last campaign—was marched off to the spot in the ditch (the space between the outer wall and the line of barracks) where the Afghans awaiting trial are lodged. The man was placed in a tent where a sirdar (an Afghan noble) was calmly reflecting on his *kismut* in being delivered into our hands, and the two prisoners were left to "make friends" as best they could. The sirdar was equal to the occasion, and made first advances. Taking his snuff-box from his belt, he offered it to the soldier, who, astonished, even in his drunkenness, by the politeness of his companion, half held out his hand, saying, in his maudlin humour,—"It's little we ever take from you niggers, and it's —— little you niggers ever give us." Having thus satisfied his conscience, he allowed the snuff-box to be nearly emptied into his hand; and still grumbling out complaints at

our policy, proceeded to "take in snuff" most ferociously. The sirdar stared in silent awe at the madman who could take snuff by the *tolah;* but presently such an explosion of sneezing followed, that he withdrew to a safe distance. His politeness had imperilled the safety of the tent. The soldier sneezed himself into such an exhausted state, that he fell asleep where he lay, and the sirdar watched over him with unfeigned interest, this new experience of Kafir life having apparently reconciled him to his fate. I am afraid this letter is a strange jumble of trivialities and more serious affairs; but such is our life at present. On one side Ghoorkas making mud-pies and laughing good-humouredly at their own architecture; on the other, a gleam of bayonets showing where an Afghan prisoner is on his way to the gallows. In one tent, the chaff and anecdote of the mess-table; in the next, Yakub Khan at his prayers.

It is to be hoped we shall not remain long under canvas here, for the cold at night is already intense. Nine degrees of frost were registered last night, and in the morning the watercourses were all frozen over. It is these watercourses which make Sherpur so uncomfortable just now. The soil is light and porous, and has all been under irrigation for vine and wheat culture; and as the channels are raised a foot or so higher than the fields, and steady little streams are coursing along from the higher level of the Cabul river, the whole place is damp and excessively cold. The water lies in places only a foot from the surface, and, near the eastern end of the cantonments, bursts forth in a spring, proving how saturated the subsoil must be. No cold is so trying to men living in tents, without fires of any kind, as that which strikes upward, and a water-proof sheet is but a poor protection from it, however much it may neutralize the actual damp. At Siah Sung water was in request, every drop used having to be carried up the steep hillsides; but here we have too much of it. The channels are carried under the walls by low culverts, and some of these will have to be filled up if we are to counteract the effects of past irrigation. This can be done without much trouble; and the existing wells, aided by a few more that can be sunk in a week, would meet all our drinking requirements, while the channels outside could also be used by the *bhistees* and followers.

There is such a turmoil here with the building and improvements going on and the storing of five months' supplies in the Commissariat godowns, that one almost forgets military movements; but when the Pioneers marched out this morning, we were reminded that an important step was being taken towards opening up the Gundamak and Khyber line of communications. General Macpherson commands the brigade which has left, and he has with him the following troops:—67th Foot, 23rd Pioneers, 28th Punjab Native Infantry, 12th Bengal Cavalry, and two guns F-A Battery, Royal Horse Artillery. Swinley's Mountain Battery will also join him at Butkhak, ten miles east of this, on the 3rd, and a few days later on he will march for Jugdulluck. We are anxiously awaiting this movement, as our postal arrangements are very uncertain, it being impossible to send off bags while the tribes are infesting the roads. I have complained of the slowness of the Khyber Force; but it is only just to General Charles Gough heading the advance to say that he has pushed on as rapidly as General Bright would allow him. He has had but few troops, little transport, and scarcely any supplies; and with Khugianis and Shinwaris in front, and fickle Afridis behind, great caution had to be exercised. A long convoy with stores, which had accumulated at the Shutargardan, came in to-day. Since the breaking up of the tribal combination at the Shutargardan on October 19th, all has been quiet south of Cabul, and our convoys have marched along without molestation. The little exemplary severity we showed in shooting three villagers, who fired upon General Baker's rear-guard when near the Logar Bridge at Zahidabad on October 4th, had the best results; while the fact of our being in possession of Cabul itself has so far acted like a charm.

3rd November.

The Shutargardan route having been finally closed, it has, of course, become imperative to open up the Gundamak and Khyber line of communication, and General Macpherson, with a force already detailed, is now engaged upon that work. From Cabul to Butkhak the road runs in a due easterly direction through the Cabul plain, and is so good that cavalry can travel at a gallop

over it. To the south a range of hills shuts out the valley through which the Logar river runs after passing through the Sang-i-Nawishta defile; and when this range is passed a swampy *maidan* is entered upon, which gradually changes into a dry, open plain, overgrown with short tufts of coarse grass. The Logar river is crossed at right-angles by the road which is carried over a stout masonry bridge of six arches. The river is turbid, but its current runs at about four or five miles an hour to its junction with the Cabul stream, creeping away under the high hills which bound the view to the north, two or three miles away. Irrigation channels are cut from the Logar, and these serve as a source of fertility to the fields about Butkhak, a walled village prettily situated in its orchards, with shallow streams running near the walls. Butkhak is to be the first post on the road, its garrison consisting of forty rifles, who will be placed in a square enclosure easily capable of defence. The telegraph wire has been already laid to this village from Sherpur cantonments. The hills which bound the Cabul plain to the north and south close in near Butkhak, and to the east sink down 1,000 feet, affording the only out-look towards Jugdulluck. One can see even from Cabul that this break in the continuous ranges which guard the plain must give an outlet into the Jellalabad Valley, and it is accordingly in this direction that we shall unite our little army with the supporting force that has marched out from Peshawur through the Khyber. The ordinary road from Butkhak to Jugdulluck, and thence to Gundamak, is through the Khurd Cabul Pass; but this has been represented of so formidable a kind, that alternative routes have been sought. Moreover, the Khurd Cabul Road makes a considerable detour to the south, and thus adds many miles to the distance, measured as the crow flies. To satisfy himself as to the practicable nature, or otherwise, of other routes, General Roberts, accompanied by Colonel Macgregor and a few members of his Staff, left Sherpur early on Sunday morning, and rode over to Butkhak, where General Macpherson was encamped.

The first route examined was that known as the Luttabund Road, which runs due east, in a straight line from Butkhak as far as Kata Sung, 28 or 30 miles distant, and then turns down in a southerly direction to Jugdulluck, five miles further on. This would

make the whole distance to be marched over only 35 miles, whereas the Khurd Cabul Road is at least 55 miles long. A reconnoitring party of six companies of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, and two mountain guns, was sent out from Butkhak with the General towards the Luttabund Kotal,* and the country was thoroughly examined. The road was found to traverse open rolling hills for about 4 miles, and then by a gradual ascent to lead up to the Kotal. The hills were not at all precipitous, and nowhere closed down upon the road, which all along permitted of flanking parties working to right and left without the slightest difficulty. In one place only did a ridge break the even run of the path, and a few days' blasting would cut away the obstruction. The Kotal is 9 miles distant from Butkhak, and was calculated to be 8,000 feet above sea-level. From the summit a splendid view was obtained on all sides; and it would be a perfect heliographing station, as not only could Sherpur and Cabul be distinctly seen, but also the whole range of the Safed Koh and the peaks above Lundi Kotal in the Khyber range. In fact, it is not too sanguine an estimate of the position to say that Cabul, Ali Kheyl, and Lundi Kotal could all be connected by the heliograph. Sikaram stood out prominently in the long range of the Safed Koh, and the various minor peaks could also be observed. Native report had said that to the Kotal the road was easy enough, the difficulties being on the eastern side, where precipitous descents had to be overcome. So far, however, as General Roberts could judge, looking down towards Kata Sung, there was nothing that skilled road-makers could not overcome: a short ravine with almost perpendicular sides seeming the chief difficulty. It was too late in the day to continue the reconnaissance, and the party accordingly returned to Butkhak, well satisfied with their visit. On the following day the Chinari Road was tried, General Roberts taking a few of the 12th Bengal Cavalry with him; while a force, similar in strength to that of Sunday, was sent round through the Khurd Cabul. The Luttabund route was again taken by the General for 4 miles, and then a turn to the south was made and the bed of a stream followed for 3 miles until the Chinari defile was reached.

* The word "Kotal" is applied usually where the road passes over a hill, instead of through it; "Pass" being used in the latter case.

This was found to be of a really formidable character, the hills closing down upon the stream, which wound along through a gorge where horsemen could only march in Indian file. High pinnacle-shaped peaks jutted up on either hand, and the scenery was of the wildest nature. This defile was 4 miles long; and although a few Kushi camels were being driven along it by their nomadic owners, it would be quite impracticable for the passage of anything but infantry. The gorge ended, rolling hills, rising here and there to round-topped mounds, were crossed for 5 miles; and then the road joined that from the Khurd Cabul on the south about 3 miles west of Tezin. A halt was called at this junction, 16 miles from Butkhak, and in a short time the reconnoitring party came up. They had passed through the Khurd Cabul without seeing a single armed man, and such villagers as were met were quite friendly. The General rode back to Butkhak by way of the Khurd Cabul, and they saw all three roads, and could decide as to their merits. The old descriptions of this famous Khurd Cabul Road had led every one to expect tremendous difficulties; but at this time of the year there are no obstacles sufficiently great to prevent horse artillery trotting through. The scenery is imposing enough and the high pinnacles of the Chinari gorge are repeated on a grander scale; but the Pass is never so narrow as to forbid the orderly march of an army of all arms, and the real gorge is only 2 miles long, or even less. A rapid mountain-stream runs through it and boulders are plentiful but they are not so large as to hinder progress; and the heights above, though formidable-looking, would not, if crowned by an enemy, be an absolute bar to an advance through. Besides, a path to the south-west enables the heights to be occupied very easily, the cavalry and mountain guns from Butkhak taking this road and crossing over the height without any check. The gorge at Ali Musjid, with precipitous crags added, will give a good idea of this part of the road. There is, of course, the objection to this route that, in the melting of the snows, the river bed would be covered by a roaring torrent of ice-cold water; but, for present service, the road can be used without any improvements being required. From the juncture with the Chinari Road to Butkhak is 17 miles; and after riding this distance General Roberts rested a short time, and

then started for Sherpur, which he reached at dusk. It was a hard day's ride, 42 miles, partly over bad ground; but the valuable information gained as to the future line of communication with the Khyber and Peshawur was ample recompense. The conclusions arrived at may be summarized very briefly: the Chinari Road is, once for all, condemned as out of the question; the Khurd Cabul can be used for all present emergencies without labour being expended upon it; while the direct Luttabund route, so far as it has been examined, is to be made the road of the future. It has followed from this that General Macpherson has marched along with his force to Jugdulluck by the Khurd Cabul, as it is of the first importance that he should join hands with General Charles Gough's force pushing onward from Gundamak. He will not strike the Luttabund Road until Sei Baba is reached, 5 miles west of Kata Sung: and on his return march he will no doubt be able to test the truth of native rumour as to the difficulties immediately to the east of the Luttabund Kotal, which, so far as General Roberts could see, have been much overrated. Having the 23rd Pioneers with him, whose knowledge of roads and road-making is exceptionally good, General Macpherson will be able to form an exact estimate of this Luttabund route. If it is pronounced practicable, it will save, as I have said, fully 20 miles, and, having no awkward defile in its entire length, will be much safer for an army to work through. Even if it is rejected, there is still the Khurd Cabul open, the "formidable" features of which have been torn down by closer acquaintanceship.

5th November.

With the exception of the brigade under Brigadier-General Macpherson, which has been detached on the important work of securing our winter line of communication by way of Gundamak, General Roberts's force is once more concentrated, the arrival yesterday of Brigadier-General Hugh Gough with the troops lately at Kushi and on the Shutargardan having prevented the army here from dwindling to too small proportions. At noon on the 1st we had here only the following regiments:—72nd and 92nd Highlanders, 5th Ghoorkas, one company 23rd Pioneers, and

one company of Sappers and Miners, as our infantry force; 120 of the 9th Lancers, and the 14th Bengal Lancers, as cavalry; two guns F-A, Royal Horse Artillery and G-3 Royal Artillery, with the two Gatling guns, as artillery. This was a very small force, and, if it had remained unstrengthened, might have given rise to a suspicion of weakness on our part; but between Kushi and Cabul was a long line of troops, who soon began to arrive at their destination here. The convoys they were escorting from the Shutargardan were all safely on their way; and on the afternoon of the 1st two companies of the 5th Punjab Infantry, a squadron of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, and four guns of Swinley's Mountain Battery, reached Sherpur with the last loads. On the morning of the 2nd this mountain battery started again to join the force at Butkhak. On the 2nd there were no further arrivals here; but on the morning of the 3rd news was brought in that General Hugh Gough had reached Beni Hissar, and General Roberts rode out to meet him. The troops which were so near at hand were two squadrons of the 9th Lancers and headquarters, two squadrons 5th Punjab Cavalry, six companies of the 5th Punjab Infantry, the 3rd Sikhs, and four guns of the Kohat Mountain Battery (Captain Morgan's). General Gough had not followed the route taken by the main force when advancing upon Cabul, but, starting from Kushi, had immediately crossed the Logar river, and encamped for the first night on the left bank at Payo Kheyl. His next halting-place was Bagh Sultan; and thence onward to Charasia he followed the usual road. His march was perfectly orderly, none of the villagers molesting him, the fall of Cabul having checked any warlike tendencies among the Logaris.

As we rode out to Beni Hissar we found the band of the 5th Ghoorkas waiting upon the bridge over the Cabul river to welcome the 3rd Sikhs and Captain Morgan's battery, to whom all of us were anxious to give every praise for their steady defence of the Shutargardan. At the gate of the Bala Hissar the band of the 72nd was waiting with a similar object. Taking the bridle road which leads to Beni Hissar through the Cabul plain, we presently met a few of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, the advance guard of the little force, and immediately in rear of them was Padshah

Khan and a few attendants. The powerful Chief of the local Ghilzais was eager to greet General Roberts, and looked very much as if he would kiss his stirrup. He is a man of common appearance, with no pretence of dignity, and lacks the fine features often seen among the independent hill chiefs. He is past middle age; but is well-formed, and has, seemingly, many years of life before him in which to pursue the "tricky practices" for which he is so celebrated. At present he is rather humbled by the ill-luck which has come upon him in the loss of his brother, Allahaddin Khan, whose arm was blown off by a shell from the Kohat Battery during the investment of the Shutargardan. Allahaddin was left in a dying state at Charasia, secondary hemorrhage having broken out some days after his arm was amputated. I may as well state, once for all, that he has since died, and that Padshah Khan to-day received his *congé* from the General, and was told he might return to his home to bury his brother and to find, if possible, some letters which the members of his tribe have looted in the Khurd Cabul. After a few words with Padshah Khan, General Roberts rode on, and, upon meeting his Brigadier, faced round again for Cabul. A halt was called just outside the Bala Hissar gate; and, after the 9th Lancers, the 5th Punjab Cavalry, and 5th Punjab Infantry had passed on, the Mountain Battery and the 3rd Sikhs were formed up to receive the thanks of the General. The battery in its equipment and general turn-out of men and mules looked but little worse for wear; while the 3rd Sikhs, though dusty and travel-stained, marched along in excellent form. They are as fine a set of men as could be desired, and a red standard, captured from the Ghilzais, flying alongside their regimental colours, bore testimony to the successful fighting they had gone through. They are 730 strong, and will be a great addition to the force, as there is no question of their ability to meet an enemy of far superior strength on equal terms. The regiment is made up chiefly of Sikhs, but there is also a fair sprinkling of Pathans among them, and all have fought equally well under very trying circumstances. Having halted them alongside the Mountain Battery, General Roberts proceeded to compliment them on their late exploits. He said:

"It always gives me much pleasure to meet the 3rd Sikhs and

the Kohat Mountain Battery, and this is more particularly the case now, after their gallant behaviour at the Shutargardan. When the force left Kushi for the march upon Cabul, there was only one point which gave me anxiety, and that was the post to which, with the 21st Punjab Infantry, they had been told off to hold. The safety of my right flank and rear depended mainly upon the safety of the Shutargarden; for, if once the latter had fallen, the tribes would have attempted to hinder my march. Repeated attacks were made upon the position you were holding; and so confident were the Ghilzais of their success, that I hear they brought down their women to witness your discomfiture. You were able, however, to beat them off with heavy loss, though far outnumbered; and this shows how, with the weapons you are now armed, you can hold your ground against almost any number of these tribesmen. You have set a good example to the whole force by showing what a few men can do when properly led; and I do not think I could have chosen a better spot on which to thank you than here, beneath the walls of the Bala Hissar, to the capture of which you have, indirectly, so much contributed." General Roberts then alluded to the excellent dispositions made by Colonel Money in meeting the attacks made, and complimented Captain Morgan upon the good practice of his gunners. He referred also to the bravery of Major Griffiths, who, although wounded in the early fight at Karatiga, had led his men at the Surkhai Kotal on the 14th, and worked bravely with them on the following days of the investment. The native officer, Jemadar Sher Mahomed, 3rd Sikhs, who distinguished himself both at Karatiga and on the Surkhai Kotal, was called from the ranks and briefly praised; and, in conclusion, the General said the Viceroy had sent a special message, thanking the Shutargardan garrison for their bravery; and if it had not already been made known to the sepoys, he should wish the message to be published in full orders. The 3rd Sikhs and the Mountain Battery then marched to Sherpur without further delay, no doubt well pleased with the hearty reception given to them.

The 3rd Sikhs had five prisoners with them, who were hanged in the Bala Hissar this morning. Four of these were the head-

men of villages about the Shutargardan who were in our pay, but who, with the treachery of their race, played a double game. At the time they were receiving pay from us to keep the road safe, they were proved to have been active in stirring up the neighbouring tribes to attack Colonel Money. Their object was either to obtain large sums with which to buy off the Ghilzai chiefs assembled, or to share in the loot if the Shutargardan were captured. They failed to accomplish either object, and when with consummate coolness they turned up after the tribesmen had been scattered, they were summarily arrested. The fifth prisoner was a villager, who was stopped by Major Griffiths when out on a foraging party. The man thought that officer was unarmed as he had no sword with him (his right arm was stiff from his wound and he had discarded his sword); and as the sepoys were some distance away, the fellow put his hand upon his tulwar and stepped forward as if to cut down Major Griffiths. The latter drew his pistol, and his self-possession put an end to the meditated attack, two or three Sikhs overtaking the man as he tried to escape to the hills. The 3rd Sikhs have also with them a havildar, who deserted from one of the regiments at Candahar. He was disguised as an Afghan villager, but was recognized on the roadside by an old companion, who addressed him by name, and called out "halt," which order, with his old respect for discipline still clinging to him, he obeyed at once. He is to be tried by court-martial.

All hands are still busily engaged in preparing to meet the hardships of a Cabul winter, but it is difficult to see how adequate provision can be made for the followers unless some part of Bemaru is cleared out for them. Private servants and kahars are so numerous, that the housing of them is a serious question. As a subsidiary portion of the force, but one which could not be dispensed with under the conditions of Indian warfare, it is worth while drawing attention to the kahars forming the ambulance corps. There are 900 of these men with General Roberts, and to them is entrusted the charge of carrying off the wounded in action and conveying the sick in *dandies* and *doolies* on the line of march. They have been drilled into good order by Surgeon-Major Bourke, by whose energy they have been kept much better in hand than

is usual in campaigns similar to this. They correspond to the bearers of the Army Hospital Corps at home, but in camp they are also employed in any rough work which may require to be done. Their behaviour on the 6th of October at Charasia was extremely good; they were constantly under fire, and their indifference to danger was very marked, their belief in *kismut* supplying the place of steady courage. In the Ambulance Corps two were killed and three wounded; while with the regiments three more were killed.

CHAPTER XI.

The Inquiry into Yakub Khan's Conduct—Visit to the Chardeh Valley—Dismantlement of the Bala Hissar—The Amir's Palace—A curious Picture—A Sirdar's House in the Fortress—General Baker's Raid upon Indikee—Arrest of Sepoys—Seizure of Arms—The Guilt of the Herat Regiments—Opening up of Communication with General Bright—Failure to keep the Road Open—The Execution of Forty-nine Sepoys—An Amnesty Issued—The probable Fate of the Amir—Punishment of the Shutargardan Tribes—First Signs of Winter.

SHERPUR, *7th November.*

THE Commission which is inquiring into the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his escort may be said to have reached the first stage of its work—the examination of nearly 100 witnesses, who have spoken as to what occurred at the Bala Hissar and in Cabul afterwards, having been completed. This has furnished materials, so to say, for the brief against the Amir, who, from the 5th, may be considered to have been on his trial. Explanations will, of course, be required of him of such suspicious circumstances as point to something beyond mere helplessness and vacillation, and his statements will be weighed against those already in the hands of the Commission. In the present stage of the inquiry great reticence is observed as to what evidence has been taken, and it would be idle to indulge in too free conjectures. This much may be taken as certain, that not the least respect of persons will be shown in the decisions arrived at by the Commissioners. The hanging of such wretches as the Kotwal of Cabul and the *chowkidar* of Mundai was an example to such small fry as those

who make up the rabble population of Cabul; but higher game may be flown at, as the faithlessness of chiefs and influential leaders must be punished. The Mustaufi and the other Ministers under arrest have yet to be dealt with; and if their complicity in the treachery which we are punishing is established, they will have short shrift.

Yesterday General Roberts, taking his usual personal escort and a troop of the 9th Lancers, rode into the Chardeh Valley with General Baker. The position of the enemy on the Asmai Heights on the 8th of October was explained by General Baker, and also the disposition for the attack. The Cabul gorge was passed through, the river crossed, and the road at the foot of the hills blocking Chardeh from Charasia followed. Walled homesteads and richly-cultivated fields alternated with orchards, on the right; and as the road gradually ascended, a beautiful view of the whole valley was obtained. Even so late in the year as now it will answer the description given of it by a member of the Embassy: "a mass of vegetation." Rows of willow-trees rise from the sides of every irrigation channel, and orchards innumerable are scattered on all sides. The walled enclosures, with their small towers, are dotted here and there, breaking the even monotony of the view, and whichever way one may turn, the steep hills which run out from the Pughman Range shut in this fertile valley. We followed the path from the gorge to the village of Indikee, and halted on the plain immediately in rear of the heights which the 72nd Highlanders and 5th Ghoorkas stormed on October 6th. It was across this plain that the enemy fled; and, seeing how clear it is of all obstacles, one can well understand General Baker's regret that he had not cavalry ready at hand to cut up the retreating Afghans. If the nature of the ground had been better known to us, the loss of Nek Mahomed's force would have been much heavier. Turning back from Indikee, we retraced our steps through the narrow, winding streets of the village, perched on the steep hillside with a roaring brook running through it, and struck the Bamian Road. This was followed for three miles into the heart of the valley, where nothing but wheat-fields and irrigated plots under water, or lying fallow for the plough, was seen. Then a bee-line was taken to the break in the hills to the east,

and after a good gallop the northern suburbs of Cabul were reached, and the road to Sherpur followed until Camp was gained. Such villagers as we had seen were quiet enough: and if any sepoys were hidden away, they did not think it worth while to risk a shot at the General. Fanaticism seems at present incapable of producing a Ghazi equal to the fear of meeting certain death.

The dismantlement of the Bala Hissar has made such rapid progress, that within the walls the houses are now in ruins, all the beams and wooden supports, as well as every scrap of timber of every kind, being in course of removal to Sherpur. We are looking forward to a severe winter; and, however snug our quarters may be in the long ranges of barracks built here by Shere Ali, there will be much discomfort, not to say sickness, if firewood runs short. There are no forests from which large supplies can be drawn: the hillsides all around being bare rock or shingly deposit on which no vegetation can grow.

Some of the large houses in the Bala Hissar, though now deserted and partially demolished, show signs of luxury and comfort which speak highly of the pains taken by rich sirdars to enjoy life in their own rude way. The palace in which Yakub Khan lived was furnished luxuriously, no doubt, in his estimation; thick Persian carpets, bright-coloured rugs and *dhurries* covering the floors; while English-made tables, sideboards, and chairs were ranged side by side with the usual Eastern pillows, cushions, and *rezais*, which are the delight of indolent loungers. In one small room the ceiling was so closely hung with glass chandeliers that to move about was to risk a small shower of pendants falling; while the shades for the candles were of such brilliancy in light green and pink that the effect in the bright sunshine was quite dazzling. "Pearls and barbaric gold" there were none to be seen,—they had been removed for safe-keeping to his father-in-law's house in the city, where the ladies of the harem were also lodged,—but such gimcracks as usually light up the houses of the poorest classes in England were not wanting. Cheap pictures in common gilded frames, the kind turned out by the thousand in Germany, all gaudy colours and painfully real, were hanging on the walls; while a few well-executed portraits of Russian officers, in full uniform and bedecked with orders, were found scattered

about. These were all neatly framed in wood, and were so well got up that most probably they had been presents to Shere Ali from the Embassy, whose stay in Cabul gave rise to such serious results. One small picture was discovered, which is certainly a great curiosity. It is plainly the work of an Afghan artist, and carries us back to the disasters of 1841–42, when for a time our arms suffered so serious a reverse. The subject of the drawing is an Afghan on horseback, in full splendour of gold-braided coat of many colours, enormous black Astrakan hat with its characteristic cone shape, small black boots peeping out of the white drapery of his wide-flowing trouser, and the silver scabbard of his sword dangling at his side. His saddle is gorgeous in red and gold, while the trappings of his charger are bright with elaborate gilding. The horse is, in the language of heraldry, *rampant*, while his rider sits proudly in the saddle, staring out over the wide, wide world with an expression of haughty contempt, which is almost awe-inspiring. On the green foreground, which represents the grassy sward of the Cabul plain, a dog, abnormally developed in some particulars, gambols along, barking joyously (if the protrusion of a crimson tongue as big as his head means anything), and thoroughly enjoying his master's triumph. What that triumph is has yet to be told! On the flank of the horse, and so close as to be in danger of its heels, is the figure of a British officer, clad in the old Pandy uniform, with a musket at the trail in his hand, and crouching in the most abject terror. His face, that of a boy subaltern, is turned upwards; while his eye, full of fear and respect, is watching his Afghan conqueror with great intentness. He is at the double, to keep up with the horse, and the artist has cleverly depicted in figure and expression the humiliation he is undergoing. Nothing could be finer than the contrast between the black-bearded Afghan, with his enormous pouting lips of a purple tinge, and staring eyes, and the smooth boyish face, full of timidity, of the unlucky Briton he is leading captive. We can afford to laugh at the picture, for "the wheel has come full circle," and the subject now for an artist to draw would be an English Lancer, perfect in his array as a lily of the field, leading captive at his stirrup a typical Afghan (say Yakub Khan, for example) with a halter round his neck and clad

in all the simplicity of a *dhotie*. The picture I have described is a standing curiosity in Camp, and is to be the nucleus of a future Cabul Picture Gallery.

In Cabul the better class of houses all present the same appearance outside: that of high brown mud walls, with one or two small doorways. Nothing can be more uninviting than these sun-baked walls, which, from the Mediterranean eastwards, always mark the residence of a Mussulman population. But within them there is much to atone for their forbidding exterior. Entering one of these large houses in the Bala Hissar some days ago, I found myself in an inner courtyard full 20 yards square. At either end were sets of rooms with open verandahs in front, built of a framework of wood fitted in with bricks, and then carefully plastered over. The lower rooms were four or five feet above the level of the courtyard, and broad flights of steps led up to them. Every bit of wood used as supports or for partition walls had been carved and fretted with great skill, while the inner rooms were cut off from the glare outside by carved wooden screens, some of the patterns being extremely pretty. But the greatest wealth of ornamentation had been lavished above, in what were the quarters of the women. A handsome wooden staircase, broad enough for four persons to walk abreast, led up to these; and once on the higher level the change from the dull brown below was quite refreshing. There was the same repetition of carved woodwork and open screens; but the inner walls were gay with frescoes in every colour, the plaster being covered with native designs of scroll-work, filled in with birds of startling plumage and flowers of hues to shame the rainbow. The ceilings and cornices were similarly adorned, the latter being set with mirrors in long narrow strips of various sizes. The recesses for lamps and the lintels of the doors had all shared in the general ornamentation, and to its inmates the *zenana* must have seemed a triumph of artistic skill. All was deserted now, not even a door remaining on its hinges. The carved work was smashed as if some reckless soldier had thrust his rifle stock through it; the bits of mirror were starred with stray blows, and the plaster had been broken from the walls as the woodwork had been torn away. The wood from the staircases leading to the roof, the

favourite evening gossiping place of the sirdars, ladies, and attendants, had all been carried away, and the gaping holes through which the sunlight poured were eloquent of desolation. And it is a desolation well deserved, for it was in just such a house, with courtyard and pleasant upper rooms (perhaps not so elaborately decorated, the whitewash covering the beauties of the frescoes) that Cavagnari was lodged. The Bala Hissar may at last meet with the fate which it deserved, and narrowly escaped, when Pollock was master of Cabul in 1842: and soon not one mud wall may remain to stare its neighbour out of countenance. The large godowns in the Upper Fortress are still full of powder —nearly a million pounds; but, with this exception, the place has been cleared of all its warlike stores. The excavations at the Residency are still carried on, but the remains of our officers have not been found. Two English watches were unearthed a few days ago: one had stopped at 2.45 P.M., and the other at 8.15 P.M.

9th November.

There seems to be an impression gaining ground outside that the army here has been rather tardy in its work of vengeance, and has not fulfilled its mission in so bloodthirsty a way as might have been expected. Much, however, has had to be done in the clearing of the Shutargardan, laying in stores for the winter, and making inquiry quietly into the probable intention of the scattered regiments. It would not have been advisable to alarm such of the Afghan sepoys as had left their homes in Cabul and the villages near, and we have, therefore, hitherto only picked out a few of the worst characters and hanged them as an "encouragement to the others." Seeing that no general action was taken in thoroughly searching such villages as were close at hand, the disbanded soldiers have returned in many instances to their homes, and now that we have some of the muster-rolls of the regiments in our possession, we have suddenly begun to sweep into the net of the Military Commission every one against whom suspicion exists. Flying parties of cavalry are sent out, some with sealed orders, to bring in such men as have been marked down by informers eager to earn the rewards offered for the apprehension of guilty persons,

and yesterday a swoop was made into the Chardeh Valley, only two or three miles from Camp. The village of Indikee and its neighbours sent out most of their armed men to fight against us, and for the last month they have been revelling in fancied security, in the belief that their misdeeds were unknown. They have just been rudely awakened from their pleasant dream. On Friday evening the 3rd Sikhs, 5th Punjab Cavalry, and two mountain guns of the Kohat Battery were warned for service with General Baker for the morrow, but their destination was kept a secret. There are so many channels by which information may leak out that if it had been stated whither they were bound, some kind friends of the Afghans, who are favourably received in Camp, might have given warning to the men whose lives were in danger. General Baker formed up the troops outside the walls of the cantonments at daybreak yesterday morning, and at once moved off through the suburbs of Cabul to the gorge through which the rivers enters the city. The road to the left was taken after Dehmazung village had been passed just beyond the gorge, and the cavalry pushing on formed a *cordon* round Indikee. In my last letter I described the village, which General Roberts visited three days ago. It is commanded from several points on the hill-side, and at one of these the two guns were posted ready to open fire if resistance were offered. There was, however, no thought of fighting: the village was taken quite by surprise, and the headmen came out in fear and trembling as General Baker and the 3rd Sikhs marched up. The headmen were briefly told that all sepoys belonging to the Afghan army must be brought out and surrendered. They were given five minutes to produce the men, the threat of a forcible search, with, perhaps, worse to follow, giving point to the request. In a very few minutes they brought forward thirty men, unarmed, and with no uniform on their backs, and these were at once made prisoners. The General had a list in which the names of certain sepoys known to be in Indikee were entered; and, upon calling this over, several were found to be missing. The *maliks* explained that twenty-two sepoys were absent in various directions, and promised faithfully to bring them into Sherpur when they should return. This promise was accepted, and the disarmament of the village then began. The orders were

that all arms, even to the knives so commonly worn by Afghans, should be laid at the door of every house before our sepoys entered. This was done, the whole place being divided into three parts : two companies of Sikhs were sent to each section to collect the weapons. Wherever the arms were not before the doors the houses were searched, and in such a manner that but few weapons could remain hidden. Indikee having made itself so particularly obnoxious, was further punished by a fine of 1,300 maunds of grain and 300 loads of *bhoosa* being levied upon it. This quantity of grain and forage was ordered to be delivered in Sherpur within a week, and two headmen were taken as hostages for the due fulfilment of the bargain. In case of their failing to carry out the order, the village will be burnt to the ground. Other villages which had shared in the guilt of Indikee were then visited, and eighteen more Afghan soldiers taken. Many of these belong to the Herat regiments, and answered to their names when called upon. They fell into rank at the word of command; and, when " right about face " was called out, preparatory to marching back to Sherpur, obeyed with alacrity. All the arms taken were humbly carried into camp by the villagers, escorted by our sepoys and *sowars*, much to the edification of such Cabulis as were met upon the road. The raid was altogether a very successful one: and if all the towers in the Chardeh Valley are blown up as a pendant to the excursion, the villagers will have been taught a severe lesson. To-day the *maliks*, true to their word, brought in between twenty and thirty sepoys, many of the latter marching quietly in, and surrendering themselves as calmly as if they were our own soldiers who had overstayed their leave and expected a slight punishment. What their fate is likely to be, appears from the result of the sitting of the Military Commission to-day. Sixteen prisoners were brought up, and eleven of these will be hanged to-morrow morning. Five poor wretches, *khalassies* belonging to the Artillery, were released, as there was nothing to inculpate them. We seem at last to have got hold of certain sepoys who were concerned in the first outbreak in the Bala Hissar. They do not attempt to conceal their names, or those of the regiments to which they belong, and hear their sentence of death as stoically as if each man were a Spartan. It makes one ex-

asperated to see the rank and file of these wretches being marched off to execution, while their leaders are still at large, and but few of the Cabul rabble have been brought to account. One grows sick of hanging ten common men a day; and there is already a talk of an amnesty being shortly proclaimed—only ringleaders and certain marked men being excepted. There will be no difficulty, I imagine, in the future in capturing a few score sepoys if the executions have to be begun over again, as the muster-rolls give very fully the names and residences of the sepoys. The rolls are framed somewhat on the Indian pattern, and are fairly complete. One is the crack regiment, called the "Asnider Regiment," and these men are still at large with good rifles in their hands. Perhaps they may have courage enough to die as soldiers, fighting openly, rather than come to an end on the scaffold.

We are unhappy in our minds as to our winter line of communications, our hopes of the road to Gundamak being secured by the meeting of General Macpherson's and General Charles Gough's forces having suddenly dropped below zero. It is difficult to understand what has occurred: but the most important step in our recent operations has certainly been neutralized in some way. Whether it is divided authority,—General Roberts on the Cabul side being unable to give orders to General Bright on the Gundamak line so long as the latter remains senior in army rank,—or some local exigency, is not at all clear; but this much is only too plainly evident, that the force under General Charles Gough, after joining hands with our brigade at Kata Sung, four miles west of Jugdulluck, has fallen back upon Jugdulluck, while General Macpherson has marched down the Tezin river to the Lughman country. Consequently we have been cut off again from the Khyber Force for several days. We are most anxious to ensure the safety of our postal and telegraphic line through the belt of mountains which shuts us off from our reinforcements if we chance to need them. Besides, we are anxious to send our sick and wounded back to India before the full rigour of winter comes upon them here; and, with snow likely to fall early in December, there is not much time to spare. General Macpherson, on his part, has crossed the Cabul river at a point where, it is said, a pile-bridge could be easily built, and has explored the Lughman Valley at

its western end. Shortness of supplies is given as his reason for leaving Kata Sung. He has found a good road running for 30 or 40 miles over nearly a hill country; but whether it will be of service is quite another matter, which may be dealt with when we have *one* route open. The troops with him are needed here, as one or two local punitive expeditions have to be sent out; and he has therefore been recalled. The Luttabund route is to be adopted as the one best calculated to be followed to Jugdulluck, and the Pioneers will be left behind to make it practicable. Blasting powder is being sent up to the Kotal, and the work will, it is thought, soon be accomplished. In the meantime, General Hugh Gough has left Sherpur to arrange for all the posts between Luttabund and Jugdulluck being held. There was no opposition to the advance from Gundamak beyond a few shots fired by a knot of men near Jugdulluck; the only damage they inflicted was the wounding of one of the Guides' horses.

12th November.

The last few days have been remarkable for the trial and execution of no less than forty-nine prisoners, nearly all of whom were sepoys belonging to the Herat regiments which attacked the Residency. As already mentioned, General Baker captured forty-eight men in the Chardeh villages in his excursion of the 8th; and others were brought in by the headmen in fulfilment of their promise. In all, eighty-nine were tried by the Military Commission; and of these, eleven, twenty-eight, and ten were hanged on the 10th, 11th, and 12th instant. The remainder were released, as they were able to give a fairly satisfactory account of themselves, two only being retained, as they have promised to lead our search parties to villages where men are still lying hidden. These two men were to have been hanged this morning, and were only reprieved at the last moment. Every opportunity was given to these Afghan sepoys to explain their actions, and such lame stories as were invented were easy of disproof. Their *maliks* stated what men were absent from the villages, and whether they were with their regiments, or away at distant points during September and October. The muster-rolls in our possession showed the rank and regiment of the men, and in no case did the prisoners

deny their identity. Such as were released were either poor wretches like gun-*khalassies*, or sepoys, who could show that they were nowhere near Cabul from September 1st to October 8th, and could not consequently have shared in the attack upon the Embassy, the battle of Charasia, or the fight on the Cabul Heights. These wholesale executions were mainly intended as a punishment to such as disregarded the Proclamation issued at Zerghun Shahr by General Roberts on October 3rd, and it is now thought an example, severe enough, has been made. The Afghan army, or such of it as exists, must see that we were thoroughly in earnest in threatening with death all who chose to appear as rebels against the then Amir, in whose name we were advancing. Of course the instant men came in and surrendered, putting themselves at our mercy, the task of hanging them became a very ungracious one —if they had only been guilty of contesting an advance. To-day, therefore, an amnesty was issued, under which all of this latter class were pardoned on condition of surrendering their arms. The following is the full text of the amnesty:—

PROCLAMATION OF NOVEMBER 12TH, 1879.

"To all whom it may concern. On the 12th of October a Proclamation was issued, in which I offered a reward for the surrender of any persons who had fought against the British troops since the 3rd of September, and had thereby become rebels against the Amir Yakub Khan. I have now received information which tends to show that some at least of those who shared in the opposition encountered by the British troops during their advance on Cabul, were led to do so by a belief that the Amir was a prisoner in my camp, and had called upon the soldiery and people of Cabul to rise on his behalf. Such persons, although enemies to the British Government, were not rebels against their own sovereign, and the great British Government does not seek for vengeance against enemies who no longer resist. It may be that few only of those who took up arms were thus led away by the statement of evil-minded men, but rather than punish the innocent with the guilty, I am willing to believe that all were alike deceived. On behalf of the British Government, therefore, I

proclaim a free and complete amnesty to all persons who have fought against the British troops since the 3rd of September, provided that they now give up any arms in their possession and return to their homes. The offer of reward for the surrender of such persons is now withdrawn, and they will not, for the future, be molested in any way on account of their opposition to the British advance. But it must be clearly understood that the benefit of this amnesty does not extend to any one, whether soldier or civilian, who was concerned, directly or indirectly, in the attack upon the Residency, or who may hereafter be found in possession of any property belonging to members of the Embassy. To such persons no mercy will be shown. Further, I hold out no promise of pardon to those who, well knowing the Amir's position in the British camp, instigated the troops and people of Cabul to take up arms against the British troops. They have been guilty of wilful rebellion against the Amir's authority, and they will be considered and treated as rebels wherever they may be found."

It was not to be expected that clemency would be extended to such men as joined in the actual attack upon the Residency, or to the leaders, who misled the sepoys afterwards, by declaring that the Amir was an unwilling prisoner in our hands, and was calling, from his captivity, upon all true Mussulmans to resist the British, and to release him from the hands of his own and his country's enemies. As we have had daily to watch the string of men passing along under escort to the Bala Hissar, many a keen regret has been felt that leaders like Nek Mahomed and Kushdil Khan have not been in their ranks. The demeanour of the men hanged has, in all cases, been one of stolid indifference: they accepted their fate as a matter of course, and, when surrounded by the bayonets of the Highlanders, tried to keep up a semblance of soldierly bearing, by marching in time and keeping shoulder to shoulder. But that one remembers the bitter treachery we have come to punish, and can almost look down from the foot of the scaffold into the pit in which the bodies of our brave Guides are lying, one might feel pity for the wretches whose fanaticism has put their heads

into the noose. There were no extra precautions taken, even when twenty-eight men had to be hanged; a small guard of fifty men under a commissioned officer was told off from one of the British regiments, and the prisoners were marched off in the usual way. They apparently never thought of attempting to escape; and Cabul is so cowed by the military law it is now enjoying, that its rabble population has not spirit enough left to cry "a rescue." Nothing can be quieter than the city, which has always been so notorious for bloodshed and turbulence: the shadow of the scaffold is over it, and not one among the ruffians who throng its narrow streets, and hide in its filthy purlieus, but feels its influence. They have hitherto traded upon our known weakness—the worship of the quality of mercy,—and it is only now that they understand the new principle of retribution we have introduced into our policy. Like Pollock, General Roberts might have destroyed their bazaar and left Cabul to its fate; but whether we withdraw again or not, there will be the tale of lives taken by our hangmen still to be counted over in the city and the villages; and who knows yet what powerful names may not top the list?

The work of the Special Commission dealing with the Massacre and intrigues of the Ministers has so far progressed, that, in a few days, I believe, the report will be ready. Each of the members—Colonel Macgregor, Dr. Bellew, and Hyat Khan—is writing a report; and from the three will be framed a final one, to be submitted to the Government, with such recommendations as General Roberts and his advisers may deem fit to make. The chief interest, of course, attaches to the Amir, whose fate now hangs in the balance. That he will at least be deported to India seems beyond doubt. What punishment will be meted out to the Mustaufi, the Wazir, Yahiya Khan, and Zakariah Khan, cannot of course be estimated; but if the evidence against them of inciting the rebel regiments to continue in arms is at all clear, they ought certainly not to be spared. They see day by day how unyielding we are in carrying out the work we have undertaken; and, if guilty, they must uneasily count their beads while calculating the chances of ultimate escape. The amnesty is so framed that they do not at present come within its scope, and they cannot tell the exact evidence which has been forthcoming as to their

intrigues. They are closely guarded, and all access to them will be forbidden until their sentence is pronounced. There is one prisoner in the row of tents where our captives are confined who is to be treated to-morrow to the smart punishment of fifty lashes, and his case is a peculiar one. When the Ghilzais and their allies were investing the Shutargardan, Colonel Money received a *jirgah* who proposed certain terms which I have before characterized as absurd. The tribes proposed, first, that the force then in Shutargardan should retire to Ali Kheyl, the Ghilzais finding carriage for their stores and giving hostages as a guarantee of good faith. This was declined, and they then made a similar proposition, giving Kushi as the destination of the troops instead of Ali Kheyl. On this also being rejected, the *jirgah* said that on promise of payment of two lakhs of rupees they would disperse the tribes. This was laughed at by Colonel Money and Dr. Bellew, and the *jirgah* were dismissed. One Ghilzai chief, losing his temper, said :—"Very well, to-morrow morning we will come and cut all your throats." This part of the programme did not come off, and this man had afterwards the audacity to come into Camp here, no doubt to see how we were progressing. He was recognized and arrested, and to-morrow he will be sent back to his tribe well scored with the lash. He will, perhaps, use greater discretion in future. While on this matter of the Shutargardan investment, it is worth mentioning that one section of the tribes has been punished in a manner that may rather astonish their chiefs. When it was believed that the telegraph line would be permanently laid to Cabul from Ali Kheyl, large quantities of timber were purchased from local *maliks*, one section (the Ahmed Kheyls, I believe) supplying Rs. 6,000 worth. They had been paid half this sum ; but as they broke faith by joining the other tribesmen during the late disturbances, General Roberts has sanctioned the confiscation of the Rs. 3,000 still due to them. This will be a heavy fine, and is a ready mode of punishing them. The cost of laying the line from Ali Kheyl westwards to within a few miles of Dobundi was over Rs. 20,000, and nearly all the wire and posts have been carried off by the hillmen—a costly experiment to us, which it is to be hoped will not be repeated.

We are now rejoicing in the probable opening of the road from here to Jugdulluck, as arrangements have been made by General Hugh

Gough for the garrisoning of the posts. Our quarters in barracks are not quite ready, and such a sudden access of cold as that now experienced is difficult to withstand in the light tents our men have to live in. Yesterday there were signs from the early morning that some change was threatening, the sun being obscured by a haze which, in the eyes of the natives, meant snow. Late in the afternoon one of the local *khak-bads*, or small dust-storms, swept over Camp, and this was followed by light rain, just sufficient to lay the dust. A great fall of temperature occurred, which drove us to seek the warmth of poshteens and over-coats, and just before sunset sleet began to drift down. For about an hour it fell, not very heavily however, and soon the whole cantonment was whitened over. The hills about were all obscured by light clouds, which closed down upon the plain, and we began to fear heavy snow would fall. Fortunately, however, for our comfort, it cleared up soon after six o'clock; but a sharp frost set in, and the night was bitterly cold, water freezing even in our tents. To-day the sky was as blue and clear as in June, and the frozen sleet soon disappeared as the sun shone out. In sheltered places little patches of white are still seen, while the Pughman mountains are covered with snow. An early and severe winter is expected from this sudden change, although it is possible two or three weeks of bright genial sunshine may still be in store for us before the real winter snow-fall covers the country. A flying column, made up from General Baker's brigade, was to have started for Ghazni on the 15th, General Roberts in person accompanying it; but it is probable that the expedition will now be postponed. It would involve great hardships to march troops between 80 and 90 miles exposed to sleet and snow storms; and as the chief object of the journey would be to secure food and forage, other means may, perhaps, be found to gain the end in view. The proclamation of an amnesty will give confidence to villagers at a distance, who may now be tempted to bring in supplies.

There has not been much excitement in Camp apart from the news of a skirmish at Doaba, in which the 67th had, at last, a chance of distinguishing themselves. We shall only gain particulars of this little fight, which has cost us four killed and five wounded, when General Macpherson comes in on the 14th.

CHAPTER XII.

Winter Supplies—The Forage Difficulty—Lack of Civilized Appliances and Inventions—Compressed Hay—The Sick Convoy for India—Alleged Atrocities—The Inquiry into Dr. Bourke's Statement—An Exaggerated Description of the Charasia Battle-field—General Macpherson's Excursion to Tagao—Attitude of the Safis—Shere Ali's Military Road along the Northern Bank of the Cabul River—The Skirmish at Doaba—Narrow Escape of Captain Poole's Company—Defeat of the Safis.

SHERPUR, 14*th November*.

THE fall of sleet on the evening of the 11th led us to believe that severe weather might be setting in; but, to our surprise, the same genial days which delighted us before have returned; and after three sharp nights, in which a cheerful fire in a walled building would have been very welcome, we are hoping that winter will spare us further inclemency at least for two or three weeks. The Ghazni expedition may, I think, be looked upon as abandoned; and we are trusting to local sirdars to bring us in the large supplies of forage which we were going out to seek. Advances in hard cash are made to these men, so that they may go out with the practical evidence of our willingness to buy up all the *bhoosa* in the country, and from Daoud Shah downwards they promise us great things in the way of supplies. As I said in a late letter, the question of forage is the most pressing, as, once the ground is covered with snow, the scanty supply of grass which now comes in will be entirely cut off. From Kohistan, the Logar and Chardeh Valleys, and the villages in the Cabul plain eastwards to Butkhak, we have drawn some thousands of maunds; * but with the horses of the 9th Lancers, three native regiments, and two batteries of Artillery, as well as the mules of two mountain batteries, to be kept in good condition, and all the transport animals to be fed, the consumption is enormous. Pressed hay would be worth its weight in silver if we could only get it here; but, of course, we might as well long for sea-coal fires. One sees much written of what ought

* One maund=40 seers=80 lbs.

to be done by armies advancing from India into Afghanistan, and the slowness of our marches is sometimes criticized very rabidly; but the critics seem to forget that we have no railways upon our lines of communication, and that we are asked to make war in almost as rude a way as the barbaric hordes which swept to and from India centuries ago. Barring our weapons and ammunition —and even here we have been served with Gatling guns that will not work—we have but the old means of advance: the camels, mules, and ponies, which have been time-honoured carriers since the days of Alexander; and we have them in such small numbers, that the loss of even 100 is a serious matter. We feed them as the old warriors fed their beasts of burden—on such corn and forage as we can get; but whereas they appropriated every maund that was to be found, and asked no questions, we pay exorbitant prices, dealing as traders, and not as conquerors, with the people. Civilization has done this much, that it has shown there are ways by which forage for a month can be carried in so small a compass that it is but little encumbrance; but we reap no benefit from the discovery, and are thrown into a by-no-means fertile country to do as best we can with such supplies as may be forthcoming. The very hackeries which ply along the road from Jhelum to Jumrood groan out reproaches against the civilization which permits them to linger out their lives; and every grass-cutter's pony, half hidden by his huge bundle of worthless straw, or burnt-up grass, kicks against the absurd pricks which force him to do as his ancestors did—fetch and carry bulky loads of which he himself eats nearly half. We could do mighty deeds, and march mighty distances, were it not that our transport equipment is usually x—an unknown quantity, which can never be relied upon. In the morning x may equal the equivalent of 10,000 camels; in the evening it may be 9,500; after six months' campaigning it may be 500. We have not merely to forage for the chargers of our fighting men—we have to feed the very animals which carry the forage, and carry it often in its bulkiest form. If we had merely to do the latter, we might trust to the country, especially where the local baggage animals are used for carriage. A Cavalry Brigade that could carry its own forage—and such a brigade could be created if advantage were taken of the principle which reduces bulk to one-

twentieth or even less—would be so powerful an aid to an advancing force, that delays would be almost unknown. There would be no question, as there is now, of sending back regiments to pasturing-grounds; there would be the means of sustaining them always at hand. A pony that now carries a load which a horse can eat in a day, could carry food for twenty days. A trooper could strap his forage to his saddle as he now does his gram-bag. We might take many a hint from the nomads of Central Asia—perhaps the horsemen who can travel long distances, and keep their horses always equal to the work, better than any other race in the world. The Turcoman carries with him, in the ingenious shape of small balls of food, such concentrated nourishment, that his horse never flags in a sixty-mile ride; and if he can do this in his own rude way, and be independent of passing supplies, we, with elaborate hay-presses and chemical processes, might surely put ourselves at least on his level. I have been led into this dissertation chiefly by reason of the proposed splitting up of our cavalry brigade. It is said that the 12th Bengal Cavalry will probably remain for the winter in the Jellalabad Valley, where forage is fairly plentiful; and it is also possible that another cavalry regiment will be sent from our camp here to join them. We all regret that the cavalry which has been with us during the march upon Cabul should have to be sent back even for three or four months; and yet what can be done? 150,000 maunds of *bhoosa* (chopped straw) is the estimate made by the Commissariat Department of the quantity of forage required from the 1st of November to the end of March, and we have only gathered in between 15,000 and 20,000 maunds. The deficiency is so great that, unless the sirdars we are now employing as purchasing agents keep their pledges, our cavalry must starve or be sent back. Besides, we have been busy in providing the army with several hundred *yaboos* as transport animals. These *yaboos* will have to be fed during the winter, in addition to the mules and camels we brought up with us from Ali Kheyl: there were not many certainly, for we did wonders in the way of removing with little carriage. It may seem trifling, with passing events, to grow eloquent upon so dry a subject as hay; but in warfare, such as we are engaged in, cavalry are so indispensable, that their position

should be fairly represented. We hear of hay-presses being made for the Candahar Force, but we do not want to be encumbered with these. Could not the forage, ready compressed, be sent to us without further trouble ?

The convoy of sick and wounded, which left Sherpur to-day, was made up of fifty-two Europeans, seventy-two native soldiers and followers, and eight officers. There were also a number of time-expired men, and a sufficient escort was sent to take care of the convoy as far as Butkhak, whence the 12th Bengal Cavalry and the 28th Native Infantry will be detailed to see them through the mountainous country lying between the Cabul plain and the Jellalabad Valley. All the elephants here have also been sent away to General Bright's force, as we are not likely to want them until the spring, and they would have probably died off when the snow came. The convoy will do the distance to Peshawur by easy marches, and every precaution will be taken against possible attacks in the Passes that have to be gone through. The sick have not been sent away a day too soon, as the cold nights here are very trying to weakly men. The hospital quarters in the barracks are now ready, and are very comfortable. Such invalids as are only suffering from slight ailments are now in the rooms, the strong mud walls of which set at defiance the cold which penetrated so easily the thin canvas of the tents.

Further examination of the Luttabund route has shown that a good road can be made with very little trouble, the difficult bits near the Kotal being avoided by a slight diversion. Scarcely any blasting will be needed, and as this kind of skilled labour is generally very protracted and tiresome, the saving of much valuable time is a great consideration. The Pioneers will be enabled to return to Sherpur to finish their lines and to carry out such defensive works on the Bemaru Heights as may be thought necessary. These works will probably be on a large scale, so far as the general design goes; but the immediate work to be done will be the building of block-houses, or towers, where the picquets can be posted under shelter from the cold wind which sweeps across the ridge. Three or four tents are now pitched on the heights; but it is very trying, especially for native troops, to do sentry-go in such an exposed spot. An enemy would scarcely

venture to attack the Camp from the north, as they would have to cross a level, grassy plain, on which the cavalry would have them at their mercy. The long, shallow Wazirabad lake, bordered by marshy ground, shuts in this plain to the north, a spur from the Pughman range again bounding the lake still further to the north. The *maidan* is now used as a polo-ground, or for giving our horses a gallop; while the lake affords wild-fowl shooting for sportsmen lucky enough to have guns and cartridges.

There has not been much to excite us in Camp lately, except two slight shocks of earthquake yesterday; and as the executions have for the present ceased, there seems falling upon us that fatal period of inactivity which always follows successful movements against an enemy who runs away after the first brush. But one unpleasant incident has occurred, and it has been made the most of. We have had a Court of Inquiry, and the subject thereof has been nothing less than "atrocities." In a letter from the correspondent of the *Civil and Military Gazette* appeared a paragraph in which "a noble corps" was said to have disgraced itself by burning alive the wounded Afghans left behind by their friends on the Charasia Heights. The paragraph implied, from the context, that the 72nd Highlanders had been guilty of this cruelty; but, on inquiry being made, Dr. Bourke, the correspondent of the Lahore paper, said that, although he had not named the regiment, it was the men of the 5th Ghoorkas who had burned the Afghan wounded. This was the first General Roberts had heard of any such occurrence, as Dr. Bourke had made no report on the subject, although he had drawn a highly-coloured picture of the scene in his letters. The General at once ordered a court to assemble and to take evidence, not merely to clear the good name of the 72nd, but to investigate the charge against the Ghoorkas. The President of the Court was Major Pratt, of the 5th Punjab Infantry. Being a closed court, it has not, of course, transpired what evidence was taken; but I believe the following are the facts of the cases of cruelty said to have taken place. When the heights were cleared by the general rush of General Baker's troops, the Afghans left their dead on the ground as well as several men wounded at close quarters. A Ghoorka was seen stooping near one of the latter; and when Dr. Bourke, with the ambulance,

came up, it was found that the Afghan, who had been shot through the breast and almost disembowelled by a bayonet thrust or slash from a *kookrie*, had had his clothes set on fire. A box of matches was lying near the body. The man was *in extremis*, and was said to be insensible; and by Dr. Bourke's orders a European soldier shot him through the head. Another Afghan lying near had also his white clothing smouldering, and he was shot in a similar way. This seems to be the plain truth about the affair, which has been exaggerated into the wholesale burning alive of wounded men. The Ghoorkas know the superstitious dread among Mussulmans of any part of their body being destroyed after death; and, on the face of it, there is the probability of a lighted match having been applied to the clothes of men seemingly dead, in order to send their souls to perdition. The passions of the Ghoorkas have also been highly inflamed by a story which reached Ali Kheyl from Cabul, that a Ghoorka, with the Guides' escort, was led through the city streets with his face blackened, was horribly tortured, and afterwards burned alive. They believed fervently in this story, and, as I have said, they may have thought to kill the Afghans in the next world as well as this. No one in the force would seek to be an apologist for such cruel acts as burning alive, deliberately and systematically, the wounded men of an enemy even so cruel as are the Afghans; but the reflections cast upon the 72nd Highlanders and upon General Roberts himself, as letting such acts go unpunished, are as unjust as they are absurd. The General knew nothing whatever of the incident until his attention was called to it in the newspapers, and his action then was prompt enough. I understand that he has now called upon Dr. Bourke to give his reasons for not reporting the matter officially.

16th November.

Yesterday Sir Frederick Roberts and Brigadier-General Baker rode over to Butkhak, where Brigadier-General Macpherson is encamped after his late excursion in the Tagao country. There have been so many movements of troops in the Cabul plain lately, that the only escort the General thought it necessary to take with him was six sowars of the 5th Punjab Cavalry. Since the first brigade marched to Butkhak on the 1st instant, the villagers in the

plain and in the lower Logar Valley, which runs down from the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, have seen small parties of cavalry constantly on the move backwards and forwards, and within the last few days have watched the 23rd Pioneers encamped on the banks of the Logar and the long convoy of sick and wounded march along on the way to India. There have been so many evidences of our presence, that any unruly tribesmen or disbanded sepoys have wisely kept very quiet. The road may be considered safe, even for a solitary traveller; the telegraph wire has hitherto been scrupulously respected; and our foraging parties have never been molested.

We were, of course, anxious to learn some particulars of the late skirmish, in which a company of the 67th had come to close quarters with the Safis; and, leaving the invalid camp, we passed up to the head-quarters of the 1st Brigade near the village walls. Sir Frederick Roberts heard the details of the affair from General Macpherson as well as an account of the work done by the Brigade in opening up communication with the Khyber Force. I may here incidentally state that Sir F. Roberts has now received the local rank of Lieutenant-General, and commands all the troops in Eastern Afghanistan, Jumrood being the point in the Peshawur direction to which his power of control extends. Some severe strictures have been passed upon those who have hitherto had the supreme control of the force operating from Peshawur, and the answer given to these is that General Bright's advanced Brigade was a "flying column." If that were so, how was it that it took twenty-four days to "fly" from Jellalabad to Kata Sung, a distance of about sixty miles? Surely its wings must have been clipped by Transport or Commissariat scissors, in which case it would cease to be a flying column at all, and would drop down to the lower level of a sedate brigade moving two and a half miles a day, sleeping comfortably in tents, and living on the fat of the land. But in that case there should have been supplies sufficient to have justified the stay of the troops at Kata Sung, and so to have secured the road. General Macpherson had of course no supplies with *his* force, as everything is being gathered into Sherpur for the winter; and he could not stay at Kata Sung, but had to try and find food north of the Cabul river. Here accordingly came in the story of the reconnaissance northward into

Tagao and of the collision with the Safis. The bed of the Cabul river lies about ten miles north of Kata Sung, Sei Baba, and the Luttabund Kotal, its direction being due east and west. From the vast pile of mountains which shut out the Cabul plain from Gundamak high spurs run down towards the river, and among these the Tezin stream, with two or three small tributaries, finds its way. When General Macpherson found that the force he had come to meet at Kata Sung had withdrawn, he turned off to the north, and proceeding down the bed of the Tezin stream for six or seven miles, reached the banks of the Cabul. He encamped at Sirobi, and on the 8th, resolved to cross the river to the village of Naghloo, on the opposite bank, two miles higher up. The natives had reported that a good road was in existence on the northern side of the Cabul from that point, and that it had been regularly used as the military convoy route between Cabul and Jellalabad. General Macpherson found, without much difficulty, a ford over the Cabul, which is here a stream with a strong current travelling very rapidly on account of the descent of 4,000 feet, which the river makes from Cabul to Jellalabad. Like all fords, however, in the Cabul river, this crossing-place was found to have its dangers, the least divergence from the narrow roadway—if the word can be used where there is no dry land—plunging men and horses into deep water. The fatal experience of the 10th Hussars at Jellalabad last spring was remembered, and ropes were stretched across the stream by which the men were guided. This marked the road to be taken and minimized the danger. On the evening of the 8th half the force had crossed to Naghloo without any accident, except that Lieutenants Forbes and Macgregor, of the 92nd Highlanders, acting as orderly officers to the General, were swept away by the current. By a little hard swimming they managed to reach the bank again. The troops bivouacked without tents. On the following day a reconnaissance was made from Naghloo eastwards, towards the Lughman country, Lieutenant Manners Smith, Assistant Quartermaster-General, going out with a few cavalry to examine the district. The orders given to the troops were not to fire upon any of the local tribesmen, unless the latter first opened fire; and this order was rigorously carried out. Working down on the left bank of the Cabul, a *kotal* was gained eight or ten miles from Camp, from which a splendid view of

the Lughman Valley was obtained. There was a track right through this, and this was undoubtedly the road used by the late Shere Ali for his military convoys. It seemed to traverse an almost level country; and except that to use it would involve two bridges —one near Naghloo and the other at Jellalabad,—there can be no question that it would be far easier than *viâ* Jugdulluck, Gundamak, and Futtehabad. The country, however, north of the Cabul is known to be inhabited by Safis—converted Kafirs, whose fanaticism exceeds that of almost any other Mahomedans. Tagao, in which they live, boasts of several fertile valleys, watered by the Panjshir, Tagao, and Uzbin rivers, and might furnish supplies if the people could be reduced to obedience. Their chief is one Usman Khan,* a noted robber; and of the temper of his followers we have already had an example. When the reconnoitring party were looking into the Lughman Valley, some seventy Safis, all armed with *jhezails* and swords, appeared a few hundred yards off, and threatened to attack the troops if they proceeded further into their country. As they did not open fire, no notice was taken of their threats, and Lieutenant Smith returned to Naghloo in peace. On the next day, the 10th, a foraging party of one company of the 67th Foot, under Captain Poole, was ordered to march up the Cabul river to a village some six or seven miles to the west of Naghloo. This village is in close proximity to Doaba, at the junction of the Panjshir and Cabul rivers. The villagers near the Cabul are not Safis; and as they had expressed their willingness to sell grain and forage, only a small party of men were sent out in charge of about 100 camels and mules. The road taken was found to be rather difficult, a narrow defile close to the river having to be passed through, four miles from Naghloo. After passing through this, the narrow camel-track passed over a small semicircular piece of open ground, the hills falling away to the north. At the western end was a second defile, with a high ridge running up to the right and shutting out from view the village beyond. When Captain Poole was crossing the open with thirty men, some distance in front of the baggage animals, he met a number of villagers hastening along with their household goods and cattle. They were evidently

* Afterwards killed on the Asmai Heights on December 14th.

panic-stricken and shouted wildly to Captain Poole, but as he did not understand their language he pushed on to the second defile. It appears that what they really said was that the Safis were in force over the defile, had attacked their village, burned their houses, and murdered some of the inhabitants. Upon getting through the second defile, Captain Poole saw on the slope below some 800 or 1,000 armed men, who immediately opened fire. The thirty men of the 67th returned the fire and checked the enemy, who had tried to rush forward. It was important to keep them back until the baggage animals with their small guard of twenty-four men could retrace their steps through the first defile. After firing for some time, our men observed 300 or 400 Safis creeping round over the hill to the north, with the evident intention of getting into the open plain and cutting off all retreat. The position of the handful of men then became so hazardous, that Captain Poole ordered them to fall back, and for an hour and a half he faced towards the Safis, who advanced to within 40 yards. It was in the open that our men began to drop, although one had been shot dead in the defile. Cover was taken under the river bank, which was three or four feet above the level of the stream; and though the enemy opened fire from the southern bank, they could not do much mischief. The steadiness of the soldiers, who used their Martinis with good effect, was remarkable throughout, one or two incidents being worth recording. The crack shot of the regiment, Corporal Woolley, was with the company, and his practice was wonderfully good. He was unfortunately shot through the leg, but still continued firing. One of his comrades, on being shot down, fell into the river, and struggled hard to gain the bank. Two Safis ran down to cut him up; and these men Corporal Woolley shot before they could make their way to the wounded man. The latter was so exhausted by his efforts that he fell back, and was drowned in the stream. Corporal Woolley also brought down two standard-bearers. The fighting was so close that Captain Poole could not carry off his dead (two others were killed in the open besides the men in the defile); and the Safis mutilated them in a horrible way. Their eyes were gouged out, and faces cut to pieces by sharp knives, so that the bodies could scarcely be identified.

While fighting across the open, Captain Poole was struck by a bullet in the calf of the leg, and four other soldiers were wounded. One, who was too badly hit to be able to walk, was put upon a camel, and carried safely away. Lieutenant Carnegy kept the men together after his Captain had been hit; and although eight men and an officer out of fifty-six had been either killed or wounded, the others never wavered. A sowar had galloped back to Naghloo for assistance, and General Macpherson sent out at once a squadron of the 12th Bengal Cavalry and four mountain guns; 150 of the 67th, and a company of the 28th Punjab Native Infantry following. The cavalry arrived at the trot, but the defile was so blocked by the baggage animals, that to get through was impossible. The sowars dismounted and went up the hill to use their carbines, and the guns, also arriving, went up the crest under escort of the 28th and one company of the 67th, under Major Baker, and opened fire at 1,000 yards into the mass of the Safis below. The shells had a wholesome effect upon the enemy, and valleys from the Martinis and Sniders were also fired at long ranges. One man of the 28th was killed by a stray bullet. The other company of the 67th, under Lieutenant Atkinson, went along the river bed, and the enemy then retreated behind a *sungar* on the ridge to the north of the second defile, and covering their right flank. The mountain guns came into action again at 1,700 yards, having been brought down into the plain, and Major Baker marched over the hills to take the *sungar* in flank. Lieutenant Atkinson advancing at the same time, the Safis fled towards the Doaba, the cavalry pursuing them for six miles. Their loss must have been heavy, as they left many of their dead behind; seven bodies were found in one nullah. The mutilated bodies of three men of the 67th were recovered: the fourth had been swept down the river. The whole affair proves how great a risk small foraging parties run in an unexplored country, where the temper of the inhabitants is uncertain. It is true no resistance was expected; but the fanaticism of the Safis is so well known, that extra precautions should have been taken. The difficult ground to be traversed also put a small body of infantry, encumbered with baggage animals, at a great disadvantage. That one-sixth of Captain Poole's company was put out of action is too significant to be lightly regarded.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Report of the Commission of Inquiry upon the Massacre—The Suspicion against the Amir Yakub Khan—The Report forwarded to the Government of India—Probable Deportation of the Amir to India—Gatherings of Tribesmen at Ghazni—The Necessity of collecting Supplies for the Winter—The Khyber Line of Communications—No Supplies obtainable from Peshawur—Slowness of the Khyber Advance—Projected Expedition to Ghazni—The Reason of its falling through—The Strength of the Army of the Indus—General Baker's Excursion to the Maidan Valley—The Chardeh Valley in Winter—Sir F. Roberts joins General Baker—The Destruction of Bahadur Khan's Villages in the Darra Narkh.

SHERPUR, 18*th November*.

ONE part of the important work which the British force came to Cabul to fulfil has been done: the Commission appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the massacre of our Envoy and the after-events, culminating in the battle of Charasia, has completed its task, and to-day the report was duly signed by Colonel Macgregor, Dr. Bellew, and Mahomed Hyat Khan. For the past two days Sir F. Roberts has had the report before him, and has telegraphed a summary of it to the Government of India, who will thus be put in possession of its main features several days before the text of the document can reach them. In due course the Government will, no doubt, furnish a connected narrative of the events of the early part of September, and the world at large will then be able to judge on what basis of proof our suspicions against Yakub Khan and his most favoured ministers have rested.* The Commission began examining witnesses on the 18th of October; so that it is exactly a month to-day since the first step was taken towards compiling the mass of evidence now understood to have been recorded. I have before pointed out very fully how difficult was the work which lay before the Commissioners: there was scarcely any clue to be laid hold of which would lead them direct to their chief point—the cause of the outbreak of the Herat regiments; and they had to

* Contrary to expectation, no such narrative has ever been published.

take such witnesses as were forthcoming, and to trust to later evidence to clear away the darkness in which they were at first groping. The consideration shown to the Amir seemed, to the suspicious minds of the Cabulis, a sign which foreboded his future restoration, or that of his near relatives; and those who were well inclined to us shrank from declaring their partisanship too boldly, for fear of after-consequences, when the Barakzai family should again be all-powerful in the country. There was a slight dissipation of this feeling when the Proclamation of October 28th was issued, announcing Yakub Khan's voluntary abdication, and ordering all chiefs in Afghanistan to look to the Commander of the British force at Cabul for their authority in future; but we are known to be so eccentric a people that there still lurked uneasiness in many minds, and mouths were sealed that might reasonably have been expected to be open. The actual presence of the late sovereign in our Camp—even though he was known to be under a close guard—was too powerful an influence to be easily swept away: if he had been hurried away to India in disgrace, the atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty would have cleared up. But our ideas of justice are too strict to be warped by passionate anger, and it was resolved to give Yakub Khan as fair a chance of defending himself as he could possibly expect. That he lost his personal liberty by listening to foolish councillors, who thought he might gain something by flight, was nothing to us. One cannot always guard a man against his own stupidity. Having, then, to keep Yakub Khan with us, we had to do as best we could in gaining means of judging what were his relations with the men who stood forth as leaders of the rebel army, and how far he had sympathized with their plans. In endeavouring to trace out the palace intrigues which Nek Mahomed, Kushdil Khan, and others had set on foot, the Commission had often to rely upon men themselves tainted with suspicion; and when this was the case the statements had to be carefully weighed and critically compared with facts which were attested beyond doubt. To dwell, as I have dwelt before, upon the strong point of an Afghan, and the strongest of a Barakzai—the capacity for lying—would be merely to repeat an old story: the lies might contain in them a germ of truth shining out as a silent

protest against the mass of falsehood; and many of these germs have, after careful nursing, borne such fruit, that very tangible results have been arrived at. In spite of the religious antipathy always manifested by Mussulmans against Christians, increased a thousandfold when it is thought a Mussulman's life is in danger; in the face of a strong feeling against the restoration of a Barakzai Amir on the one hand, and of the feudal reverence shown towards the dynasty on the other; in silent but cautious calculation of those opposing influences, the Commission felt its way forward. Such men as professed friendship for us were invited to tell us all they knew, and that *all* seemed so little that it was disheartening to listen to it; such others as were Yakub Khan's faithful followers were asked to give their version of events, and their garbled stories were just as disappointing. Towards the close of the inquiry, however, there was more tangible matter to be used as a lever by which to force disclosures; and I believe that such fair evidence as will fully justify Yakub Khan's deportation to India was obtained. That it will justify more I cannot venture to hope, and I must guard myself against misconception by saying that officially no sign has been given as to the conclusions of the Commission. There are inferences which observant men cannot fail to draw from little episodes in a camp-life so limited as this, and the rigorous attention paid to the safe-keeping of Yakub Khan is but one in a string of collateral circumstances which have been interesting us since the Proclamation in the Bala Hissar and the arrest of the Wazir and his fellow-ministers. We may be all wrong in our surmises as to what will occur: there is only the charmed circle of three, who have had to shape the conclusions now before the Government of India, in which speculation may be safe; but we believe in our prescience, and are proportionately happy. The final decision on so important a step as the punishment of a sovereign supposed to have been guilty of treachery—whether of the blackest kind, or merely of the nature arising from pusillanimity and indecision—must rest with the highest authorities; and if we were tempted to chafe at our helplessness in having the knowledge of all that has transpired withheld from us, we should be consoled at once by the thought that it is the voice of

the Government alone which can pronounce the final sentence. That the Commission will have spoken freely, and not have shrunk from any startling conclusions it may have been driven to, I am fully convinced—they are not the men for half measures who have composed it—and in the full expectation that their recommendations will be carried out, even if the end is more than usually bitter, all of us who have sojourned before Cabul since we camped on Siah Sung Ridge, on 8th October, are content to rest until everything is made known.

The latest arrivals in Camp are Mahomed Syud, Governor of Ghazni, and Faiz Mahomed, the Afghan General, whose name became so familiar when Sir Neville Chamberlain's Mission was turned back in the Khyber. Faiz Mahomed was then in command at Ali Musjid, and his interwiew with Cavagnari just below the fortress is matter of history. He does not seem to have shared in the rebellion, and his adherence to Yakub Khan was never shaken. Mahomed Syud was compelled to leave Ghazni, as he found himself powerless to control the local *moollahs*, who have been preaching a *jehad* on their own account, and have gathered together several thousand tribesmen from the villages in the district. There are but few trained sepoys in their ranks, and, although they have made the road between Ghazni and the more northern districts very unsafe, their efforts are too insignificant to be at present seriously regarded.

21st November.

"Nae, nae! I'll nae fa' out till I've washed ma' hands in th' Caspian!" These were the words, not of any veteran soldier looking forward to crossing bayonets with the Russians, but of a plucky little drummer boy, of the 92nd Highlanders, when toiling painfully along the road to Cabul. The lad had his heart in the right place at any rate; and if the strength of an army is to be judged by its marching powers, we have rare material in our ranks. It is a long cry from Cabul to the Caspian; but the drummer boy may have many years of soldiering before him; and if ever the Gordon Highlanders form up on the shores of Russia's inland sea, to that boy should belong the honour of leading the van. But we are only at Cabul, and it now seems beyond

doubt that we shall not advance any further this year. The winter has come down upon us with a suddenness that we little expected from the mildness of the last season; and 20° of frost have warned us that bivouacking out would be nearly impossible for well-clad soldiers, and would be certain death to hundreds of camp-followers. The news of the disturbances on the Ghazni Road may, perhaps, call forth the remark, that after Cabul had been captured, and the country around cowed into order, a rapid march to Ghazni should have been ordered. There is much virtue in sudden and striking displays of force in an enemy's country, particularly when the enemy is disorganized by defeat, and is debating as to the possibility of waging guerilla warfare. But there are considerations which must override even rapidity of action, and the first of these is the provision of supplies on which an army can subsist when far removed from its base of action. Cabul was practically in our possession on the 9th of October, though the formal march into the Bala Hissar did not take place until three days later; and our cavalry and spies had shown us that no organized resistance was being prepared within many miles of the capital. The rebel regiments had melted away; the city people were cowering in abject submission; and the local tribes had seen that their day had not come and were once more in their homesteads, nursing their wrath and their *jhezails* until the Kafirs should be delivered into their hands. Sir. F. Roberts was at this time quite cut off from India, so far as a connected line of communication went; the Shutargardan post was the only link between Cabul and Kurram, and that was beset by an army of hill-men. From that direction he might hope, by relieving the garrison, to get one convoy through; but beyond that point he could not go. The great height of the Shutargardan Pass precluded all hope of keeping troops there during the winter. He had come from Ali Kheyl with but a few days' provisions; and it was plain that, unless supplies came by way of the Khyber, the army must rely upon the country for food for its 18,000 soldiers and followers. That one might have reasonably expected a long string of baggage animals to be moving westwards from Peshawur at the end of October did not seem so preposterous as men with General Bright's column would now have us believe.

To say that Peshawur was swept clean of all transport animals for Kurram, is begging the question. The Kurram Valley Force was only half-equipped when it began the advance upon Cabul, and northern India still held many thousands of mules, donkeys, camels, and their kind. We hoped that some of the energy our own Commander had shown would have been displayed in the "Army of the Indus," and that a few troops at least would have kept pace with us, or, say, have moved on a parallel line five marches in rear. If this had been done, and a well-equipped brigade of 2,500 men had been pushed forward to Jugdulluck, the massing of 12,000 men in rear might have been postponed—for a few months, say,—and some of the transport (swallowed up by regiments who will never be wanted west of Peshawur) then liberated. But to look to the Khyber for supplies was soon found to be an expensive amusement. The troops would starve before a seer of *atta* or grain passed Jumrood. We could live from hand-to-mouth for a week or two; but there were the four months of winter to be thought of; and it became merely a question of arithmetic whether a brigade strong enough to march to Ghazni could be spared, with all its equipment of baggage animals and followers, and at the same time four months' supplies could be bought up and swept into our Camp by those left behind at Cabul. There seemed just a chance of this being done, if our broken reed in the Jellalabad Valley could be propped fairly straight for a few weeks. The work of collecting grain, forage, and all other supplies, was begun in earnest; and we resigned ourselves to hard labour until the troops from the Shutargardan should come in, and our communications *viâ* Jugdulluck be well established. Expeditions to Kohistan and Ghazni were looked upon as certain of accomplishment in the near future. We knew that Jellalabad had been occupied by the advanced brigade of General Bright's force on October 12th, and it was only sixty miles from that post to the point beyond Jugdulluck, where they would join hands with the Cabul Army. The end of October would surely see them within a few marches of us. But it had been apparent from the first that drag-ropes were upon the "Army of the Indus," and that every tug forward made by Brigadier Charles Gough was responded to by a double tug behind. The end of the month

came; the convoys from the Shutargardan were well on their way, the troops under Brigadier Hugh Gough had also started; and the Jugdulluck route seemed about to be opened. On 1st November Brigadier Macpherson was at Butkhak, and four days later he shook hands with General Bright at Kata Sung. Then it was decided at head-quarters here that a force should visit Ghazni. The mass of our supplies were being stored away in Sherpur; General Macpherson could march his brigade back after garrisoning Luttabund and Butkhak; Cabul would not be denuded of troops; and from Sherpur to Peshawur the road would be guarded by an overwhelming force. But the programme went all wrong: the broken reed, after being straightened for twenty-four hours, failed us. The Khyber advanced brigade had no supplies; General Macpherson had to cross into Tagao to feed his force; and we, in Sherpur, saw the 15th November—the day fixed for our departure for Ghazni—come and go, and still the army remained stationary. The weather, too—an element that can never be despised in our calculations in a semi-barren country like Afghanistan—had punished our delay by declaring against us. Snow and sleet fell in and around Cabul, and no man knew when the next storm might come. So the Ghazni expedition fell through; and if the ruffians who are now trying to make capital out of our failure to visit the place, succeed in their efforts to cry a *jehad*, the blame for any mischief that may ensue cannot be thrown upon the Cabul Army, but upon the short-sighted policy which could leave it to its own resources, while nominally moving a supporting force in a parallel line in order to secure its alternative communications. Foreign military critics have reflected severely upon the want of skill shown in the plan of the campaign, and have condemned the rashness of the Shutargardan-Cabul advance, without support from the Khyber. But the supports were said to be there, and General Roberts could not know that they would be steadily kept back, and would be unable to take up their share of the alternative road a month after he had captured the position they were both supposed to be converging upon. Supports which travel at the rate of two or three miles a day are worse than useless.

When it is considered what the numerical strength of the Khyber supporting column is, one cannot understand the timidity

of the advance. There may have been tribes in front, in flank, and in rear; but so there were on the Shutargardan route, and tribes far more capable of mischief than Afridis and Shinwaris. Yet the menace at Budesh Kheyl, Ali Kheyl, the Shutargardan, and on either flank at Charasia, did not check the forward movement of an army half the strength of that supposed to have been put in motion from Peshawur simultaneously with the advance from the Kurram side. Looking at General Bright's force at the end of October, we find that, inclusive of troops at Nowshera and Peshawur, he had under his orders over 16,000 men, viz., British troops: 148 officers and 4,287 men; Native troops: 147 British officers and 11,795 men. These included five batteries of artillery and one mountain battery, and six cavalry regiments, three British and three Native. Out of the total, two batteries were in Peshawur; and there must also be subtracted the following regiments, which had not crossed the old frontier :—11th Bengal Lancers (356), part of the 17th Bengal Cavalry (338), 1-17th Foot (443), 1-25th (715), part of 51st (209), 1st Native Infantry (774), 22nd Native Infantry (638), and 39th Native Infantry (609). Deducting all these, there was left a force of 11,800 men actually moving on, or garrisoning the Peshawur-Gundamak line; supports equal, it might have been supposed, to any work required of them. That there were conflicting ideas as to the object with which such a body of troops had been sent from India, must have been apparent even to a superficial observer; but upon whon the responsibility of playing with such an army rests, no one here pretends to say. The local rank of Lieutenant-General, which has at last been given to Sir F. Roberts, brings these 11,800 men under his command, and their future movements are likely to be directed in sympathy with the advanced army at Cabul. For the next few months they will probably be required to do little more than keep the road; but during the winter their transport equipment and commissariat arrangements—defects in which are said to have been the chief cause of their tardy movements—will have to be so far put on a footing of efficiency that, if the necessity arises in the spring for the Cabul Army continuing its march westwards, they will be able to keep pace with its movements. There are good men and tried soldiers enough in the Khyber Force to

do all that is required, if they are allowed scope for their energies, and are not trammelled and crippled at every step by those influences in the background, which I have already described as being "drag-ropes" upon their freedom of action. General Roberts has now in his command—that of Eastern Afghanistan —two divisions of 8,000, and 11,800 men, respectively: in all, nearly 20,000 troops, whose movements he controls from his head-quarters at Sherpur. Matters of detail on the Khyber side are left, as before, to local commanders. I have dwelt at length upon the shortcomings of the Peshawur column, not so much because very serious results have followed its laggard advance, but as showing how helpless the small force here would have been if, in case of a check, it had looked for support to "the Army of the Indus."

General Macpherson's brigade returned to Sherpur cantonments yesterday, having left at Luttabund 300 of the 23rd Pioneers and half the 28th Punjab Native Infantry. Before the brigade marched in, a strong body of troops had been warned for service, their destination being the district of Maidan, twenty-five miles distant on the Ghazni Road, where large supplies of grain and *bhoosa* are said to have been collected for us by the sirdars employed to purchase it on our account. Over 100,000 maunds of *bhoosa* are still wanted to complete our winter supply; and as the villagers have not sufficient carriage to bring in their supplies so long a distance, we must needs go out ourselves. Every available baggage animal will be employed for the next week or ten days in carrying in this forage; and as there are rumours innumerable of gatherings on the Ghazni Road further south, it has been determined to run no risk with reference to our valuable mules and *yaboos*. A string of between 2,000 and 3,000 animals needs to be well protected, and the brigade which marched out this morning under General Baker was therefore very strong. It was made up as follows:—500 of the 92nd Highlanders; 400 of the 3rd Sikhs; 400 of the 5th Punjab Infantry; two guns, G-3, Royal Artillery; four guns Kohat Mountain Battery; one squadron 9th Lancers, two squadrons 5th Punjab Cavalry, and two squadrons of the 14th Bengal Lancers. The display of so large a force half-way to

Ghazni is sure to have an excellent effect upon the surrounding country. Sir F. Roberts rides out to-morrow to join General Baker at Maidan.

A Divisional order was issued to-night, directing the public reading of an order of the Commander-in-Chief dismissing Subadar Mahomed Karim Khan, 1st Punjab Infantry, from the service for having failed in his duty to the Queen-Empress on the occasion of the attack upon the Residency. This man is a Logari, and was on furlough at Cabul in September. On the morning of the outbreak he was in the Residency, and after the lull following the first collision of the Herat troops with the Guides—while the Afghans went for their arms—he was sent with a message to the Amir by Sir Louis Cavagnari. This he does not seem to have delivered with the spirit that might have been expected from a soldier in our service; and afterwards, when Gholam Nubbi, Cavagnari's *chuprasse*, found money and horses for him to carry the news of the disaster to the British Camp at Ali Kheyl, he behaved in a dastardly way. He changed clothes with Gholam Nubbi and started out, but only went as far as Beni Hissar. There he stayed for two days, and then returned to Cabul, where he hid himself for five days in the Kizilbash quarter. Afterwards he quietly made his way to his own village; and, upon our troops appearing at Kushi, came into camp and told some wonderful stories of what he had done. These were afterwards proved to be false, and the Military Commission when trying prisoners found that his conduct had been really that of a poltroon. They recommended his dismissal from the service, and he has now been summarily discharged, all arrears of pay being forfeited. This is another striking instance of the shifty and untrustworthy nature of our Pathan soldiers, for Karim Khan was an old native officer.

CAMP MAIDAN, GHAZNI ROAD, 24*th November*.

The Lieutenant-General Commanding is now out on a visit to the force under Brigadier-General Baker, which is collecting supplies of forage from the villages along the Ghazni Road. Leaving Brigadier-General Macpherson in command at Sherpur, Sir F.

Roberts, accompanied by his personal Staff and Colonel Macgregor, Chief of the Staff, with a small escort of ten men of the 14th Bengal Lancers, rode through the Cabul gorge on the afternoon of the 22nd, and, following the road which traverses the Chardeh Valley, made for the village of Argandeh, about sixteen miles away. The Chardeh Valley, which we passed through, gave evidence on all sides of that fertility which has earned for it the name of the "Garden of Cabul;" but it is so late in the year that only autumn tints mark the fields on either side. Here and there the young wheat is shooting up, but the small green blades are scarcely strong enough to do more than chequer the general area of brownness. The long lines of willows and poplars which line the hundreds of watercourses threading the valley, are mere skeletons of trees; their leaves rustling down in eddying circles as the cold wind sweeps blusteringly from the snowy tops of the Pughman Hills. The valley is shut in on all sides by high mountain ranges, the hills which guard Cabul from approach on the west seeming to rise perpendicularly from the plain. The range above Indikee village is overtopped by the sheer cliffs which dominate the plain between Zahidabad and Charasia, and these are already covered with snow, which gleams out in startling whiteness above the barren rocks in the foreground. Far away to the north lies the Hindu Kush, with its long undulating sky-line similarly snow-laden, the lower intermediate hills of Kohistan being still mere brown masses jostling each other in grand confusion. Looking towards Bamian the view is bounded scarcely ten miles away by the Pughman spur, which boasts of several lofty peaks rising in sullen grandeur from the hills about Argandeh. For fully twelve miles, or about as far as Kila Kazi, the road is an extremely good one; stones, the curse of Afghanistan, being few and far between. After this the dry bed of a snow-fed stream has frequently to be crossed or followed, and boulders are not uncommon. Guns, however, could be got along without much trouble, and if necessary a new track on a higher level, across the cultivated land, could be laid out. The road ascends gradually the whole way, and when near Argandeh a *kotal* is gained, about a mile and a half across and two or three miles long. It is now a bare plain without tree or shrub, but for the most part is under cultivation, the fields of

course lying fallow during the winter. To the right or north the hills are rather precipitous, and in a sheltered curve at their base the village of Argandeh lies. It is fully a mile from the road, and all about it are terraced fields said to yield magnificent crops of wheat and barley. The high pitch to which irrigation attains in Afghanistan is strikingly exemplified in this district, the water-channels being so arranged that the distribution of the water is admirable.

Sir Frederick Roberts rested for the night at Argandeh, and yesterday morning rode on to Maidan. Striking the Ghazni Road a mile from Argandèh, we followed its course over the *kotal* and soon began to descend. The hills on either side were as bare as any in Afghanistan, and the plain between them was only partially cultivated. After about four miles a *chowki* (watch-tower) was reached on a little rise, and looking to the south we saw the district of Maidan stretching before us. It is a beautiful valley, land-locked on every side, the Cabul river running through it about a mile from the foot of the western hills. The valley must be at least four miles across; and, with the exception of low rolling downs, covered with stones and rocks, for about a mile on its eastern flank is as flat as its name, Maidan (open plain), implies. Twenty or thirty walled enclosures and villages on the banks of the Cabul stream stand out from amid poplars, willows, and plane trees, which fringe the banks of the sparkling little river, and for many square miles nothing is seen but endless corn-fields, each with its little boundary of mud, along which the water slowly wanders as it does its work of irrigation. The road falls rapidly from the *chowki*, and a few hundred yards below bifurcates, the main route to Ghazni going straight to the south over the rolling downs I have mentioned, and a bridle-path leading down to the villages of the plain. General Baker's camp is pitched at Naure Falad, two miles from the *chowki*, down in the plain near the first of the fortified enclosures, its rear being guarded by a high rocky ridge. From the summit of this a splendid view of Maidan is obtained, and the extraordinary fertility of the valley fully appreciated. To the west the ridge runs sharply down into the plain, and the valley is there narrowed to half a mile, but it opens out again to the north among the hills.

The main road to Bamian, which strikes off from the Ghazni Road before the *chowki* in the *kotal* is reached, runs across this part of the valley and enters the Ispekhawk Pass, a few miles further on.

Yesterday afternoon a small party of cavalry were fired upon in the Darra Narkh, a valley running in the Bamian direction, and to-day Bahadur Khan, who was responsible for the action, and who is known to be harbouring Afghan soldiers, has been visited and punished. He had already given much trouble. General Baker, since his arrival in Maidan, has found much difficulty in inducing the *maliks* of the villages of the district to bring in corn and *bhoosa*. They have given the tribute grain and forage readily enough, but have evaded furnishing the amount we required in addition to this. Every maund was paid for at a forced rate, which, I may state, was far higher than the normal prices; but the village headmen hung back, and, though profuse in promises, made but little effort to meet our wants. Several of them were very insolent in their bearing, and no doubt thought to worry us out by their procrastination. But General Baker is not the stamp of man to have his orders disobeyed. and by confining some of the *maliks* to the camp for a few days, he had gradually brought them to their senses. One *malik*, however, trusting to the obscure valley in which he lived, wherein Europeans had never been known to penetrate, was obstinate. This was Bahadur Khan, whose fort is about eight miles from the Maidan villages, along the branch road which leads to Bamian. He not only refused to sell any of his huge store of grain and forage, but insolently declined to come into camp. He was known to have great influence among the tribesmen in his neighbourhood, and it was reported that some sepoys of the Ardal regiments were living under his protection. When Sir F. Roberts heard of the contumacy of this *malik*, he agreed with General Baker that it would be well to fetch him in by force, and at the same time to arrest any sepoys found in his villages. To accomplish this double object the cavalry were sent out yesterday, with the result already stated, that they were fired upon by a large body of men, including some 200 sepoys armed with Sniders. It was necessary to make an example of Bahadur

Khan, and at the same time to break up the tribal gathering, which, if left alone, might grow to serious proportions. Our foraging parties would probably have been roughly handled in scattered villages, all of which boast of towers and fortified enclosures, if the rumour had been allowed to circulate that our cavalry had been driven back.

Tents having been struck at daybreak, the baggage of the force was packed up and placed within a fort near the Cabul river, under a guard of 300 men, drawn equally from the 92nd Highlanders, 3rd Sikhs, and 5th Punjab Infantry, with a squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers and a troop of the 9th Lancers. The two guns of 9-3, R.H.A., were also left behind, as the road to the villages was known to be difficult for wheeled guns. The troops which marched out were 400 of the 92nd, 300 of the 3rd Sikhs, 300 of the 5th N.I., a troop of the 9th Lancers, a squadron of the 14th B.L., and four guns of the Kohat Mountain Battery. General Baker was in command of this compact little column, which was not encumbered with transport animals, as a rapid march was intended. Sir F. Roberts, with Colonel Macgregor, also rode out with his personal escort. It was bitterly cold in the early morning, and all but the swiftest running streams were coated over with ice. The troops carried with them one day's cooked provisions, but were otherwise in light marching order. A point was made for a little to the south-west, where the Darra Narkh stream falls into the Cabul river, and then a due westerly course was followed up the narrow valley through which the former stream runs. The usual mountainous country was seen on either hand, high hills closing down on the valley, and presenting treeless slopes barren of all verdure. The two rivers had to be crossed by fords, and the men went through the icy-cold water as carelessly as if wading a stream in summer. The sepoys stripped off their *putties*, and made light of the floating ice which barked their shins, while the Highlanders in their kilts seemed rather to enjoy the bracing cold. The road was fairly well-defined and ran through cultivated fields, with an occasional fortified homestead or country villa relieving the monotony of the landscape. Information was brought from time to time of the movements of Bahadur Khan, it being at first stated that he had 2,000 or 3,000 men ready to meet us. About

seven miles from the camp the road was commanded by a high ridge on the left, and beyond this, we were told, lay the open valley in which the cavalry had been attacked. This ridge was at its highest point 800 or 1,000 feet above the roadway, and on the previous evening had been lined with men. Now it appeared quite deserted, and the cavalry swept round it and waited in a friendly village until the infantry could come up. A local *malik* volunteered the news that Bahadur Khan and his followers had taken all their movable property away during the night and had fled to the hills. When the Lancers first appeared round the ridge and pushed forward into the horseshoe-shaped valley, they saw fifty or sixty men on some low hills to the north, a gunshot from Bahadur Khan's chief fort; and as these moved down the slopes, it seemed probable that a body of tribesmen might be lying hidden behind the crests. Possibly the Ghilzais expected that only cavalry were again about to pay them a visit, and were emboldened to come to the lower levels. As soon as the advanced company of the Highlanders appeared on the road, the "enemy," if fifty are worthy of the name, drew off hurriedly to the highest hill, a couple of miles distant, and watched our movements. General Baker directed one company of the 92nd to advance in skirmishing order, and occupy a rocky hill overlooking Bahadur Khan's fort, and commanding it at 700 or 800 yards, and sent a company of Sikhs round to the north, with orders to drive out any men who might be occupying the lower hills. It was soon seen that the place was quite deserted, and not a shot was fired from any of the hills. The whole valley lay before us dotted over with fortified homesteads, surrounded by grain-fields already green with sprouting corn. It seemed wonderfully fertile, and extended over many square miles; other and smaller valleys penetrating between the hills wherever there was a break in their continuous line. The exact extent of these minor valleys could not be estimated, but native report stated that the fertility was equal to that of the rich plain stretching away to the north-west for five or six miles. When it was seen that no opposition was to be offered, the Sikhs doubled down upon the fort from the low hills above it, and at the same time another company raced across the fields from the southern entrance to the valley, all being anxious to be in

" at the loot." It was a pretty sight watching the sepoys doubling along and spreading out as the fort and the village near it were gained. Clouds of dust with the gleam of lance-heads shining out soon arose further to the left in the heart of the valley, showing where the cavalry were galloping off to more distant homesteads. All Bahadur Khan's villages, some ten in number, were marked down to be looted and burnt, and Sikhs and sowars were quickly engaged in the work. The houses were found stored with *bhoosa*, straw, firewood, and twigs for the winter as well as a small quantity of corn, and as there was not time to clear this out, and we could not afford to leave a force for the night in such a dangerous position so near to the hills, orders were given to fire the villages and destroy the houses and their contents. No better men than Sikhs could be found for such work, and in a few minutes Bahadur Khan's villages were in flames, and volumes of dense black smoke pouring over the valley, a high wind aiding the fire with frantic earnestness. The villagers had carried off all their portable property, not even a *charpoy* remaining, but the Sikhs ransacked every place for hidden treasure, and smashed down the earthen corn-bins in hope of gaining a prize. These corn-bins seemed quite a feature of every house. They are three or four feet square and made of sun-dried clay, often fancifully ornamented with scroll-work. They stand on a raised platform in the living-room, and have near the bottom a small hole in which a piece of rag is stuffed. This answers to the tap of a barrel, for when the rag is withdrawn the grain pours out, and the daily supply can be drawn just as we would draw a tankard of beer in an English farm-house. Indian corn, from which rich *chupaties* (unleavened cakes) are made, is chiefly stored in this way, and near the bins stand the grinding-stones, at which the women of the house prepare the flour for the household. Generally an adjoining room is turned into a kitchen, the earthen floor being skilfully burrowed to form ovens, and round holes cut out on which to place the *dekchies* which serve for Afghan pots and kettles. Such of the rooms as I went into were dark and dirty enough, small square holes in the walls serving as windows, and the roofs being made up of thick logs laid a foot apart, and covered over with twigs, on which a foot of mud had been plastered. The

Sikhs fired house after house, and every room was soon converted into a huge reverberating furnace, the fire having no means of escape through the roofs, which were very strong. Nearly all the houses were two-storied, with narrow wooden or mud staircases, and many a sepoy in his haste first fired the lower rooms, stored with wood or *bhoosa*, and then rushed upstairs intent on loot, soon to be driven down again by the smoke and flames from below. The search after household goods was varied by exciting chases after the fowls, ducks, and donkeys of the village. Sikhs and *kahars*, who had come up with the *dandies* (stretchers for wounded men), scrambled over housetops, and through blinding smoke, to capture the dearly-prized *moorgie*, while below an unoffending donkey would be chased frantically round awkward corners and over frozen watercourses, where pursuers and pursued alike came to grief. A donkey when captured was laden with such little loot as the men thought worth while carrying off. Each fowl had its neck wrung on the spot, was thrown into a convenient bit of fire in some blazing house, and having been singed clean of its feathers, was cooked in a few minutes, and eaten with infinite enjoyment. The cavalry were fortunate enough to secure fifty sheep and a few cows, which were driven to camp. After two or three hours had been spent in firing the various villages owned by Bahadur Khan, the order to fall in for the homeward march was given, and leaving the valley draped in smoke and the fire still working its will, the troops filed off for Maidan. They reached camp by evening, having marched seventeen miles over difficult ground and through half-frozen streams without mishap. As the rear-guard left, a few men appeared on the heights of the north and fired a few shots at long ranges, but these were merely in bravado.* We could learn nothing of the body of tribesmen and the 200 sepoys, and it is believed they have dispersed. The punishment of Bahadur Khan will have a great effect upon the whole district of

* This is a plain statement of the foray in the Darra Narkh, and our indignation was greatly aroused afterwards by seeing sensational articles in English papers describing how old men, women, and children were turned out to die in the snow. There were *no* old men, women, and children seen, and *no* snow. There were forty or fifty other villages in which they had taken refuge long before we arrived.

Maidan, as it will show the *maliks* that they are not safe from our troops even in their most obscure valleys. General Baker remains in the neighbourhood of Maidan until next week, all the available transport animals from Sherpur being now engaged in carrying to our cantonments the large quantities of corn and *bhoosa* collected. Our winter supply of forage seems likely to be assured.

CHAPTER XIV.

Deportation of Yakub Khan to India—Review of his Reign—The Scene on the Morning of December 1st—Precautions along the Road to Jugdulluck—Strengthening of the Posts—Tribal Uneasiness about Cabul—Attitude of the Kohistanis—General Baker's Brigade ordered to Sherpur—The State of Afghan Turkistan—Its Effect upon Kohistan—Gholam Hyder and his Army—The Extent of his Power—Return of his disbanded Regiments to their Homes in Kohistan—Our Policy towards the Afghans—Failure of the Attempt to conciliate the People—Modifications necessary—Murder of our Governor of Maidan.

SHERPUR, 1*st December*.

THE ex-Amir of Afghanistan, Sirdar Yakub Khan, is now well on his way to India: the order for his deportation having been carried out so silently and quickly that, while I am writing, the majority of men in Sherpur cantonments are ignorant of his departure. As I ventured to predict in forwarding the news of the close of the Commission of Inquiry, Yakub Khan's fate is that of an exile to India; but even now we are in the dark here as to whether he will be treated as a State prisoner, and allowed to live in luxurious comfort, or will be sent to the Andamans, to drag out his life as a common malefactor. If the latter, it will be an ignoble ending of a career which in its earlier stages promised such brilliant achievements. Yakub Khan was once the first soldier in Afghanistan, but from the evil moment when he confided in the word of his father, his fame was at an end. Five years' captivity—and such captivity as only Shere Ali could devise—broke his spirit, dulled his intellect, and left him the weak incapable we treated with at Gundamak, and confided in so blindly until the fatal week in September. That under fairer auspices he

might have proved a strong ruler, such as the Afghans require, can scarely admit of a doubt; that he would have been a Dost Mahomed even his most ardent admirers would hesitate to assert. The conditions of government in a country like Afghanistan compel the sovereign either to be a tyrant or the tool of factions: Yakub Khan, during his few months of power, was the latter. His accession to the throne took place under circumstances to cope with which, even in the prime of his manhood before imprisonment had crippled him, would have taxed his power to the uttermost. After five years in a dungeon he was suddenly liberated by his father, only to find that father in the last stage of defeat and despair, his kingdom practically at the mercy of a powerful invader, and himself a panic-stricken fugitive. Left first as Shere Ali's regent, Yakub Khan could do nothing beyond watch, with Oriental submission to fate, the advance of the two invading armies up the Jellalabad and Kurram Valleys. The help which Shere Ali expected to receive from his Russian friends over the Oxus was not forthcoming; in a few weeks came the news of the death of the Amir at Mazar-i-Sharif, and Yakub found himself in possession of a kingdom already tottering to its fall. If he had had the energy of Dost Mahomed he might have organized armies, called upon the semi-barbarous tribes still lying between Cabul and India to join his soldiers in a holy war, and make a supreme effort to check the invasion which had driven his father from the capital. But that energy was lacking; he made but a faint-hearted appeal to the fanaticism of the hill-tribes, and, unsupported as this was by any real attempt to collect the scattered units of Shere Ali's once-powerful army, it necessarily failed. Nothing was left to him but negotiation; and, thanks to the clemency of the enemy to whom he was opposed, he was granted terms which, in his position, he could scarcely have hoped to gain. He allied himself with the most powerful State in Asia, and the safety of his kingdom was assured against all foreign aggression. If he had been a tyrant to his subjects, and thoroughly determined to make his will their law, the reception in his capital of an Embassy from the Power with which he was allied would have been fraught with no danger either to himself or to the Ambassador. But he had not the strength of tyranny sufficient to control the fac-

tions of which he was a mere tool, and it seems only too probable that he gradually drifted from his first position of sincerity towards his new allies, to that of a timid spectator of intrigues against the alliance. His weakness and vacillation could not check the danger that was growing so formidable, and, when the final outbreak came, his personal influence was even unequal to saving the life of the man who had trusted so implicitly in his good faith. That Yakub desired the death of Sir Louis Cavagnari we do not believe; that he had been led, insidiously, by men about him to coincide in the view that the Embassy should be forced to leave may be readily credited. And once that Embassy had been destroyed, there is only too much reason to suppose that he was inclined to parley with the men who had brought about its destruction, and to listen to their plausible reasoning that what had been done was irrevocable. The access of personal fear, which drove him to seek safety in the British camp, no more excuses him of responsibility for his acts of omission or commission, than does the voluntary surrender of a murderer condone the crime he has committed. So far as human canons are concerned, repentance cannot blot out guilt, however much it may modify judgment: the supreme quality of mercy is impossible under ordinary conditions of life. Taking the most pitiful estimate of Yakub Khan's offence, putting aside the idea even of participation in the views of the men who wished him to break the engagements to which he stood pledged, there is the one unpardonable crime still clinging to him—that he stood by, and made no sign, while the lives of men were sacrificed which should have been sacred to him, even according to the narrow creed of the fanatics who surrounded him. His own words, when refusing the help that was so dearly needed, rise up against him when he appeals to our forbearance: "It is not to be done." Perhaps, hereafter, the same answer may be given when we are asked to preserve the integrity of a country which has always repaid friendship with falsehood, trust with treachery.

From the 28th of October until his departure for India this morning, Yakub Khan had been a close prisoner in our camp, the tent in which he was confined being always strongly guarded, and no one beyond our own officers being allowed access to him.

The monotony and solitude have told upon him, of course, and he is now thinner and more worn than when he first took refuge with General Baker at Kushi. Before the closing day of the inquiry he was contented and placid enough; but of late he has displayed some anxiety as to his probable fate, the irksomeness of the restraint under which he was placed having, no doubt, largely contributed to this. He could hear all the busy life in camp about him, but was as much shut out from it as if a prisoner again in the Bala Hissar. The bayonets of the sentries who quartered the ground day and night about his tent were a barrier beyond which he could not pass. The departure for India, Malta, or London, which he had expressed himself so willing to undertake nearly two months ago, must have seemed to him hopeless, even so late as six o'clock last night, when Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer, paid his usual visit to the tent, then guarded by fifty men of the 72nd Highlanders. Major Hastings said nothing of the orders which had been received from the Government, as it had been resolved to give as short a notice as possible of the intended journey, for fear of complications on the road to Peshawur. Not that it was at all likely an effort would be made to rouse the tribes to attempt a rescue, but that nothing was to be gained by an open parade of the departure. At eight o'clock Major Hastings sent word to Yakub Khan that he intended paying him a second visit; and, accompanied by Mr. H. M. Durand, Political Secretary to the Lieutenant-General, he again went to the tent. Yakub Khan was a little astonished at the unusual hour chosen for the visit; but when told that he would have to leave Cabul for India at six o'clock the next morning, he kept his composure admirably. He expressed surprise that such short notice should be given, but beyond this did not question the arrangements. He asked that his father-in-law, Yahiya Khan, and two other sirdars now in confinement should be released and allowed to accompany him. This, of course, could not be granted, and he then asked to what place in India he was to be taken, and where the Viceroy was. This was all the concern he showed. The orders received here are to convey him safely to Peshawur; so but little information as to his final resting-place could be vouchsafed him. I may here incidentally mention that he will probably go on to Umritsar or

Lahore, where, perhaps, the decision of the Government will be made known to him.

All the arrangements for the journey had been carefully made beforehand. There were, this morning, at Butkhak, the 12th Punjab Cavalry, and between that post and Sei Baba 400 of the 72nd Highlanders, 300 of the 23rd Pioneers, and a wing of the 28th Punjab Infantry; while the convoy of sick and wounded, with its escort, was between Kata Sung and Jugdulluck. The escort from Sherpur was simply two squadrons of cavalry drawn from the 9th Lancers and 5th Punjab Cavalry, under the command of Major Hammond, of the latter regiment. Soon after five o'clock this morning the little camp in which the ex-Amir was lodged, not far from head-quarters, was all astir with preparations for the journey. A bright moon was shining overhead and a few watch-fires were blazing brightly among the tents, by the light of which the mules and *yaboos* were loaded up. The squadron of the 5th Punjab Cavalry drew up outside the gateway which leads from the cantonments near the western end of the southern wall; while the Lancers passed from their lines, opposite the break in the Bemaru Heights, to a bit of open ground between the quarters of the 72nd Highlanders and Yakub Khan's tent. The early morning air was bitterly cold, and the usual light mist which settles nightly over the Cabul plain still hung about. The camp was silent and deserted, every soldier being at that hour asleep, except the sentries at their posts and the patrols, stalking like armed ghosts from picquet to picquet, seeking for any rabid Kohistani who might have invaded the sanctity of our lines. The Lancers moved smartly round and round in small circles to keep themselves and their horses from freezing as they stood; and through the dust and mist enveloping them their lances shone out now and again as the steel-heads caught a glint from the moon. It was a fantastical sight, this endless circling of misty horsemen, moving apparently without aim or object and growing momentarily more and more distinct as dawn began to creep up over the distant Luttabund and Khurd Cabul hills, and struggle with the clear moonlight which had before been supreme. In an hour everything was ready for departure. Yakub Khan's horses were waiting ready saddled, and the Lancers had ceased

their circling, and were formed up waiting for the order to march. Sir Frederick Roberts, Colonel Macgregor, Chief of the Staff, and Major Hastings were present to see the prisoner start on his rapid journey, and at half-past six exactly Yakub Khan rode off surrounded by Lancers. He had exchanged salaams with the General and those about him, and, if not positively elated, was seemingly quite content to leave Cabul. Captain Turner was the Political Officer to whose care he was assigned; and Abdullah Khan, son of the Nawab Gholam Hussein, was the native officer in attendance. His four body servants and a favourite attendant, Abdul Kayun, who had been released at the last moment, rode with the escort. No notice was given beforehand to his servants; and when the royal cooks heard that they were to start for India, they abandoned their master and took refuge in the city. They were afterwards sought out and sent on to Luttabund, the halting-place for the night, as the comfort of Yakub Khan is to be strictly considered. The news of the departure soon spread through Cabul, and the Mussulman population, according to a Hindu informant, are greatly depressed and uneasy. They are now convinced that the Durani dynasty is at an end; and, while not regretting Yakub personally, they mourn over the fall of that reign of turbulence which they could always carry out in the city under a Barakzai. Double marches are to be made the whole way to Peshawur, where Yakub Khan is expected to arrive in eight days. Part of the Cabul Field Force escort will accompany him to Jugdulluck, where the advanced Khyber Brigade will assume charge, and he will be passed through the various posts until the Punjab Frontier is reached.* His son, the so-called heir-apparent, remains here, as well as the members of his harem, who will be pensioned and properly cared for by the British authorities.

During the past few days reports have come in of growing uneasiness among various sections of the tribes about Cabul, and these culminated yesterday in the news that the Kohistanis had actually risen, and were at Khoja Serai, on the Charikar Road. They were said to have cooked three days' food, and to meditate

* I may here state that Yakub Khan made the journey to Peshawur without incident; the rapidity of his movements preventing any tribal combination being formed with the object of attempting his rescue.

attacking Sherpur on the last day of the moon. From the Luttabund direction also it was reported that the Safis of Tagao and the hillmen west of Jugdulluck were also meditating mischief, though beyond gathering together in small bands they had not made open demonstration of hostility. The change in the attitude of the Kohistanis has warned us that it is idle to expect a peaceful quiet among men who have always been unruly and turbulent. The sections which will probably give us most trouble now and in the future are—the Wardaks inhabiting the country about the Ghazni Road, who may drag in the Logaris, the Safis of Tagao, and the Kohistanis. With the two former we have already come into collision; General Macpherson having ventured into Tagao in search of supplies, while General Baker on a similar mission at Maidan has had to burn Beni-Badam in the Wardak country.* It is probable that both Safis and Wardaks will seek hereafter to have their revenge; but in the meantime we shall not trouble them further, as we have the Kohistanis to deal with. Kohistan lies due north of Cabul between the Pughman, a spur of the Hindu Kush, and Tagao, and includes the upper valley of the Panjshir River, which stretches away north-east from Charikar, the most important town in the province. The lower portion of Kohistan is known as the Koh-Daman (Mountain Skirt), and is the district renowned for its vineyards and orchards, from which Cabul is largely supplied with fruit. It is fertilized by innumerable streams running down from the Pughman mountains, and uniting to form a river, which, turned to the north by ranges of hills facing Pughman, eventually empties itself into the Panjshir on the western border of Tagao. Looking northwards from the Bemaru Heights above Sherpur cantonments, one sees nothing but a mass of hills piled together in picturesque confusion,

* General Baker nearly fell a victim to Afghan treachery at Beni-Badam. He visited the village with twenty or thirty troopers of the 9th Lancers, leaving his infantry on the Ghazni Road, 2½ miles away. The villagers brought out milk and fruit for the officers, and provided corn and forage for the horses, protesting their friendship loudly. General Baker noticed that only old men seemed in the village, but did not suspect treachery until suddenly two large bodies of armed men, with banners flying, were seen rushing down the hill to cut off his retreat. The troopers had to skirmish on foot with their carbines, and after a sharp fight the General managed to rejoin his infantry. The next day he destroyed the village.

the foreground being a low range running parallel to the narrow swampy lake, which borders the plain from which Bemaru rises. The road from Cabul to Kohistan passes close to Sherpur on the east, crosses the grassy plain, and over the lake on a raised causeway at a point where it is very narrow and shallow, and thence over a low *kotal* called Paen Minar. Koh-Daman is then fairly entered upon, and the route northwards is as follows:—Paen Minar to Kila Ittafal Khan, six miles; Ittafal Khan to Khoja Serai, five miles; Khoja Serai to Istalif, seven miles; Istalif to Charikar, *viâ* Isturgehteh, thirteen miles; or a total from Paen Minar, four miles from Sherpur, of thirty-one miles. While we were encamped at Siah Sung the Kohistan Chiefs came in and made professions of friendship, which were gladly accepted by General Roberts. They remained with us for several weeks, but were plainly disappointed that no large subsidy was promised to them for their future good behaviour. A Governor, Shahbaz Khan, a Barakzai sirdar who had intermarried with the Kohistanis, was appointed, and was sent to Charikar, his mission being chiefly to furnish supplies for our troops, and to prevent any Chief arrogating to himself power in the province. No sooner do the *maliks* seem to have returned to their villages than they began to concert measures to annoy us. They gathered armed men together, set at nought Shahbaz Khan, and, as I have said, have been bold enough to declare their intention of attacking Sherpur. That they will do this seems too absurd to believe, unless there is a general combination, but the precaution of building breastworks on the Bemaru Heights has been taken, and yesterday afternoon a small party of cavalry were sent out to reconnoitre past Paen Minar. They saw no signs of any gathering, but still there may be bands of men lurking about. We have but a very small infantry garrison in Sherpur at the present time, as 500 of the 92nd, 400 of the 3rd Sikhs, and 400 of the 5th Punjab Infantry are out in Maidan, while the troops sent to hold the road as far as Jugdulluck on the occasion of Yakub Khan's journey down are, as already stated, very numerous. General Baker has, therefore, been warned to march to Sherpur with his brigade as rapidly as his foraging arrangements will allow.

4th December.

The attitude of the Kohistanis continues far from satisfactory, though they have not, as yet, been reckless enough to carry out their threat of attacking Sherpur. The author of the late disturbances is said to be the mother of Yakub Khan, a woman well advanced in years, but still capable, through agents, of doing much mischief. She is in Cabul with the harem of the ex-Amir; and as we do not war against women, she has had full liberty to intrigue with discontented chiefs. Of the gathering of hostile bands at Khoja Serai, south of Istalif, we have heard little of late. The man who will probably give us most trouble is Mir Butcha; while, to show how interests clash in this once "God-governed country," I may state that the nephew of Daoud Shah, the ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army, is a prominent leader of the malcontents. His uncle is striving in every way to ingratiate himself with the British, and has so far succeeded, that he is freely made use of by our Political Officers. He has several times given valuable information and has been of great service in aiding us in the collection of supplies. He has warned us of the disaffected nature of the Kohistanis; and though he over-estimates their strength as opposed to our army, his warning has been partially justified by late events. The southern part of Kohistan, the Koh-Daman, is not so turbulent as that further north, about Charikar, in which Ṣhahbaz Khan is supposed to exercise power. One road from Northern Turkistan passes over the Hindu Kush and runs through Charikar to Cabul; and this near proximity to a province, supposed at present to be safe from our army, has a tendency to foster local disaffection. In fact, the state of Turkistan re-acts upon all Kohistan, and indirectly upon the country about Cabul; and, in view of further complications, it is worth while looking critically upon the present position of that important province.

The capture of Cabul and the dispersion of such of the rebel regiments as fought at Charasia had a great effect, at first, in showing every province of Afghanistan that the impregnability of their capital was a myth. Our arms having been so successful in so short a time, checked the incipient state of anarchy into which the

whole country was fast falling, as it seemed rational to suppose that an army which in a few days had captured Cabul would be more than equal to the task of visiting Charikar, Bamian, or even Balkh, if occasion required a further display of force. But, as time passed on, and it began to dawn upon the minds of men somewhat removed from the captured city that we were settling down for the winter in local quarters, the latent hostility to our presence in Afghanistan revived. In Turkistan it could scarcely be called a revival, as it had never died out. In that province were still organized regiments (well armed and boasting of being in possession of guns), whose sepoys had never suffered the disgrace of a defeat at our hands. It was not, therefore, surprising that our attempts to open up communication with Gholam Hyder, the Afghan Governor of the northern districts, should have failed. In the first place, it was extremely difficult to get trustworthy news of what was going on over the Koh-i-Baba range, and Gholam Hyder's movements were absolutely unknown. He was believed to be at Mazar-i-Sharif, or Balkh, and rumours then reached us that he had left with Nek Mahomed to seek aid from the Russians over the Oxus. This news was never confirmed; but from incidents which occurred and were verified in several ways, it transpired that, wherever Gholam Hyder might be, his power was very limited. The troops on which he relied for support either revolted, as in the case of the regiments at Ghori, a post fifty miles south of Kunduz, the nearest station to Badakshan, on the Balkh, Tashkurgan, Kunduz, and Faizabad Road, or were deserted by their Generals, who sought safety with the British. The sepoys knew there was really no Government in existence, and, with arms in their hands, felt themselves masters of the situation. Badakshan was in revolt. Ghori and the district between Balkh and Badakshan could not do better than follow the example. They did so, and Gholam Hyder's power was gradually narrowed, no attention being paid to his commands. To make his position of Governor still more absurd, an Uzbeg Chief, Mahomed Shah, appropriated the country about Sar-i-Pul and Maemena, distant only eighty miles to the west and south-west of Balkh. The nominal Governor of Turkistan, therefore, found himself at last ruling the tract of country south of the Oxus, as

far as Tashkurgan and Aebak on the east, and Akcha on the west: southwards, to Bamian, he governed as far as men chose to obey him, and no further. From Aebak to Akcha, in a bee-line, is less than 130 miles: from the Oxus through Balkh to Bamian is 160 miles. This was—and for all we know is—the extent of territory Gholam Hyder governs. He is responsible to no one but himself: and as long as he can find money to pay his troops, he may rely upon exercising a certain influence. If we had got as far as Bamian, 100 miles from Cabul, he might still have retained a show of independence, Balkh being so near the Oxus that to escape to Bokhara would have been easy if our troops had been pushed on, before winter set in, towards the northern frontier. But Gholam Hyder has been left undisturbed; and now that the Kohistanis have broken faith with us, his name is being freely used to induce men to gather together. A few days ago it was reported that he had reached Charikar with eight guns and a force of cavalry; but later reports show this was a false rumour circulated in Cabul to excite the Wardaks and Ghilzais on the Ghazni Road and in Logar. He may have left Mazar-i-Sharif; but if, as seems likely, he looks for Russian gold to aid him in keeping his hold upon Turkistan, he would scarcely have deserted Balkh and the neighbourhood for the questionable glory of raising an army of hill-men in Kohistan. What is far more probable is, that the regiments which disbanded and scattered to various villages are forming bands among themselves, and some of these may think Charikar as good a centre to make for as any other place. Turkistan can furnish any number of these sepoys; and as the Bamian route to Cabul is long and tiresome, they may prefer taking the road over the Hindu Kush to Kohistan, there to await for further development of events. If the British force menaces them, they can return to Turkistan: if we leave them alone, as we probably shall, they will have to find a way of living during the winter; and this to an Afghan well-armed, and with the bluster of a bully, is not a difficult task. From what I have written above, it will be seen that Northern and Eastern Turkistan is in the state into which it might have been expected to fall without a strong hand controlling it from Cabul. Of Herat I know nothing, as it is

too far removed from us for even rumours to drift down to our camp.

With this condition of affairs in a province most open to outside influence and trans-Oxus intrigue, it becomes of serious moment to consider what modification of our policy, as set forth in the Proclamation of October 28th, is necessary. The Proclamation concluded as follows :—"*The services of such sirdars and chiefs as assist in preserving order will be duly recognized; but all disturbers of the peace, and persons concerned in attacks upon the British authority, will meet with condign punishment. The British Government, after consultation with the principal sirdars, tribal chiefs, and others representing the interests and wishes of the various provinces and cities, will declare its will as to the future permanent arrangements to be made for the good government of the people.*" Now these stilted periods either mean a great deal, or nothing at all. As regards Turkistan there are within it at the present moment numerous "disturbers of the peace," as there are in Kohistan, Maidan, and Logar; and, to be consistent, we must fulfil our pledge to punish them condignly; if not now, at some future date. But these disturbers have this much in their favour, that beyond the empty words of the Proclamation they have had no evidence of the British authority which has supplanted that of the Amir. To them it is non-existent. It may flourish within 20 miles of Cabul and eastwards along the Jellalabad Valley to the Khyber, but it has never shown itself north of the Hindu Kush: it has left Balkh and Herat untouched: it has not been felt at Bamian or Ghazni, each within 100 miles of the 7,000 men encamped at Sherpur: how, then, is it to be acknowledged at more distant points? An authority, to be respected, must be tangible. The British authority at Cabul is in the tangible shape of a conquering army: it is respected—at Cabul. But Cabul is not Turkistan, and it is idle to expect a Proclamation, or even a thousand, to cause provincial governors, now free from all control, voluntarily to submit to an authority which makes, apparently, no effort to reach them. "Consultation with the principal sirdars and tribal chiefs representing the various provinces and cities of Afghanistan" is admirable from the view of closet politicians, but how if sirdars and chiefs decline to con-

sult? It may have been intended, when the Proclamation was issued, that a demonstration of force should be made to bring about the consultation, but that demonstration has never been carried out—probably as much from political considerations as military difficulties. Sir Frederick Roberts and his army did their first work of capturing Cabul with such rapidity that, with troops pushed forward from Jellalabad to garrison the captured city and collect supplies for the winter, they might have ventured into Turkistan with the prospect of meeting with no opposition; and there might have been now, at Bamian and Balkh, agents who had been installed by our army and left in the position of governors ruling in our name. This programme was believed at one time to be on the cards, and we calculated how many marches it was to Bamian and the Oxus; but with no supports forthcoming up to the middle of November (a flying column at Jugdulluck was not worthy of the name), and with the usual stupid outcry at home against even the appearance of annexation, the project fell through. An attempt has been made to carry out the spirit of the Proclamation—to make "permanent arrangements for the good government of the people"—by consulting with such sirdars as have deemed it wise to join us. From their number four men have been chosen as governors of districts; but, so far, this system has been a failure. However much they may represent us, they are rejected of the people; and the three who, to use an official phrase, have "joined their appointments," have had a very rough time of it. These were Shahbaz Khan, Mahomed Hasan Khan, and Abdulla Khan, all sirdars of local influence about Cabul, who were posted to Kohistan, Maidan, and Logar, respectively. (Turkistan, so far, has not received its governor, Sirdar Wali Mahomed, who had made many preparations for starting.) They were sent without armed escorts, and have been worried and threatened by malcontents, who have resented their intrusion with menaces that can scarcely be lightly regarded. In one case, that of Hasan Khan, son of Dost Mahomed and half-brother of Wali Mahomed, assassination has been added to threats. News was brought in from Naure Falad, the village in the Maidan Valley which General Baker's force only left on the 1st instant, that a body of men, including some sepoys of the Ardal Regiments, had attacked the

fort in which Hasan Khan was living, and had murdered our lately-appointed governor and one of his followers. They shot the old man through the head, and then hacked his body to pieces. Hasan Khan was quite a favourite in our camp at Maidan, his kind disposition and hearty frankness being qualities very foreign to the nature of the ordinary Afghan sirdar. The men who killed him are said to have come down the Darra Narkh from the hills about Bahadur Khan's villages; and their action was in revenge for our burning of their villages. They returned to Upper Maidan as soon as they had murdered our representative, having, according to their own rude idea, shown us that they had no intention of accepting our authority. It is evident that from Ghazni northwards much excitement has arisen since General Baker's departure. From Charikar and Logar our governors report that they are looked upon with disfavour, and even hated, by many *maliks;* and as they also have no escorts, their lives may be considered in jeopardy. When the Kohistanis, a few days ago, were up in arms, Shahbaz Khan's position was very ticklish; and to relieve the pressure put upon him, Sirdar Ibrahim Khan, an elder brother of Yakub Khan, was sent out to bring back the chiefs to the allegiance they had promised when in our camp. Though he succeeded in inducing twenty or thirty of the minor chiefs of Koh-Daman to come in, he was reviled by others as a "Feringhi" and "Kafir," and was warned to return to Sherpur, or his life would be taken. These are the results of the first experiments of governing provinces through chiefs selected by us as representing the interests and wishes of the people.

CHAPTER XV.

Parade of all Troops in Sherpur—Strength of the Garrison—The Commencement of the December Operations—General Macpherson's Brigade at Aoshahr—General Baker's Flank March upon Maidan—The *Jehad* preached by Mushk-i-Alam—Strength of Mahomed Jan's Force—The Plan of Operations—Defeat of the Kohistanis at Kila Karez—General Macpherson starts for Argandeh—General Massy's March up the Chardeh Valley with the Guns and Cavalry—First Sight of Mahomed Jan's Army—Unexpected Strength of the Afghans—The Action of December 11th in Chardeh—Loss of Four Guns and Repulse of the Cavalry—Defence of the Dehmazung Gorge by 200 of the 72nd Highlanders—Recovery of the Guns by Colonel Macgregor—Macpherson's Arrival at Dehmazung—Attack on the Sherderwaza Picquet.

SHERPUR, *9th December.*

GENERAL BAKER'S Brigade returned to Sherpur a few days ago, and the result of his visit to Maidan is now visible in the large stacks of *bhoosa* and the bags of grain near the Commissariat Gate. Sir Michael Kennedy, Director-General of Transport, with a small party of officers has arrived from India on inspection duty and is now a guest of Sir Frederick Roberts. The ex-Amir is now well on his way to India, and the troops sent to strengthen the posts between Cabul and Jugdulluck have returned to quarters. So far no attempt has been made by the tribes on the Peshawur Road to rescue Yakub Khan, but there is much latent fanaticism about Cabul, and the *moollahs*, who always gave us so much trouble, may seize upon the deportation of the sovereign as a rallying-cry.

Yesterday a parade of all the available troops in garrison was held on the large *maidan* which lies to the north of the Bemaru hills, and extends to the borders of the narrow Wazirabad Lake at the foot of the southern Kohistan hills. No better place for a review of even 20,000 men could be desired, as the ground is very level, and is covered with short grass, which prevents dust accumulating. The nominal object of the parade was to present four men of the 72nd Highlanders with medals for distinguished

service at the storming of the Peiwar Kotal last December.* There were 4,710 men and twenty guns on the ground. The guns were twelve 9-pounders, belonging to F-A and G-3, and eight 7-pounders of the Mountain Batteries. The following table shows only the troops paraded; it was necessary, for the safety of the cantonment and the valuable stores now collected within its walls, that a strong guard should remain in Sherpur, and 100 men were detached from each infantry regiment for this work. In-lying picquets were posted, signallers with heliographic apparatus placed on the Bemaru Heights and over the Commissariat Gate (that nearest the city), and, to prevent any incendiarism being attempted, orders were given to refuse admission to all the Hazara coolies employed on the quarters until the parade was over. Our *bhoosa* stacks and wood-piles are so nearly completed now, that we cannot afford to let them be burnt down.

The following is the full strength of the troops drawn up for the Lieutenant-General's inspection:—

KURRAM DIVISION, CABUL FIELD FORCE.

Troops.	Officers.	Native Officers.	Non-commissioned Officers and Men.		Total
			British.	Native.	
F-A, Royal Horse Artillery	5	—	106	—	111
G-3, Royal Artillery	6	—	107	—	113
No. 1 Mountain Battery...	2	1	4	80	87
No. 2 Mountain Battery...	4	—	4	74	82
9th Lancers	16	—	265	—	281
5th Punjab Cavalry	8	11	—	342	361
14th Bengal Lancers	7	10	—	213	230
67th Foot	15	—	439	—	454
72nd Highlanders	18	—	553	—	571
92nd Highlanders	15	—	561	—	576
23rd Pioneers	4	6	—	295	305
3rd Sikhs	8	10	—	525	543
5th Punjab Infantry	4	11	—	503	518
5th Ghoorkas	5	8	—	389	402
7th Company Sappers	3	—	4	69	76
Total	120	57	2,043	2,490	4,710

* These were Sergeant-Instructor of Musketry Salmond, Sergeant Cox, Private McIveen and Private Bonar.

To these have to be added the Staff, which was made up as follows:—

Commanding Cavalry Brigade — Brigadier-General Massy; Brigade-Major—Lieutenant Brabazon: Orderly Officer—Lieutenant Hearsey.

Commanding 1st Infantry Brigade—Brigadier-General Macpherson; Brigade-Major—Captain Guinness; Orderly Officer—Captain Macgregor.

Commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade—Brigadier-General Baker; Brigade-Major—Captain Farwell; Orderly Officer—Lieutenant Kane.

Commanding Royal Artillery—Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon; Officiating Adjutant—Lieutenant Allsopp.

The parade went off very successfully, and seemed to impress Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan, Daoud Shah (the late Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army), and other persons of importance who were present.

We mix work and play a good deal at Cabul: for scarcely had the parade ended than the more serious business of sending out a brigade into the Chardeh Valley was begun. In the afternoon the following troops, under the command of Brigadier-General Macpherson, left the cantonment and marched to Aoshahr, five miles due west of Sherpur:—

6 companies 67th Foot;
7 companies 5th Ghoorkas;
550 of the 3rd Sikhs;
4 guns F-A, Royal Horse Artillery;
4 guns No. 1 Mountain Battery;
1 squadron 9th Lancers;
2 squadrons 14th Bengal Lancers.

This movement is due to the gatherings in Koh-Daman and Maidan. The efforts of old Mushk-i-Alam, the Ghazni *moollah*, to raise a *jehad* have been so far successful, that Mahomed Jan has 5,000 men with him between Argandeh and Beni-Badam, on the Ghazni Boad. This would not have been of much consequence were it not that pressure had been brought to bear upon the local villagers, who were bringing in grain and *bhoosa*. In the Logar

Valley our Governor has been defied and the supplies which were pouring in from that district have almost entirely ceased. We still want about 15,000 maunds of wheat and 50,000 maunds of *bhoosa*, and as we are anxious to get it all in before the snow falls, it has been determined to attack the tribal bands and once more open the road. If our supplies were collected, we should probably have left Mahomed Jan alone until he had got a large force together, and then have gone out to meet him. General Macpherson has halted to-day at Aoshahr, as a plan has been carefully prepared by which it is hoped Mahomed Jan's "army" will be forced to fight. In the carrying out of this plan, two separate forces will be employed—the second brigade, under General Baker, being now at Charasia with secret orders. This force is made up as follows, and is a "flying column" in the true sense of the word:—

450 of the 92nd Highlanders;
450 of the 5th Punjab Infantry;
5 troops of the 5th Punjab Cavalry;
4 guns of No. 2 Mountain Battery;
7th company Sappers and Miners (detachment with gun-cotton).

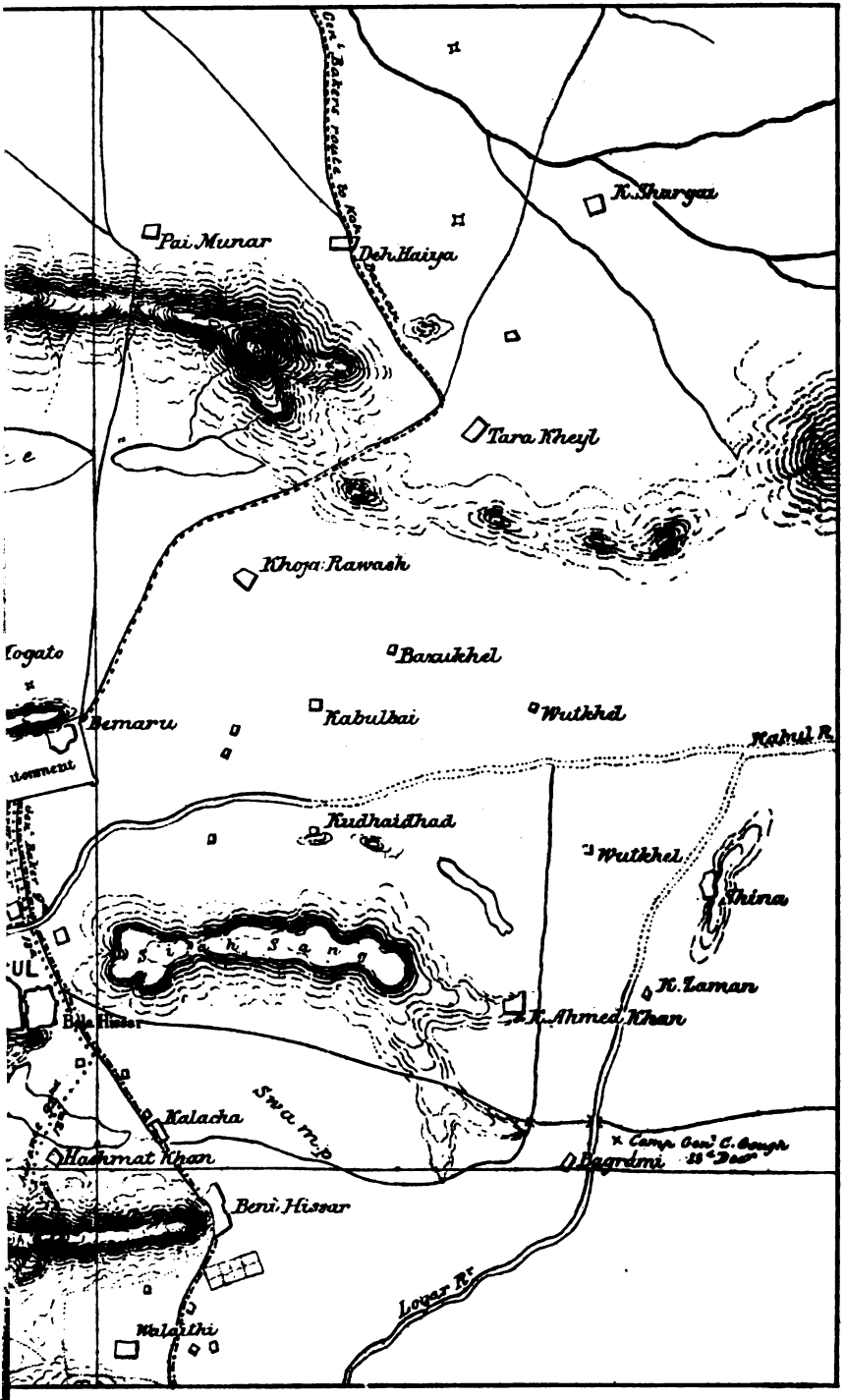
General Macpherson will to-morrow march up the Chardeh Valley and endeavour to get between the enemy and the road leading to the Unai Pass, so as to cut off their retreat towards Bamian. General Baker, moving in sympathy with the Chardeh Force, will leave Charasia and make a feint of going up the Logar Valley. This intention will be openly proclaimed; but, after leaving Charasia a few miles in rear, he will turn sharply to the south-west and throw himself across the Ghazni Road below Beni-Badam, cutting off Mahomed Jan's retreat to Ghazni. The 5,000 men said to have assembled would then be practically encompassed about, and, being unable to run away, they would probably make a stout resistance. If General Macpherson can only keep them in play and get well above them in the Bamian direction, blinding them to the movements of the other column, we shall at last be able to punish the Ardal Pultan right smartly. Our information leads us to expect that Mahomed Jan will fight. He

certainly held on to the heights above Cabul, even after we had reached Beni Hissar on October 7th; and, perhaps, his courage may be equal to again resisting us. The detachment of so many men has, of course, weakened the garrison of Sherpur, and the Guides, Cavalry, and Infantry have been ordered up from Jugdulluck in consequence. They will probably arrive in a day or two. The Kohistanis have not ventured to display further hostility to us, but Mir Butcha still keeps about him a gathering of discontented men, and may try to join Mahomed Jan at Maidan. Amid all this tribal disturbance it is satisfactory to know that the Ghilzais, Lughmanis, Shinwaris, and Afridis on our line of communications with India are still quiet: whether suspiciously so, I cannot say. Beyond the cutting of the telegraph wire between Dakka and Jellalabad occasionally, they seem to be on their best behaviour.

11th December.

The strategical move of two columns out of our cantonment here, to disperse Mahomed Jan's force, has had a most unexpected result. The enemy have beaten us at our own game—has outmanœuvred us—and, instead of Mahomed Jan being a fugitive, he is calmly occupying the peaks to the south of the Bala Hissar Ridge, and his standards are flying in sight of Cabul and all the country round. We have been complaining of want of excitement here lately, but to-day has given us more than our fill. I explained in my last letter that Brigadier Macpherson moved out, on Monday, to Kila Aoshahr, just through the Cabul gorge and at the eastern end of the Chardeh Valley; while Brigadier Baker, on the following day, marched to Charasia, and intended cutting off Mahomed Jan's retreat, on the Ghazni Road, at Maidan. Yesterday the force under General Macpherson left Kila Aoshahr at dawn; four guns of F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, with an escort of two squadrons of cavalry, drawn from the 9th Lancers and the 14th Bengal Lancers, remaining on the camping-ground, with orders to check the retreat of the enemy if they turned towards Cabul. The infantry, with four mountain guns and a squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers, under Colonel Ross, took the Kohistan Road, and finally gained the Surkh Kotal—a ridge running down from the Pughman Range, and dividing Chardeh from the Koh-

11th to 14th.



Genl Bakers route to Kohi Daman
K. Shargai
Pai Munar
Deh Haiya
Tara Kheyl
Khoja Rawash
Bazukhel
Kabulbai
Wutkhel
Bemaru
Kabul R.
Kudhaidhad
Wutkhel
Shina
Sisah Sang
K. Zaman
K. Ahmed Khan
Bala Hissar
Swamp
Kalacha
Hashmat Khan
Camp Genl C. Gough 13^d Dec^r
Bagrami
Beni Hissar
Logar R^r
Walaithi

Daman, the celebrated "fruit country" of Kohistan. The chief object of General Macpherson was to head back Mahomed Jan, who was reported to be making for Kohistan, in order to unite his force with the bands gathered by Mir Butcha at Khoja Serai. The 14th Bengal Lancers were sent forward to reconnoitre on the Pughman plain to the north of the *kotal*, and they soon found themselves in the face of several thousand men near Kila Karez. The whole country seemed covered with masses of armed tribesmen, and on every low hill banners were flying. The infantry halted on the Surkh Kotal while the baggage came up, and preparations were made for dispersing the Kohistanis, who were plainly on the way to swell Mahomed Jan's gathering. As Macpherson's force formed up on the *kotal*, the enemy advanced very confidently, and our cavalry were obliged to fall back. Two mountain guns were got into action, and a few shells broke up the most advanced bodies. A sufficient guard was left over the baggage, and General Macpherson then attacked with the following infantry: four companies 67th Foot; six companies 5th Ghoorkas; three companies 3rd Sikhs—two mountain guns moving with them. The enemy broke and fled in confusion as soon as our rifles began to make good practice. There was one hill, defended by *sungars*, at which a few Ghazis tried to make a stand; but the 67th were not to be denied, and they raced up it in fine form, driving out its defenders very smartly. The 5th Ghoorkas took by a rush a hill on the extreme left, and the 3rd Sikhs, in assailing another hill, were equally successful; but two fanatics jumped over the *sungars* and charged upon the men nearest to them, sword in hand. They wounded two sepoys, and then rushed back to their comrades. The guns shelled the Kohistanis as they streamed away up the valley, and the cavalry, dismounted, also fired at a few hundred yards into them. The watercourses and enclosures prevented the Lancers charging. The Kohistanis, who were commanded by Mir Butcha in person, lost heavily; many bodies were found on the ground by our men, and many of the dead were seen to be carried off. Our casualties were —one man 67th, two Ghoorkas, and four of the 3rd Sikhs, all wounded. Major Fitz-Hugh, commanding the Ghoorkas, received a slight flesh-wound from a bullet in the right leg. He was not so badly hurt as to be incapacitated from duty, though, at the

Lieutenant-General's request, he has since remained in cantonments. Having thrashed Mir Butcha, General Macpherson encamped for the night at Mahomed Surwar Khan's Kila, close to Kila Karez, ready to deal with Mahomed Jan on the following day. The presence of a large force of sepoys and tribesmen at and near Argandeh, on the Ghazni Road, 14 miles from Sherpur, was known beyond doubt: and General Macpherson's aim was to get between them and the Unai Pass leading to Bamian, so as to drive them down towards Maidan, where General Baker was waiting with 950 infantry, five troops of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, and four mountain guns. There was a chance that Mahomed Jan would break back into the Chardeh Valley, towards Cabul, but it was not believed that he had with him a sufficient number of men to do any mischief in that direction. He had, however, double the force reported (5,000), and was sufficiently confident to take the bold step of entering the valley. Whether he contemplated an attack upon Sherpur, knowing there was nothing between him and the cantonments, except a small party of cavalry and four guns, is not known; but if he had learnt the weakness of the place, such an attempt was highly probable. In any case, while General Macpherson marched from his camp at the fort, where he had passed the night, and took the path to Argandeh behind a range of hills running right across the Chardeh Valley from the Surkh Kotal, the enemy, to the number of at least 10,000, debouched into the villages on the Cabul side of the range, and waited there the movements of our troops. They were rewarded for their manœuvre by the appearance of the Horse Artillery guns and their small escort of cavalry, making their way to join the infantry at Argandeh. This movement of our guns and the after-events, which have been extremely serious, can best be explained by following the action of the cavalry from the evening of yesterday.

The four Horse Artillery guns, under Major Smith Windham, were, as I have said, left at Kila Aoshahr with an escort of cavalry. They were ordered to move this morning along the Argandeh Road to rejoin the infantry, and they started, with this object in view, under the command of Colonel Gordon, R.A. Brigadier Massy, with another squadron of the 9th Lancers, from Sherpur, overtook them soon after starting, and took command of the whole.

He had then as escort to the four guns of F-A, 170 troopers of the 9th Lancers (under Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland) and 44 sowars of the 14th Bengal Lancers (under Captain Neville), or a total strength of 214 lances. A troop of the 9th Lancers (43 strong), under Captain Butson, had been sent off by General Massy to open communication, if possible, with General Macpherson. General Massy made Kila Kazi on the Ghazni Road his objective point, that being about 4 miles distant; and he reached this without incident. Just after it had been passed, however, his advance-guard, which consisted of a troop of the 9th Lancers under Captain Gough, reported the enemy in sight on the hills in front. It soon became apparent that the Afghans had thrown themselves across the Argandeh Road, but as only 2,000 or 3,000 appeared in sight, it was thought they were fugitives flying either from General Macpherson or General Baker. As they began streaming down from the hills General Massy got his guns into action at 2,900 yards, which range, at Colonel Gordon's suggestion, was changed to 2,500, and 2,000 yards, the guns advancing towards the left to make their fire more effective. After a few shells had been fired, the enemy showed themselves in full force and advanced in skirmishing order upon the guns and cavalry. Their line of advance was fully two miles in extent, and was of good formation. There were about 4,000 men thus extended in the shape of a crescent, and in rear of them was an irregular body, numbering 6,000 more. Thus Mahomed Jan's force was found to be 10,000 strong, instead of 5,000. It was admirably led, and boasted thirty or forty standards, mostly common red, white, or green cloth floating at the end of a rude staff 12 or 13 feet long. Though the shells from the four guns were pitched into the thick of the enemy, no effect was produced in the way of breaking the line of advance. It never wavered, but came steadily on ; and as General Massy had no infantry with him, he was obliged to retire. The guns changed position "right back," and re-opened fire at 1,700 yards. Bullets from Snider and Enfield rifles began dropping among the cavalry and the gunners, but no casualties of any moment occurred. Thirty of the 9th Lancers dismounted and opened fire with their Martini carbines, but the enemy were too numerous to be checked by so small a body of men—a

regiment of infantry was what was required. While the artillery was thus in action, Sir F. Roberts and Staff, with Sir Michael Kennedy and party, joined General Massy, having ridden out from Sherpur to watch the movements of the brigade. The fire from the steadily-advancing line of the enemy was well sustained, and to check their forward movement and cover the retirement of the guns the cavalry were ordered to charge.

When General Roberts sent instructions to General Massy to order the Lancers to charge, as the enemy were approaching dangerously near to the guns, Colonel Cleland, with one squadron of the 9th Lancers (126 lances), was directly in face of the Afghan line, with the 44 sowars of the 14th Bengal Lancers in rear, some distance nearer the guns. The other troops of the 9th (44 lances) under Captain Gough, which had been acting as the advance-guard, were away on General Massy's right flank, watching the Afghans in that direction. When the charge was sounded Colonel Cleland led his squadron straight at the advancing masses, the 14th Bengal Lancers following in his wake, but not close up, as the order to charge had not reached them so quickly. Captain Gough, with his troop of the 9th, seeing his Colonel charging, also took his men into action on the enemy's left flank. Some 220 men against 10,000 were odds that could scarcely be expected to turn in our favour; but the Lancers had to risk a heavy loss in the hope of saving the guns. The three bodies of men disappeared in a cloud of dust as they headed for the masses of the enemy, and nothing could be seen for a few moments of the fight. Then riderless horses came galloping back, followed by scattered parties of troopers, evidently quite out of hand. They had been received with a terrific fire, which had killed many horses and men, and, upon trying to force their way through the enemy, had been surrounded and their progress blocked by sheer weight of numbers. Men and horses went down in the *mêlée*, and, once down, there was but a faint chance of being rescued. In one or two instances, however, men were dragged from under their dead horses, mounted on others, and got well away out of the ruck.* Even among Sir F. Roberts's party

* The Chaplain of the Force, the Rev. — Adams, was recommended for the Victoria Cross for extricating one man, under a heavy fire.

watching the fight, bullets fell thickly, killing three or four horses under their riders and wounding others. When the dust cleared away, it was seen that the cavalry charge had made no impression upon the enemy, who were still advancing steadily across the fields, waving their knives and *tulwars*, and carrying their banners more proudly than ever. Mounted men were galloping about from end to end of their line, directing their movements and keeping them well together. The fire from their Sniders and Enfields was deliberate and well-directed; and though any of our English regiments would with their Martinis have checked them in a few minutes, the broken ranks of the cavalry could not hope to stand against them. The 9th Lancers had suffered terribly in the charge: sixteen of their troopers, with two officers (Lieutenants Hearsey and Ricardo), had been left on the ground, dead; their colonel had come out badly wounded by a sword-cut, and a shot through the side; Lieutenant Stewart Mackenzie had been disabled by his horse rolling over him; and seven troopers had received wounds more or less severe. It was Colonel Cleland's squadron which was so shattered in this charge. This squadron having lost its officers, and being broken up by the bad ground, got out of hand; but Captain Gough's troop, being more fortunate, served as a rallying point; while the 14th Bengal Lancers, not getting well into the enemy, as a nullah checked them, were kept compactly together. The rally was sounded, and Colonel Macgregor and other officers of the General's party collected the Lancers together, while the guns advanced 400 or 500 yards, and re-opened fire. The squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers had lost but one officer, Lieutenant Forbes (whose body is still missing), and with Captain Gough's troop of the 9th were able still to keep between the guns and the enemy, now only 1,000 yards off. A second charge of these two troops, together with all the troopers who had been collected, was ordered, but it was made in a half-hearted way, the country being of extraordinary difficulty for horses, and the enemy swarming behind every tree and the banks of the higher water-channels.

As Major Smith-Windham was retiring with his two guns, which had been advanced after the first charge, he found one of the other two guns stuck firmly in a watercourse, Lieutenant

Hardy trying vainly to drag it out with such horses as had got over. This was found to be beyond the strength of the horses, already worn out by the severe work of the morning; and as the enemy were closing around on both sides the gun was spiked and abandoned. Lieutenant Hardy was killed by a shot through the head while near this gun. The other three guns had been got 400 or 500 yards further on to the village of Baghwana, but were stopped by a channel deeper and steeper than any yet crossed. Guns, men, and horses floundered into this, and the guns at least would not come out again; they, also, were spiked and left in the water and mud, and drivers and gunners moved off with the cavalry, the villagers firing rapidly upon them. The long line of the enemy came straight on, passed through the village, shrieking and waving their knives, and put their faces towards the Nanuchi Kotal, which leads from the Chardeh Valley to the Western gate of our cantonments. Sir F. Roberts, with a small escort, had gone across country towards the village of Dehmazung, commanding the western entrance to the Cabul gorge. He had sent urgent messages to General Macpherson to hasten down the valley, and the Brigadier was soon engaged with 2,000 men, left behind by Mahomed Jan to keep him in play. The cavalry fight had been watched through telescopes by several officers with General Macpherson, who had heard the artillery fire. Sending his baggage under a strong guard of infantry, and a squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers, under Colonel Ross, by way of the upper road nearest Kohistan, General Macpherson marched through a break in the hills and debouched into the Chardeh Valley. The appearance of his troops away in their rear seems to have influenced the movements of the enemy, who turned off from the road to Sherpur, and, swinging their left flank round, made direct for Dehmazung, with the evident intention of getting into the city, and occupying the Bala Hissar Heights above it. General Roberts, upon seeing the new movement, sent off a message by his aide-de-camp, Captain Pole-Carew, to Brigadier Hugh Gough, commanding at Sherpur, ordering 200 men of the 72nd Highlanders to double out to the gorge.

After the second charge, in which the 9th Lancers lost several men shot down, Captain Gough's troop did rear-guard work, dis-

mounting and firing, so as to hold the enemy a little in check. Only such Lancers as were wounded, or had their horses disabled, were sent back to Sherpur, by way of the Nanuchi Kotal, the rest escorting General Roberts to Dehmazung. Once the broken squadron of the 9th were got together, they settled down resolutely to their work of keeping the enemy in play, and their carbines were used with good effect until Dehmazung was reached. Here they got cover, and, with the sowars of the 14th, opened a smart fire upon Mahomed Jan's force as it streamed up towards Cabul. Alone and unaided they could not have hoped to stem the rush, and matters were at a crisis when Colonel Brownlow, with the 200 rifles of the 72nd Highlanders, arrived. The Highlanders were in the nick of time: Colonel Brownlow doubled out a company to occupy Dehmazung, the 9th cheering them lustily as they saw the welcome relief, and soon from the roofs and walls of the village rapid volleys were being poured into the Afghan ranks. The enemy streamed down upon the village "like ants on a hill," as a Highlander described it, but Colonel Brownlow's admirable disposition of his handful of Highlanders soon checked the rush. The men were told not to throw away a shot; the Martinis soon blazed out in one persistent line of fire—and such a fire, that even Ghazis shrank from encountering it. In less than half an hour the enemy were forced back, and they then split up into two parts—one going on to the south, to Indikee village, and thence scaling the Takht-i-Shah Peak and the heights to the south of the Bala Hissar fortified ridge, the other facing round to the west, as if to get upon the hills south of Kila Kazi. Their entrance into Cabul had been frustrated, and all that was left to them was to raise their standards on the hills they had occupied and flourish their knives in defiance at distant Sherpur. This they did, as we could see plainly enough through our binoculars.

In the meantime General Macpherson had fallen upon a large body of Afghans higher up the valley, and with the 67th Regiment and the 3rd Sikhs had completely broken their ranks and pursued them towards Argandeh. General Macpherson did not then know of the loss of the guns, but in facing round towards Cabul he came upon the scene of the charge, and was then able to recover the bodies of Lieutenants Hearsey and Ricardo and of the troopers

killed in action. His own loss was not heavy, Lieutenant Cook of the 3rd Sikhs being the only officer wounded. Sir F. Roberts remained at Dehmazung until Macpherson's force reached it, about nightfall; and then, leaving the Brigadier with his men encamped below the gorge, where Wali Mahomed had a camp with some mountain guns (he was preparing to start for Turkistan), the Lieutenant-General returned to Sherpur. He had before received the news that the guns had been pulled out of the watercourses into which they had fallen, and were on their way to cantonments. How they were recovered, well deserves telling.

When Sir F. Roberts trotted across to the Cabul gorge, there were Lancers, gunners, and drivers, making their way towards Sherpur, and most of them were out of hand, their officers having been either put out of action or being missing. At the Nanuchi Kotal, facing the western end of Sherpur, most of these rallied about Colonel Macgregor, Captain Dean also having gathered some stragglers together. When the enemy veered off towards Dehmazung, Colonel Macgregor saw that the village of Baghwana, near where the guns were lying, was not guarded by any of Mahomed Jan's rear guard, and he thought there might be a chance of recovering the guns without waiting for General Macpherson's advance. With a scratch lot of Lancers and Artillerymen, he accordingly followed the upper Argandeh Road; and, beyond stray shots from villagers (who, as on October 8th, blazed at us whenever we were within range), the party met with no opposition. The baggage of Macpherson's brigade was met making its way to Sherpur; and as the enemy were then well on their way to Indikee, Colonel Macgregor took thirty men of the 67th, and about the same number of Sikhs and Ghoorkas—sixty in all—and, extending them in skirmishing order, made for the abandoned guns. On arriving at the village he placed his men in an enclosure well adapted for defence against any numbers; and such artillerymen as were with him set to work to get out the guns. This was done after a long struggle, and then it was found that teams sufficient only to give four horses per gun were present. The rest had galloped into Sherpur with their officer, Major Smith-Windham. With no artillery officer, but with the Chief of the Staff, rests the credit of recapturing the guns. Colonel Ross

was told to bring them safely into camp with the baggage escort and the scratch gathering of mounted men, and this he did.

Our losses in the day's action, so far as the R.H.A. and the cavalry are concerned, are four officers killed, two wounded, and twenty-three men killed and ten wounded. The officers killed and wounded were well to the front in the desperate charge their squadrons made upon the unbroken masses of infantry, and most of them were hit by the volley which the enemy poured into them as they got to close quarters. Colonel Cleland, in spite of his two wounds, was helped into the saddle and rode eight miles to Sherpur, fainting as he was lifted from his horse into a *dhoolie* at the gate. The bodies of those killed were brought in, and, I am sorry to say, they had been fearfully mutilated. The passions of our men are likely to be dangerously aroused in future fighting by the remembrance of these mutilations, which will not bear description.

In Sherpur, an anxious afternoon was passed. When stragglers from the 9th Lancers and F-A battery rode in, wounded, mud-splashed, and many without lances or swords, it was known that a serious action had taken place, and all troops in the cantonment were ordered to stand to their arms. Major Smith-Windham, with half a dozen drivers of F-A battery, was the first officer to arrive; and when no guns followed him, and he reported them "spiked and abandoned," and the enemy advancing towards Sherpur in overwhelming force, the anxiety of Brigadier Hugh Gough was greatly increased. No gunner would leave his guns if there were a chance of recovering them, and they were given up for lost. The western wall of the cantonments was manned by 150 of the 3rd Sikhs. At its northern end, where there is a gap between it and the Bemaru hills defended by a shelter trench, wire entanglements were laid down from the foot of the hill to the end of the wall. All the gates were occupied by small detachments of infantry, and the two remaining Horse Artillery guns were placed upon the Bemaru Heights facing towards the Nanuchi Kotal leading to Chardeh. If an attack were really about to be made, it would be sharp work defending the three miles of walls enclosing the cantonments, as less than 1,000 men were available for the duty; but the news that Mahomed Jan

with his 10,000 followers had turned off towards the Cabul gorge dissipated the anxiety felt; and when, later, the fire of the 72nd Highlanders was heard at Dehmazung and then died away, everyone knew Sherpur was safe. It was ticklish work for the time being; but Brigadier Gough made his arrangements quietly, and without listening to any absurd suggestions. As a precautionary measure, a heliogram was sent to Colonel Jenkins, commanding the Guides, who had reached Luttabund from Sei Baba in the morning: he was ordered to come in with his cavalry and infantry, without baggage. At seven o'clock we heard he was at Butkhak, and as I am writing (at midnight) his corps is marching in over 700 strong—200 more will arrive to-morrow with the baggage. Sir F. Roberts, after sending up 200 of the 72nd Highlanders to reinforce the picquet on the Bala Hissar Heights, rode into cantonments, within the walls of which all is made snug for the night. The reinforcement to the picquet was caused by the belief that Mahomed Jan would attempt to occupy the heights commanding the Bala Hissar and Cabul, and there is no doubt this was his intention. Since seven o'clock the picquet has been assailed on all sides, and even now the circle of fire shows where the 250 British soldiers are holding their own.

CHAPTER XVI.

Attempt to storm the Takht-i-Shah Peak—Natural Strength of the Position—Heliograms exchanged with General Baker—Failure to take the Peak—Casualties—The New Plan of Attack—The Action of the 13th of December—Storming of the Beni Hissar Ridge by the 92 Highlanders and the Guides—The Cavalry Charges in the Plain—Death of Captain Butson—The Position of Affairs at Nightfall—Reinforcements from Kohistan—The Action of December 14th—Storming of the Asmai Heights—Retreat of the Safis—Captain Vousden's Charge—Counter-Attack by the Enemy from Indikee—Death of Captain Spens, and Retirement from the Cuncal Hill—Loss of Two Mountain Guns—Withdrawal of all Troops from the Asmai and Sherderwaza Heights—The State of the Sherpur Defences—Total Casualties.

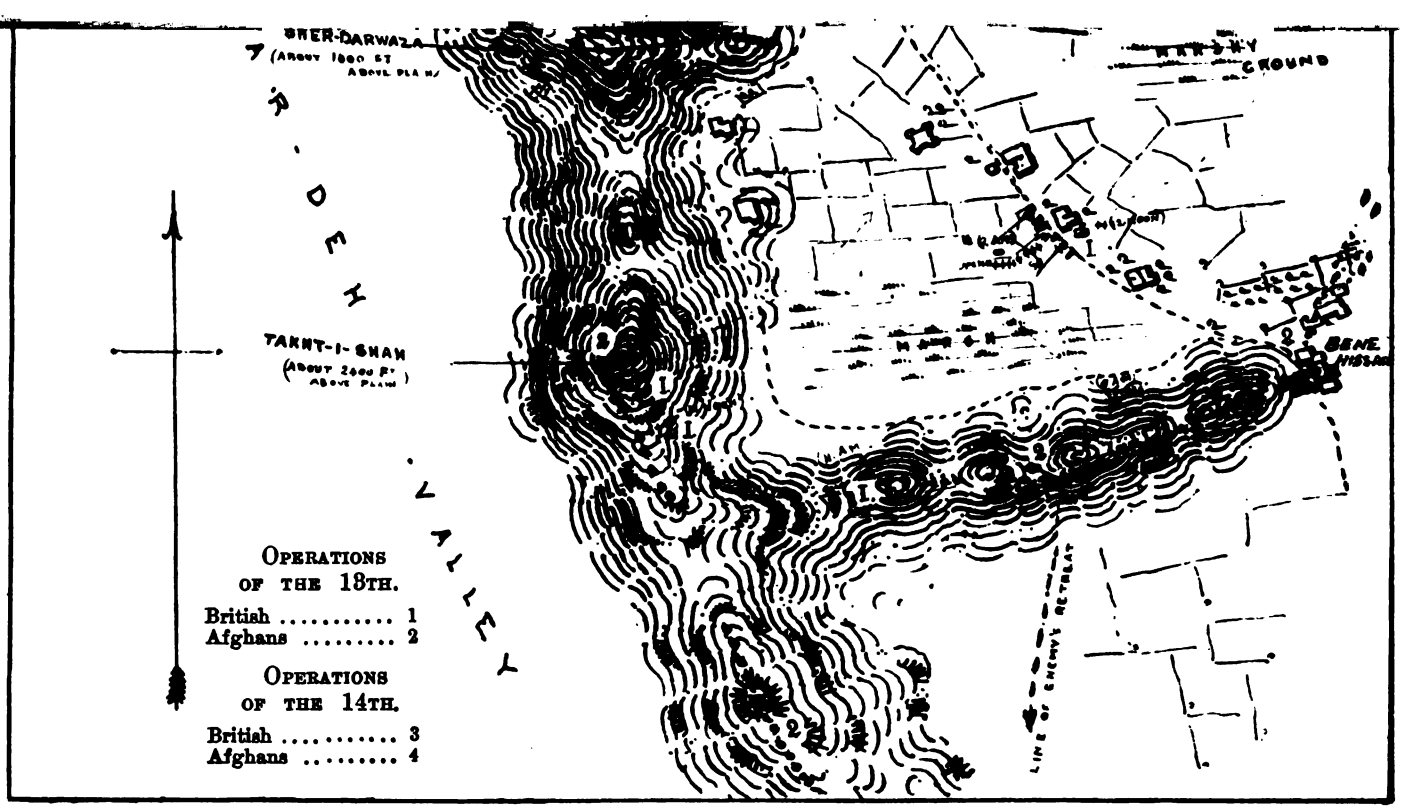
SHERPUR, 12*th December, midnight.*

I LEFT Mahomed Jan and his followers in possession of the hills to the south of the Sherderwaza Heights, with a part of General

Macpherson's brigade on the latter, ready to attack him. To-day a party of 560 men, made up in nearly equal proportions from the 67th Foot, 72nd Highlanders, 3rd Sikhs, and 5th Ghoorkas, aided by two guns of Morgan's mountain battery, have made that attack, and have established themselves on a lower hill between the Sherderwaza Heights and the high conical peak of Takht-i-Shah, whereon the enemy muster in great force and have sixteen standards flying. This peak is the highest of the clump of mountains south of Cabul and lying between the city and Charasia, and was the point whence Captain Straton tried to heliograph to the Shutargardan in the early days of our occupation. It is cone-shaped, looked at from Sherpur, and on its southern side joins a ridge running southwards above the village of Indikee. The sides facing Cabul are very steep, and covered with huge boulders polished by wind and rain, and of a kind to check any storming party. Perfect cover is afforded to men holding it, and on the summit is a well-built *sungar* of great thickness, covering a natural cavity in the rocks which has been made bomb-proof by some Afghan engineer, who understood the strength of the point. Fifty men could lie in perfect security behind the *sungar* or in the hole below it, and could choose their own time for firing at an advancing enemy. Outside the *sungar*, and a little lower down, is a cave, wherein another strong body of men could hide themselves and act in a similar way, while their flank to the left would be guarded by a broken line of rocks extending down to the *kotal*, where the Bala Hissar Ridge meets them. Just between the two ranges is a low, dome-shaped hill, blocking up the otherwise open *kotal;* and round this a footpath winds, leading to the *sungar*, but so narrow as only to admit of men going up in Indian file. The enemy occupied this morning the Takht-i-Shah Peak and the line of rocks I have mentioned, and had also a few score of men on the lower hill in the *kotal*. Away on the south, hidden from our view, were some 5,000 or 6,000 men, waiting for an attack to develop, in order to reinforce the peak. At eight o'clock our guns opened fire from the picquet on the ridge. There were then only seven standards on the peak, but during the day nine others were brought up; and the long ridge, stretching downwards to Beni Hissar, was lined with men. These were, by the contour of the

ground, safe from our shells, and they quietly watched the guns all day. From eight o'clock until evening Captain Morgan fired shell after shell into the *sungar* and the rocks below. The enemy were of quite a different order to those we have hitherto had to deal with. They stood up boldly to their flags, and waved their rifles and knives in derision at each shot. We could not spare more infantry for the attack, as we had to protect Sherpur, which, we learnt, was to be attacked by Kohistanis from over the Paen Minar Kotal, north of the lake. The city, too, was known to be in a ferment, and a demonstration might at any time be made from it against our cantonment. General Baker with his flying column was still absent, and our object was rather to hold the main body of Mahomed Jan's force in check, than try to disperse them with 560 men. At nine o'clock heliographic communication was opened with General Baker, then on the Argandeh Kotal. He reported that his rear-guard had been harassed for the last two days, and that the hills in all directions were lined with tribesmen. He was ordered to march without delay to Sherpur, and it was hoped at first that he would arrive in time to assist General Macpherson in attacking the enemy's position. As he had to march fourteen miles with his rear-guard engaged from time to time, he did not reach Sherpur until evening, so his troops, foot-sore and tired, were not available.

After several hours' shelling of the Takht-i-Shah Peak, the 67th, the Highlanders, Sikhs, and Ghoorkas made their attack; and, in spite of the stubbornness with which the Afghans fought, established themselves on the low hill on the *kotal*. They tried to work upwards to the *sungar;* but the fire of the Afghans was so true and sustained, that the attempt had to be given up. Our men also ran short of ammunition, and they contented themselves finally with holding the position captured, so as to be able to co-operate on the morrow with any force sent out from Sherpur to attack by way of Beni Hissar on the enemy's flank. Our casualties included Major Cook, V.C., 5th Ghoorkas, shot below the knee; Lieutenant Fasken, 3rd Sikhs, bullet wound in both thighs; and Lieutenant Fergusson, 72nd Highlanders, seriously wounded in the face. The enemy this evening still hold the Takht-i-Shah Peak in strength, and large reinforcements are said


SHER-DARWAZA
(ABOUT 1000 FT ABOVE PLAIN)
A·R·DEH·VALLEY
TAKHT-I-SHAH
(ABOUT 2400 FT ABOVE PLAIN)
GROUND
BENE HISSAR
LINE OF ENEMY'S RETREAT
OPERATIONS OF THE 13TH.
British 1
Afghans 2
OPERATIONS OF THE 14TH.
British 3
Afghans 4

to have joined them from Logar, the Ghilzais from that district being up in arms. It has been decided to-night to send a brigade, under General Baker, to attack the peak from Beni Hissar village to-morrow at the same time that Colonel Money, of the 3rd Sikhs, moves up another force from the hill on the *kotal.*

13th December, evening.

To-day the Takht-i-Shah Peak has been carried, and a strong picquet now holds it. The action has been a great success, but there are still large bodies of the enemy above Indikee; and as they may try to regain the position, General Macpherson has abandoned Dehmazung altogether, and posted his brigade on the Sherderwaza Heights. At eight o'clock this morning General Baker left cantonments with the following troops:—

G-3, Royal Artillery, four guns;
No. 2 Mountain Battery, four guns;
92nd Highlanders (six companies);
Guides' Infantry (seven companies);
3rd Sikhs (wing of 300 men);
5th Punjab Cavalry.

General Baker took the road past the Bala Hissar, and, upon debouching into the plain north of Beni Hissar, found the enemy posted in force all along the ridge in front, leading down from the Takht-i-Shah Peak. Beni Hissar was also full of Afghans, and in the fields about it were detached parties. These, seeing our force advancing, began to stream towards the ridge, and the original plan of attack was so far modified that, instead of working round through Beni Hissar village, the Highlanders and Guides were sent straight across some marshy ground at the ridge. The object in view was to cut the enemy's line in two, and it was attained most successfully. Our eight guns opened fire at 1,400 yards upon the masses of Afghans on the ridge, and the shells kept under the musketry fire opened upon our infantry. The 3rd Sikhs protected General Baker's left flank, while the cavalry aided in keeping the scattered parties about Beni Hissar in check. Nothing could be finer than the advance of the 92nd

and the Guides; they reached the slope of the hill, and opened fire upon the enemy, one continued roll of musketry being heard as they pushed upwards. They gained the crest, and the Afghan line was severed, about 2,000 being left about Beni Hissar while the assault was made upon the peak. The rapid fire from our breech-loaders swept away such of the enemy as stood firm, while the bayonet made short work of the ghazis who defended the standards. At some points twenty and thirty bodies were found lying piled together, shot through and through by Martini and Snider bullets, showing how well the volleys had told. In a very short time the majority opposed to the storming party had broken and fled. A few ghazis fought desperately, but upwards went the Highlanders in the same gallant style they had shown at Charasia, and under the same leader, Major White. The Guides, under Colonel Jenkins, were equally eager, this being their first chance in the campaign, and they shared with the 92nd the honour of scattering the defenders of the ridge. One young Highland officer fell a victim to that uncalculating courage which becomes rashness when pushed to extremes. Lieutenant Forbes, with only a few men, scaled the ridge, and got detached from the regiment which was toiling up as fast as the men with their heavy load of rifles and ammunition could climb. He was left at last with only Colour-Sergeant Drummond, an old twenty-one years' man, and a band of ghazis turned back and attacked him. The Sergeant was shot down, and Lieutenant Forbes rushed forward to save his body from mutilation. After cutting down a ghazi he was overpowered and killed before the Highlanders could save him. Not a man of the ghazis who had turned back escaped: they were shot and bayoneted on the rocks. As the attacking party neared the Takht-i-Shah Peak the Afghans deserted it; and when a party of the 72nd Highlanders and 5th Ghoorkas from the Bala Hissar side reached the *sungar*, they found the flags still flying, but no one guarding them. The position had been captured in about two hours, and as the mid-day gun was fired in Sherpur, the heliograph flashed from the *sungar*, and the peak was known to be ours. Some of the enemy ventured too near the Chardeh plain in their retreat, and a squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers charged among them, killing between twenty and thirty.

While the Highlanders and Guides were storming the ridge, an attack had been attempted from Beni Hissar upon General Baker's left flank, but the 3rd Sikhs drove back the enemy, who began to move round towards Siah Sung, and eventually collected in force upon these hills. They were shelled by our guns, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry were reinforced by two squadrons of the 9th Lancers, a squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers, and the Guides' Cavalry. Wherever the ground was good, our sowars and Lancers charged and did great execution. The Afghans fought bravely, forming up to receive the cavalry with a steadiness that trained infantry would not have surpassed, and reserving their fire until the horses were close upon them. One brilliant charge by the 9th Lancers cost that regiment one officer killed and two wounded, besides the loss of several troopers. Captain Butson and Captain Chisholme, at the head of their respective squadrons, swept down upon 500 or 600 men, taking them on the right and left flank. Captain Butson turned in his saddle as he faced the enemy, and cried out:—"Now, men, at them for the honour of the old 9th," and the next moment he fell dead, shot through the heart. He was in command of the regiment, the affair of the 11th having sadly thinned the ranks of the officers, and his death is universally regretted. Captain Chisholme was shot through the leg, the flash of the rifle burning his clothes, so steadily had the Afghan in front of him waited before discharging his piece. Lieutenant Trower was also slightly wounded, while the Sergeant-Major and three troopers were killed and seven wounded. The Lancers rode through and through the Afghans opposed to them, and scattered them all over the plain. The 5th Punjab Cavalry also made a successful charge, and the Guides twice got well among the fugitives. Their second charge was upon a body of Kohistanis, who had crossed the plain east of Bemaru and made for Siah Sung with the intention of joining Mahomed Jan. They were shelled from the eastern end of the Bemaru Heights; and, upon seeing General Baker's force engaged, halted irresolutely near Siah Sung. They tried to retrace their steps, but were suddenly charged down upon by the Guides, who had waited for them behind the northern slopes of Siah Sung. Sixty are said to have been killed in this charge alone, the Guides chasing them as

far as the Logar river, where the swampy ground checked the cavalry. Altogether the day's fighting has been a wonderful success; and though our casualties are eleven killed and forty-three wounded, the enemy's loss in killed alone must have been between 200 and 300. 150 of the 5th Punjab Infantry, sent out to reinforce General Baker, came upon a large party of Afghans marching down the Bala Hissar Road. They were at first mistaken for Highlanders; but when they fired a volley at the officer who rode up to speak to them, the mistake was soon apparent. The Punjabees at once extended themselves in skirmishing order among the willow plantations on each side of the road, and opened a rapid fire. The Afghans faced about and made for the Bala Hissar, but a company of the 5th cut off half their number, and in a hand-to-hand fight killed forty. These men, who are believed to have been from the city, were really run to earth, and were so exhausted that they could scarcely use their knives.

One feature of the day's fighting has been the attitude of the villagers about Cabul. A straggler from the 92nd Highlanders was found cut up between Sherpur and the Cabul river; officers riding alone have been fired at, and pelted with stones; and two villages on either side of the road to Beni Hissar opened a heavy fire upon our troops. General Baker halted on his way back to cantonments to burn these villages as a reward for their treachery. The lives of the men in one were spared on condition that they fired the other, the gates of which could not be forced open by our guns. The defenders were shot as they tried to escape from the ruins. From the Bala Hissar and near the city shots were fired, and the flanking parties of the 92nd, in their homeward march, came upon 200 or 300 men in the willow plantations, who fled towards the city walls. A convoy of wounded sent from the Sherderwaza Heights to Sherpur had also a narrow escape, the bravery of the non-commissioned officer in charge of the escort alone preventing a catastrophe on a small scale. After General Baker had captured the Takht-i-Shah Peak, a number of *dhoolies*, containing officers and men wounded on the 11th and 12th on the Sherderwaza Heights, were sent down the hill to Sherpur. Sergeant Cox, with twenty men of the 72nd, was in charge of the *dhoolies*, and among the wounded were Major Cook, V.C., 5th

Ghoorkas; Lieutenant Fergusson, 72nd Highlanders; and Lieutenant Fasken, 3rd Sikhs. Upon arriving at the foot of the hill, the road leading under the southern wall of the Bala Hissar was followed, and it was soon seen that parties of armed men were lining the parapets. Sergeant Cox, fearing to draw the fire by striking across the fields towards Beni Hissar, where General Baker was shelling some villages, put on a bold face, and marched on steadily. This had the best effect, as not a shot was fired from the walls. Ten Highlanders were at the head of the *dhoolies*, and ten in rear. Just as the little party got near the Bala Hissar gate a large body of Afghans sprang out from among the willows lining either side of the road, and, drawing their knives, came straight upon the advance-guard. The road from Beni Hissar joins the road to Sherpur just at this point, and seeing that it would be impossible to cut through the enemy, or to retreat the way he had come (as in the latter case the men on the walls would probably open fire), Sergeant Cox pushed on, ordering his men to reserve their fire. His object was to get the *dhoolies* fairly on the Beni Hissar Road on his right, and then to fall back until help should come from that quarter. The manœuvre succeeded admirably. Waiting until he was within twenty yards of the Afghans, he ordered the ten men with him to fire a volley. This was too much for the enemy, who broke and took cover in the trees. The *dhoolie*-bearers thought all was over, and those carrying Major Cook dropped their *dhoolie* in the middle of the road. They were about to run, when Sergeant Cox threatened to shoot them down unless they did their duty. They soon recovered courage, and while rapid volleys from the advance-guard kept the Afghans in check, all the *dhoolies* were got safely upon the Beni Hissar Road, and finally reached General Baker's force in safety. Sergeant Cox managed the whole business splendidly, and under such leadership the men were cool and collected, skirmishing and retiring without being touched by the scattered fire directed at them. After waiting an hour, the escort was strengthened by some cavalry, and the little convoy of wounded reached cantonments in safety. The position in which Sergeant Cox was placed was a most dangerous one, as the least hesitation or want of decision would have been fatal: the Afghans were, indeed, so sure of

success, that they did not fire at first, but trusted to cutting up the guard at close quarters with their knives. The three officers, whose lives were saved by Sergeant Cox's steadiness, reported the incident to Colonel Money, who had sent the *dhoolies* down the hill. Sergeant Cox was one of the men decorated with the distinguished service medal on December 8th for gallantry at the Peiwar Kotal. General Baker's force is now safely in quarters again. General Macpherson has sent back to Sherpur the 72nd Highlanders and the 3rd Sikhs, and, with the 67th Foot and the 5th Ghoorkas, holds the Bala Hissar Heights and the Takht-i-Shah Peak. The enemy are still in force above Indikee and at Dehmazung, which commands the Cabul gorge, and the road into the city has been abandoned. They may try to work round in that direction—that is, if to-day's defeat has not disheartened them. This evening a party of Kohistanis have come over the Surkh Kotal, and are bivouacking on a hill a mile and a half west of Sherpur. These are the reinforcements sent by Mir Butcha, who has no doubt heard of the success of Mahomed Jan on the 11th. The casualties to-day were eleven killed (two officers) and forty-three wounded. Of these the 92nd lost one officer and two men killed and nineteen wounded. The Guides had three killed and eight wounded.

15th December.

Yesterday the severest fighting we have yet gone through took place on the Asmai Heights above Deh-i-Afghan, and a lower conical hill adjoining them on the north. The enemy have been so largely reinforced, that their numbers are estimated at 40,000, and they have shown a recklessness in sacrificing life which has hitherto been considered quite foreign to the Afghan character. There must be many ghazis in their ranks from what we have seen to-day, and these fanatics always show a contempt for danger which makes them formidable enemies. They sacrifice their lives, satisfied if, before death, they have killed a Kafir, and so secured a future reward. Our own losses have been heavy, and for the first time our men have had to retire before the enemy, who are wonderfully elated at their success. It is true it was but an isolated case of a handful of men having to meet 5,000; but

with the evacuation of the position our men were holding, we lost two mountain guns, which Mahomed Jan is sure to make the most of as trophies, if he does not turn them against us. To give in detail the incidents of yesterday:—Between seven and eight o'clock in the morning some thousands of men were seen gathering on the slopes above Deh-i-Afghan, a suburb of Cabul lying north-west of the city upon a low eminence, which overlooks Timour's tomb. The evacuation of Dehmazung had, of course, given free passage to such of the enemy as wished to pass into Cabul and the Bala Hissar, and these now poured out by way of Deh-i-Afghan and manned the heights. The usual standards were carried, and in a very short time the sky-line was alive with men, until there must have been 8,000 or 10,000 looking down upon Sherpur and within range of our guns. The array extended upwards from the suburbs, along the crest of the Asmai Ridge, down the dip to the north, and over the conical hill I have mentioned; while, again, further to the north, was a higher lumpy hill, on which were a number of Kohistanis, who had bivouacked there the previous night. General Baker was ordered to clear the hills, and for this purpose he took out the following troops:—

Four guns G-3, Royal Artillery;
Four guns No. 2 Mountain Battery;
14th Bengal Lancers;
72nd Highlanders (225 men);
92nd Highlanders (45 men under Captain Gordon, who fell in with the 72nd, as the six companies of the latter were so weak);
Guides' Infantry (460 sepoys);
5th Punjab Infantry (470 sepoys).

This gave a total of 1,200 bayonets and eight guns. The cavalry were employed in the open to keep in check, or cut up, stray bodies of the enemy. General Baker left cantonments by the head-quarters' gate in the western wall, and made straight towards a mound near Kila Buland, a mile and a half away, facing the conical hill, on either side of which were roads leading into the Chardeh Valley beyond. He got his guns into action at once, in order to clear the way for the infantry attack, and sent his cavalry

round on his right flank towards the Chardeh Valley to reconnoitre in that direction. The Guides' Cavalry were ordered out to reinforce the 14th Bengal Lancers, and were fired at several times from walled enclosures just over the Nanuchi Kotal. The mountain guns drew off to a low ridge on which stood the ruins of a fort, Kila Buland, and shelled such bodies of men as were visible in the direction the cavalry had taken. The party told off to take the heights were the Highlanders, under Colonel Brownlow, and Guides' Infantry, the 5th Punjabees being held in reserve near the guns. The low, conical hill was captured without much trouble, but there then remained for Colonel Jenkins, commanding the attack, the difficult task of taking the Asmai Heights, every foot of the crest bearing an Afghan firing from behind the excellent cover given by rocks and boulders. Rising up from the captured conical hill was a steep hillside, with here and there shelving rocks hiding men from the view of those above, and up this rugged ground our soldiers went steadily and rapidly, utilizing every bit of cover, and answering from time to time the heavy fire they were met with. The guns shelled two strong *sungars* which had been built on the northern and southern points of the crest; and made such practice, that the enemy began to move downwards towards Cabul. They clustered in masses above Deh-i-Afghan, where the shells of G-3 could not reach them, and afforded so tempting a mark, that Sir F. Roberts, who was watching the attack from the signalling station on the roof of the officers' quarters in the western gate, ordered two Horse Artillery guns out to open fire from under the cantonment walls. A wing of the 3rd Sikhs and some cavalry went out as escort, and extended themselves into the fields beyond. The shrapnel fired from these two guns made the hillside almost untenable; but still in the *sungars* on the crest a few determined ghazis resisted the advance of the Highlanders and Guides. Our men fought up, however, and the *sungar* on the northern point was taken with a rush. The banners waving above it were obstinately defended by ghazis, who were killed to a man. Colonel Jenkins then worked his way under a heavy fire along the crest, which has a total length of a quarter of a mile; and there only remained the southern *sungar*, built on the peak of the hill, to be taken. In this *sungar*,

which was unusually strong, were forty or fifty men who, by their fire, checked the advance for some time. Major Stockwell, with a few Highlanders, passed through a gap in the wall which runs down the ridge, and galled the Ghazis by a cross fire. Private Gillon, of the 72nd, climbed up the wall, and, creeping along the top, pulled out a standard from among the stones of the *sungar*. There was an open bit of ground between our front attacking party and the *sungar* walls, and this was swept by such a fire that even the bravest might have hesitated to cross it. Such of us who were watching the fight saw that the stubborn defence would cost us some valuable lives; but presently, when the Drummer was seen on the walls, there was a rush of Highlanders and Guides—one plucky Highlander, Lance-Corporal Seller, 72nd, leading full 20 yards in front, with a Guide quite close behind him. As the *sungar* was neared, most of its defenders cleared out on the opposite side, but a few Ghazis stood to their post; one fanatic jumping, knife in hand, on the low stone walls. The bayonet made short work of such of his companions as had remained. Lance-Corporal Seller had a tough fight for the last standard on the *sungar*. As he got up to the wall he pulled the flag out and, at the same moment, a Ghazi cut down at his head with a long knife. Seller parried the blow with the standard, and then the Ghazi jumped over and closed with him. They rolled over together, and another Highlander bayoneted the Afghan. Seller was cut over the arm, and is now in hospital. He certainly deserves the highest reward for his gallant conduct: the "V.C." has been given for much less. The *sungar* was filled with dead men, fifteen bodies being counted in a heap as if a shell had burst among them. Our loss had been heavy, as much hand-to-hand fighting at difficult points had taken place; many of the Guides were cut and slashed by the knives and *tulwars* of the Ghazis; while the ranks ef the 72nd Highlanders were thinned by numerous casualties, mostly of a dangerous kind. Lieutenant Egerton, who only joined the regiment a few weeks ago, was shot through the neck on the crest of the hill. He showed courage that even an old soldier might have envied, being always well to the front in the attack. Lieutenant Frederick Battye, of the Guides, was also shot through the neck at about the same time.

Colonel Jenkins was now holding the whole crest of the Asmai Heights; but on the slope towards the city were many thousands of the enemy. The two guns of F-A Battery shelled them at 1,700 yards, and the mountain guns, with General Macpherson, were also turned upon them. A wing of the 3rd Sikhs were extended in skirmishing order across the fields towards Deh-i-Afghan, and with their Sniders were easily able to reach the men pouring down into Cabul. Deh-i-Afghan, however, held many of the enemy; and from the house-tops, walls, and orchards about, the 3rd Sikhs were fired upon. The watercourse gave our sepoys good cover, but still there were one or two casualties; and General Roberts resolved to sack and burn Deh-i-Afghan. The two guns of F-A began to shell it vigorously, and two more guns of the same battery were brought out and joined in the work. Shell after shell was pitched among the houses, and the defenders of them drew off before such a fire. Some 1,500, supposed to be Safis from Tagao, went through the city and made for the Cabul plain so as to reach Deh-i-Sabz, to the north of Butkhak. Some of them ventured too near the King's Garden, outside Sherpur, where the 5th Punjab Cavalry are quartered, and Captain Vousden charged out upon them and killed thirty. He had only twelve sowars with him, and of these two were killed and four wounded; Captain Vousden killed five Afghans with his own hand.* The main body got well away beneath Siah Sung; and although some Lancers were sent in pursuit, and two Horse Artillery guns went out under escort of a party of the 92nd Highlanders, the Safis could not be overtaken. They ran at a sling-trot for miles, just like wolves in a pack, and had plainly had enough of fighting for the day. We had thus, apparently, disposed of the body of the enemy (those who had manned the heights from the city); but there were many more to take their place, and General Baker, with his 1,200 bayonets, had yet to learn the full strength that was against him.

About midday the signallers with General Macpherson heliographed down that a vast body with many standards were streaming out from Indikee into the Chardeh Valley, and were taking a northerly direction, which would bring them under the

* For this he was strongly recommended for the Victoria Cross.

hill occupied by Colonel Jenkins. The movement was well made, and eventually developed into an attack upon the conical hill which the Guides and Highlanders first stormed. This hill was held by thirty-three men of the 72nd Highlanders, a small party of Guides under a Subadar, the whole being under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Clark, 72nd. While the upper hill was being taken, parties of the enemy's infantry and cavalry were seen coming across Chardeh from the direction of Kila Kazi, as if to take Colonel Jenkins in flank, and the conical hill was strengthened by Swinley's Mountain Battery, with an escort of 100 men of the 5th Punjabees, under command of Lieutenant Wilson, of the 10th Hussars, serving for the day as a volunteer. This gave Colonel Clark about 200 rifles, with which to hold the hill. The mountain guns opened fire upon the body of Afghans in the plain, who broke up and dispersed out of range. In the meantime the enemy from Indikee—to the number of fully 15,000 or 20,000; they covered the plain for miles—had marched out as if going to Kila Kazi, or Argandeh. Their array was orderly enough; and when they had all reached the plain, they suddenly faced about and came down in the shape of a crescent upon the heights we were holding. Their right flank had for its object the scaling of a ridge extending down from the southern *sungar* on the Deh-i-Afghan hill; their centre, the assault of the low conical hill, which was General Baker's weakest point; and their left flank swept round upon the lumpy hill to the north of Colonel Clark's position, and commanding it. They seemed to our handful of men to be myriads as they came steadily on; and although volleys were fired from the conical hill, and the mountain guns shelled them at short ranges, they never faltered. They were literally mowed down; but as one Ghazi fell, another sprang to the front, and their standards were at last placed on a little mound within 150 yards of our bayonets. Their left flank had gained the lumpy hill which we had left alone, not having men enough to occupy it, and a cross fire was opened upon Colonel Clark's party. There was a bit of open ground between the mound on which their standards were placed and the rocks in rear, under which their main body had clustered in face of our fire; but across this small space numbers rushed with reckless audacity until,

behind their advanced standards, several hundred men were hidden. Colonel Clark thought that at all risks they must be driven from this mound, as they might make a rush in overwhelming numbers: and Captain Spens volunteered to make the attempt. Taking with him five of the 72nd Highlanders and a few Guides, he made for a bit of rising ground below the mound and reached it safely. His fire could not dislodge the Ghazis, who suddenly rushed out upon the little party. Captain Spens was attacked by four or five men: he cut down one, but in a second he was overpowered and hacked almost to pieces. There followed in rear of the Ghazis, who had sprung out, a dense mass of Afghans, who swarmed up to the thin line of defenders, who could scarcely hope to stop them. The mountain guns were on Colonel Clark's left, and their guard of 5th Punjabees had been, perhaps too sanguinely, sent forward to repel the attack. Our men lost heart as they saw four or five thousand men nearly upon them; and when Captain Hall, with a reinforcement of 150 more of the 5th Punjab Infantry, got near the crest of the hill, he found such of its defenders as had not been shot down retiring in disorder. To rally them was impossible at that point, and they fell back down the hillside. The fire of the enemy at such close quarters cost us a score of wounded, and the mules of one mountain gun being shot, it had to be abandoned where it stood. A second gun was being carried safely downwards when the mule carrying it was also knocked over. The handspike in the muzzle used for lifting it was broken, but the gunners rolled it for some yards down the hill until the Afghans were close upon them, when it also had to be left. Two guns were thus lost, but fortunately there was but little ammunition left behind. At the foot of the hill our men rallied, and re-opened fire, which checked the rush of the enemy. The 3rd Sikhs doubled across the fields from near Deh-i-Afghan and reinforced General Baker, driving back such Afghans as had ventured down the slope towards the village where the guns of G-3 were placed. These guns were withdrawn to a safe distance; but, although the enemy in half an hour had 10,000 men on and about the conical hill, they did not venture down to attack. Our cavalry were ready in the plain to charge down upon them if they gained

the fields ; but they had quite a different intention. As I have said, their right flank were scaling a spur running down from the southern *sungar* to the Chardeh plain, and they hoped to cut off Colonel Jenkins and his party. This soon became evident, as a long string of standard bearers began to climb up towards the northern *sungar*, following exactly the path taken by our storming party in the morning. From over the crest of the hill came the rattle of musketry; and estimating the difficulty of holding the crest all night, and so weakening the defences of Sherpur, General Roberts sent word to Colonel Jenkins to evacuate the position.

The enemy has shown such unexpected strength—40,000 men in all are believed to have been present in Chardeh Valley and in the hills above Deh-i-Afghan—that it was running considerable risk to keep our garrison in cantonments short of a man; accordingly at the same time that Colonel Jenkins was ordered to retire, a message was sent by heliograph to General Macpherson to hasten back to Sherpur with all his force. He was to take the road above the Deh-i-Afghan suburb. General Baker was ordered to hold on to the village he had occupied since the morning until all the troops from the heights were within the walls. Meanwhile Colonel Jenkins had met the attack up the spur from Chardeh. Major Stockwell, 72nd, was sent down a few score yards with a small escort, who kept up a hot fire upon the advancing masses. A few Ghazis, with their standards, got from point to point ; but they were still at a respectable distance when the order to evacuate the hill was received. Major Stockwell withdrew his men from the little *sungar* they had built, and retired leisurely, so as to give the Afghans no idea that the crest also was to be evacuated. Captain Gordon, of the 92nd, was shot through the right shoulder while this movement was being made. Five minutes after our men had left their *sungar* a banner was planted upon it, showing how rapidly the Ghazis rushed up the hill. Major Stockwell's party having been safely withdrawn, the retirement down the hill facing Sherpur was begun. The enemy, who were nearly at the northern *sungar*, led by a Ghazi with a green flag, were kept in check by volleys fired by covering parties thrown out on Colonel Jenkins's left flank. There was not the least appearance of undue haste, the Highlanders forming up quietly to cover the Guides

scrambling down, and the Guides then doing the same in their turn for the Highlanders. The hillside was so exposed that our casualties were rather severe, among the killed being Lieutenant Gaisford of the 72nd. Not a man was left behind, however, all the wounded and dead being brought in. All anxiety about Colonel Jenkins's force being now at an end, there only remained General Macpherson's brigade to come in. Two companies of the 92nd Highlanders were marched out to cover them across the plain, and to help General Baker's rear-guard in its final retirement; but they were not wanted. Presently shots were heard in Deh-i-Afghan, and then the baggage of the brigade was seen entering the fields under a strong guard. The 67th Foot, 5th Ghoorkas, and 3rd Sikhs followed with the mountain battery, and, before long, entered the head-quarters' gate. In coming through the Cabul gorge, General Macpherson had been able to help the Highlanders and Guides by his fire. He sent two companies of the 67th, under Colonel Knowles, to hold a knoll half-way up the slope from Deh-i-Afghan to the southern *sungar*. Bodies of the enemy tried to rush down the hill to overtake Colonel Jenkins and even to harass the brigade under General Macpherson; but the steady shooting of the 67th conld not be faced, and the most adventurous Ghazis being shot down, the rest withdrew to the crest. Colonel Knowles handled his men with a coolness that could not have been excelled. General Baker then retired slowly, his rear-guard, under Major Pratt, 5th Punjab Infantry, by a brisk fusillade for about ten minutes, stopping the few Ghazis who came down from the conical peak. By dusk everyone was in cantonments, and we could count our casualties. They were unusually heavy for Afghan fighting, but have given us valuable experience, as we no longer despise our enemy. That Afghans when in overwhelming numbers will fight and rush blindly on, regardless of loss of life, has been fully exemplified, and we shall no longer send flying columns over the hills and break up our army into three weak parts. With Generals Baker and Macpherson both out of Sherpur, an attack upon cantonments might have resulted in a disaster. Now that our force is once more concentrated, Sherpur may be looked upon as safe.

When all our troops were once more in quarters, we had to

think about our defences, though it was highly improbable that Mahomed Jan would try a night attack. Our men were quite fagged out with all the hill-climbing they had done to so little purpose; but the majority of them had to turn out to do picquet duty, and keep a sharp look-out on the walls. Shelter trenches were hastily thrown up at our weakest points on the Bemaru Heights; the gates in the walls were barricaded with gun carriages belonging to the guns captured on October 8th; and we waited patiently and a little anxiously, it must be confessed, for a night alarm. Every regiment was told off to particular points, and a reserve—made up of a wing of the 67th, a wing of the 72nd, and the whole of the 92nd—were ready to fall in below the gap in the Bemaru Hills in the centre of the cantonments. We did not fear any attempt to scale the walls; but at either end of the heights which shut us in on the north were open gaps; Shere Ali's line of wall, intended to include the Bemaru Hills within the fortified square, never having been completed. At the eastern end of Sherpur, the 28th Punjab Infantry have built a line of huts extending from near the corner bastion towards Bemaru village; and as the ground beyond it is covered with walled enclosures, towers, and orchards, excellent cover would be given to an attacking force which might gather under cover of darkness, and make a rush to get in. On the 14th, *abattis* had been laid, the orchards near giving plenty of wood, and above Bemaru village were strong picquet posts and trenches which commanded the road leading from Kohistan. Two guns of G-3 were at this point, but they were withdrawn, as to remove them in face of a determined attack would have been nearly impossible, the ground towards camp being very steep and much broken up. Wire entanglements, made with telegraph wire and tent-pegs, were laid down, wherever there was open ground over the walls, and extra vigilance was shown by sentries. The block-houses on the crest of the Bemaru Heights were also filled with our men, ready to reinforce any points assailed. But the night passed quietly, the soldiers being undisturbed even by stray shots. The enemy were, perhaps, as tired as ourselves, and were holding high revel in the city and the Bala Hissar, where no doubt they found many friends to welcome them. Our garrison at Butkhak, consisting of some fifty rifles, and the whole of the 12th Bengal Cavalry, arrived safely at Sher-

pur during the night, it being deemed unwise to leave them so far away from cantonments. As they also had to be supplied with food from our godowns, and we could not spare a force to escort convoys across the Cabul plain, it was necessary they should be brought in. This withdrawal has cut us off from Luttabund.

To-day (the 15th) has been one of almost absolute quiet. Beyond cavalry parties patrolling outside Sherpur, our men have not been sent out, although the Afghans crowded out upon the slopes above Deh-i-Afghan, inviting us to come out and attack them. There can be no good object attained, however, in again storming the heights, as we cannot weaken the garrison by telling off a couple of regiments and a mountain battery to hold the hills when captured. We had not, either, ammunition to throw away; there are only about 300 rounds per rifle of Snider and Martini-Henri, and we are as yet uncertain when reinforcements from Gundamak, bringing a further supply, will reach us. Luckily the telegraph remained open until five o'clock this morning, so full particulars of our condition were sent down the line. General Charles Gough has been ordered to bring in his brigade as quickly as possible, and he is now concentrating them at Jugdulluck. Colonel Hudson, commanding at Luttabund, has been ordered to hold on with the 300 Pioneers and the 28th Punjab Infantry, until General Gough reaches him. He will then come on to Sherpur. With the arrival of the brigade we shall be able, not merely to hold Sherpur in comfort, but also to send out 2,000 or 3,000 men to attack Mahomed Jan in whatever position he may take up. With more ammunition for our batteries, we can shell Deh-i-Afghan, the Bala Hissar, and even Cabul itself if occasion requires. At present we cannot afford to waste shells; as in the case of any check to General Gough's brigade, we should have to rely upon our own strength until more troops could be sent forward from Jellalabad, and further down the Khyber line. We must make our calculations on this basis until we hear of the brigade from Jugdulluck being at Luttabund or Butkhak, which they should reach by the 19th or 20th at the latest. Asmatullah Khan, of Lughman, with his powerful section of Ghilzais, is reported to be anxious to join Mahomed Jan with 10,000 or 15,000 men, and he may try to intercept the force moving from Gundamak. As he would leave his villages west of the Darunta

cliff at the mercy of a flying column from Jellalabad, he may, perhaps, hesitate before taking such a step. The Safis of Tagao, who returned to their homes yesterday afternoon, before our reverse, will soon learn that Cabul is still in the possession of Mahomed Jan, and they also may try to block the Luttabund Road.

Our losses in yesterday's action were very severe, and among our wounded are many dangerous cases. The proportion, usually, of severe wounds is one-third out of the total wounded, but nearly every case now in hospital is "severe." The list of casualties from the 10th to the 13th and on the 14th is as follows:—

CASUALTIES FROM 10TH TO 13TH DECEMBER.

Regiment.	British.				Natives.		Total.
	Officers.		Men.				
	K.	W.	K.	W.	K.	W.	
F-A, Royal Horse Artillery ...	1	—	—	1	—	—	2
No. 2 Mountain Battery ...	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
9th Lancers	3	4	21	16	—	—	44
5th Punjab Cavalry	—	—	—	—	3	—	3
14th Bengal Lancers	1	—	—	—	7	4	12
67th Foot	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
72nd Highlanders	—	1	—	5	—	—	6
92nd Highlanders	1	—	2	21	—	—	24
3rd Sikhs	—	2	—	—	4	10	16
Corps of Guides	—	—	—	—	3*	9	12
5th Punjab Infantry	—	—	—	—	1	10	11
5th Ghoorkas	—	2	—	—	1	10	13
Total	6	9	23	45	19	45	147

CASUALTIES ON 14TH DECEMBER.

	K.	W.	K.	W.	K.	W.	
No. 2 Mountain Battery ...	—	—	—	—	1	6	7
5th Punjab Cavalry	—	—	—	—	—	8	8
14th Bengal Lancers	—	—	—	—	—	5	5
67th Foot	—	—	—	5	—	—	5
72nd Highlanders	2	1	15†	16	—	—	34
92nd Highlanders	—	1	—	3	—	—	4
3rd Sikhs	—	—	—	—	—	5	5
Guides' Infantry	—	1	—	—	13	27	41
5th Punjab Infantry	—	—	—	—	1	13	14
5th Ghoorkas	—	—	—	—	3	2	5
Total	2	3	15	24	18	66	128

* Missing. † One missing.

The total loss in the five days' fighting is, therefore, eight British officers killed and 12 wounded; 38 British soldiers killed and 69 wounded; 37 Native soldiers killed and 111 wounded; or a total of 275 casualties, viz., 83 killed and 192 wounded.

The officers killed on the 14th were Captain Spens and Lieutenant Gaisford, 72nd Highlanders: those wounded were Captain Gordon, 92nd Highlanders; Lieutenant Egerton, 72nd; and Lieutenant Frederick Battye, Guides' Infantry.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Defences of Sherpur Strengthened—Continued Inactivity of the Enemy—State of the Walls and Trenches—Mounting of Captured Guns—The Reserve—The State of Cabul—Attacks upon the Hindu and Kizilbash Quarters—Threat to assemble 100,000 Afghans—Reflections upon Past Events—Neglect of Military Precautions—Non-destruction of Forts and Villages—Review of the Fighting—City Rumours—Musa Jan proclaimed Amir—Seizure of Treasure by Mahomed Jan—Demonstration by the Enemy on December 17th—The Distribution of Commands in Sherpur—Immunity from Night Attacks—Steadiness of the Troops—The Attack of December 18th—Heliograms exchanged with Luttabund—The First Fall of Snow at Cabul.

SHERPUR, 15*th December, night.*

TO-DAY'S respite from fighting has been of the greatest value to us. The shelter trenches thrown up in the darkness have, in many instances, been found to be defective, accordingly Colonel Perkins and the engineers with the force have laid out new lines, and the northern and eastern defences are now quite strong enough to assure our safety in those directions. The northern end of the western wall was partly blown down when the mutineers fired their magazine the day after Charasia; the breach in it has been closed with earth and rubbish; and the corner bastion, looking towards the lake, has been made thoroughly defensible. From this bastion to the foot of the Bemaru Heights is an open space, about 100 yards across. The trees beyond it, which shaded our cemetery, have been cut down, and a strong entrenchment thrown across, with wire entanglements, 20 yards in front. Here, again, Afghan ammunition waggons have been of great use. They are placed

sideways, one wheel facing outwards, and the other forming the inner side, over which the defenders can fire. A deep trench has been dug along the outer face, and the earth thrown up between the wheels, so as to give stability to the barrier. This has made a formidable obstacle, which could not be readily taken when defended by breech-loaders. From the end abutting on the steep slope of the heights a trench and parapet run up to the block-house on the crest. An *abattis* has been made of the branches of trees 30 yards in front of this, faced again by wire entanglements, and two 18-pounders from among the captured guns are placed on a platform cut in the slope and commanding the ground in front of the lower barrier of ammunition waggons. The fire from the block-house and the trench on the hillside would take in enfilade any force making a front attack. Along the crest of the Bemaru Heights is a line of earthen breastworks extending to the break in the hills above the Ghoorka quarters on the foundations of Shere Ali's intended palace. It was in this "gorge," as it is now called, that our troops in 1841-42 had much severe fighting, their old "Brown Besses" being unequal to carrying from slope to slope. From the camp, paths lead up a gentle slope through the gap. The northern side, facing Kohistan, is much steeper, and the centre is cut up by deep nullahs formed by the streams which rush down when the snow melts. Immediately below, at the foot of the hills, cultivation begins and reaches out half a mile to the open *maidan*, where we held our review on the 8th instant. On either side of the gorge are flanking trenches with *abattis*, while wire entanglements have been laid across the paths below. Two block-houses look down upon the nullahs from either side of the gap; while right in the mouth is a third, built very strongly, and loop-holed for musketry. A Gatling gun is placed near this defence, and guns could also move up in case of attack. The eastern Bemaru hill is also entrenched, and has a block-house in the centre, and another at the northern point, which was, at first, very weak. The village of Bemaru, with strong towers and walls, lies at the bottom of the hill; and the ground is so rugged and steep, that men could creep up almost without being seen. Flanking trenches, wire entanglements, and *abattis* have here, again, given strength to the

defences. Bemaru village itself is now occupied by the Guides; the quarters of the 23rd Pioneers, and the mule and *yaboo* lines being just below. There now remains the eastern line of defence; which, even now, is not completed, and has given us much anxiety. I have already mentioned that the huts of the 28th Punjab Infantry have been built between the end of the cantonment wall and Bemaru; and I may add that every means of rapidly strengthening the place has been taken. Shelter-trenches and positions for guns have been made, and the orchards outside have been cut down wherever they gave shelter. The bit of country outside cantonments in this direction is very fertile, being irrigated from a wide canal, and some dozen villages and forts are clustered together on its banks. The walls bounding the orchards and gardens as well as the near forts would, if time permitted, be razed to the ground; and until this is done, there will be a chance of strong bodies of the enemy annoying us thence. Until we know Mahomed Jan's tactics, and whether he really means to attempt an assault, we cannot do more than strengthen the actual lines of defence, leaving the walls and towers in the fields to be destroyed hereafter. Regarding the walls of Sherpur itself, they are in a thorough state of defence; such openings as had been cut in them for the convenience of soldiers and followers having been blocked up with arm chests filled with stones and rubbish. The outer wall is about twenty feet high, with numerous flanking bastions, and is pierced for musketry at every six feet. The actual parapet is six feet high, giving perfect shelter to soldiers manning the walls; and our men, preferring to fire over the top, have cut resting-places with their bayonets for their rifles. No bullet can penetrate more than a few inches into the sun-dried mud, which is really so hard that 9-pounders could not breach it. The blocks of mud solidify so thoroughly after a time, that they will turn the edge of a pick, as we have found in improving our quarters in the long line of barracks. A dry ditch, twenty feet in width, follows the line of walls, which, in an early letter, I described as three sides of a parallelogram. The barracks form the inner line of defence, a low parapet on the roof overlooking the dry ditch below.

There are four high gateways in the walls; one facing westwards, known as the "Head-quarters' Gate," and three in the

southern wall facing Cabul. The middle one of these is the "Commissariat Gate," and abuts on the road leading through the old cantonment over the Cabul river to the Bala Hissar. All the Commissariat godowns are in the barracks and verandah to right and left of this gate. A line drawn at right angles from these across the cantonment would strike the gap in the Bemaru hills; and in anticipation of our having to draw in our defences, the engineers are preparing an inner line of entrenchments stretching between these two parts. Our food supply, firewood, and *bhoosa*, would be enclosed within it, and our men would be far less harassed. We should probably continue to hold the north-eastern Bemaru hill as an outwork; but to do this we should have to destroy very thoroughly Bemaru village, the huts of the 28th Punjab Infantry, and the barracks and wall at the eastern part of Sherpur. There seems but little probability of our having to do this, as the reinforcements will lighten our work, give an ample garrison, and also permit of a brigade moving out to meet the enemy. We are mounting one of the 8-inch howitzers, captured here, in a bastion of the western wall, whence we can shell Deh-i-Afghan and the road leading from the Cabul gorge. We have plenty of loose powder for this howitzer, and any number of empty shells left behind by the mutineers. Some of Shere Ali's mountain guns are also being got ready for use. Our own batteries are kept free to move from point to point as required, special stations being told off for them at night. Morgan's mountain battery is the artillery reserve: the infantry and cavalry reserve is made up of the whole of the 92nd Highlanders, a wing of the 67th, a wing of the 72nd, and six squadrons chosen from among the 9th Lancers, 5th Punjab Cavalry, Guides' Cavalry, 12th Bengal Cavalry, and the 14th Bengal Lancers. The remainder of the troopers and sowars are dismounted, and used as infantry to man the defences. The reserve, in case of a night attack, is to form up in the open ground in the middle of cantonments below the Bemaru gorge. We have thus made all our preparations, and shall probably pursue a waiting policy, leaving Mahomed Jan to his occupation of Cabul city and the Bala Hissar until General Charles Gough arrives. What that occupation is likely to be, we are already learning: the houses of all known friends of the

British are being looted and destroyed, and the Hindu and Kizilbash quarters are also being attacked. Constant firing is heard from the city, and the Kizilbashes are resisting the attacks to the best of their ability. Against such numbers, however, they cannot make a stand, however bravely they may fight. Several of them have sought refuge with us, and we have also, as our guests, Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan, young Ahmed Ali, and their personal retainers. Daoud Shah has been put under arrest "as a matter of precaution," and the Mustaufi is also again in confinement, as well as other Afghan sirdars, whose honesty is a doubtful quality. Hazara coolies and city people, employed hitherto as labourers, masons, and carpenters, have also been turned out of Sherpur, as they are now only a drag upon us, and might also be bearers of information to the enemy.

This evening large bodies of men with standards appeared on the road above Deh-i-Afghan until the slope of the hill was completely covered. Beyond waving their knives and *tulwars*, and shouting defiance, they did nothing to annoy or irritate us. General Roberts at first ordered some guns out to shell them, but changed his mind, and declined to waste ammunition upon them. In the evening they returned to the city, but kept two large signal fires burning on the heights. They are said to expect reinforcements from Kohistan, Turkistan, and the Shutargardan district; but we have no news of these being on the move. They boast of being able to get 100,000 men together in a week, and have sent to Ghazni for guns. At present they have not been able to rig up the two mountain guns they captured, or to use two others taken in Wali Mahomed's camp above Dehmazung. If they were to shell Sherpur they might cause us some loss, as our cavalry are picqueted in the open.

While I am writing (on the evening of the 15th) we are expecting a night attack; but we are quite ready for it, every post being fully manned. The Mohurrum has now begun, and fanaticism is sure to run high among the Ghazis and followers of Mushk-i-Alam, but it will scarcely prompt them to attack so strong a position as we have now made. Orders have been issued that, in the event of any of the enemy getting within cantonment walls, they are to be bayoneted. Shooting is forbidden, as in camp our

bullets would probably be more dangerous to our own troops than to scattered parties of Afghans. Every man is resting on his arms ready for an emergency.

16th December.

The second night has passed without any demonstration by Mahomed Jan against Sherpur; and while the fire-eaters in our force are longing for an attack, in order that the Afghans may learn how mud walls and entrenchments can be defended by men with breech-loaders in their hands, most of us are glad that our soldiers have had time to rest, and have not been obliged to stand out all night in the bitter cold. Four blankets per man have been served out; and, wrapped in these, the soldiers have been able to keep themselves fairly comfortable, while sleeping in the trenches and bastions. The sentries are on the alert, and have, of course, had to endure cold and discomfort; but the great body of men have rested quietly. To-day also, no attack has been attempted; and while we are settling down to the new conditions imposed upon us—for we are now practically in a state of siege—our spirits are as high as ever. We chafe under the delay which must necessarily ensue before we can once more disperse the enemy; but we hope that the troops from Jugdulluck and Gundamak will soon put us in a position both to hold Sherpur and to have a few thousand men outside, dealing with the Ghazis. There can be no doubt we have been lulled during the past two months into false security. Our only anxiety hitherto has been to find an enemy to fight; and the opinions I have expressed in former letters as to the Afghan weakness for running away have been simply those held by every one here. When we sent our brigades out to fight, they found no one to face them; and we were unaware that such a powerful combination as that now against us was possible. After the dispersion of the remnants of Yakub Khan's mutinous army, there was such an appearance of peace, at least for many months, that the ordinary military precautions were not taken. Our hands were full with laying in supplies for the winter and getting the troops into barracks. Sherpur, with its three sides already fortified, and ample accommodation in its long lines of rooms, was ready to our hand, and we occupied it

at once, although the strength of our army was scarcely adequate to defending it * and keeping our communications open. The original plan of placing two or three regiments in the Bala Hissar was certainly a good one; but the explosions in the fortress, and the dread that it might still contain mines unknown to us, deterred General Roberts from carrying out his first intention.

Further, when Sherpur was occupied, the sense of security then prevailing led us to spare the forts and villages in its vicinity. Even the old walls and isolated towers in the fields about were left untouched. We make war so humanely that, even in a country like Afghanistan, we are loth to let military exigencies override all other considerations. That we shall suffer for it now in loss of life is beyond question; for, at several points about the walls, cover is given to an attacking party, who can get within 400 or 500 yards of our bastions. On the eastern and southern sides this is particularly the case. Outside Bemaru, as I have said, are forts, villages, and orchards; while, between the three gates facing towards Cabul, the ground is similarly occupied. Fort Mahomed Sharif, so well known in the dreary days of 1841—42, still stands intact within 700 yards of the "72nd Gateway," and about it are high walls and walled enclosures, which are sure to be occupied by sharp-shooters. Outside Deh-i-Afghan also are orchards and gardens, each with its strong open walls, and in the fields are ruinous walls, with an occasional tower, which we could easily have destroyed if we had foreseen that an investment was hanging over us. It is easy to be wise after the event; but there can now be but one view as to the defects of Sherpur. To defend it, simply, is now comparatively easy, even with the 6,000 men we have within its walls; but beyond defence, we can do nothing. It covers such an enormous area of ground, that when all our picquets and sentries have been placed, we have no one to spare; and though we have dismounted nearly the whole of our cavalry, there are not even 1,000 men available for outside work. If it were half the size, we should be as comfortable as in an Indian cantonment; or if we had 10,000 men here, and three or four more batteries of artillery, we could break up Mahomed Jan's army without difficulty. But neither of these conditions exists, and we

* This was the view taken by Colonel Macgregor, Chief of the Staff.

are quietly accepting the humiliation of investment, and witnessing the looting of Cabul and the Bala Hissar without being able to strike a blow against the enemy. The suddenness of the whole business is the most remarkable feature, and we now see to what imminent danger Sherpur was exposed when Generals Macpherson and Baker were sent out to force the fighting in Maidan. In the first week of December native rumours of 40,000 or 50,000 men gathering together to attack Cabul were freely circulated in the city, but little attention was paid to them. Later, there was the plain evidence of our cavalry scouts that 4,000 or 5,000 men were between Maidan and Argandeh, and to cut them off was the object of General Macpherson's march into the Chardeh Valley, and of the *détour* made by General Baker from Charasia to Maidan. General Macpherson, in carrying out his flank march to get between Mahomed Jan and Bamian, came unexpectedly upon Mir Butcha and his Kohistanis; and he had first to deal with them before turning his attention to the Ardal Pultan and their friends from Wardak and Ghazni. His defeat of Mir Butcha, on December 10th, was of great value, as preventing the Kohistanis from joining the other force; but on the 11th there followed the defeat of our cavalry and the temporary loss of two guns. That afternoon was really most pregnant with danger to the cantonment. Two brigades were miles away from the walls, and between the nearest men of General Macpherson's brigade and Sherpur were 10,000 of the enemy. If they had streamed over the Nanuchi Kotal, near where the action of the 14th was fought, and had shown the same determination in assaulting our lines as they had done in resisting the cavalry and guns, we must have lost Sherpur long before help could have come from the two Brigadiers. That the enemy streamed off to the Cabul gorge, with the intention of seizing the Bala Hissar and the city, was the saving of our cantonments. Two hundred rifles of the 72nd checked them at Dehmazung, and they contented themselves with occupying the hills to the south of the Bala Hissar Heights, and waiting for reinforcements. We kept them in play, on the 12th, with 600 men, who partly captured their position; and by that time General Baker had reached Sherpur. On the 13th our success was unqualified; we stormed and occupied the enemy's position,

and our cavalry in the Cabul plain cut to pieces such fugitives as left the hills. That evening we believed we had seen the enemy's full strength and had broken it; but after the action on the Asmai Heights, and the retreat of our troops to cantonments, we were undeceived. It became apparent that there were between 30,000 and 40,000 men, quite sufficient to keep us within our walls, as with such numbers many points could be threatened at the same time. It came to this: that we must be content to let them occupy Cabul, the Bala Hissar, and whatever other points they chose, while we watched them carefully from Sherpur, ready to repel attack, or to clear them out of forts and villages dangerously near our walls. *They* have liberty to roam whithersoever they will; while *we* are so numerically weak, except for cavalry reconnaissances, that we must accept the usual conditions of a beleaguered garrison. We have accepted it, cheerfully enough, I venture to say; and when we again go out to clear Cabul and the Bala Hissar, we shall do it with all the more zest after being penned up in Sherpur by sheer weight of numbers.

To-day there has not been much done beyond hard work at the entrenchments, at which the men labour heartily, as they know the importance of having continuous lines of defence. Our curiosity is fed by rumours from the city, from which we gain a certain amount of trustworthy news; though our spies, as a rule, are the most treacherous-looking ruffians we have seen for a long time. Our intelligence department has such bad tools to work with, that scarcely any information proves correct; for an Afghan is a greater adept at fabrication than any other Asiatic. We cannot *trust* them: they go and come, and bring strange tales, and fill our minds with the idea that 40,000 Ghazis mean to fight to the death, so as to capture Sherpur; and then nothing comes of it. We hear to-day of scaling-ladders being made, and of an assault to be delivered simultaneously at seven points; but when or how it will be made not even the most pronounced liar among the spies ventures to say. Two or three bankers from the city have been in Sherpur to-day, and from them we have learnt that Mahomed Jan and his followers are bursting with pride at finding themselves in possession of Cabul, and holding the British army in check. There is so much confidence among them, that, no doubt at the

instigation of Yakub Khan's mother, they have proclaimed young Musa Jan, Yakub's son, Amir. This is to give a semblance of order and patriotism to their movements, we suppose; and, perhaps, their leaders hereafter may be bold enough to proffer negotiation. They will be the mouthpiece of their new Amir, and Sir F. Roberts will be nothing more than the representative of the British, who will be told, as in olden times, that they are not wanted in the country. Further, they have found that no Governor of Cabul now exists, General Hills, our nominee, having, of course, left the *kotwali* for the safer quarters of Sherpur. The fanatics have therefore nominated Mushk-i-Alam, the old *moollah*, to be Governor, and, with all his ninety years heavy upon him, he sits dispensing justice and encouraging the *moollahs* to work upon the religious feelings of soldiers. Whether he expects long to enjoy his dignity does not appear; but, apart from his great age, there is the contingency of Cabul once more falling into our hands. His *jehad* has certainly been a wonderful success, and it is long since so large a number of armed men have been assembled in and about Cabul. They are likely to experience the same difficulty we have always felt—supplies. Each villager carries with him *chupaties* and dried mulberries sufficient for three or four days' consumption; but their food-bags now want replenishing. With her usual energy, Yakub's mother is said to have given her jewels and money to the "troops"—if they deserve the name—and they have now ample funds to carry them on for a short time. The citizens also have been called upon to show their patriotism. By beat of *tom-tom* it has been proclaimed that all surplus grain and other food must be given up, each family only retaining enough for its own consumption. The *bunniahs* and others will be heavy losers by this enactment; but as death is threatened in case of disobedience, there is no option but to obey. They will find Mahomed Jan's short rule far different from ours, under which they amassed rupees by thousands, and fleeced the strangers handsomely. The wholesale looting that has gone on during the last two days has given the enemy vast stores of treasure; and one report states that Yahiya Khan's house, which we only partially cleared out, has proved a mine of wealth to them. The usual result has followed: they have begun to quarrel among

themselves. Every Afghan is not a Ghazi; and to the mind of the village tribesman, far away from his home, it seems folly to risk further fighting, while such plunder has been already obtained. The Ghazis would at all costs try to storm Sherpur, and repeat the victory of 1841–2, but their fanaticism has not extended far, and it will have to rise to fever-heat before it will face an assault. We have not much to fear in that direction; but still with our small stock of ammunition, it would be better, perhaps, if it did not take place. If made at night, our men would probably blaze away 70 or 100 rounds; and if our reinforcements were checked, we might seriously feel the want of ammunition.

To-day the sky has been overcast and the hills obscured with mist, so we have been unable to communicate by heliograph with Luttabund. We believe the garrison there to be quite safe, as news of any attack in that quarter would reach us very soon. Colonel Hudson knows that we are invested, and he will have taken every precaution to ensure his own safety. There seems no disturbance among the Tezin Ghilzais as yet, and the Safis of Tagao have not yet returned to their friends in Cabul. Their losses must have been heavy on the 13th and 14th. The Kohistanis who got away from the cavalry on the 13th did not all escape to their homes. While the fight was going on near Cabul, the 12th Bengal Cavalry at Butkhak were ordered to patrol the plain between that post and the Logar river. Towards evening they came across eight men who were at once made prisoners. They were all armed and well mounted, and, upon being questioned, said they were friends of Wali Mahomed, on their way to Tezin, to bring the Ghilzais down to aid the British. This statement was telegraphed to Sherpur, but Wali Mahomed knew nothing of the men; and as they had the accoutrements of a Guide sowar on one horse, and three new Snider rifles, with 400 rounds of ammunition, they were ordered to be shot. When told they were to die, they half-admitted that they were not friends of Wali Mahomed. Their leader was a young Kohistani, who met his death bravely enough: the second was a petty sirdar, who, in fear and trembling, begged for his life; and the third was a village priest, who tried to induce the Mahomedan sowar told off to execute him to let him go. "You are a Mahomedan," he said,

"and I am one of your holy men. You cannot shoot me! Let me get past the sentry, and I can escape." The sowar's answer was characteristic of our men: "You have been fighting against the *Sircar*, and it is your *kismut* now to be shot. You must fulfil your *kismut*." The *moollah* saw that his prayers were of no avail, and as he was walking out, he added half-apologetically:—"I tried to persuade these others not to fight, but they would come down to Cabul, and they brought me with them." This was admission enough, even if it were not the whole truth. It is the *moollah* usually who persuades the tribes to turn out, not the tribesmen who have to persuade the priest to come with them. The four other prisoners were servants of the three men named: as they were all bearing arms they also were shot.

17th December.

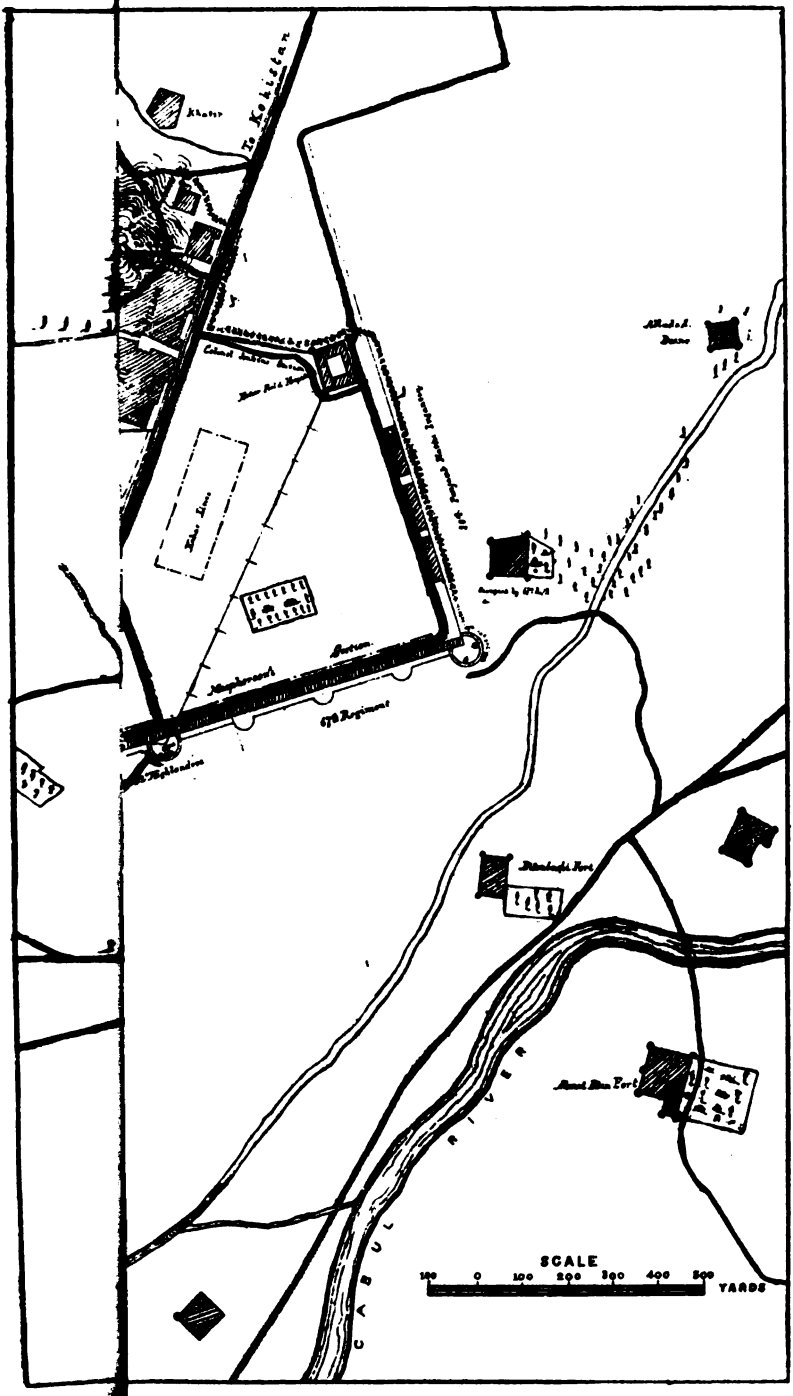
To-day the enemy seem to have awakened to a sense of their responsibility as an investing force. Having made their permanent (?) political arrangements for the good government of Cabul and Afghanistan, they have begun to turn their attention to the stranger within their gates. They fondly imagine that a parade of their strength may overawe us, and strike terror to our souls: quite forgetting that it can only be for a short time that we shall be the attacked, and not the attackers. About ten o'clock this morning they poured out of the eastern and western gates of Cabul, with banners flying and *tom-toms* beating, and drew up in dense masses upon the Siah Sung Heights on the one side and the slopes of the Asmai hill above Deh-i-Afghan on the other. Horsemen were seen galloping about in their midst, and trying to keep them together in military order; but their efforts were, as a rule, of no avail, only the men of the Ardal Pultun marching at all like soldiers. The men in that regiment (Guards) still carry their Sniders, and dress in a soldierlike manner, their cross-belts and pouches giving them the appearance of regular sepoys. At eleven o'clock the Afghans assembled must have numbered fully 20,000, and it was believed that they meditated an attack on the eastern and western walls of Sherpur. The alarm was accordingly sounded in cantonments, all work at the trenches was stopped, the Reserve formed up at its appointed place below the Bemaru gorge,

and every man went to his post. It was a bleak December day; the sun was obscured, a cold wind sweeping down from the Pughman hills, and heavy clouds louring as if threatening snow. Our men in the trenches and on the walls were all clad in their overcoats, and dreary work they found it waiting for an enemy who never came. The hundreds of scaling-ladders we had heard so much about were not visible, and the thousands of men who crowded upon Siah Sung were only valorous enough to wave their knives and scream out curses which never reached our ears. After several hours of this unsatisfactory waiting, the order was given to shell the enemy, most of whom were out of rifle-range. G-3 and two guns of F-A opened upon Siah Sung, and their practice was excellent. G-3 got the range exactly, and two or three shells burst right in the thick of the masses upon the ridge. The effect was instantly seen: "they jist ran like skelpit bairns," as a Highlander remarked. The dead and wounded were dragged away by the heels, and in an hour the heights were clear, except of such small parties as disdained to run away. A few marksmen of the 67th, with their Martinis, knocked over one or two of these at 1,700 yards, and this long range shooting caused the Afghans to disperse, some going to the Bala Hissar, and others running down to the villages below Siah Sung. On our eastern wall the 8-inch howitzer, placed in position on one of the bastions, was fired for the first time, and its huge shells, dropping into and over Deh-i-Afghan, scattered the crowds there assembled. The terrific report of the howitzer, and the bursting of its heavy shells, did much to alarm the enemy, who have hitherto only had 7-pounders and 9-pounders fired against them. There was some difficulty at first in getting the range and fixing fuses in the shells, which are of Afghan make; but our gunners soon overcame this, and the howitzer is now in perfect working order. It will be very useful in shelling such villages near Deh-i-Afghan as may be occupied by sharpshooters.

The only attempt to open fire upon the cantonment walls was made by a small body of the enemy, who took possession of the small walled garden, where the 5th Punjab Cavalry was quartered before the investment. This garden lies to the right of the road leading to the city, and is about 700 yards from the "72nd Gate-

way." It is all that remains of the old "King's Garden" of 1839–42. The walls are about ten feet high, and within them are numerous large trees, up which some of the more daring Afghans climbed. Their best shots aimed at our men lining the walls; but although their bullets struck the parapet from time to time, or dropped far over into the open space where our tents used to stand, no harm was done. Two mountain guns of Swinley's battery were placed in the bastion, fifty yards to the west of the "72nd Gateway," and these shelled the garden, while a few marksmen fired at such Afghans as exposed themselves. In the afternoon two companies of the 5th Punjab Infantry were ordered out to clear the garden. Colonel Brownlow, of the 72nd, who has charge of the wall from the gateway to the south-western bastion, rode out with them. They doubled across the open, covered by the fire from the gate and bastions, and got well round to the westward of the garden. The enemy fired a few shots, and then rushed out at the opposite side, making for Mahomed Sharif's fort on the other side of the road. One was shot and bayoneted; and on our side a sepoy of the 5th was slightly wounded by a bullet in the leg. The garden was thoroughly searched, but none of the enemy could be found, so our men returned to Sherpur, two companies of the 72nd being ready inside to cover their retirement if they had been followed up. Beyond one or two dropping shots, they were allowed to march back unmolested. While this was going on, the Bala Hissar was seen to be crowded with armed men, and word was brought in that the *moollahs* were haranguing them, and urging them to attack in earnest. Their exhortations had some effect, as several thousand men took the road which would have brought them across the Cabul river and well within range of our rifles; but their courage or fanaticism was not equal to the demand made upon it, and they eventually turned off and went into the city. A few are reported to have gone to some villages outside Bemaru and the eastern wall of Sherpur; but whether they will remain there all night is doubtful. There is no organized plan of attack among them; and unless more determination is shown than that displayed to-day, our investment is likely to be of a very mild kind. The numerical strength opposed against us seems also to have decreased, and

our spies report that many villagers have returned home with their dead and wounded, taking also with them such loot as they can carry. The boasted reinforcements to swell their ranks to 100,000 men are not forthcoming; and beyond the annoyance of being confined within cantonments, we do not suffer much from Mahomed Jan's successes. The wells we have sunk since our water-supply was cut off give us good water; and except the cavalry, whose lines are in the open, we are all snug under cover in our barracks, so that stray bullets cannot do us harm. For the better purposes of defence the cantonment has been divided into sections, and each of these is in charge of an officer. From the head-quarters' gate northwards to the end of the wall, and thence along the heights to the Bemaru gorge, Major-General Hills has charge; Brigadier-General Hugh Gough takes from the gorge and along the line of entrenchments to Bemaru village; Colonel Jenkins, of the Guides, has the eastern wall, from Bemaru to the corner bastion looking towards Butkhak; Brigadier-General Macpherson the southern wall, from that bastion to the 72nd Gate; Colonel Brownlow from the gate to the corner bastion on the south-west, facing Deh-i-Afghan; and Colonel Hogg from that bastion to the head-quarters. Major Hanna is Brigadier-General Gough's orderly officer. The Reserve is under Brigadier-General Baker, and at night all the men belonging to it sleep on the hillside below Bemaru gorge. During the day the position of the infantry is as follows:—From the head-quarters' gate to the western foot of the heights, the 5th Punjab Infantry; below the heights to the west of the gorge, the 3rd Sikhs and 5th Ghoorkas; east of the gorge, the wing of the 23rd Pioneers; in Bemaru village, the Guides' Cavalry and Infantry; near the eastern wall, 100 men of the 28th Punjab Infantry and part of the 67th Foot; in the barracks, on the south, the remainder of the 67th, the 92nd, and the 72nd; and in the western wall the Sappers and Miners. Dismounted cavalry are also employed at a few of the bastions and near the gorge. The guns are moved from point to point as their fire is wanted. To-day parties of cavalry were out, reconnoitring towards Kohistan, in the direction of the Surkh Kotal; but beyond seeing a few score men moving about, they reported nothing unusual. They did not come under


To Kohistan
Khatir
Section
Maspherson's
67th Regiment
CABUL RIVER
SCALE
100 0 100 200 300 400 500
YARDS

fire of the enemy. Our cavalry videttes take up a position on two low hills, a mile beyond the north-western bastion, whence they can watch the Aliabad and Nanuchi Kotals leading from Chardeh Valley, and also warn us of the movements of the enemy along the road at the foot of the Asmai hill from Deh-i-Afghan. No large bodies of Afghans could move from this direction without the garrison having timely warning of their approach.

Again to-day we had no heliographic communication with Luttabund, and the position of General Charles Gough's brigade is quite unknown to us. We are calculating that he will be here by the 20th; but this is a sanguine estimate, as the troops on the Khyber side are still weak in their transport arrangements. He may be unable for a few days to concentrate his troops at Jugdulluck preparatory to starting for Cabul; but the exigency is so great, that we may reasonably hope great energy will be shown in pushing on when once a start is made. He is to bring with him the 9th Foot, the 2nd and 4th Ghoorkas, and a mountain battery; and if the baggage is limited to the merest necessaries, the march should be a rapid one. It is a heavy blow to our prestige to be forced into Sherpur after having ruled Cabul for two months; and the sooner the present humiliating state of affairs is changed, the better will it be for our future control of the country. Our men are equal to bearing the exposure of night work well enough under the influence of excitement; but when the reaction comes, there will be a long list of hospital cases, for, even with four blankets and an overcoat, a soldier cannot but feel the effects of sleeping out in the open air. To-day has been the coldest we have yet experienced, and the wind is very trying to the sentries, who have to stand motionless at their posts, watching for the enemy. If snow falls, the discomfort will be increased, and the men in the trenches and bastions will have to bear great hardships.

18th December.

Night attacks, which would cause us much trouble and seriously harass our troops, do not seem to be advisable in the eyes of the Afghans. Not even the Ghazis, who showed such courage on the 14th, can persuade their friends to venture forth at night; and

as the moon nightly gives more and more light, we feel less anxious as we "turn in," fully dressed, at ten o'clock. Not that we relax our vigilance in the least: there is too much at stake for this; but that we sleep sounder, now that for three nights we have been left undisturbed. A sentry occasionally fires a shot; but no sooner does the report ring out, than an officer visits the post and personally sees if there are signs of danger. In the Reserve below the gorge the officers of each regiment watch for an hour in turn; and thus, in addition to the sentries, there are always eyes and ears ready to detect anything unusual. Tents have been pitched for some of the men to sleep in; but the majority roll themselves up in their blankets and waterproof sheets, and rest as cheerfully as if within four walls. The officers on duty on the walls sleep among their men, and are called whenever suspicion is excited by moving objects outside, so that a night surprise is impossible. The officers in charge of sections visit their walls and trenches nightly, to see that all arrangements are properly carried out; and General Roberts and his Staff sometimes make the entire round of cantonments. If an enemy were besieging us in a civilized manner, and pushing forward parallels and entrenchments, we could not be more vigilant; and it is satisfactory in the extreme to see the soldierlike bearing of all the troops engaged in the weary work of keeping watch and ward over nearly five miles of defences. British and native are fully alive to the serious duties they have to fulfil; and down even to the dismounted Lancer, with his carbine ready for use, doing the unwonted task of sentry-go in the trenches, there is not a man who has not accepted cheerfully the hardships imposed upon him.

It was understood that to-day an attack would be made in earnest. The *moollahs* had been at their prayers in the early morning, and had blessed innumerable flimsy standards which were to be planted on our walls when their victorious followers had driven us from our defences. There certainly was more appearance of resolution in the movements of the enemy than has hitherto been the case. The small party in the villages beyond the eastern wall had cleared out during the night, and a demonstration in force was made from the south-western direction. Our

cavalry videttes on Siah Sung and the hills near the north-west bastion gave us warning of the approach of several thousand men, who moved out with their standards from the Jellalabad gate and Deh-i-Afghan, and took up positions in the gardens and enclosures which cover the plain to the north of the city. I have said that good cover for an attacking force still remains in front of the southern wall and the south-west bastions, and this was made use of by Mahomed Jan, to push his men well towards Sherpur. The alarm was sounded in cantonments at eleven o'clock, as on the previous day, and in a quarter of an hour we were ready for the attack. A hot fire was begun from behind walls, watercourses, and towers, upon the soldiers lining the walls of Sherpur, and we answered it with our guns. Shells were dropped into the gardens where the enemy were in most force, six guns of G-3 and F-A being taken out at the north-west corner of the cantonment, and making good practice at 1,500 and 2,000 yards. Orders were given for no small-arm ammunition to be wasted, and small volleys only were fired upon the men fully exposing themselves. A few Ghazis worked from wall to wall, until within 400 yards of the corner bastion nearest Deh-i-Afghan, but they could do nothing beyond planting their standards, for at that distance our marksmen, with their Martinis, could scarcely fail to hit even so small an object as a man's head. Afghans are good skirmishers, and in the art of taking cover they are almost unequalled; but there was an open space between their advanced standards and the walls, which even a Ghazi would not venture to cross. All that we could see were the flashes from their rifles and *jhezails* from loopholes in the enclosures and towers, or from behind trees, ditches, and stones. Our shells were so effective, that two or three bursting in a garden were enough to drive its defenders to seek other protection; and as they passed from wall to wall, they were shot down by our rifle-fire, which never grew wild or irregular. Eight picked men out of the 72nd Highlanders firing a volley at a signal from their officer accounted for six men out of ten who were trying to reach a small isolated tower only 400 yards from the south-west bastion; and their comrades near were so disheartened that they left their standards, and crawled back several hundred yards. Solitary Ghazis, walking in sheer bravado out of cover,

were killed at longer ranges, and all heart seemed to die out of the attacking party, who could make no headway against such a deadly fire. For the greater part of the day the enemy's fire from the villages continued, and bullets came singing over the walls into cantonments, making it dangerous for any one to venture beyond the shelter of the barracks. Spent bullets dropped a few yards over the roofs, and Lieutenant Sunderland, of the 72nd, was struck on the foot and slightly wounded by one of these. A *bhistee* near head-quarters was hit in the chest, and General Vaughan's horse was wounded while standing picqueted near the same spot. Every tree and every yard of wall outside Deh-i-Afghan and Murad Khana, the northern part of Cabul, seemed to hide skirmishers; and the rattle of musketry for several hours told of the continuous fire they were keeping up. Not a man on Sherpur walls was hit, though narrow escapes were numerous. General Roberts, with several members of his Staff, was watching the movements of the enemy from the roof of the head-quarters' gate when a bullet passed just over the parapet and struck the wall behind. The heliograph instrument on the same roof was also hit. The Union Jack was flying just below, and it was believed that this was taken as a target, as the shooting was so accurate. A score of Mahomed Jan's nondescript cavalry galloped along the road below the Asmai hill, as if to cut off our videttes, but a few shells checked them; while a small body of infantry, which tried to work round in the same direction, were kept back by a few shots from the sowars' carbines, aided by a cross fire from twelve picked shots of the 5th Punjab Infantry, snugly ensconced in the fields, behind a little *sungar* 600 yards from the guns. These twelve men—six Afridis and six Dogras—also prevented any stragglers from firing at the guns; and the coolness with which they kept their post and fired upon 200 or 300 Afghans who tried to dislodge them was admirable. In the afternoon the 67th Foot moved out along the fields in front of the southern walls, and skirmished along the enemy's right flank, so as to draw their fire, and make them show their real strength. They were also to examine the ground, and see if it were possible for cavalry to work across. They lined such walls as gave cover and drew a smart fire upon themselves, which they returned rather too freely

considering that ammunition is so valuable. There was not time for them to clear the gardens and forts, so at sunset they returned to their quarters, their withdrawal being the signal for the enemy to follow their old tactics of creeping forward again to the positions they had evacuated. The fire from the bastions was again effective in covering the retirement, and the regiment reached cantonments without any casualties. The King's Garden had been occupied since the morning by two companies of the 5th Punjab Infantry, Colonel Williams (commanding 5th Punjab Cavalry) having reported that it was easily defensible by infantry. The Punjabees were withdrawn at the same time as the 67th retired; two companies of the 3rd Sikhs, who had gone out to strengthen the right flank of the 67th, keeping the enemy back while the garden was evacuated. No sooner had the sepoys withdrawn than the garden was filled with Afghans, who fired the quarters of the sowars, and amused themselves by shrieking and howling about the place, as if they had gained a great success. The 5th Punjab Cavalry have had all their trouble for nothing: they had made themselves comfortable for the winter, and had got in *bhoosa* and firewood; and this is now either burnt or carried away. In a village near Mahomed Sharif's Fort are large stores of forage, and this, also, will probably be looted.

To-day the sun shone out for a short time, and we were able to heliograph to Luttabund, although the mist over the hills beyond Butkhak was very dense. A message was received from Colonel Hudson, commanding at Luttabund, reporting all well; he had not been attacked; Gough's brigade had not been seen, and it was supposed he was still at Jugdulluck. General Roberts signalled back, ordering the brigade to advance instantly, even if they had to leave their tents behind for want of transport; but whether the signallers at Luttabund could read our message, is not certain, as no answering flashes came back, heavy clouds obscuring the sun over the distant *kotal*. It was signalled twice, so that it might be understood, and we have but little doubt that it was "read" correctly. It is now plain that our reinforcements will not be here by the 20th, and we must wait patiently for another five or six days.

Snow began to fall at seven o'clock this evening, and it is still

steadily snowing now (midnight). At ten o'clock I visited the bastions held by the 72nd Highlanders, and gained some idea of the work our men are called upon to do. The sentries in their greatcoats were simply white figures standing rigidly up like ghosts, the snow-flakes softly covering them from head to foot, and freezing as they fell. Men on guard in the bastions were walking briskly to and fro in their limited space to keep themselves warm, and at their feet were their sleeping comrades, covered with their waterproof sheets. A cold wind had been blowing in the early part of the evening, and this had driven the flakes into every crevice, and had caused several inches of snow to drift about the feet of the sentries in the parapet. In the ditch below our horses were tethered, and our syces and followers sleeping, the snow covering all alike, and whitening the ground as far as the eye could reach. Inside cantonments was one wide sheet of snowy brightness, the Bemaru Heights rising up in the background and looming through the snowflakes like a snowy barrier blocking us from the outer world. It was bitterly cold on these heights, over which a cold wind nearly always blows; and we knew that, hidden from our view, were 2,000 or 3,000 men sleeping at their posts, with snow about them, every man ready to answer the first call of his officer, stalking about among the sentries. Picquet duty under such conditions is a real hardship; but with Balaclava caps and warm gloves frost-bite is guarded against, and with the early morning comes hot soup and cocoa, which cheers the men, and gives them heart to face the cold. By order of the General, the Commissariat serve out, night and morning, tinned soups and cocoa to all European soldiers; and it is fortunate that a large supply of these stimulants—for such, indeed, they are in a climate like this—reached us a few weeks ago. The small tins are easily carried by the men, and all that is wanted is a cup of hot water to give a "drink" with which rum cannot hope to compete. The sepoys and sowars of the native regiments are not forgotten, additional comforts being served out to them; and they are cheery as their English comrades, though the snow is far more trying to men from a tropical climate.

Our wounded generally are doing well, though one trooper of the 9th Lancers, who was injured by his horse being killed in a

charge, has died. Colonel Cleland, the Colonel of the same regiment, who was wounded in the disastrous affair of the 11th, is pronounced out of danger; while Lieutenant Egerton, shot through the neck on the 14th, is walking about again, though still on the sick list. I am sorry to say that Major Cook, V.C., 5th Ghoorkas, is dying, mortification having set in from the wound he received below the knee on the Bala Hissar Heights. His brother, Lieutenant Cook, of the 3rd Sikhs, who was wounded in Chardeh, is rapidly recovering.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Siege of Sherpur continued—General Baker's Attack upon Kila Mir Akhor—Destruction of the Fort—Telegraphic and Heliographic Arrangements in Sherpur—News from Luttabund—Despatch of a Convoy to Colonel Hudson—Movements of the Enemy at the Butkhak Road—Want of Military Knowledge among the Afghans—Dissensions in their Ranks—Mahomed Jan offers Terms—Heavy Guns got into Position in Sherpur—Bombardment of Kila Mahomed Sharif—Failure to dislodge the Enemy—Arrival of General Charles Gough's Brigade at Sei Baba—Night March of the 12th Bengal Cavalry to Luttabund—Occupation of Villages East of Sherpur by the Enemy—Trustworthy News of a contemplated Attack—The Preparations to resist an Assault—The Attack of December 23rd—Repulse of the First Attack on the Eastern Trenches—The Attack renewed—Dispersion of the Enemy—Cavalry Pursuit—Deaths of Captain Dundas, V.C., and Lieutenant Nugent, R.E.—General Charles Gough at the Logar Bridge—Return of Casualties.

SHERPUR, *19th December.*

THE enemy during the night occupied two strong forts a few hundred yards beyond the eastern wall, and were in such numbers that their fire annoyed us in that direction. Near the 28th N.I. lines is a high walled enclosure, in which sick and wounded sepoys are placed; and in front of this again, outside the lines, is a small fort in which fifty men, of the 67th Foot, under Captain Smith, had been stationed during the night as an advanced post. The fort nearest to them in possession of the enemy is known as Kila Mir Akhor, named after the Afghan Master of the Horse, and to-day General Baker was ordered to destroy this. He took with him 400 of the 67th, under Major Kingsley, 400 of the 3rd Sikhs

under Colonel Money, the 5th Punjab Cavalry, two mountain guns of Swinley's Battery, and a party of Sappers and Miners. These moved out about eight o'clock; but the morning was so misty after last night's fall of snow, that nothing could be seen twenty yards away. A wall of mist shut out the view on every side, and it was difficult to feel the enemy and to test their strength. Just as the guns were being got into action, a terrific fire from the two forts held by the Afghans was opened upon General Baker, and several men fell wounded. Lieutenant Montenaro, of the Mountain Battery, was laying a gun when a bullet struck him in the chest and lodged in the spine, inflicting a mortal wound. General Baker moved back the 67th in rear of the fort occupied by Captain Smith, to act as a reserve, and extended the 3rd Sikhs in skirmishing order through the orchards to open fire upon Kila Mir Akhor. The guns tried to get round on the left, but found no position to suit them in the orchards, and it was then reported that the fort was commanded from the south-eastern bastion. They were moved into this bastion, and, aided by two guns of F-A, shelled the place for some time. Covered by this fire, the 67th advanced to see if the fort were still held, as the fire from it had slackened. As they were not fired upon, the Sappers, under Lieutenants Nugent and Murdoch, pushed on with powder bags and got within the walls, which were surrounded by Major Kingsley and his men. The towers were mined and blown up, and the buildings set on fire. The enemy still held the further fort, which was of great strength, with walls 30 feet high, and beyond some skirmishers of the 67th checking the fire from its towers, it was left untouched. The enemy were crowded within it, and were reinforced by men from the Siah Sung Heights. Our cavalry and a company of the 67th kept a sharp look-out on General Baker's left flank in the Kohistan direction, while the towers and bastions were being blown up, and Kila Mir Akhor having been destroyed, the force returned to cantonments. This kind of work is full of danger, as the Afghans make good shooting from loop-holes and behind orchard walls; and in this skirmish we had six of the 67th and six of the 3rd Sikhs wounded, besides Lieutenant Montenaro fatally hit.

There was again to-day constant firing at the walls by detached

parties of the enemy, and several casualties occurred—horses, ponies, and camp-followers being hit. Our men do not answer the fire, except when certain of their aim, as one rifle discharged from the walls is the signal for twenty answering shots. The bullets go wide of their mark and drop into cantonments, doing, as I have said, some damage. A trooper of the 9th Lancers, while in the open, was badly hit in the chest; and one of the 3rd Sikhs, while on the Bemaru Heights, was also struck. The bullet was from a Snider rifle, and must have travelled 1,500 or 1,700 yards. The Ardal Pultun was running short of Snider ammunition, and the irregulars with them are equally short of lead. Slugs made of telegraph wire, revolver bullets, and, in some cases, even cartridges have been picked up within the walls. They were probably fired from Enfields, smooth-bores, or *jhezails*. They would make an ugly wound at short ranges, but they are mostly spent by the time they reach us.

Though we are cut off entirely from the outer world, our internal means of communication are perfect. The heliograph works from the head-quarters' gateway to the eastern end of Bemaru, and telegraph offices have been opened about cantonments by Mr. Luke and Mr. Kirk in charge of the line. There is plenty of wire left even after so many hundreds yards have been used for entanglements, and branch lines have been laid from the chief office to the more distant quarters. General Roberts is thus kept informed of all that is going on, and much orderly work is saved by these means. Orders can be transmitted to General Macpherson and Colonel Jenkins in a few seconds, and troops warned for duty without the least delay. At night, lamps are used for heliographic signalling from the gateways and the heights whereon there are no telegraph offices; and though the light draws fire occasionally, the signallers have not yet been hit. Such of the cavalry as were picqueted in the open have been moved nearer to the line of barracks, so as to be out of fire, and there is now an open *maidan* where, a month ago, our tents covered the ground. The ordnance stores have also been moved to a safer spot than that formerly occupied, in rear of General Baker's garden, and the office tents and post-office near head-quarters have been repitched on safer ground. There have been so many bullets singing about that

away from the shelter of the walls there was positive danger in walking from point to point. On the northern line, the Bemaru Heights, no shots have been fired, as the enemy cannot get within range without laying themselves open to being cut off in the plain beyond by our cavalry.

We have heard from Luttabund to-day that none of the special messengers, conveying letters and telegrams, has reached there since the 15th. We are afraid after this to entrust important letters to the messengers, who may have taken them to the enemy, or been captured on the road to Luttabund. Beyond keeping a diary of events, such as I am now writing, nothing can be done; and it is hardly likely that beyond the mere fact of being invested and of stray shooting at the walls there will be anything left to chronicle for a few days.

Major Cook, V.C., as good a soldier as ever served, and a universal favourite in the force, died this evening. Lieutenant Montenaro still lives, but paralysis has declared itself, and his death must be a matter of a few hours. Our loss of officers is painfully great, and the total casualties of all ranks since December 10th must now be nearly 300. The 9th Lancers have been the worst sufferers: they have lost three officers killed and four wounded, and twenty-one men killed and seventeen wounded, or forty-eight casualties in their ranks. The 5th Punjab Cavalry is the only regiment whose officers have escaped scot-free during the five days' fighting, from the 10th to the 14th.

20th December.

Waiting for the attack has grown so terribly monotonous, that we daily curse the tactics pursued by Mahomed Jan, who only sends out 200 or 300 sharp-shooters to blaze away their ammunition at our sentries. It has become so apparent that no real assault is likely soon to take place, that we are half-inclined to go out and deal with the enemy. But, fortunately for them, they are in Cabul, and street fighting with our small force would be almost a useless sacrifice of life. We could burn the city down certainly; but there are political considerations which tie our hands, as to destroy Cabul means much more than burning so many

thousand houses. We have still no news of General Gough's brigade, although the 20th has come and gone, and now even the most sanguine among us do not expect the investment to be at an end till Christmas Day. Our little garrison at Luttabund has had a small fight of its own, but has come well out of the scrimmage, having killed fifty of the assailants. Mahomed Jan is afraid to split up his force, or he would before this have detached 5,000 or 6,000 men to hold Butkhak, and advance thence to carry the Luttabund Kotal. It is the presence of our troops at Luttabund and Jugdulluck which has no doubt kept the Tezin Ghilzais in check; and as Asmatullah Khan seems to be quietly waiting in the Lughman Valley for further news of Afghan successes, the march of our reinforcements should be made without a shot being fired—at least as far as Luttabund. A small convoy of *yaboos*, in charge of their Hazara drivers, carrying food to Colonel Hudson, was sent from Sherpur last night, and reached Luttabund safely. Another will be sent to night; but as parties of the enemy have been seen taking the road to Butkhak, it is not unlikely that it will be intercepted. The Hazaras are very plucky; they go out willingly for a small reward, and we are now using a few of them to carry letters and despatches. They pass out of the north-west corner, make for the border of the lake, and thence work along the northern edge of the plain between Sherpur and Butkhak, avoiding the latter place as much as possible. We are anxious as to the safety of the bridge over the Logar river, halfway to Butkhak. It is believed at present to be intact; and unless it is very thoroughly blown up, its strong masonry piers and arches can be easily repaired. Luckily, we are not fighting an enemy with many resources. There is no one from Mahomed Jan downwards who understands, in the first place, how to make an investment really worthy of the name. To deal with walls such as we have to defend, the only mode to harass the garrison successfully is to concentrate an enfilading fire so as to sweep the parapet. We have not had time to make traverses of sand-bags on the bastions or walls; and our men would suffer greatly if the bullets, instead of passing harmlessly over the parapet at right-angles, were directed so as to rake it from gate to gate. If the enemy threw up earthworks during the night at some distance from the corner

bastions, and fired in a line parallel to the ditch, they could not fail to do some mischief. As it is, not a man on the walls has yet been wounded, and our answering volleys, when fired, have always been effective. Four men out in the open were shot down by one volley from the marksmen at the south-west bastion, the range being 450 yards. A Martini rifle, resting in a neatly-cut channel on the parapet, is, in the hands of cool, collected soldiers, a most deadly weapon at these short ranges; and as no one is allowed to fire without an officer's permission, the shooting is nearly always good. One of the many rumours from the city was that powder-bags were to be brought to blow in the gates. In only one case, at head-quarters, has an attempt been made by us to permanently close the gateways. There is a strong guard at each, and the open space is usually blockaded with Afghan ammunition waggons, strong *abattis* outside being so arranged as to check a rush. On either side of the waggons, which can be easily drawn away when troops are sent out, are low walls built up of flour-bags, from behind which ten or twelve men can command the entrance if it comes to close fighting. At the head-quarters' gate strong doors have been placed on hinges let into the wooden supports to the mud wall on either side, and gun carriages are closely jammed against these. Twelve picked men are on duty day and night on the wall commanding the entrance, and their orders are to reserve their fire until the enemy with their powder-bags are within twenty yards of the gateway. A strong wooden platform, with a parapet of sand-bags, stretches from wall to wall six feet above the gun-carriages, and this post is entrusted to the care of the thirty Ghoorkas who came up with Sir Michael Kennedy as escort. Even if the door were blown in, the ghazis at the head of a storming party would have to face a heavy fire from above, which they could not return while clambering over the barricade. This gateway would probably be the one first assailed, as the Afghans know quite well that General Roberts and his Staff have their quarters within it.

Some of our spies state that the men now holding Cabul have seriously contemplated an assault; but that their ranks are split up by quarrels as to the right of tribal sections to appoint a new Amir. Old Mushk-i-Alam still continues to prophesy that a repetition of

the victory of 1841-42 is sure to come to pass; and, as a first step towards this, Mahomed Jan has had the coolness to "open negotiations." One would be inclined to look upon his self-assurance as ludicrous, were it not that he has the gratification of seeing us shut up in Sherpur, as if at his mercy. The propositions offered are of such a "mixed" order that they seem, at first sight, scarcely serious. One is that we should at once retire to India, after having entered into an agreement to send Yakub Khan back to Cabul in the state befitting an Amir; and we are to leave two British officers of distinction as hostages for the faithful carrying out of our contract. Another is made on behalf of the Kohistanis, who offer to accept Wali Mahomed as Amir, if we will march away without concerning ourselves further with Afghan matters. The leaders, who have been bold enough to make these proposals, think, perhaps, that we are as weak as our unfortunate army thirty-eight years ago, and that by frightening us into concessions they will be able to cut us up in detail as we toil back to Peshawur. As all the advantages of arms, equipment, and ample supplies are now on our side, we only laugh at the terms so considerately offered. "We have a lakh of men: they are like dogs eager to rush on their prey! We cannot much longer control them!" is said to have been one of the messages sent to shake our faith in our own strength; but such absurd vapouring is taken at its real value, and contemptuously passed over. Yet a few days, and we shall have 6,000 men hammering at the gates of Cabul; and unless our soldiers belie themselves, there will be a great revenge taken for the humiliation our army has had to endure. The idea of creating a new Amir has turned the heads of our foes to an extent that is absurd when it is remembered that they are merely in Cabul on sufferance for a few days until our reinforcements come up. The Kohistanis, who have nominated Wali Mahomed, are at loggerheads with the Ghilzais from Logar and Wardak, who wish to put Yakub Khan's son, young Musa Jan, on the throne. They are politicians enough to know that Yakub himself will never be sent back as ruler of Afghanistan, and nothing would suit them better than to have an infant as Amir, and their own chiefs as a Council of Regency. Such a government would be on lines which would give full scope to ambitious men, and the

country would be plundered for the benefit of the Ghilzais and their friends. In this wrangling about the Amirship, the more warlike work, ready at hand, is forgotten, though the more fanatical have held councils of war and told off leaders to various sections which are to assault Sherpur at a given signal. There is, however, but little attention paid by the rank and file to the commands of their leaders; and though when a ghazi rushes upon his death, a handful of desperate men will follow him, the great majority hang back when they see the task before them.

The firing into cantonments to-day was of the usual desultory kind, and our mountain guns pitched a few shells into such gardens as contained fairly large bodies of men. Two Highlanders were wounded while on picquet duty at the line of entrenchment from the commissariat godowns to the Bemaru gorge. Kila Mahomed Sharif, so well known during the disastrous winter of 1841, still stands near the site of our old cantonments between Sherpur and the Cabul river, overlooking the road from the Bala Hissar. From this fort, which is only 700 yards from the 72nd Gateway, men fired at the southern wall all day, while others could be seen, with rifles slung across their backs, superintending the carrying away of the *bhoosa* stored by the 5th Punjab Cavalry in a village near for winter consumption. Hazara coolies were made to do this work, and also to dismantle the cavalry quarters in the "King's Garden," which, as before stated, we have abandoned. This morning three 18-pounders and an 8-inch howitzer, part of the siege train given to Shere Ali by the Indian Government, were got into position on the bastions east and west of the 72nd Gateway, and to-morrow these will open upon Kila Mahomed Sharif and the villages in rear. We want 40-pounders at least to batter down the thick walls of the fort; but still the heavy guns now ready to be fired will probably have a good effect upon the enemy. Round shot will be used for these 18-pounders, and bits of iron, bullets, &c., have been sewn up in canvas to serve as canister if the enemy make any demonstration in force. There was no difficulty in getting the guns and howitzer up the bastions, twenty or thirty men at the drag-ropes moving them easily into position. It is strange that guns which were given to Shere Ali as a reward for his fidelity to the British should now be

turned against the Afghans, who have shown themselves unable to appreciate the value of an alliance with India. Now that the siege train has returned to our possession we shall, perhaps, be less confiding in handing over munitions of war to a nation which has treated us so treacherously.

Beyond throwing out our usual cavalry videttes, we have done nothing to-day to show the enemy we are on the alert. The cavalry have been terribly hard worked since the 10th, and horses and men have suffered in consequence. At one period the saddles were never taken off the horses of the 5th Punjab Cavalry for sixty hours, and the other regiments have been nearly in the same condition. Lieutenant Montenaro died this evening from the effect of the wound received yesterday. This makes the tenth officer we have lost in as many days, and there are still eleven others under treatment for wounds.

21st December.

The three 18-pounders and the howitzer opened fire about ten o'clock this morning upon Kila Mahomed Sharif, and fired round-shot and shell at its walls and the village in rear, where the enemy mustered in strength. The bombardment was so far successful that the fire from the fort at our walls ceased; but the thick walls were too strong to be battered down by anything under a 40-pounder; unless, indeed, our guns had been kept playing upon it for two or three days. After three or four hours' incessant firing, a party of the 5th Punjabees went out, accompanied by Major Hanna, of the Quartermaster-General's Department, to examine the place, and see if the enemy had really withdrawn. It was soon found that they were only hiding themselves from the shot and shell; and when the Punjabees got in the open, the Afghans rushed back to their positions and re-opened fire. They used the holes made in the walls by the round-shot as loop-holes, and it must be confessed they were admirably adapted for the purpose. All day long bullets have been dropping over the walls, and five soldiers and several camp-followers have been wounded. The tactics of the enemy are annoying, as they withdraw at the first sign of our men moving out, and return again as soon as we retire. Two or three of their marksmen are daily posted to the same

points, and blaze away steadily at any one incautiously peeping over the parapet. Our men quietly sit down inside, smoke their pipes, and laugh at the bullets. A few watch the movements of the sharp-shooters; and as soon as they show in the open, a volley from four or five Martinis is fired, generally killing one or two men. One of the Afghan modes of skirmishing is for a few men to get in rear of a wall, cut holes through the bottom a few inches above the ground, dig another grave-like hole in which to lie down flat, and then to fire their pieces from their loop-hole. The effect is very singular: the flashes seem to leap out of the ground itself, and when a score of men are firing, the bottom of the wall bristles with flame. This manner of firing gives greater steadiness of aim, and is far safer than resting the rifle on the wall-top, or thrusting it through a slit cut half-way up. This afternoon the enemy showed in large numbers in the orchards about Deh-i-Afghan, and were plainly trying to skirmish round towards the north-west gap between the walls and the Bemaru Heights. General Hills commanding at that corner sent out a party of the 5th Punjab Infantry and 3rd Sikhs to occupy some low hills half a mile from the north-west bastion; and these were enough to intimidate the enemy, although we never fired a shot from our rifles. The guns shelled the orchards, and, at dusk, the usual retirement of the Afghans to the city followed. The Sikhs and the Punjabees were then withdrawn to their lines, and all made snug for the night. We have materially lessened the number of men on the walls and bastions to-day, as the duties are so severe, but everything is held in readiness to repulse an assault at a few minutes' notice. As the Martini ammunition is rather short, Sniders are served out to the Europeans behind the parapets at night. We have plenty of Snider cartridges, as a large quantity was captured in the Bala Hissar.

To-day heliograms were exchanged with Luttabund, and news was received from General Hugh Gough, who is at Sei Baba with 1,400 men and four mountain guns. He will reach here on the 24th at the latest, and then we shall be able to turn the tables on Mahomed Jan and his 30,000 or 40,000 men. Our second convoy of *yaboos* to Luttabund was cut off, only four ponies out of fifty reaching Colonel Hudson safely. The villagers

en route are believed to have killed the Hazara men in charge. The 12th Bengal Cavalry start to-night for Butkhak, whence they will join General Gough's force. This is the first sign of the approaching termination of the siege.

The Lieutenant-General commanding has published the following Divisional Order, expressing regret at the death of Major Cook, V.C., 5th Ghoorkas:—"It is with deep regret the Lieutenant-General announces to the Cabul Field Force the death, from a wound received on the 12th of December, of Major John Cook, V.C., 5th Ghoorkas. While yet a young officer, Major Cook served at Umbeyla in 1863, where he distinguished himself; and in the Black Mountain campaign in 1868. Joining the Kurram Field Force on its formation, Major Cook was present at the capture of the Peiwar Kotal: his conduct on that occasion earning for him the admiration of the whole force, and the Victoria Cross. In the return in the Monghyr Pass, he again brought himself prominently to notice by his cool and gallant bearing. In the capture of the heights at Sang-i-Nawishta, Major Cook again distinguished himself; and in the attack on the Takht-i-Shah Peak, on the 12th December, he ended a noble career in a manner worthy even of his great name for bravery. By Major Cook's death Her Majesty has lost the services of an officer who would, had he been spared, have risen to the highest honours of his profession, and Sir F. Roberts feels sure the whole Cabul Field Force will share in the pain his loss has occasioned him."

22nd December.

We have been left almost undisturbed to-day, and it has been hard to believe we are really in a state of siege. Scarcely a shot was fired at the walls until the evening; but our spies bring in news that Mahomed Jan is reserving his strength for an attack, which shall be final. He has heard, no doubt, of General Gough's approach, and is wise enough to know that his opportunity is fast slipping away. The advance-guard of our reinforcements is now at Luttabund; and the fact of the 12th Bengal Cavalry going out from Sherpur last night must have shown him that we are once more equal to sending troops down our old line of communi-

cation. The 12th Bengal Cavalry had a fearful journey outwards. On passing Kila Mahomed Sharif, on their way to the Cabul bridge, they were fired upon by a picquet, and, the alarm being given, the enemy turned out and blocked the way. The cavalry turned off from the road, and struck the river lower down. The water was not very deep, but the banks were steep and slippery, and men and horses fell backwards as they tried to climb up the further bank. It cost two hours to ford the river, the last squadron having to dismount in the stream, crawl up the bank, and drag their horses after them. The sowars were wet through, and two or three horses were drowned. Once over, the road to Butkhak was taken, and from every village on the road turned out a few men, who fired upon the horsemen. They, perhaps, mistook them for another convoy of *yaboos*. The dismounted men had to be left to return to Sherpur, under cover of the darkness. Upon nearing Butkhak, a patrol was sent out; and as it was then near daybreak, they could see men moving about the village. The place was occupied by several hundred Afghans, who opened fire upon the cavalry. The latter could not stay to fight; and Major Green, in command, knowing how impossible it was to return to cantonments, resolved to push on to Luttabund. One sowar was shot dead and three others wounded; and the enemy followed so closely that a squadron was dismounted and ordered to skirmish out with their carbines. This gave time for all stragglers to be got together again, and in a short time the skirmishers were recalled and the whole regiment trotted off to Luttabund. Twelve men were missing, but ten have since reported themselves at Sherpur. They disguised themselves by altering their uniform, and then hid away in nullahs until evening, when they crept out and made a wide *détour* to the north until they reached the open plain between the Wazirabad Lake and the Bemaru Hills. Their horses and accoutrements were lost. The enemy have occupied the village of Khoja Durwesh, about three miles to the east of Sherpur, and are reported to be collecting in force in the forts between Bemaru and this village. They are probably Kohistanis, who have taken the precaution of securing their line of retreat in case of defeat.

Sunjub, a trustworthy retainer of Ibrahim Khan, a ressaldar

of native cavalry in our service, has come in from Cabul and reported that Mahomed Jan and the other chiefs have at last made up their minds to assault Sherpur. The fighting men in Cabul have been told off to various sections of attack, and the signal for the assault is to be the kindling of a beacon fire of damp gunpowder, oil, &c., on the Asmai hill. Forty-five scaling-ladders have been given to 2,000 men stationed in the King's Garden, and Kila Mahomed Sharif, and a demonstration with these is to be made against the southern wall near its western end. This is to be a false attack. The real assault is to be delivered upon the Bemaru village and the eastern trenches; but in case of this assault succeeding, an attempt, in earnest, is to be made to scale the wall near the 72nd Gateway. We have made our dispositions accordingly, and the Reserve will assemble below the Bemaru gorge, at four o'clock to-morrow morning. The Asmai hill will be watched by many eyes, and when the beacon light is seen we shall all be ready at our posts. A message has been sent to General Charles Gough, ordering him to march to Sherpur to-morrow instead of halting at Butkhak.

23rd December.

After eight days' investment Mahomed Jan has at last made his attack upon Sherpur, and has been beaten off with ridiculous ease, though nearly 20,000 men must have been sent to take part in the assault. Our casualties have been very small, and but for an unfortunate accident, by which two engineer officers were killed by the premature explosion of a mine, the day has been one of perfect success. The tribal combination may be looked upon as broken up, for Kohistanis, Logaris, and Wardaks are reported on their way, in haste, homewards, and our reinforcements are encamped within five miles of Sherpur. The news brought in last evening turned out correct to the letter. From four o'clock this morning nearly all eyes were turned upon the Asmai Peak, and even before the signal light appeared, sharp firing was heard near the King's Garden and the Fort of Mahomed Sharif. Our sentries on the walls in that direction had been strengthened, but they did not answer the fire, as it was desirable to get the enemy well within range by encouraging them in the belief that we were not

on the alert. Our men fell silently into their places; two mountain guns had been placed below the block-house on the eastern end of the Bemaru Heights, the reserves were standing to their arms, and the officers in charge of the sections of defence were all at their posts. At half-past five there was seen on the Asmai Height a little flash of fire, which in a moment grew to a bright glare, and streamed up into the air until it must have been seen by all the country round. For a few moments it burned brightly, as if fed with oil or inflammable matter, and then died away. As it flashed out, a continuous fire was opened below the bastions on either side of the 72nd Gateway, the flashes from the rifles and matchlocks showing that a large body of men had crept up within 200 yards. The bullets whistled harmlessly over the walls and barracks, our men still remaining quiet; as, in the semi-darkness and with the mist still hanging over the fields, nothing could be seen distinctly 100 yards away. We were waiting for the development of the real attack, and shortly before six o'clock it came. From beyond Bemaru and the eastern trenches and walls came a roar of voices so loud and menacing that it seemed as if an army 50,000 strong were charging down upon our thin line of men. Led by their ghazis, the main body of Afghans hidden in the villages and orchards on the eastern side of Sherpur, had rushed out in one dense mob and filled the air with their cry of "*Allah-il-Allah!*" The roar surged forward as their line advanced, but it was answered by such a roll of musketry that it was drowned for an instant, and then merged into the general din, which told us that our men with Martinis and Sniders were holding their own against the attacking force. For ten minutes the roar was continuous, and then the musketry fire dwindled down to occasional volleys and scattered shots from the south-eastern bastion to the Bemaru Heights, where the mountain guns were waiting for daylight before opening fire. The eastern defences were in charge of Brigadier-General Hugh Gough at the eastern end of the heights, and Colonel Jenkins of the Guides from the trenches on the slopes of the hill to the corner bastion facing Siah Sung. The troops defending the position were the Guides' Infantry in the trenches about Bemaru, 100 men of the 28th P.I. in the native hospital, and 67th Foot. The latter were reinforced by two

companies of the 92nd Highlanders from the Reserve. When the attack was made, it was still so dark and misty that little could be seen in front of the trenches, and the orders were to reserve fire until the advancing masses of Afghans could be clearly made out. Then the men of the 28th were the first to open fire, and they fired volley after volley at such long ranges that they effectually scared away even the ghazis from their neighbourhood. That the fire was not otherwise effective was proved by only one dead body being found afterwards in front of their lines. General Hugh Gough from the hillside, hearing such a tremendous fusillade below, fired star-shells, which burst in the air and showed the attacking force in the fields and orchards nearly 1,000 yards away. The Afghans opened fire in turn, but their shooting was wild and ineffective, though the bullets dropped dangerously about cantonments. The native hospital seemed the point towards which the enemy worked, taking it perhaps as a landmark to guide them; but their right flank was directed towards Bemaru and the trenches on the slopes of the hill. The Guides joined in the fusillade, and the attack was broken while yet the advanced ghazis were 500 or 600 yards away. Sniders at that distance told with precision, and to make headway against them was impossible. The bullets searched every yard of open ground, and made even the orchards almost untenable. To the right of the sepoys of the 28th were the 67th and the 92nd Highlanders, waiting with characteristic discipline the order to fire. Through the mist at last appeared a dense mass of men waving swords and knives, shouting their war-cry, and firing incessantly as they advanced. The order came at last for our soldiers to open fire, and the Afghans were then so close that the volleys told with murderous effect. Some of the ghazis were shot within 80 yards of our rifles, so patiently was the attack awaited; while thirty bodies were counted afterwards well within 200 yards' range. The attack collapsed as suddenly as it had begun, the Afghans saw what execution men in trenches and behind parapets can do with breech-loaders in their hands, and they took cover behind walls and trees, from whence they expended thousands of cartridges, doing us but little damage. Our ammunition was too precious to be needlessly wasted, and only when clusters of men got within range were volleys fired to scatter them.

As day broke the two mountain guns, with an 18-pounder and two of F-A Battery in the corner bastion, shelled the villages and orchards, and it was believed that the ghazis were too disheartened to try a second assault. About eleven o'clock, however, after five hours' skirmishing, they succeeded in getting a few thousand of their more desperate followers together, and tried again to assault our lines. They were driven back more quickly than on the first occasion; and could, indeed, scarcely be said to have advanced 100 yards in their rude formation of attack. Shortly after this they began to waver and to slacken their fire, and when their scouts reported, as no doubt was the case, that a new force was crossing the Logar river, they became a demoralised mob bent upon seeking safety at the earliest opportunity.

General Charles Gough had left Luttabund in the early morning, and upon arriving at Butkhak had been able to communicate by heliograph with General Roberts. The heliograph flashing away to the east in the Cabul plain must have warned Mahomed Jan of the near approach of our reinforcements, and the clouds of dust rising between Butkhak and the Logar river showed him that troops were moving onwards, and would perhaps take him in rear. In any case the villages east of Sherpur were, in two or three hours, nearly empty of men; the plain beyond was covered with Afghans streaming towards Siah Sung and Cabul. The Kohistani section, to the number of fully 5,000, went away to the north, homewards, taking their women, whom they had brought down, to witness their triumph, with them. It was now our turn to attack instead of being attacked. The guns shelled the fields wherever parties of men were within range; two guns of F-A and an 18-pounder making grand practice at so close a range as 300 yards; and the cavalry were sent out by way of the Bemaru gorge to cut up the fugitives. First of all went the 5th P.C. with four guns of G-3, R.A., which shelled the villages near Bemaru. By one o'clock the enemy were completely broken. The 5th P.C. were fortunate to get among a detached body on the north side of the lake. When their first charge was over, thirty Afghans were lying dead on the plain. The 9th Lancers joined them, and soon our horsemen were charging over the Siah Sung slopes. The main body of the enemy had got well away to the city, but all stragglers

were hunted down in the nullahs in which they took shelter, and then despatched. Two or three lancers or sowars were told off to each straggler, and the men, dismounting, used their carbines when the unlucky Afghan had been hemmed in. Following in the wake of the 9th Lancers and the 5th Punjab Cavalry came the Sappers, with every engineer officer in camp, their orders being to blow up and burn all the villages and forts lately occupied by the enemy. The cavalry had cleared the fields and open ground of all Afghans, but in the villages some fanatics remained, and these, fastening themselves up securely in houses or towers, were blown up by the mines laid by the engineers. Lieutenant Murdoch had a very narrow escape. Entering a fortified village he kicked open the door of a house, and was greeted with a volley from three or four men inside. He was wounded in the neck, but not dangerously, and as the Afghans refused to surrender, the blasting charge was laid near the house, and they were killed when the mine was fired. A sad accident occurred in another fort. Captain Dundas, V.C., and Lieutenant Nugent, Royal Engineers, had constructed three mines which were to destroy the walls and towers; and all being ready they went back to light the fuses. The sappers were drawn up outside under their European non-commissioned officer, and noticed that two of the mines exploded almost instantly. Their officers were still within the walls, and when the dust and smoke cleared away, they were still missing. Search was made, and the bodies of Captain Dundas and Lieutenant Nugent were found lying under the *débris*. Both officers were dead. It is conjectured that the time-fuses, instead of burning slowly, flared up like a train of powder, and that the mines exploded a few seconds after the fuses were lighted. We have thus lost two good officers by an accident which might have been prevented if the equipment of the Sappers had not been cut down by the parsimony of the Government. So few fuses were sent up from India when the force advanced upon Cabul that the engineers had to make others, and these were of course defective. It was two of these which were being used when the explosion occurred. While the cavalry were covering the operations of the Sappers, several thousand men marched from the Bala Hissar and opened fire upon the 9th Lancers and the 5th Punjab Cavalry on Siah Sung. Several men

were hit, and Captain Gambier, of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, was wounded by a bullet passing through his thigh. The Cavalry withdrew under the heavy fire directed against them, and for a few hours the Afghans remained on the heights with banners planted. They retired to the city at nightfall, and all the villages between Sherpur and Cabul are now quite deserted.

While the attack was being made on the eastern defences, three or four thousand men had kept up an incessant fire at the southern wall, and such a rain of bullets fell about the Commissariat and 72nd Gates that many of our camp-followers in cantonments were wounded. Kila Mahomed Sharif and the King's Garden were full of Afghans, and two 18-pounders and two mountain guns shelled them until late in the afternoon, while the marksmen behind the walls shot down such men as retreated across the open. Dead bodies were seen lying in the fields, and two or three scaling-ladders, so heavy that six men would have been needed to carry them, were scattered about on the ground less than a thousand yards away. When the Afghans on the southern side saw our cavalry sweeping over Siah Sung, they began to retire hastily to the city, and as they crossed the road 1,000 yards away from our bastions, they were fired at from the 72nd Gateway, and many were seen to fall even at that distance. The men who stopped to carry off the dead behaved in the coolest way, one Afghan returning again and again to drag off the bodies of his comrades. Earlier in the day four men were killed by a volley at 600 yards, and two or three who escaped tried to face the bullets which swept the ground about their dead. Finding it was certain death to appear in the open, they crawled behind a wall, and with a long crooked stick dragged their dead away. Several of the best marksmen of Mahomed Jan, who had come daily to the same posts and fired persistently at the ramparts, were shot to-day, our men having at last got the exact ranges. The waste of ammunition on the part of the enemy was enormous; they knew perhaps that it was their last chance, and they fired round after round all day long.

From the ladders found in the fields there can be no doubt the feint on the southern side of Sherpur would have become a real attack if the eastern line of defences had been forced; but

the scaling ladders were only high enough to reach half-way up the wall, and the assaulting party could never have gained the parapet. We should have been well satisfied if they had come on, as their punishment would have been fearfully severe. On the south-west and west no attack was made: a few hundred men from Deh-i-Afghan occupied our vidette-hill towards the lake, and planted a white standard on the crest, but they never fired a shot, and a few shells in the evening warned them to retire, which they did about five o'clock. A few standards were also placed in the fields to the west, but the ghazis with them hid themselves behind little *sungars* they had thrown up, and did not annoy us at all. The northern line of trenches along Bemaru Heights were never assailed, the steep hillside facing Kohistan being clear of cover; and though, once, it was expected that the gorge would be attacked, and guns were ordered up to the trenches there, the appearance of the 5th P.C. on the *maidan* below checked such of the enemy as were working round from the village north of Bemaru. In fact, after the first unsuccessful attack, the enemy did not know what to do, and though their leaders on horseback galloped about and harangued them, they could never be got together in a cohesive body. Several of the horsemen were shot, and we are hoping that Mir Butcha, the Kohistani Chief, is among the number. At any rate, a horseman who was most energetic was struck by a volley, and immediately he fell from his horse 200 or 300 men rushed from a village near, placed him on a *charpoy*, and went straight away across the *maidan* over the Paen Minar Kotal, which is on the southern road to Kohistan. The man must have been a chief of distinction to be thus guarded, for his escort never looked back upon Sherpur, but hurried their chief away as fast as the bearers of the *charpoy* could walk.

To night we are resting on our arms, but all is quiet in the fields about Sherpur, and we look upon the investment as at an end. The brigade under General Charles Gough is halted to-night on the Jellalabad Road at the Logar river, and is holding the bridge, which after all was never destroyed by Mahomed Jan. Our reinforcements will march in to-morrow, but it is scarcely likely there will be any more fighting, as spies from the city report

that the tribesmen are in full retreat. Very glad, indeed, are we to be once more free after nine days' close confinement at Sherpur. As a soldier remarked on the walls when the Lieutenant-General was making his rounds :—"Well, I should think this is the first time in his life that General Roberts has been confined to barracks!" The confinement has harassed men and officers so much that we dread the re-action : the excitement is over now, and the exposure night after night in snow and slush must have broken down the health of many. The worst cases in hospital even now are men suffering from pneumonia : the wounded are doing well, though some of the wounds are very severe. Snow has begun to fall again, and winter has now set in thoroughly.

The casualties to-day, including followers, are thirty-two in number. General Hugh Gough was knocked over by a Snider bullet, which must have been nearly spent. It cut through his poshteen in the right breast, but was caught in the folds of a woollen vest, and fell at his feet as he shook himself together again. The returns for to-day are as follows :—

CASUALTIES ON 23RD DECEMBER.

Regiments.	British.				Native.		Total.
	Officers.		Men.				
	K.	W.	K.	W.	K.	W.	
Royal Engineers	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
F-A, Royal Horse Artillery ...	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
G-3, Royal Artillery	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
No. 1 Mountain Battery ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
No. 2 Mountain Battery ...	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
9th Lancers	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
5th Punjab Cavalry	—	1	—	—	—	7	8
67th Foot	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
92nd Highlanders	—	—	1	5	—	—	6
23rd Pioneers	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Guides' Infantry	—	—	—	—	—	3	3
Sappers and Miners	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
3rd Sikhs	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
5th Punjab Infantry	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
28th Punjab Infantry	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Total	2	2	1	9	2	16	32

Of our followers one was killed and six wounded. The total

casualties during the siege and on the day of the final attack were eighteen killed and sixty-eight wounded (including seven followers killed and twenty-two wounded).

CHAPTER XIX.

The Re-Occupation of Cabul—Signs of Mahomed Jan's Occupation—Complete Dispersion of Mahomed Jan's Army—General Hill's Return to the City—Christmas in Sherpur—Universal Character of the late *Jehad*—Necessity for reinforcing the Army of Occupation—General Baker's Expedition to Baba Kuch Kar—Examination of the Bala Hissar—Demolition of Forts and Villages about Sherpur—Cabul Revisited—A New Military Road—The Destruction of Shops by Mahomed Jan's Force—Despondency of the Hindus and Kizilbashes—State of the Char Chowk Bazaar—A Picture of Desolation—The Kotwali—Wali Mahomed's Losses—Ill-treatment of Women.

24th December.

Our expectations have been fully realized; the enemy which held us in check since December 14th has disappeared, and our troops are once more in Cabul, which shows terrible marks of Mahomed Jan's occupation. Every house belonging to Sirdars known to favour the British has been looted, and in the bazaars all the shops are gutted except those of the Mahomedans. Doors and windows broken in, walls knocked down, all woodwork destroyed, floors dug up, and property carried off: these are the signs of the Reign of Terror lately instituted among the Kizilbashes and Hindus. The search for treasure was carried out in a systematic way, and the loot now in possession of Kohistanis, Ghilzais, and other tribesmen must be worth many lakhs. Two lakhs of treasure belonging to Hashim Khan alone, are said to have been seized, while the Hindus complain of being utterly ruined. We shall have to inquire further into this when things are once more firmly settled, but at present we have enough to do in pursuing the enemy, and arresting such local Afghans as joined their ranks. These men now hide their arms, and appear in all the beautiful simplicity of peaceful citizens, but the subterfuge is too easily detected for them to escape punishment. We were not sure early this morning that Mahomed Jan's host had

vanished, although, as the night had passed quietly, there was every reason to believe the siege was at an end. Our first movement was to occupy Kila Mahomed Shariff, and Colonel Brownlow sent out a party of the 72nd Highlanders to the fort at dawn. They found it quite deserted, and the other forts and villages near were also without occupants. Two or three wounded men were lying within the walls, and the bodies of some thirty Afghans were scattered about near the loop-holes, or in the open where our bullets had struck them down. This was on the southern face, near the 72nd and Commissariat gateways, so that the false attack in this direction must have cost the enemy many lives. Afghans do not, as a rule, leave their dead behind, and doubtless there were carried away double the number found. Scaling-ladders covered with blood were lying in the fields and forts, and heaps of powder and some hundreds of ball-cartridges were discovered. Unlimited ammunition must have been served out to each man, and as an examination shows that all the powder and caps in the Bala Hissar have been carried off, or destroyed, it is clear that every tribesman filled his pouch with an ample supply before making the attack. Those who have got safely away will have powder enough to last them for two or three years, as many tons were left by us in the magazine. But for their losses, which are calculated at 2,000 or 3,000 killed and wounded since December 10th, the army of Mahomed Jan may consider their sojourn in Cabul during the Mohurrum a grand success, temporary though it was. They blockaded the British army, caused it a loss of between 300 and 400, and proclaimed a new Amir, whom they have still with them. Young Musa Jan has been carried off by Mushk-i-Alam, who may, if he chooses, establish the new sovereign at Ghazni, and invite all Afghanistan to rally about him. The old *moollah* is reported to have fled with the lad last night, while Mahomed Jan remained in Cabul until eight o'clock this morning. He then saw that his army had deserted him, and he followed the example of Mushk-i-Alam, and took to the hills. Strong parties of cavalry have been out all day in the Chardeh Valley and round by Charasia, but beyond a few men on the snow-covered hills no one was met with. It was difficult work pursuing, as snow was falling steadily. The 30,000 men have dissolved, and, with their loot,

are taking mountain roads, where they are safe from pursuit. The villages contain many men who fought against us, and hereafter we shall visit them with our flying column. On the 11th, 12th, and 13th every fortified enclosure our men passed was barred against them, and the occupants fired at stragglers and turned out to harass rear-guards. The Mahomedan population of Cabul joined Mahomed Jan almost to a man, thinking the British rule was at an end, and now these citizens, whose homes we spared when we came among them in the flush of success, are hurrying away in anticipation of the reprisals we shall inflict. The time has gone by for weak sentimentality: military law alone should now guide Sir F. Roberts in his dealings with the people, for it has been proved beyond question that to act humanely is merely to encourage the Afghans in their belief that we are unequal to controlling them. Instead of leaving an indelible mark upon Cabul, we have enriched it by our purchases of winter supplies, and have poured lakhs of rupees into the purses of the very men who had nothing to expect but the fate of a conquered race.

The Hindus and Kizilbashes who relied upon us for protection may well revile us, since we have left them to their fate; while the Mahomedans who have looted their homes, insulted their women, and terrorized over them for ten days, are now laughing at our inability to follow them to their distant villages. The unlucky Hazaras, who have worked so well for us, were hunted down, beaten, and reviled wherever they showed their faces in the streets; and were told jeeringly to call for help upon the British locked up in Sherpur. Our humiliation is so great that to risk a repetition of it would be ruinous. We must show that the investment of Sherpur can never again occur, and to do this 10,000 troops must hold Cabul, and our line of communication with India be so permanently established that even 100,000 tribesmen cannot break it. An immediate declaration of policy should be made: to wait quietly for "events to develop" may be disastrous. We must create events, not allow others to turn the current of them in whichever direction they please. If we are to hold Cabul—and this is now ten times more imperious even than it was before, for to retire would be to acknowledge that we have failed in our occupation, and dare not risk another reverse—we must hold it by our

bayonets and not by our rupees. Half-measures will only imperil our safety: to put trust in Afghan cunning and be guided by Afghan insincerity is only to risk the lives of our soldiers. Those soldiers have done all that soldiers can do, and they may well look to their commanders to make success once obtained sure and stable. We lost less than 100 men in capturing Cabul; we have lost nearly four times that number in fifteen days' fighting, after we had occupied the place for two months. There must be no longer a state of false security; for it is not improbable that the *jehad* will be revived before the winter is over, and the *moollahs* may again influence the religious fanaticism of the people against us.

To-day General Hills, our Governor of the City, once more visited the *kotwali*, guarded by the 5th P.I., while the sepoys were busy all day in searching the Mahomedan quarter, and in arresting such citizens as they could find remaining. One hundred Punjabees garrison the *kotwali* for the night, and the Kizilbashes and Hindus are once more plucking up courage. The Bala Hissar has been examined, and not an Afghan found in it, and in two or three days the 9th Foot, and the 2nd and 4th Ghoorkas, which arrived at Sherpur this morning with General Charles Gough, will be quartered in the fortress. Butkhak is also to be re-garrisoned with 100 of the 9th and the whole of the 12th B.C., and in a short time we shall be once more holding a strong line of communication with Peshawur. Our most urgent want is ammunition. The reinforcements have only brought about 200 rounds per man, and our own supply cannot be much more than 250 rounds, taking the regiments all through.

Among our political prisoners now is Yakub Khan's mother, who was chiefly instrumental in raising the *jehad*. She will be closely watched for the future, and as she is a woman of great resource, it may be advisable to deport her to India. The camp has also received with due hospitality forty or fifty ladies, the wives and other relatives of Sirdars among us, as guests.

27th December.

After all the excitement of our ten days' siege it is a great relief now to pass beyond the walls of Sherpur, even though the roads

and fields about are ankle-deep in mud and half-melted snow. Not a shot now disturbs our peaceful quiet, and the only unusual sound is the dull report of a mine exploding where our engineers are busy demolishing forts and walls which only four days ago sheltered our enemy. Our Christmas has been of the sober, thoughtful kind. We have so lately been released from the painful constraint of constant vigilance and hard fighting, that our spirits could not rise very high in the scale of festivity; and our losses have so sobered us that it would seem almost sacrilegious to "feast and make merry" with the death of so many comrades still fresh in our memory and with the hospitals full of wounded men, sufferers in the actions fought since the 10th. Besides, every one is worn out with watching, and it will be some time before officers and men can once more take life placidly, and enjoy heartily such little pleasures as are forthcoming. Christmas day was one of rest for all of us, for our cavalry reconnaissances had shown that the enemy had dispersed far out of our reach; and as the snow lay six inches deep on the ground, there was little chance of our troopers overtaking even such small bands as might have followed the main roads to Logar, Ghazni, or Kohistan. On the 24th the horses had to be led back by the troopers from Charasia, the snow having "balled" their feet and made riding dangerous, and there was nothing to be gained by sending them out again on a similar errand. We were not all convinced that none of Mahomed Jan's followers were lurking about, and strong guards were still held ready at night, to repel any sudden attack. But the precaution might have been neglected; for never before has an "army" 30,000 strong melted so rapidly away. The tribesmen must have travelled quickly during the night of the 23rd after we had beaten them from our walls, and now the country about for miles seems deserted of its inhabitants. Such villages as are passed have their doors barred and bolted, and not even a ghazi turns out to throw away his life. The snow-covered hills, which now shut us in on all sides, stand out in pure whiteness and make no sign. They have seen the scattered thousands who held high revel in Cabul pass away in hot haste; but the snow has blotted out their foot-prints, and the trail is lost. By-and-by we shall take it up anew, and search out our enemy in his secluded villages and forts, for a force

is even now toiling over the snow in Kohistan, and will in a few days be at Mir Butcha's gates. Logar also may see another column marching upon its villages, but more distant Wardak and Ghazni are probably safe until the spring; that is, if Mahomed Jan and his powerful friend, the *moollah* Mushk-i-Alam, do not keep their promise of returning to Cabul at the festival of Nauroz, March 21st. They have had such an unexpected success, and have secured such valuable loot, that, in spite of their losses, they may be tempted again to repeat the experiment of coming boldly to meet our army, instead of waiting in their homes for an attack.

The fuller we examine into the *jehad*, the more clear it becomes that the late combination more nearly approached a general movement among all sections than any that has yet been attempted. In the short period during which it existed, nearly every available fighting man in North-Eastern Afghanistan flocked to the banners consecrated by Mushk-i-Alam; and if the success of the *jehad* had been a little longer-lived—say by the interception of our reinforcements—there would have been streams of men setting in for Cabul from Turkistan, Badakshan, and the Shutargardan district, which would have made Mahomed Jan the leader of that "lakh of men" of which he boasted. Every chief of importance among the wide-spread Ghilzais and the more compact Kohistanis and Safis was up in arms, and the fighting at Jugdulluck showed that Asmatullah Khan and his Lughmanis were at one with their friends besieging Sherpur. Even Padshah Khan, whose virtues short-sighted politicians have extolled, brought a contingent to Cabul, and fought against us with desperate hatred, although he had greatly smoothed our path during the first march from Ali Khel. With Mahomed Jan were also Mir Butcha and several other Kohistani chiefs—Usman Khan, the Safi leader of Tagao; Gholam Hyder Khan (Logari), and Aslam Khan, Colonel of Artillery, both of whom fought at Charasia; and several minor Ghilzai leaders, who had each brought their following of 500 or 1,000 men. The countenance Mahomed Jan and Mushk-i-Alam received from Yakub Khan's mother and wife gave them a status which they did not fail to use to the best of their advantage; and while, perhaps, half their followers were freebooters, intent upon looting Hindus and Kizilbashes, they made it appear in their

attempt to negotiate with Sir Frederick Roberts that they were the patriotic leaders of a movement which had for its object not so much the ejectment of the British army, as the revival of the Amirship. Singularly enough, the removal of Yakub Khan was made a pretext for their occupation of Cabul, and this in the face of their callousness as to his fate when he was a prisoner in our camp. Yakub's mother, working through Mushk-i-Alam and his *moollahs*, turned the full tide of religious enthusiasm aroused by the *jehad* into channels which should serve to place either her exiled son or her grandson on the throne, and the proclamation of Musa Jan as Amir was a bold step, which may yet give us much trouble to nullify. Musa Jan is in the hands of Mushk-i-Alam, who may renew his *jehad*. By setting up the child in state at Ghazni, and formulating decrees and proclamations in his name, he may give the people a pretext for denying the existence of British authority further than the few acres commanded by our guns about Cabul: and taking religion again as a rallying cry, he may by Nauroz be ready with another 30,000 men to try conclusions with us again. The late army which besieged us does not exist, save in scattered units. The feeling which drew it together is still alive; for fanaticism only slumbers in this country, and has sometimes so rapid an awakening that it must be constantly watched. The ten days' success of Mahomed Jan will be quoted as proving that, under more favourable conditions, it might be extended indefinitely; and unless, by our preparations, we show that the conditions in future, instead of being more favourable, become steadily less and less attractive to men who may be called upon to join a new *jehad*, the British army of occupation may be again isolated. It is to be hoped that no false measure of economy will prevent the strength of the force here being so raised that from 3,000 to 4,000 men will *always* be available for outside work, after Sherpur or whatever lines we may occupy have been strongly garrisoned. Our reinforcements number only 1,400 men, and Luttabund is still left without a garrison; while 100 of the 9th Foot and the whole of the 12th Bengal Cavalry have been sent to Butkhak to hold that post. We may seem strong enough now when we have not an enemy within twenty miles; but so we seemed equally safe three weeks ago, when we disbelieved in the

possibility of 30,000 Afghans ever collecting together. If our experience is to go for nothing we shall revert to the old order of things, perhaps allowing the other division to garrison Luttabund and Sei Baba; but if we are to convince the late leaders of the *jehad* that a second can only be a ridiculous failure, we shall have the whole of Generals Charles Gough and Arbuthnot's brigades west of Jugdulluck.* There may arise some difficulty in regard to winter supplies; but if the policy, now begun, of requisitioning the villages belonging to hostile chiefs be carried out to its full extent, our reinforcements can live comfortably. Besides, the Kyber transport should at once be so remodelled that it will not be frittered away for want of due supervision, and then, surely, supplies can be sent from Peshawur as far as Jugdulluck, Luttabund, or even Cabul itself. If we have to face the possibility of a second siege of Sherpur, and of another blow at our prestige by tribes of Asiatics, we may as well face it with our eyes open and our powder dry. This same question of powder may involve us in difficulties yet, for we want ammunition badly; and if it has to be brought up from Peshawur, it will take three weeks to reach here. As we are sending flying columns out again, the troops comprising which may get rid of 100 rounds per man in a few days, the prospect does not seem so bright of our 250 rounds each lasting very long. If Mahomed Jan had persistently attacked our force in the manner he at last did on December 23rd, we should now be left with about seventy rounds in each man's pouch. Fortunately for us, Mahomed Jan is not a military genius.

I have spoken of the flying columns we are sending out. The first of these left Sherpur this morning, bound for Baba Kuch Kar, where the villages belonging to Mir Butcha are said to lie. This is about twenty-four miles away on the Charikar Road, through the heart of the Koh-Daman, and it is not improbable that our force may meet with opposition. This is the first time we have interfered with the Kohistanis since 1841, and they have a belief in their own powers among their native hills, which may cause them to fight bravely in defence of their villages. They have an unlimited supply of ammunition taken from the Bala Hissar, and this to tribesmen is half the battle. The country is quite

* The plan here suggested was afterwards carried out.

unknown to us, and, with the snow lying thick on the hills, our men are sure to suffer great hardships. General Baker's column is made up as follows:—

Hazara Mountain Battery (four guns);
Guides' Cavalry (200 sabres);
67th Foot (500 men);
Guides' Infantry (400);
2nd Ghoorkas (400);
5th Punjabees (400);
Sappers and Miners (1½ company).

The 2nd Ghoorkas were too weak to muster 400 bayonets for service, so the 4th Ghoorkas were called upon to make up the number. The Sappers take with them materials for demolishing forts and villages; and it is intended to loot the place thoroughly, so 15 per cent. of the transport animals in Sherpur accompany the column in addition to their own complement of mules and *yaboos*. 200 rounds of ammunition per man and five days' rations are carried for the men. Two survey officers accompany the column, and three parties of signallers under Captain Straton. The signalling branch of the service has come, deservedly, to be looked upon as playing a most important part in every operation undertaken. The column is strong enough both to punish Mir Butcha and to collect supplies; but there is a strong opinion in camp that before any reprisals were begun our communications with Jugdulluck should have been secured. We have had no news from Jugdulluck since the 20th, and we are in doubt as to the safety of our despatches. The news of Mahomed Jan's flight should cause the local Ghilzais to settle down peacefully again; and as more troops move up from Gundamak and Jellalabad, the line will doubtless be re-opened in ten days. When General Baker returns from Kohistan, another column is to be sent to the Logar Valley, and more supplies collected; this time, perhaps, without the expenditure of two or three lakhs of rupees.

A report has been spread that the Bala Hissar has been mined, and for the present no garrison will be placed within its walls. The Engineers are busy examining the fortress, and when they have decided as to its safety, General Charles Gough's

brigade will be moved into it for the winter. Gangs of Hazara coolies are employed demolishing the walls of villages and forts about Sherpur, and also in clearing away detached walls in the fields, the remains of old fortified enclosures. One of the guns given by us to Wali Mahomed, when it was expected he would go to Turkistan as Governor, has been brought in; but the two guns of Swinley's Battery, lost on the 14th, are still missing.

29th December.

I have visited the city of Cabul, which is now again in our hands, and have seen the havoc made in its bazaars by the army of Mahomed Jan and the fanatical followers of Mushk-i-Alam. The city is considered safe again for visitors, though officers visiting it have to go in pairs, and carry arms. This is a precaution against any stray ghazis who may still be in hiding within its walls. My guard was simply four Sikhs, and with this small escort I was able to examine the place thoroughly, without molestation. The Mussulman population still remaining is in a wholesome state of fear, and as our search-parties go from house to house seeking men who played us false, there is a tendency among the citizens to draw off to obscure nooks and corners. Passing out by the head-quarters' gate in the western wall, I followed the muddy footpath across the fields to Deh-i-Afghan, the walls and ditches about which yet show signs of the late fighting, in the presence of cartridge-cases thrown away after being fired by the Afghans. In the gardens about the suburb the trees are cut and "blazed" where our shells exploded, but the damage really is very slight. We had not sufficent ammunition to waste shells on these enclosures, and two or three doses of shrapnel or common shell were generally enough to silence the fire of the enemy in any given orchard. Climbing up the path to Deh-i-Afghan, which stands on a low rounded hill at the foot of the Asmai Heights, and on the left bank of the Cabul river, I came across a few disconsolate-looking Hindus and Kizilbashes on their way to Sherpur, to relate their woes and file their bill of damages against "the great British Government," which had promised to protect them. Besides these unlucky men were

strings of Hazara coolies, staggering under their heavy loads of wood or *bhoosa*, and to all-seeming as happy as ever in their rags and wretchedness. All the doors and windows of the houses were barred and locked, and but few Mussulman faces could be seen. Here and there were knots of men discussing, with subdued looks, the late events. The gossipers were profuse in salaams, but moved off as our little party moved onwards. Deh-i-Afghan was shelled, on the 14th, by six guns for about an hour, and during the siege an 8-inch howitzer occasionally pitched a shell into the crowds which always gathered within and about it. I therefore expected to see some great damage done to the houses. But beyond a hole in a wall or roof, or the branches of trees cut off in the courtyards, there was nothing to show that our shells had fallen within its walls. Most of the houses are so strongly made, the walls being four or five feet thick at the base, and firmly built up of stone and mud cement, that to breach them would require a 40-pounder, and we have no guns here of this calibre. The streets of Deh-i-Afghan were so deserted that it was quite a relief to leave them behind, especially as the whole place seemed to smell of the shambles—due, perhaps, to the bodies of men killed in action being buried in shallow graves. At the foot of the Asmai Heights, where the road turns off to the Cabul gorge, a company of the 3rd Sikhs was halted, while Captain Nicholson, R.E., was deciding the direction a new military road should take from Sherpur to Dehmazung. General Hills, Governor of the City, with a number of "friendly" Cabulis, explained to them what houses were to be pulled down, and in a few days we shall have some 500 or 600 men busy in demolishing the place. As yet we have not destroyed a house in Cabul, and our merciful policy as only encouraged its turbulent ruffians to turn and harass us at the first opportunity. Military considerations alone should be now allowed to prevail, and any course decided upon as contributing to the safety of Sherpur should be carried out unswervingly. We have seen how great was the protection afforded by Deh-i-Afghan to the enemy, as enabling them to collect beneath its walls in perfect security, in occupying or in retiring from the Asmai hill, and this protection should now be swept away, even if every wall and house between the foot of the

hill and the Cabul river has to be pulled down. General Macpherson's retirement from above the Bala Hissar on the evening of the 14th had to be made by way of Deh-i-Afghan, and his troops were under fire the whole time in getting from the Cabul gorge to the fields beyond, where our troops from Sherpur were waiting to cover their retirement. Our anxiety, so long as a man remained within the shadow of Deh-i-Afghan, was at the time very great.

From Deh-i-Afghan across a bridge which spans the Cabul river, and thence by a winding path among high walls and sombre-looking dwellings, to the Chandaul quarter, is only a few minutes' walk. The melting snow had made the narrow, ill-paved streets almost impassable in places, and we had to splash through mud and slush to make any progress at all. As this end of the city was entered there were a few more signs of life, and one or two shops were open, but few wares were displayed. All these shops belonged to Mahomedans; they had escaped looting, and their happy owners were now placidly returning to their every-day life, though, perchance, during the Mohurrum they ruffled it with the best, and swaggered about, threatening death to all Kafirs. They know our weakness for sparing a fallen foe, and they trade upon it systematically. They will take our rupees to-day, and be all subserviency or sullen independence—not so much the latter now—and will cut our throats and hack our bodies to pieces to-morrow as part of the beautiful programme drawn up by a far-seeing Providence. Passing by these few shops tenanted by Mahomedans, I soon came to those owned by Hindus, and here the wreck was great. Like all Eastern bazaars, those of Cabul consist of rows of little stalls raised three or four feet above the street level. The rear and side walls are built of mud and sun-dried bricks, while the front is all open, except where the rude wooden shutters are put up at nightfall, and the little door securely padlocked. But few of the shopkeepers live "on the premises;" they have houses in the back-streets, where their wives and families are secluded; so that, when the day's work or trading is over, the bazaars are deserted, except by wanderers or strangers in search of their night's resting-place. These little stalls have been gutted; nothing is left except the bare walls. Every scrap of woodwork has been carried away, and the floors have been dug up in search

of hidden treasure. The walls in several places are broken down, and their ruins lie across the street; while in one or two instances the very poles of the roofs have been purloined, and the snow and mist have wantoned through the nice snug corners where Bokhara silks, Manchester cottons, or Sheffield cutlery lay stored away. A description of one stall will serve for all. Scarcely a Hindu shop has been left untouched, and Defilement has followed upon Devastation, until the twin-sisters have made the havoc complete. The wretched shopkeepers sit among the ruins in helpless misery, and are already debating whether it would not be better to pack up their household goods and move for Hindustan rather than wait for a second irruption of the hungry horde of tribesmen who are now hurrying away to their homes laden with the loot of Cabul. These Hindus make the most of their losses unquestionably, in the hope of obtaining compensation from the British; yet there can be no doubt they have been robbed of a large amount of property. The Shore Bazaar is nearly all wrecked, and one part of the Char Chowk, the large covered-in bazaar of Cabul, has been cleared out even to the nails in the walls. The practice of burying articles of value is so common among Cabulis, and indeed among Asiatics generally, that part of the strong masonry of which the main walls of the Char Chowk are built up has been broken down, and huge holes and gaps left to show the earnestness of the search. Such shops as have been spared in the heart of the city are still closed, for their owners do not care to display their goods too soon, as they have to bear the inquisitorial questions of their less fortunate neighbours. A more wretched picture of desolation than Cabul presented as I rode through it cannot be imagined. All the life and turmoil had died out of it, and the only persons who seemed to take advantage of the general stagnation were the women, many of whom were flitting about in their long white robes as if free from all restraint. The *kotwali* had been made the temporary head-quarters of Mahomed Jan, who had garrisoned it with a few hundred resolute men. Their first act had been to destroy and defile the room where General Hills sat as Governor of the City; and they had done this very completely, even the roof and floor being

torn up. Loop-holes had been knocked into the walls of every room, both above and below, as if in anticipation of a stand being made if it came to street-fighting. The *kotwali* is a high square building; an open courtyard, with two tiers of rooms round it, and a parapet above all whence the neighbouring roofs and streets can be commanded by musketry fire. It is so closely hemmed in by buildings, however, that it would not be a good position to defend. The entrance is from the middle of the Char Chowk Bazaar, and it is the centre round which all Cabul circulates when any excitement arouses the people. When I visited it in my ramble through the city I found 100 Sikhs and Ghoorkas garrisoning it, and ready to turn out at a moment's notice if an alarm of "ghazis" were raised. Speaking to a friendly Cabuli, he assured me that lakhs of property had been looted; he himself had had five houses cleared out, while sirdars in our camp had been treated in a similar way. Wali Mahomed especially had been a sufferer, and the ladies of his *zenana* had been subjected to great indignities. Believing that they had ornaments of value hidden upon their persons, they were stripped of every stitch of clothing, and turned out in all the shame of nakedness into the streets. Questioned as to the number of Mahomed Jan's followers, the Cabuli said there were fully 30,000 men, and this coincided with estimates given by our spies and others who have been examined since. Padshah Khan, the man whom we trusted so implicitly on our march from the Shutargardan, was among the leaders, and brought a small contingent to swell the army of fanatics. The systematic way in which the looting was carried on will appear from the statement that, when a man defended his house against a small band of marauders, they retired for the time, and then returned, as a Hindu put it, "10,000 strong." It was useless to offer opposition to such numbers, though I believe many of the Kizilbashes, by professing to be good Mahomedans, saved their property. There were not many inoffensive shopkeepers killed, eight or ten at the highest estimate: but the fear and terror in which they lived hidden away in cellars and holes made their life during the Mohurrum scarcely worth the living. I left Cabul, feeling that it was, indeed, a hapless city. The industrious classes, who had

been our friends and had rejoiced at our coming, had been despoiled under our eyes; while those who had cursed us in their hearts, and longed to drive us out, were once more cowed after a short triumph, and were calculating how many of their number would shortly grace the gallows. The Military Commission under the presidency of Brigadier-General Massy has again been ordered to assemble. This time, it is to be hoped a few men of importance may be executed—always provided that we can find them. The members of the Commission are General Massy, Major Morgan, (of the 9th Foot), and Major Stewart (of the 5th Punjab Cavalry).

The remains of Captain Spens were found to-day by Dr. Duke, about ten yards from the spot where he was cut down. General Roberts, with a small force, visited Chardeh Valley to-day, to examine the ground where the cavalry and guns came to grief on the 11th. One mountain gun of Swinley's Battery, lost on the 14th, has been found. It was lying in a *jheel* (a shallow pool) a few miles up Chardeh Valley, where it had been abandoned by the enemy in their flight.

CHAPTER XX.

The Probabilities of the Revival of the *Jehad*—Insincerity of Native Chiefs—The Need of further Reinforcements—The Difficulties of Warfare in Afghanistan—Return of General Baker from Baba Kuch Kar—Recovery of the Bodies of Lieutenants Hardie and Forbes—Review of the *Jehad*—The Attitude of the Tribes on the Line of Communications—Asmatullah Khan's Position—Failure to check our Reinforcements—The Importance of the Luttabund Post—Attack upon Jugdulluck—Repulse of the Lughmanis—Deportation of Daoud Shah to India—Military Executions.

1*st January*, 1880.

THE New Year has come upon us so suddenly that we have had no time to cast vain regrets upon worn-out months, which have witnessed the making of important pages of history, and given us a new starting-point in our relations with Afghanistan. A month ago we were dying of weary inactivity, but this feeling was swept away by the stirring events of the Mohurrum, and we have not

yet sunk back into our old state of lassitude. Our losses have been so heavy, that it behoves us to take precautions to prevent a repetition of the late investment; and we are bestirring ourselves right heartily to give the ghazi-*log* a reception worthy of their impetuous nature, if they keep their promise to return in March. Musa Jan, Yakub Khan's son, is now with Mushk-i-Alam (that unsavoury *moollah*, whose title means "Scent of the Universe") at Bad Mushk, twelve miles from Ghazni; and when the *jehad* is revived, all true Afghans will be called upon to rally round their rightful sovereign. The waverers will be wrought upon by promises of endless loot; the fanatical by opportunities of future bliss after they have died as ghazis; and the mass of the tribesmen by an appeal to their warlike instincts which lead them to fight for the sake of bloodshed. It was a grave mistake which left Musa Jan, with the women of Yakub Khan's household, in Cabul; for now a status is given to the leaders of the up-rising which they lacked before. We have Wali Mahomed with us still; and if we so far modify our policy as to make him Governor of Cabul and the districts about,—and all things are possible in the see-saw of politics,—we could make a counter-appeal and declare Musa Jan to be merely a puppet in the hands of mischief-makers. Whether this appeal would be disregarded, one cannot say; but if it were backed by a strong display of force, say 12,000 men holding Sherpur and every post down to Jellalabad well garrisoned, it might have some effect. No faith can be put in Afghan promises; we have learned that by the falling away of Padshah Khan, if we did not already know it from past experience; and our safety from constant attack must lie in the completeness of our own preparations, rather than in contracts made with sirdars who will only serve us so long as fair weather lasts. Padshah Khan is said to have remained faithful at least until the 14th of December. When he learned that the British had been obliged to withdraw within the walls of Sherpur, and had lost two mountain guns in the day's fighting, he may have thought that a disaster was impending, and so joined Mahomed Jan with as many Ghilzais as he could collect together. He now affirms that he was more a spectator than an active participator in the siege; and that this was so evident to the other chiefs that, after

assigning him a post in the fore-front of the attack, they withdrew him from his command at the last moment, so great was their mistrust of his sincerity.

The Khyber Force will relieve us of all garrison work at Luttabund, which sets free 800 men and two guns for duty here; so that with the 1,400 men General Charles Gough brought with him we shall be over 2,000 stronger. But our losses have been heavy, and there are now 800 men on the sick list, many of whom must be sent back to India. The present campaign cannot be brought to a successful conclusion without a much greater display of force than we have hitherto made; and I believe every effort is now being put forth to collect further supplies, so that, if necessary, 15,000 or 20,000 men could be fed during February and March preparatory to our resuming the offensive in the spring. The warning of Sir Henry Durand, in his criticism of the old war, must have recurred to our leaders when contemplating a new accession of strength to the force now here. He wrote:—"Everything in the expedition was a matter of the greatest uncertainty, even to the feeding of the troops; for Afghanistan merited the character given to Spain by Henry IV. of France: 'Invade with a large force, and you are destroyed by starvation; invade with a small one, and you are overwhelmed by a hostile people.'" We have tried the latter alternative, and, after being shut in by 50,000 Afghans (for such it is now said was the numerical strength of Mahomed Jan's following), we have no wish to repeat the experiment. To avoid it, we must have a large and handy force ready to cope with the enemy before he can reach Cabul; and here the starvation difficulty crops up. After paying fabulously high prices for everything—from a sheep to an onion—we had laid in stores sufficient for the consumption of our original division until the spring; but these will not suffice when they are drawn upon by the troops which have since joined us (9th Foot, Guides, 2nd and 4th Ghoorkas, Hazara Mountain Battery, and Sappers), apart from any others that may yet come up. The Khyber transport is not strong enough for much reliance to be placed upon it in the matter of bringing up supplies from Peshawur, and we shall probably have to requisition the country and force the people to sell their hidden stores at our own prices.

We cannot starve, and the military exigencies of the position render it imperative that we should have Sherpur not only well garrisoned, but a movable force of sufficient strength to disperse all Cabul gatherings, and regiments stationed along our line of communication, equal either to punishing chiefs like Asmatullah, or moving westward to Cabul if a second *jehad* brings about another great combination of the people. Our latest reinforcement, which arrived here on the 24th, under General Gough, is now garrisoning the Bala Hissar; while the Guides have been attached to General Macpherson's Brigade, and will remain in cantonments. They have done good service since their arrival, and well deserve to be attached to the army which captured Cabul single-handed.

General Baker returned yesterday from his excursion to Baba Kuch Kar, where he destroyed the forts and villages belonging to Mir Butcha. This place was demolished by Sale on the 8th of October, 1840. It was considered at that time a stronghold which would have given an army without a battering-train much trouble; but now the fortified enclosures were less formidable. They were not defended, Mir Butcha and his retainers have fled northward to Charikar when he saw how quickly we were following him after his retreat from Sherpur on the 3rd December. No opposition on the road to, or from, Baba Kuch Kar was offered to General Baker, who was only away five days. The snow-covered roads and hills were very trying to the soldiers and followers; and it was conclusively proved that camping out in this weather is likely to sow the seeds of much sickness among our men. The country visited was not Kohistan proper, which lies north of Istalif, but the Koh-Daman ("Skirt of the Hills"). The valleys were found to be marvellously fertile, the orchards and vineyards on the hill-slopes stretching away on either side for miles. Cabul is said to draw most of its delicious fruit from the Koh-Daman, the fertility of which we had every opportunity of observing. In the spring the district must be the most beautiful spot in Afghanistan, the Chardeh Valley sinking into insignificance before it. Great difficulty would be experienced by an army marching through in the face of determined opposition. Sunken roads, irrigated tracts, walled fields, and innumerable watercourses form such a network

of obstruction, that if the forts and villages, with their acres of orchards and vineyards, were defended, progress would be laborious and dangerous in the extreme. For miles there is admirable cover for skirmishers to harass an army with all its impedimenta of baggage and followers; and every fort would have to be stormed, as mountain guns would make no impression on the mud walls. General Baker not only looted and levelled to the ground all forts and villages owned by Mir Butcha, but cut down his vineyards, and set the Ghoorkas to work to "ring" all the fruit trees. This will be a heavy loss to the villages, which mainly derive their local influence from the return yielded by their orchards and vineyards. Baba Kuch Kar is a little over twenty miles from Sherpur; and from it Istalif could be seen, with its white walls gleaming out on the hillsides, surrounded by orchards extending as far as the eye could reach. Istalif is about ten miles further north, and the country between is all under culti vation. Arrangements were made with local headmen to bring in supplies, and large quantities of grain and *bhoosa* are expected to reach us from the Koh-Daman.

The quickness with which we resumed the offensive after being besieged in Sherpur has favourably impressed all the country about. Such chiefs as were hostile to us now see that they are not safe from reprisals; and within easy marches of Sherpur many villages which turned out their fighting men during the *jehad*, are now being punished. One village in Chardeh was said to contain the bodies of Lieutenants Hardie and Forbes, who fell in the cavalry action on the 11th of December. On our troops visiting it, the *maliks* denied that the bodies had been seen. Two of the headmen were tied up and flogged, but still refused to speak; but upon a third being seized, he offered to show the officers' graves. The bodies were exhumed, and were found to be unmutilated. The village has been destroyed on account of the contumacy of the *maliks*, and also because our troops were fired upon from its walls when the guns were lost. Several other missing bodies of Lancers have been found; and on New Year's Day an impressive funeral of the bodies of Captain Spens, Lieutenant Hardie, Lieutenant Forbes, and a non-commissioned officer took place at the foot of the north-western slope

of the Bemaru Heights. We have lost twelve officers killed and fourteen wounded since December 10th, which shows the severity of the fighting; while of the rank and file and camp-followers, ninety-eight have been killed and 238 wounded.

4th January.

One feature of the late investment of Sherpur cantonment which deserves considerable attention is the part played by the powerful Ghilzai tribes between Cabul and Jellalabad. Their attitude, from the 14th of December, was the same as that taken up in the war of 1841–42, and they no doubt looked for a similar result. It might have been foretold with absolute certainty that once a British army was besieged at Cabul, the tribesmen on the route to India would rise to a man and try to block the road along which reinforcements must pass. The *jehad* which Mushk-i-Alam headed had its origin far from the rocky barrier which shuts in the Cabul plain on the east: its birth was at Ghazni, and its growth extended on the north to Kohistan, and on the south to Logar, the two districts which furnished at the outset its principal strength. The Safis of Tagao were drawn within its influence by their close neighbourhood to Kohistan; but the Ghilzais of Tezin and the valleys about, as well as the more distant Lughmanis, held aloof at first by reason of their position between the two British forces. If Mahomed Jan had failed in his march upon Cabul, and had been driven back upon the Ghazni Road, we should probably have heard little of the hostility of the tribes westward of Butkhak; the preaching of the *moollahs*, which had for weeks before fallen upon the ears of the Ghilzais as the prediction of a great triumph over the Kaffir army, would have borne no fruit beyond an occasional raid upon our convoys. The local clans would have felt that, if a powerful combination, such as that which had gathered about the Ghazni priest, had failed to drive back the British army, they themselves were powerless to do so. But once the vast host of 50,000 men had occupied Cabul and the Bala Hissar, and had made it impossible for the garrison of Sherpur to move beyond its defences, the Ghilzais felt that the appeal to their fanaticism was a safe lead to follow, and they began to muster in strength. The messengers from Mahomed

Jan were welcomed, and our evacuation of Butkhak proved that his promise to surround and cut to pieces the small army which had captured Cabul was not widely removed from the possible, as our leaders were concentrating their force to resist an attack. If we had not needed every man at Sherpur, why should we hurry away from our first outpost under cover of darkness? This was the argument which went home to the hearts of the men in the hills about Khurd Cabul and Tezin; and all the local chiefs, with one exception, turned out their fighting men, and thought of the slaughter of our army in the terrible defile of 1842. Padshah Khan, in his villages nearer the Shutargardan, was carried away by the same reasoning; and, with customary treachery, he hastened to Cabul to fight against the men he had pledged himself to support. His contingent was more needed there than that of the chiefs along our line of communications, who had a similar mission to perform to that so successfully carried out nearly forty years ago—to block all outlets of escape; and in addition, to drive back our reinforcements to Jellalabad. In the first flush of success it may have occurred to Mahomed Jan that he was destined to become a second Akhbar Khan, and that a siege of Jellalabad would follow the annihilation of the force at Cabul. To carry out the programme with success, it was needful that all posts west of Jellalabad should be swept away; and this work he entrusted to Asmatullah Khan, of Lughman, a chief, perhaps, more powerful than any other single tribal leader in North-Eastern Afghanistan. Asmatullah accepted the part assigned to him, and the Lughmanis were soon actively at work: the telegraph line west of Gundamak was destroyed, and then, in full confidence, the troops at Jugdulluck were attacked. But though it was easy enough in theory to lay down plans on the old lines, the Lughmanis found that, with superior weapons, our soldiers were able without difficulty to hold their own against twentyfold odds. The road might be made unsafe, and all convoys stopped; but when it came to turning out enemies snugly entrenched, and armed with breech-loaders, it was a very different story. While Mahomed Jan fondly imagined that for two or three months the Ghilzais would hold the Passes, and check the movement of a relieving force, Asmatullah Khan was not equal to

keeping back the stream of men which set westwards from Gundamak, and could not even dispossess the solitary native regiment which held Jugdulluck when the small brigade under General Charles Gough had started for Sherpur. The Ghilzais of Tezin had also found themselves non-plussed by the abandonment of the old route of the Khurd Cabul, which was no longer followed either to or from Sherpur. Although Maizullah Khan and every local chief, with the exception of Mahomed Shah Khan, of Hisarak, were in arms, their tactics were so faulty that, beyond menacing Luttabund, they did nothing to harass our reinforcements. The mere fact of our being able to hold the Luttabund Kotal was so strong an evidence that the end had not yet come, that they hesitated to occupy the road between that post and the Jugdulluck defile, fearing that they might be caught between two fires. Then was demonstrated the full value of the decision arrived at by Sir F. Roberts—to hold Luttabund at all hazards until its garrison could be picked up by the column moving to his relief. The flash of the heliograph from Sherpur to the *kotal* where Colonel Hudson, with less than 1,000 men, was watching for the reinforcements from our eastern posts, told the tribes that the force in Sherpur, though beleaguered by an army larger than Cabul had ever seen, was still linked to its supports, and was by no means in the straits Mahomed Jan had promised. Sitting on the hills about Luttabund, the Ghilzais were too faint-hearted to attack in earnest, and Mahomed Jan was not General enough to detach one-fifth of his force to sweep away the handful of men forming our solitary outpost. Forty Sikhs of the 23rd Pioneers were enough to scatter the bands which gathered about Luttabund; and so little did the followers of Maizullah Khan prove worthy of the trust confided to them by Mahomed Jan, that from Jugdulluck to Butkhak scarcely a shot was fired upon General Charles Gough's brigade. Mahomed Jan, holding Cabul and the Bala Hissar in his grasp, must have felt that his plans were falling to pieces when the Ghilzais were unequal to breaking up the force passing through their midst; and once our reinforcements had entered upon the Cabul plain, those plans ceased to exist. In desperation the assault upon Sherpur was decided upon, and its failure was the signal for the collapse of the *jehad*. Twenty-four hours after

the signal light blazed upon the summit of the Asmai hill, not 1,000 men of the 50,000 who had held Cabul could be found within ten miles of the city.

I have tried to explain the course of action taken by the Ghilzais of Lughman and the Passes, and they have always been a bugbear when an advance upon Cabul was made from Gundamak. It has been clearly proved that they lack organization, and have not the resolute courage to attack entrenched positions held by even small bodies of our men. Asmatullah Khan, it is true, made a demonstration against Jugdulluck on the 29th of December, six days after Mahomed Jan's flight; but he was beaten back with a loss, on our side, of one officer (Lieutenant Wright, 11-9th Battery), and a native gunner killed, and one man of the 51st Regiment slightly wounded. This was after eight hours' fighting, and proves how paltry a force Lughman can send out. As this was probably Asmatullah Khan's last attempt before withdrawing to Lughman again, I will give Colonel Norman's (24th Punjab Infantry) account of the affair. Writing on the evening of the 29th, he said:—"At 10 A.M. to-day a party I had sent out to reconnoitre on the hills to the south was attacked in force by Asmatullah Khan. The party held its own until reinforced; but as the enemy were in great strength, I had to send out nearly all my men. One hundred and sixty of the 29th were on the *kotal*, and holding points on the Pass to cover the advance of the 45th Sikhs, then marching up to join me. About noon I received a telegram, saying that three companies of the 51st Foot, 360 men of the 45th Sikhs, and four guns of 11-9th Battery, were on the way up. I accordingly waited for the arrival of these troops, to enable me to act more vigorously; but it was 4 P.M. before they arrived, and before this I had driven the enemy back. The reinforcements, directly they had arrived, took up a position in prolongation of my right, to enfilade the enemy. Just as 11-9th Battery came into action, I regret to say that Lieutenant Wright was killed by a rifle bullet. The enemy had completely retired before sunset. The practice of Anderson's guns (Hazara Mountain Battery) was splendid. Asmatullah Khan has most of the Lughman chiefs with him, and the Governor of Jellalabad Mahomed Hasan Khan." Colonel Norman also reported that

with the force at his command, he could not hope thoroughly to disperse the Lughmanis, who retired from one range of hills to another. These are the usual tactics of Afghan guerilla warfare, the tribesmen returning as soon as the pursuit is over. The punishment of Asmatullah Khan will be directed from another quarter. A flying column from Jellalabad will enter his country and devastate it, dispersing any force he may attempt to keep together. The news of this proposed expedition has doubtless hastened his steps back to his own fertile valley. The Ghilzais south of Jugdulluck will also be visited by a flying column from Gundamak, which will penetrate as far as Hisarak, and punish Maizullah Khan and the other chiefs who joined him. Each of these columns will be made up of 1,500 infantry, four mountain guns, and a squadron of cavalry, and they are to be kept always ready to move out at short notice, apart from the regular garrison of Jellalabad and Gundamak.*

Another prisoner of some importance has been deported to India: Daoud Shah, the ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Amir's army, was sent down the line a few days ago. His honesty, which for a long time many of us believed in, seems to have been tried, and found wanting. The story that a letter was intercepted, incriminating him in the rising, is untrue; but that communications of some kind passed between him and the hostile chiefs is said to have been pretty conclusively established. The exact relations between him and Mahomed Jan may never be known; but they were probably on the basis that, if Daoud Shah would desert the British, a high command should be his under the new Amir, Musa Jan. His military experience would also have been invaluable in directing such an army as that within Cabul, and his knowledge of our cantonment and its weak points would have made him a leader whom the tribesmen would have confidently followed.

The Military Commission has had before it many of the prisoners taken after December 23rd, and five men condemned to death were hanged yesterday. Four of these were villagers of Baghwana, near which place the four Horse Artillery guns were lost on

* I may here state that both these expeditions were afterwards carried out, and their object attained.

December 11th. Captain Guinness, of the 72nd Highlanders, has taken the place of Major Morgan, 9th foot, on the Commission, which, it will be remembered, originally consisted at Siah Sung Camp of General Massy, Major Moriarty, and Captain Guinness. Very few prisoners are now left for trial.

CHAPTER XXI.

An Amnesty issued—Influences affecting the People during the *Jehad*—Invitation to the Chiefs to visit Sherpur—Leaders exempted from the Amnesty—The Malcontent Chiefs at Ghazni—Durbar of January 9th—Principal Chiefs present—Padshah Khan—Address by Sir Frederick Roberts—Loyal Chiefs rewarded—Arrangements for governing Kohistan—Migration of Hindu Merchants to India—Reasons for the Movement—Mahomed Jan's Plans—Proposal to Recall Yakub Khan—Reasons for such a Course being impossible—Improvement in the Intelligence Department—News of Abdur Rahman Khan—Additional Fortifications about Cabul and Sherpur.

7th January, 1880.

An amnesty has been issued by General Roberts, dated December 26th, which is so framed that it should convince even the most sceptical tribesmen that we are anxious to conciliate them rather by fair dealing than by force of arms. Only five leaders are exempted from the pardon which is freely offered to all tribes who will send in their representatives to our cantonments. The losses which the Kohistanis and other clans suffered by the *jehad* were so heavy that the pride of having been able to coop up the British army within Sherpur, must be mixed with a feeling that the temporary victory was dearly bought, and that to repeat it would involve still further loss of life. In the proclamation it is assumed that the mass of ignorant people were misled by the representation of certain "seditious men," and rose in rebellion against us; and our pardon is granted on the further assumption that this ignorance was generally shared in by the coalition of tribesmen. This is a very lenient view to take of what was really an outburst of religious fanaticism, in which even chiefs who were friendly to us shared; but it is a stroke of policy which may, for a time at least, win over to us most of the leaders of the tribes.

Before carrying fire and sword into their villages, we invite them to come in and say what it is they really want, and we guarantee their personal safety, even though they lately stood arrayed against us. This is not the usual treatment accorded to rebels; but it is felt, perhaps, that, with our half-hearted declarations of policy regarding Afghanistan, it would be unwise to punish, with the severity rebellion merits, the people who have given us so much trouble. If we had formally annexed the country, we might certainly punish with death men who rose in arms against our authority; but all we have done is to declare that, at some unknown date, we shall "make known our will as to the future permanent arrangements to be made for the good government of the people." Where our arms were felt, there our authority was known and respected; but in the districts beyond, our power was only nominal. To refuse to obey it was rebellion only in name, under such circumstances; and, moreover, the abdication of the Amir Yakub Khan was looked upon by his late subjects as rather compulsory than otherwise. The ignorant people, whom we are now so ready to forgive, argued that, if the abdication was voluntary, a successor would instantly have been placed on the throne; whereas time had gone by, and nothing had been done to show that our military occupation of the capital and the districts between Cabul and Peshawur was not to be permanent. An appeal to their loyalty to the Barakzai dynasty, and a further appeal to their hatred of Kaffirs, were quite enough to call them to arms; and they believed themselves strong enough either to drive us pell-mell from Cabul, or to impose terms of their own making. They did not succeed in either; and if we followed their own savage custom, we should kill every man we could lay hands upon who had joined in the attack upon our army. But, instead of these bloodthirsty reprisals, the tribesmen find pursuing them messengers bearing offers of pardon if they will merely visit Sherpur and make their obeisance to the British General. They are not asked to submit to any conditions; their safety is assured; and all that is required of them is that they will frankly say what their opinions are upon the present state of Afghan politics, and what suggestions they have to make to guide us in dealing with the people. Some of the tribal chiefs are either in Sherpur, or on their way thither; and

we shall soon have an opportunity of hearing what their wishes—if they have any—really are. But, whatever views are put forward, and whatever points may be yielded by men who are in their hearts most hostile to us, it will not be enough to take shallow promises as trustworthy in the future. With all the cunning astuteness of Afghans, the tribal leaders will come in and will try to outwit us, as they have always tried before. If we accept their promises and leave them to be carried out by themselves, they may be looked upon as a dead letter. Rather would it be better to listen to all that they have to urge in favour of a new order of things: Kohistanis, Wardaks, Logaris, Ghilzais of all sections giving their views freely; and then to dismiss them to their homes, warning them that they must rest peacefully until the *will* of the British Government is made known to them. Let a fixed date be declared on which that *will* shall be publicly proclaimed; and whether the decision is that Afghanistan is to be annexed, to be split up into provinces, or left to fall to pieces by internal disorder after our return to India, let it be clearly understood that, so long as a British General remains at Cabul, his orders are the law that is alone to be regarded. These orders, also, must be enforced, when necessary, by our soldiers, and something more must be done than sending some sirdar, alone and unprotected, into tribal districts, to carry out our wishes. The only fear is that the amnesty may be looked upon as a sign of weakness on our part, meaning that we dread another uprising; but if, along with our philanthropic forgiveness, we mix the leaven of military preparations on a large scale, the eyes of the people will be opened to our real resources and the power we have at hand to crush rebellion. It must never occur to us again to be shut up in Sherpur for nine days; such investments are fatal to our prestige, both here and elsewhere. The memorandum of a Military Secretary in India, who can seek to reassure the country by the absurd statement that 2,500 men can garrison a cantonment with over four miles of walls and trenches to man, must not be allowed to weigh against the ugly facts we have had to face. With more than 5,000 men available for duty, the work was so terrible and severe, the constant watch by day and night so trying, that over 800 sick and wounded are now in our hospitals. With these 5,000 we could

repulse assaults, but could not move outside to give battle to the enemy who flaunted their standards on Siah Sung Heights, and planted others within 250 yards of our bastions. Never was there a case in which the motto "fore-warned is fore-armed" was more applicable than now: our warning has been a rude one, and has cost us many lives; but it has done this service—that it has shown us how to guard against another such shock. Ten thousand men in Sherpur and the Bala Hissar can laugh at even 50,000 tribesmen; for, with such a force at our disposal, we could always spare 3,000 or 4,000 infantry to fight beyond the walls; and our past experience has shown that we have nothing to fear with brigades of this strength. It is only when we invite attack by weakness that hands-ful of our men are overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers. If we are to continue in the country, and operations are to be extended in the spring to Ghazni, Charikar, or Balkh, not less than 10,000 men should be garrisoned in and about Cabul by the end of March. Our power now extends just as far as our rifles can shoot; for we can no more rely upon the fidelity of Chiefs who come into Sherpur, than Macnaghten could upon the promises of Akhbar Khan. Every man's hand would be against us, if we again were encompassed about in these cantonments.

In the meantime, the proclamation of an amnesty has brought in most of the Kohistani chiefs (even those of Istalif and Charikar) and the nearer Lughman *maliks*. The latter were friendly enough to us before December 14th; but aver that they were forced to join Mahomed Jan, who threatened to harry their villages if they refused to turn out their armed men. The Kohistanis have seen Mir Butcha's villages and forts destroyed within a week from the dispersion of the investing force; and, true to their old policy, they have come in and are as peaceable as when first they were entertained on Siah Sung. Padshah Khan has suddenly grown very anxious to be on good terms with us again, and his son and uncle are already here. He himself will shortly put in an appearance, and his explanations will be interesting to listen to. He forfeited the subsidy promised to him for the aid he gave us, on our march from Ali Kheyl, by his tribe sharing in the attack upon the Shutargardan; and he is astute enough to

know that now he has no claim upon our consideration. When General Roberts has interviewed the chiefs of the various sections, he will be able to comprehend, in its true light, the reason of the late *jehad*, and what it is that the tribal leaders require. Upon this he may make his calculations for a future campaign if they again prefer an appeal to arms to a peaceful understanding. It must not be forgotten that the five men exempted from the amnesty are still at large, and are supposed to be planning a revival of the *jehad;* and doubtless every chief who now comes in and accepts the pardon offered to him will make a mental reservation to be guided by the course of events at Ghazni as well as at Cabul. The five leaders are Mahomed Jan; Mushk-i-Alam, of Charkh; Mir Butcha, the Kohistani chief, now said to be at Charikar; Samander Khan, of Logar; and Tahir Khan, son of Mahomed Sharif Khan, the sirdar kept as a prisoner at Dehra Dun. Tahir Khan was for a long time in our camp with his brother, Hashim Khan, and was generally supposed to be a harmless youngster. As he was instrumental in carrying off Musa Jan, and is active in keeping alive the dying *jehad* at Ghazni, he has suddenly become a personage important enough to be severely punished if he is caught. Mahomed Jan is all-powerful among the Wardak men, the most restless and impetuous clan near Cabul. He would have been their chief upon the death of his father, but that he was a General in the Amir's service, and could not fulfil both duties. His brother was elected chief, but has since died, and the Wardaks look upon Mahomed Jan as their leader. The malcontents at Ghazni have also been joined by the ex-Governor of Jellalabad. This man, Mahomed Hasan Khan, finding his friend, Asmatullah Khan, with his Lughmanis, was coming to grief at Jugdulluck, doubted him, and, following by-paths through the hills north of Luttabund, reached Deh-i-Sabz in safety. He thought the Safis too weak to stay with, and passed thence through the Koh-Daman over the Surkh Kotal until he gained the Ghazni Road below Argandeh. Once on the southern road, he was safe; and by this time he is probably aiding Mahomed Jan to get together a new army.

9th January.

The policy of conciliation which we have so magnanimously adopted after the ineffectual attempt of the tribesmen to drive us from our cantonments has been declared in open Durbar to-day, to some 200 Sirdars, Chiefs, and *maliks*. The effect of the amnesty, issued on December 26th, has been in the main so successful, that many Kohistanis, Logaris, and Ghilzais have come into Sherpur and made their peace with Sir F. Roberts—temporarily it may be, for but little reliance is to be placed upon the promises of Afghans; but still openly, and with no seeming reservation. What their course of behaviour may be hereafter, in case the Ghazni malcontents are able to raise a second *jehad* of importance, we cannot tell; but they have been given clearly to understand that our forbearance does not arise from any fear of our own strength to crush them, but simply because we desire rather to live on peacable terms with the people, than to be continually harrying them for their misdeeds. It is almost too much to ask any tribesman to refrain from joining in a movement which promises him plenty of bloodshed and unlimited loot; but by first thrashing him and then treating him with generous forgiveness, we may convince him that it is more to his interest to be on friendly terms with us than to risk his life and property by setting our arms at defiance. The Durbar to-day was held chiefly for the purpose of presenting such of the Kohistani chiefs as had remained friendly to us with substantial rewards, and of declaring to the others what our present policy is likely to be. The Logari and Ghilzai chiefs had also a chance of observing how we reward our friends, and of being assured that an offer of pardon to such as have chosen to accept it was not an empty promise, merely to entice them into Sherpur.

A large tent was pitched near head-quarters, and in this were assembled the chiefs who were to make their salaam to General Roberts. They were marshalled in due order by Mahomed Hyat Khan, Assistant Political Officer, and knelt down in the fashion in vogue among Orientals when serious business has to be gone through. A little square was left vacant in the middle of the tent, and in this stood four of the 72nd Highlanders with fixed

bayonets, the only sentries among the closely-packed Sirdars and *maliks*, many of whom were fighting against our troops but a few days ago. Sir F. Roberts entered, when all had been duly arranged, and the kneeling figures rose as with one accord, and made obeisance with that courteous humility which seems to convey so much, and yet, in reality, means so little. There was no parade of any kind in the Durbar: General Roberts was attended only by an Aide-de-Camp, Captain Carew, and Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer. His native orderlies were of course at hand in case of a fanatic appearing. The salaaming having come to an end, General Roberts seated himself to receive the Sirdars as they were presented separately by Mahomed Hyat Khan. Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan was placed on the General's left hand, and from time to time explained the status and characteristics of the more notable Chiefs. In addition to Wali Mahomed there were many other members of the Barakzai family present, the chief of whom were Sirdars Ibrahim Khan (brother of Shere Ali), Ahmed Ali Jan, Mahomed Hashim Khan, Abdulla Khan, and Mahomed Yusuf Khan. One by one the Chiefs were presented, and the formal ceremony of the Durbar proceeded. Many of the Sirdars, and even some of the tribal chiefs, so far conformed to English custom as to shake hands with the General. It was a picturesque scene; the dense mass of kneeling figures, clad in richly-coloured *chogas*, or with long-flowing garments shaped like the old Roman *toga*. The wild and, in many cases, handsome faces of the tribal leaders lighted up with interest and expectation as their fellows stepped out and bowed meekly before the representative of that British Government they had lately fought against. One incident was the presentation of Padshah Khan to General Roberts. As his name was called out, there was something like a titter all round—for even Afghans have a sense of humour, and they could not help appreciating the shamefacedness of this Ghilzai chief, who, after aiding the British to reach Cabul, had striven to drive them out, and had then accepted the forgiveness so freely offered. Padshah Khan came forward in his usual cringing way, and on his sunburnt cheeks just a tinge of colour mounted, the nearest approach to a blush that he could raise. Even General Roberts joined in the general smile which spread

from face to face at the evident discomfort of the Chief; while the latter, recovering his self-possession, went back to his place smiling also, as if a great weight had been lifted from his mind. He must wonder at our generosity, and, perhaps, be doubtful as to how far it may extend, in the future; but, so far, he is grateful for our forbearance, as his villages have not shared the fate of those of Mir Butcha. The Logari and Ghilzai Chiefs having salaamed, there were presented *en masse* some thirty-four Jagri and Besud Hazara Chiefs and *maliks*. These men have remained true to their promises; and as their country bounds Ghazni on the west, and also marches with the Wardak districts, they are likely to be useful allies. Being of the Shiah sect of Mahomedans, they have nothing in common with the Afghan Sunis, and we shall be able to employ them in harassing Mahomed Jan's army if that leader collects a force at Ghazni. With a column marching up from Candahar, and our own army moving down the Ghazni Road from Cabul, the insurgents would be held in check westwards by the Hazaras, and their only road for retreat would be eastwards towards Khost and the Shutargardan districts. Saftar Ali Khan, head of the Jagri Hazaras, was unable to attend owing to sickness; but his son, Ahmed Ali Khan, was present to receive the handsome *khilluts* bestowed upon his father and himself. The presentations being over, Sir Frederick Roberts read the following address to the Kohistanis, which was translated into Persian by Mahomed Hyat Khan:—

"Sirdars and Maliks,

"I am very glad to see that so many of the Kohistan *maliks* have taken advantage of the amnesty published on the 26th of December last, and have come to Cabul to pay their respects to the British Government, and to express their regrets for having taken a part in the recent disturbances. I trust that those *maliks* who are still holding aloof, will follow the good example that has been set them, and will soon make their appearance at Cabul. I told you, when you visited me in my camp at Siah Sung, after the arrival of the British troops at Cabul, that the British Government had nothing but goodwill towards the people of Afghanistan; that it is their desire to respect your lives, your property, and your religion, and to molest no one who would live at peace with them. You have had ample proof of the truth of what I told you. At the instigation of ill-advised men you came from your homes in Kohistan to attack the British troops at Sherpur. All that you succeeded in doing was to plunder your own countrymen who live in the city of Cabul. You did the British troops but little injury, and in a few days you were beaten off, and had to return to your homes with the loss of several hundred killed and wounded. You brought this punishment upon yourself, and must

not blame the British Government. What that Government did was to offer a pardon to all who would come in—except the *malik* who, it is believed, was the main cause of your being led astray. It was necessary he should be punished; but, in doing so, every care was taken that no one else should suffer injury. The British troops marched through your country as far as Baba Kuch Kar, treating you all as friends, and paying liberally for everything in the shape of food and forage you were able, or willing, to provide. I hope the lesson will not be lost upon you, and that you will not misunderstand the generosity and forbearance with which you have been treated. It is a great pleasure to me to find that so many of the more intelligent and well-informed of the people of Afghanistan took no part in the recent disturbances. First and foremost I would name Sirdars Wali Mahomed Khan, Ibrahim Khan, Hashim Khan, Abdulla Khan, Mahomed Yusuf Khan, Mahomed Karim Khan, Shahbaz Khan, Ahmed Ali Jan, Mahomed Sirwur Khan, Ataullah Khan, Anitoollah Khan Habibulla Khan (the Mustaufi), Malik Hamid Khan, and Khan Mahomed Khan. Then several of your own chiefs remained with me throughout. General Faiz Mahomed Khan, the son of Naik Aminulla Khan, of Logar, the family of the Mustaufi Sirdar Habibulla Khan, of Wardak, the Kizilbashes, and many other influential men in the city of Cabul refrained from joining the disturbers of peace and order; and I am glad to have this opportunity of thanking them on the part of the British Government for the good service they thereby performed. I am now about to give *khilluts* to those Kohistanis who remained at Sherpur with me; after which you are at liberty to return to your homes. I am sending back with you to Kohistan Sirdar Shahbas Khan, whom you have yourselves asked for as your Governor. He will settle your disputes, and preserve order in the country. Also that I may be fully informed by yourselves of all that passes, and of all that you may wish to represent hereafter, I invite you to select certain of your number who will remain here and act as a medium of communication between us. They will be treated with consideration, and will have free access to me. The rest of you may return to your homes, and for your own sake remember all that has passed."

Sir Frederick Roberts then presented the *khilluts*, which consisted of handsome *chogas* and a certain number of rupees, to the Chiefs who had remained with us, or faithfully kept their promises. Those who had merely come in answer to the amnesty were, of course, not rewarded. Besides the Sirdars mentioned in the speech, who were rewarded for their loyalty to the British Government, there were eleven Kohistani Chiefs, twelve Logaris (including Faiz Mahomed Khan, of Ali Musjid celebrity), and thirty-four Jagri and Besud Hazara Khans and *maliks*. With the distribution of *khilluts* the Durbar closed, and the Chiefs were free to depart.

In the meantime, our indecision has re-acted upon a section of the citizens of Cabul, who dread another occupation by tribesmen. The Hindu merchants are beginning to move out with their families and goods, and are taking the road to Peshawur. I have had many chances of learning their feeling from one of their

number, an intelligent banker, well versed in local politics. His explanation of the migration is that the Hindus trusted in the British, and looked to them for protection—which was promised. But when the rising took place, the British had enough to do to hold Sherpur, and consequently they were left at the mercy of the rabble about Mahomed Jan. They will not risk a second occupation, being convinced that it will take place, as we have not really received any considerable reinforcements. "Besides," they add, "no man can say what you will do next, whether you will go back to India, or occupy Cabul for ever. We have waited for you to say what is to happen, and nothing has come of it except loss to ourselves and insult to our women. We will still wait, but this time in Peshawur, where we shall be safe. If the Sirkar takes over Cabul, then we will return." And so they are taking their departure, and Cabul is losing many of its best citizens; industrious, peace-loving men, whom we cannot easily replace. It is a comment upon our "waiting-upon-Providence" policy which is not at all pleasant. Besides, if these Hindus carry to India the idea that we cannot protect them in Cabul, and spread this report throughout Hindustan, the effect upon the minds of our own subjects east of the Indus may be very serious. Prestige is such a delicate plant in Eastern soil, that it should be carefully guarded. Our military preparations in and about Cabul —the building of strong stone towers on the Bala Hissar Heights and the Asmai Hill, the cutting of military roads to the Cabul gorge, the re-occupation of the Bala Hissar, the clearing of the country about Sherpur of forts and walls—do not convey much to these Hindus. "You want more *men* if you are to hold Cabul, and keep out your enemy. What are 10,000 to 50,000? There must be 20,000 here to guard Sherpur and the city." They are men of peace, and their criticism of military matters is weak; but they shrewdly enough ask if, after sickness and wounds, our fighting men are more numerous now than two months ago. It may be a small matter, after all, that these terror-stricken Hindus turn their faces eastwards; but it should be remembered that, all through the troublous times of the Durani dynasty, their forefathers, and they themselves, have remained in Cabul, and they are only leaving the city now, because they do not believe in the

power of the British to hold it against another army of 50,000 Afghans.

Our news from Ghazni still shows that there is energy left in Mahomed Jan, and that he has held his own against the Jagri and Besud Hazaras, who have tried to drive him from the neighbourhood. His latest plan to collect a new army is very ingenious. He has placed Musa Jan solemnly before his followers, and made the child repeat after him an oath upon the Koran, by which all true Mahomedans who join in another attack upon Sherpur shall be exempt from taxation for three years. The bait is a tempting one to indigent tribesmen; but some of the more wary may refuse the offer, as they must see how unlikely it is that our army will ever be expelled by force.

There is not much cantonment news. The force has just experienced a heavy loss in the death, from pneumonia, of Dr. Porter, principal medical officer of the division. Dr. Porter was so universal a favourite, both with his own medical officers and with every soldier in the Cabul army of occupation, that his loss is a matter of personal sorrow to all of us. His high professional ability gave him a prominent place in the first rank of army surgeons.

17th January.

The malcontents at Ghazni have at last given us an idea of the terms to which they would be willing to agree: these being nothing short of the recall of Yakub Khan, and his replacement on the throne. It is difficult, in the present state of affairs, to gain accurate news from Ghazni, but from letters which have been received, it would seem that a secret council of chiefs was held at that place a few days ago, and it was decided to send Sir Frederick Roberts a kind of diplomatic message. The purport of this message was that Mahomed Jan and his adherents would fight to the end unless the ex-Amir was instantly sent back from India, and once more given charge of Afghanistan as supreme ruler. Young Tahir Khan is the originator of this new scheme, but it is uncertain how far it is shared in by Mushk-i-Alam. It is pretty certain that the latter was sorely displeased by his *jehad* being perverted into a raid upon the city of Cabul;

and on this point he quarrelled with Mahomed Jan, even before the investment of Sherpur was at an end. This quarrel was partly instrumental in causing the rapid dispersion of the tribal gathering; factions being formed, and discussion running very high. The more fanatical sided with the *moollah;* while the disorderly element supported Mahomed Jan. The letter conveying the decision of the Ghazni council has duly reached us, and we are rather amused at the coolness of the proposal. The removal of Yakub Khan is in the eyes of many people a very inadequate punishment for his culpable weakness in allowing an Envoy to be slaughtered, and we should be stultifying ourselves if we were even seriously to think of "giving him another chance." If he were a strong and capable ruler, able to carry out the terms of an alliance with us; a leader who had been captured in opposing our armies, and had been deposed after defeat, there might then enter into our calculations such a possibility as making him Amir once more. In the old war we so far sacrificed our pride as to send back Dost Mahomed to Cabul after he had been deported to India; but Dost Mahomed was a ruler worthy of respect, and a soldier who could keep his unruly subjects fairly well in hand. One can almost imagine that a few fanatics are hugging the belief that, as the Dost was reinstated, so will Yakub Khan be again placed in power; but such a consummation can never occur. It is doubtful whether Mushk-i-Alam has accepted the decision of the council. Our first information was to the effect that the arch-*moollah* had gone to Ghazni and harangued a large meeting of the malcontents; but it has since been reported that he was not present at the consultation. Mahomed Jan's movements, too, are difficult to follow. One day he is said to be among his kinsmen at Wardak; the next that he is stirring up the Zurmut people east of Ghazni; and then come all sorts of absurd rumours about his being on the way to Kohistan to see what Mir Butcha is doing.

Our intelligence department is growing at last to be something more than a name. Before the events of the 11th and 23rd December, the only reports that were received as trustworthy were those given by paid spies and followers of the sirdars—followers who are, as a rule, of the purest type of ruffianism. One always looks upon a sirdar as a past-master in the art of deception, who

would sacrifice the British at any moment if he could do so with impunity; and the hangers-on of these chiefs are not a whit better than their masters. The action of the 11th in the Chardeh Valley proved to demonstration that no trust could be placed in the reports given by the sirdars: there were found to be 10,000 or 15,000 men within ten miles of Sherpur, whereas we had only heard of 5,000 being at Argandeh. Now there has been established a regular system of patrols, and a certain number of Kizilbash horsemen are stationed at various points on the Argandeh Kotal, Surkh Kotal, the Kohistan Road northwards over the Paen Minar Kotal, and about Charasia. They are under the command of one responsible native leader in Sherpur, who again is directly controlled by Lieutenant-Colonel Lockhart, the Quartermaster-General of the division. As these horsemen are paid, not by results, but for regular service on patrol work, they are likely to be more trustworthy than the highly-paid spies hitherto employed. If the system could be a little more extended on the lines I have before pointed out in previous letters—viz., regular establishment—it might be a great aid to us in the guerilla warfare we are engaged in.

Important news has been received that Abdur Rahman Khan has left Tashkend, and is now probably in Turkistan. If his residence among the Russians has not thoroughly converted him to their views, he might be a useful man for us to take up. He is ambitious, and, if we can trust Mr. Schuyler's estimate of him, has some ability which might now be turned to good use. What his influence would be now in the country after so many years of absence we cannot tell; but to-day, in mentioning his name to an old Cabuli, and saying that he was possibly already in Turkistan, my listener's face lighted up with pleasure, and he eagerly asked if he would return to Cabul. There are so many possibilities to be weighed in calculating the chances of settling affairs here on a fairly safe basis, that Abdur Rahman's claims may come to be considered. Unless, as I have said, he has been Russianised, he might fall in with our views, and, at least as a provincial governor, be trusted with authority.

In the meantime we are making preparations to hold Cabul as well as Sherpur in case of an attempted repetition of the events of

December 11th to 23rd. General Charles Gough's brigade in the Bala Hissar is busy at work, cutting a broad road from the Shah Shehr Gate (that facing Siah Sung) to the gate overlooking the city near Chandaul. The broken places in the walls have been built up, and improvements made by the Engineers, so as to give shelter to the garrison if an attack were attempted from the city. The Sherderwaza Heights immediately above the Bala Hissar are also to be held in future by one battalion (say 500 or 600 men), stationed in three strong towers, now in course of construction. The first and strongest of these is on the spur above the Arsenal; a steep point completely commanding the Upper Bala Hissar already being crowned with strong walls, the basement of the tower. The crest of the Sherderwaza Heights already boasts of a strong wall, part of the Afghan fortifications; and this position is naturally so strong, the hillside sloping down almost perpendicularly towards Chardeh Valley, that with the two towers now being built it could defy assault from any force destitute of artillery. The ridge running down westwards to the Cabul gorge would also be held if an enemy menaced the city, and on the Asmai Heights on the northern side a strong fort is to be built. The military roads converging upon Dehmazung from Sherpur cantonments unite in Deh-i-Afghan and pass by the foot of the Asmai Hill, whence they are to be continued in one broad road until the main Bamian Road through Chardeh Valley is gained. The towers above mentioned are to be provisioned and watered, always, for ten days, and are to contain small-arm ammunition equal to the requirements of a battalion for that period, calculated on the basis of serious fighting. A road broad enough for guns will also be made about Cabul itself from Deh-i-Afghan to the Bala Hissar, in addition to a circular road about Sherpur cantonments. Another road is to be cut from Bemaru village to the Siah Sung Heights, with a bridge spanning the Cabul river; and yet another from the 67th Gateway (near the south-eastern bastion) direct to the Bala Hissar, this also crossing the river by a new pile bridge. These two roads will ensure communication between Sherpur and the fortress without our troops having to pass near the city walls; and will give us alternative bridges over the Cabul, whereas we formerly had only one bridge, that on the city road from Sherpur.

With regard to the cantonment itself, the clear space for 1,000 yards about the walls is already partly made, although the *débris* of forts and villages destroyed requires much levelling before it can be said that all cover has been swept away. The blocks of solid mud and the loose rubbish could be utilized by skirmishers advancing to attack, and until this accumulation of ruins has been thoroughly levelled, our rifle-fire will not have a fair chance. On the eastern point of the Bemaru Heights a very strong tower is now being rapidly built, and the hill about it is to be scarped for ten yards, so that to assault it from outside cantonments would be impossible. At the north-west corner, below the western end of Bemaru Heights, the line of trenches with their parapet of gun-carriage wheels (described in one of my letters written during the siege) will also be strengthened by a broad and deep wet ditch.

CHAPTER XXII.

Philanthropic Work in Cabul—Dr. Owen's Hospital—Prejudices gradually Overcome—The Attendance of Women—The Hospital Wrecked by Fanatics—The Place Re-established—A Visit to the Wards—Gratitude of the Patients—Treatment of Men Wounded in Action—Confidence in the Surgeon's Skill—Life in Sherpur—Freedom of Criticism upon Current Events—The Sherpur Club—Amusements of the Garrison—The First Theatre—The Pleasures of Skating and Sliding—A Snow Fight on Bemaru Heights—"How they Live in Cabul"—Zenana Life—Prevalence of Intrigues—Shopping—A Cabul Interior—A Lady's Dress—Cabuli Children—Character of the Citizens of Cabul—The Sirdar—Ambition and Sensuality—A Sirdar's House—The Rites of Hospitality—The Cabul Trader—His Manner of doing Business.

22*nd January*, 1880.

As there seems to be an impression gaining ground, at least in England, that our army of occupation have adopted the Russian plan of settling a country—the institution of a Reign of Terror—it may be worth while to describe fully the means which we have taken for drawing the people towards us. After the capture of Cabul in October, it was found that there was a vast amount of disease and suffering among the poorer inhabitants of the city, and that native surgery never attempted to cope with these, except

in the rudest way. With the benevolence which generally characterizes our commanders in the field, Sir F. Roberts ordered a charitable dispensary and hospital to be opened in Cabul; and Dr. Owen, Staff Surgeon, was placed in charge of the institution. The Kotwal's house, vacant by reason of the execution of that official for complicity in the Massacre, was turned into a hospital, and work was begun at once. The rooms were cleaned and put in order, wards for men and women arranged, the tottering walls shaken by earthquakes made safe and sound, and then patients were invited to attend. On November 21st, Dr. Owen was first "consulted," twelve wretched beings, suffering from various ailments, coming to him for treatment. They were carefully treated, and although, on account of the scarcity of English drugs in camp, no elaborate prescriptions could be made up, the best bazaar medicines were freely given. The news of the Sircar's latest eccentricity soon began to spread throughout Cabul, and for several days the place was visited by little crowds of persons, who were either sick, or had sick friends who needed treatment. With the suspicion always at work in Afghan minds, that every act of the stranger has some obscure tendency to harm them, the citizens were full of mistrust. They could not appreciate the generosity of their conquerors, and argued that it was absurd to suppose that men who had come to destroy Cabul would sink their ideas of vengeance, and, instead of taking life, would save life and make it worth living. Gradually their ideas changed; they believed in the disinterestedness of the English *hakeem* (who, by the way, was more than once mistaken for Sir Louis Cavagnari, risen to life again, Dr. Owen slightly resembling our dead Envoy). The number of patients increased; but, with customary jealousy, no women were permitted to seek relief: there might be a plot to invade the sanctity of the Afghan household. But attentions of this sort were not thrust upon the citizens, and some women also were found waiting at the hospital doors. A room was set apart for them in which they could wait without fear of being molested; a middle-aged woman, a Cabuli, acted as matron, and re-assured them, when their fears overcame their desire to be made whole.

By the 11th of December the daily attendance had risen to 118, of whom fully two-thirds were women, and Dr. Owen's services

were sought after by well-to-do citizens, in whose *zenanas* were sick wives or favourite concubines pining under mysterious ailments. Just when attendances were daily growing more numerous, came the rush of Mahomed Jan's host upon Cabul. The city was occupied, and in the stupid madness which prompted the ghazis to destroy all marks of our occupation, the dispensary was looted and partly wrecked. Fortunately, the few cases of instruments, which Dr. Owen had to leave behind, were taken away by one of the attendants and buried in a neighbouring house. But the bottles of medicines still on the shelves were broken; chairs, tables, and partitions smashed to pieces; and even doors and windows pulled out. This was in the outer courtyard of the late Kotwal's house; the rooms grouped about the inner yard were not much interfered with, as they bore but few signs of the stranger's hand. When on Christmas Day, Dr. Owen once more visited the place, nothing but empty rooms greeted him, and these so filthy, that they could scarcely be entered. However, those in the outer courtyard were soon cleaned, and on the following morning patients were again found waiting at the doors. There were only eighteen on that particular day; but as peaceful times were more assured, the list soon grew to its old proportions; and yesterday, when I visited the hospital, there were 207 patients on the books. The disease most prevalent in Cabul is ophthalmia, caused by dirt and exposure; while cataract and other serious affections of the eye are also only too common. The type is very much the same as that found in Egypt; and partial, or complete, blindness from neglect follows almost as a matter of course. Luckily for the Cabulis, Dr. Owen is a skilled oculist, and already his operations are bruited about the city as marvels that cannot be easily understood by the people.

My visit yesterday was made with Dr. Owen a little before noon; a sharp walk from cantonments, past the ruins of the forts of Mahomed Sharif and Mahomed Khan and over the Cabul river, bringing us in a quarter of an hour to the western skirts of the city, not far from the Bala Hissar. Through a narrow, winding lane, so filthy and muddy that a Cologne slum could not compare with it, and then into the Char Chowk Bazaar, just where it tapers off towards the Peshawur Gate: along this for a few

yards, and over a doorway on the right, a wooden board catches the eye, with the words "Charitable Dispensary," painted upon it, with the Persian translation below. As we passed through the doorway into an open courtyard, where thirty or forty wretched poshteen-clad men were squatting under a rude verandah, a Ghoorka guard of four men stood to attention on the sunny side of the yard. The squatting figures rose up and made their salaam abjectly, as poverty ever does; they were the poorest of the poor —Hazara coolies, Mahomedan beggars, lepers, the blind, the halt, the maimed—all whom wretchedness and disease have cast out as a hideous fringe upon healthful life. Apart from the general crowd were solitary men, whose appearance showed them to belong to the shopkeeping class—an influential section in the busy life of Cabul. Two or three women, veiled from head to foot, resembling nothing so much as Sisters of Charity, followed us in, and, with faces carefully covered by their *yashmaks*, passed quickly into a closed room, the door of which opening for an instant showed other white-robed figures grouped together. There are three rooms on the right of the courtyard—a small one, in which stores are kept and an attendant lives; a second, which serves as dispensary, surgery and consulting-room; and a third, the *zenana*, the room in which the women wait in quiet seclusion. Around the inner yard, which is reached by an open passage, are the wards proper of the hospital, wherein surgical cases, or those involving nursing and supervision, are treated. The rooms are warm and comfortable, and the terraced roof is well adapted for convalescent patients, who can "sun" themselves in comfort, that process which does so much to restore strength after a weary illness. A room on the roof is being fitted up for operations, as it is light and airy, and the operator will not be liable to be disturbed by the curious crowd which often collects now in the outer courtyard. Among the in-patients the most noticeable was a man suffering from severe bullet wound in the leg. He had been shot by us during the investment of Sherpur, and now, to his surprise, found himself being treated kindly, and cured of a wound that, if untended, would have caused his death. He seemed very grateful for the attention paid to him: to be given comfortable quarters, food, and a skilful surgeon by the Sircar against whom he had

fought, was so unexpected, that his mind had not quite grasped the whole idea. No doubt, in time, he will see that it was done with no more evil intent than to prove that we bear no malice, and are only anxious to conciliate the people. Other wounded men have also been treated, and notice has been sent round to all the villages about that any one suffering from hurts received in the fighting will be admitted freely into the hospital, and, when cured, will be allowed to depart without molestation. Our "Reign of Terror" must surely be of the mildest when our benevolence plays so chief a part in our policy.

After seeing the wards in which the patients were lying covered with blankets, and with their feet thrust towards the middle of the room, where was placed a wooden frame guarding a pan of live charcoal, the heat of which is retained by thick, wadded quilts placed over the frame, we returned to the dispensary where the "out patients" are dealt with. *Place aux dames:* the women were first treated, two native doctors (one a Cabuli educated in the Punjab) taking their tickets and dispensing medicine, while Dr. Owen rapidly examined them. There were many eye-cases, ophthalmia being most frequent, and the eagerness with which the women pressed forward showed their faith in their newly-found friend. They were nearly all old, wrinkled, and hideous; but their veils were as carefully drawn until they were face to face with the surgeon, as if they had been still youthful and attractive. Two or three children were also brought. One bright-eyed little fellow, with a fractured arm, which had been set a few days before, crying out with pain until it was found that the sling in which the limb was carried had been carelessly tied by his helpless mother, who had not understood the instructions given to her. In a few minutes all was set right again, and the brave little man bore the pain without a murmur. When the worst cases had been seen, Dr. Owen went out to visit one or two patients in the city, leaving the native doctors to deal with such trifling ailments as were sought to be relieved. Medicines are given gratuitously; and though patients with diseases of years' standing expect to be cured in a few days, everything done to relieve their suffering is gratefully accepted, and belief in the *hakeem's* skill is a cardinal article of faith among all of them, as only one death has occurred

since the hospital was opened. Dr. Owen is now freely admitted even to houses where Afghan exclusiveness is most severe, and thus imperceptibly an influence is being gained over the minds of the people which cannot fail to do great good. The jealousy of Mahomedans where their women are concerned is quite disarmed when they see how entirely devoted the English surgeon is to his profession, and how little it affects him whether his patients are street beggars, in the lowest depths of misery, or ladies of the *zenana*, surrounded with every comfort.

I have described one phase of our rule in Cabul, and it will be seen from it whether our policy, however defective it may be in its indistinct outlines and indefinite aims, deserves the title of "Russian." When wounded ghazis are in our "charitable hospital," our vengeance must surely be of the most harmless kind. We have troubled waters enough in Afghanistan, but we have also our pool of Siloam.

I give here two articles written a few weeks later, descriptive of our life in Sherpur, and also of native life in Cabul:—

"How we Live in Sherpur."

We are a self-contained colony here, and a self-possessed one, too, for the matter of that, but we are by no means self-satisfied. Every man among us believes that if his advice had only been asked, the Afghan difficulty would have been settled months ago, and we should now be enjoying the delights of furlough in England, or revelling in the fascinating gaieties of the cold season in the plains. A Briton without his grumble would be unworthy of his country, and so we growl and swear against the Powers that be, and ask why, in the name of all that's wicked, the wire-pullers in India and England do not make up their minds to settle the matter. We are so conscious of our own unrecognized powers as politicians and diplomats, that we laugh to scorn the idea that affairs cannot be put on a footing that would satisfy even the staunchest believers in a scientific frontier. The army in the old days was merely a machine which, once set in motion by the hand of a minister, ground out its life for years and years, without any-

thing more than an occasional groan when its wheels were not properly lubricated. But, now, things are changed: every soldier is not only a fighting machine, but a thinking machine, digesting rumours and theories with marvellous voracity, and reproducing patched and piebald opinions of his own, which will intrude themselves into prominence. There can be in our ranks no "mute, inglorious" Wellingtons—or Wolseleys (for, in the eyes of many purblind people, the terms are synonymous); an officer can now through many channels criticize and smash up the strategy of a campaign, and calmly sit upon the heads of his seniors while his comrades applaud most heartily. Even the private soldier in the ranks knows full well that if he only pulls the long bow sufficiently in a letter home, some sympathizing party journal will accept his view of the situation, and upon it draw with no uncertain hand the outlines of a new policy. If the flood of criticism which is now surging about Sherpur could only be collected in one stream, and be poured upon the devoted heads of the clever politicians who hold our destinies in their hands, these gentlemen would never stand high and dry again; they would be overwhelmed once and for all. A shower bath braces the system; a waterspout drowns all upon whom it falls; and if there were not a feeling that our blundering along here, without a guiding light to show General and soldier what to do, were now coming to an end, such a phenomenon as a waterspout might arise in Sherpur. But I have before sketched this phase of an existence here: if I said "life," my own might be endangered by the indignant army of Philistines, who only "exist;" and it is useless to revive the cry of "Loot, Love, and Liberty," for not one of these blessings is forthcoming.

And yet from day to day we continue our being, and the days are not so long as at first sight might be supposed. We have one panacea for all the evils with which we believe ourselves beset: we make the best of everything. Given the fine, bright weather which delighted us only a few days ago, and Gymkhana meets, pony matches, polo and dog-hunting delight our hearts and strengthen our digestions. Given a snow-fall and a rapid thaw, when the ground underfoot is merely a quagmire: our rooms and mess-houses, snug and warm, seem to invite us to a quiet rubber or an earnest study of books and papers. And then there is our

Club; it is an accomplished fact, and, what is more, is an "institution." It was conceived in the calm which preceded the stirring events of December 11th to 24th, but its birth came not until a fortnight ago. It is not of the imposing kind that was first intended, but still it suffices for all our wants, and is made a rendezvous by all who care for some other society than the familiars of their own messes. From Bemaru village, where the Guides are encamped, and the choice spirits of the Transport Department hold high revel occasionally on that spot sacred to the memory of that foolish virgin who died *be-maru* (without husband)—from Bemaru to the quarters in the western wall is nearly two miles; and it was not to be wondered at that friends at either end of cantonments saw little of each other when there was no gathering-point. One might pay a visit and, after tramping through slush and snow, find one's friend absent. To accept an invitation to dinner meant braving pitfalls and watercourses in the darkness, or helplessly wandering about in the darkness on the return journey, uncertain in what direction one's home lay. But now the Club is a recognized centre, about which, in the evening, when work is over and dinner not yet on the table, many of us gather. The excuse is a "nip" before dinner; the reason our sociable instincts. A witty Frenchman has said:—"Wherever three or four Englishmen are congregated, *voilà un club!*" It is so: there is nothing to be ashamed of in our love of companionship. And our Club has the charm of novelty, both in situation and design. It is the first established under the shadow of the Hindu Kush, on historic ground; and its architecture is a mixture of the nomadic and Public Works styles. We pitched a large tent: we were nomads; we took down the canvas side-walls, and built in their place walls of mud and bricks, pierced with windows and doors, and with chimneys springing out above the canvas roof. The structure was complete. From nomads we became clubmen. Could civilization further go? And here we meet and exchange views upon things in general and Afghanistan in particular, subaltern and Colonel shouldering each other in true club style, the mixed crowd being flavoured generally with a Brigadier or two, while the darlings of the Staff air their gold-lace in a more congenial atmosphere than

their stuffy quarters, which are office, dining, and sleeping rooms all in one. Certainly our Club is a success.

In the shape of indoor amusements, Christy minstrel bands are springing up, and one theatre has already had a short season—three nights. The 72nd Highlanders have rigged up in the ditch near their quarters a number of *pals* resting against the stout mud wall, and in this a first-class stage has been built with act-drop, scenery, footlights, and all complete. On the opening night the 5th Ghoorkas, old friends of the 72nd, felt that their patronage was indispensable; and when two little "Ghoorkis" struggled into the pit and tried to peep over the heads of the crowd, a dozen eager hands hoisted them shoulder-high, and amid great applause they were carried to the front and placed in the first row. Here they smiled their thanks as only Ghoorkas can smile—from ear to ear—and when the curtain rose, they watched the performance critically and with unbounded satisfaction.

The severe weather that has declared itself during the last few days has added new sources of amusement. A week ago the owners of skates were disgusted with the non-appearance of hard frost; now skating goes on nearly all day long, and the science of sliding is also being cultivated. Europeans and natives alike indulge in a "slide;" and to see half a dozen Guides contentedly coming croppers on the ice, and rising again with immense satisfaction, only to sit suddenly down the moment afterwards, would make Timour himself smile benignantly. Once on the slide, every man seems but a child of larger growth, and right gleefully the game is kept up until tired nature gives in, and various points of our bodies remind the most hardy that bruises are painful when excitement dies out. With the fall of snow on Monday came a battle-royal, which will always live in the annals of our occupation. To tell the story with due solemnity: at noon word was brought to the 72nd Highlanders that the enemy (the 67th Foot and 92nd Gordon Highlanders) had occupied the strong fort on the eastern end of the Bemaru Heights. Without delay the regiment fell in 500 strong, and, reinforced by the 9th Lancers and some artillerymen, marched with banners flying and drums beating to the attack. (The banners were those lately captured on the Takht-i-Shah Peak and the Asmai Heights; the drums were various

cooking-pots.) On nearing the enemy's position, the attacking force was joined by a detachment of the 5th Ghoorkas under their British officers; skirmishers were thrown out, and the bugle sounded the assault. The storming party were headed by the standard-bearers, the cry of "Ghazis to the front!" being answered by a rush of these reckless men up the hillside. They were met by such a terrific fire, the air being darkened by snowballs, that the assault seemed hopeless. But amid the din the cry of their leader, "Ghazis to the front!" rang out—

"Ho! Ghazis to the front! Ho! Ghazis bear the brunt
Of the battle waged on snowy Bemaru!
Let not the stinging ball your fiery hearts appal,
But hurl the Kafirs down! Allah-hu!"

The despatch says:—

"A desperate resistance was made, but a bugler with the 72nd succeeded by a *ruse* in turning the fortunes of the day. He crept round in the enemy's rear and sounded the regimental call of the 92nd, followed by the 'cease fire' and 'retreat;' the 92nd fell back and the attacking party carried the position. Many prisoners were taken and the usual atrocities committed—one gallant Highlander having three men sitting on his chest at once; while others, equally gallant, were buried alive in the snow. The conduct of all concerned fully bore out the estimate previously formed of the splendid fighting powers of our men, and several 'V.C.s' are to be awarded. The number of wounded was unusually great, but all are now doing well. The defeat of the enemy was so complete that they at once sued for peace, and a treaty was signed at the Club later in the day by the principal leaders. In consequence of the ink being frozen, curaçoa and brandy were substituted."

It will be seen from the halting sketch here drawn, that with all our growling discontent at being left in the dark as to the future, we manage to smooth away the rough edges of our life which so much gall us, and that our petulance never grows into sulkiness. That we have to fall back upon rough horse-play occasionally is not surprising: there is no softening influence to keep our spirits at an equable temperature. We are a colony of *men*—chiefly young men; and Cabul society is so very select that

we have not yet gained an entrance within its sacred limits. If we were to make ceremonial calls upon the *zenanas*, we should probably be confronted by some buck-Afghan, with a knife in his hand and an oath in his mouth. Love and war do not go hand in hand now in Cabul, although they did forty years ago; so we must sigh in vain for a glimpse of that beauty which the *yashmaks* hide so jealously when the Cabul ladies flit by us in the narrow streets of the city. When a more than usually coquettish white-clad figure passes, we turn hastily about; but what can be seen?—

"Nought but the rippling linen wrapping her about."

And what is she like in the seclusion of the *zenana?* Ah, that lies apart from our life in Sherpur; but perhaps I may be able to partly answer the question. "How we Live in Sherpur," can only have as its companion picture—

"How they Live in Cabul."

It is not an attractive life, that which we have come upon in Cabul; but it has its lights and shades and a certain robustness of its own, which is now more than ever apparent. The reaction after the excitement of the siege of Sherpur was terribly depressing for a time in the city, as every Mahomedan citizen felt that a heavy punishment might fall upon him, and in most cases justly. But these ignorant fanatics did not know that the Government of England is a limited monarchy tempered by Exeter Hall. Now they have fully realized that we were in earnest in offering an amnesty to all who would return peacefully to their homes, and have renewed their trading with a vigour which shows their appreciation of our new rupees. As in every Oriental city, the life led by men and by women runs on very different lines; the concerns of the bazaar and the affairs of the *zenana* are as distinct as day and night; the one is all energy and strife, the other dulness and monotony. Woman has no place in the creed of Mahomed beyond the base one of continuing the Mussulman race; she is an inferior creature, to be shut up and kept from mischief within the four walls of her master's harem. If she loves her lord—or some part of him, as she generally shares his affection and

bodily presence with other wives or slaves—she dutifully brings forth a son to continue the race, and then her mission ends. She is a piece of furniture, a belonging of the *zenana;* and if nature has not gifted her with a love of intrigue, she must be content to vegetate in seclusion until, in the ripeness of years, she drops out of life. She knows she has nothing to expect beyond the grave; does not her creed teach her that her lord will lie in the lap of *houris* steeped in eternal sensual bliss? Perhaps in her wildest flights of imagination, she may gain hope from some such mad idea as that she and her fellows will be blended into one great mass, from which will spring millions of *houris* to people the heavens, and wait with open arms for the souls of the faithful. May not she, in *houri* form, fall to the lot of the man she loved on earth, who despised her as something too trivial for much consideration? Such a belief may comfort her; let us hope it does.

But woman in Cabul has fewer restrictions placed upon her than in other Oriental cities, and the semi-freedom she enjoys has been the theme upon which travellers in old days delighted to enlarge. Cabul is declared by them to be the city of intrigue. This belief arose from the practice of women, closely veiled from head to foot, being allowed to pass unmolested along the public streets, unattended and with no restrictions upon their movements. One enthusiastic writer, speaking no doubt from experience, asserts that the mind of an Englishman cannot imagine the extent to which intrigues are carried on in this forward city. Wife, daughter, or mother, could, according to his account, pass from the *zenana* into the narrow thoroughfares about, and with perfect confidence visit any lover upon whom her eyes had fallen. Every figure loses its identity in the folds of the white drapery which completely envelopes a woman from head to heel, and the *yashmak* covering the face blots out the features more thoroughly than a mask. Undoubtedly this freedom of action does exist, in appearance at least, still; white-robed figures flit about the bazaars and the by-streets, and no one pays regard thereto; but they are women of low degree, with no charms to guard, and probably with but little thought of pleasure in their minds. If finest linen, a gold embroidered boot, a coquettish mincing step,

attract the attention of a Kafir, the latter will invariably find that the lady is attended by some duenna, or more probably by two or three male domestics, who clear a way for their mistress through the motley crowd. The Afghans are said to be peculiarly jealous of their women: witness the proclamation issued to our soldiers before Kushi was left!—and though love laughs at locksmiths, it seems incredible that any sirdar or well-to-do citizen should allow the inmates of his *zenana* liberty to wander about at will, with no eye to watch their movements. We are rather at a disadvantage in Cabul; for a Kafir to explore the *penetralia* of the gloomy high-walled houses is next to impossible. We have a Club, it is true, but it is not on the deliciously free principles of the Orleans; and if we were to institute five-o'clock tea, and send out cards of invitation to Madame Shere Ali and Madame Yakub Khan, and harem, or any other ladies of distinction in Cabul, there would be no chance of the invitation being accepted. The ladies might rise to the occasion, but their grim guardians would baulk their intentions with a vengeance. To make calls of ceremony would be equally impossible, for there are no grass-widows in Cabul with whom to enjoy a cosy *tête-à-tête*. If, by some lucky combination of the stars, a Kafir were fortunate enough to gain the sacred ground of the *zenana*, its simple-minded inmate would probably lisp out in fluid, but passionless, Persian:

> "I do not seek a lover, thou Christian knight so gay;
> Because an article like that has never come my way."

In fact, a stranger in the harem would be a very indefinite article indeed in Cabul, for it is not every one who can hope for the good fortune of a McGahan, who, in the Khanate of Khiva, wandered into a *zenana*, and was treated with hospitality and caresses by its inmates.

But it may be as well to be more definite in dealing with the life of women in Cabul; and I will endeavour to describe, in all fairness, what I have personally seen. To take the commonest figures seen in the bazaar: It is not unusual for women to do their "shopping" in public, though they lack the confidence of Western ladies, who parade their men-kind on such important occasions.

A Cabul lady stops before a stall in the bazaar, puts out a small fair hand, richly ringed, and touches any article she needs: generally a piece of Bokhara silk or English linen. The shopkeeper, sitting cross-legged among his goods, names his price; the customer quietly pulls the silk, say, towards her, bows her head, and, raising her *yashmak* an inch, looks critically upon the article. The seller stares over her head at the busy life about him, says not a word till the examination is at an end, and finally, after a little bartering, sells the silk, or throws it back into its place. In either case he cannot have any idea of the identity of the customer, though from her jewellery he may make a shrewd guess as to the length of her purse. Not every woman's fingers are circled by rings, or her *yashmak* secured with loops of gold. And so the lady passes on, pausing, perhaps, at other stalls, but never for long. To loiter before the goods which may charm her eye seems no part of her business, even when a more than usually brilliant display of silk or embroidered shoes attracts her. Her walk is hurried, her time, perhaps, is precious, and she glides among the crowd quietly, and as if shunning attention, though no one, unless he be a Kafir, pays the least regard to her presence. Finally, she turns off into some side-street, and disappears in a narrow gateway leading, one supposes, to her home. The majority of such women shrink from any chance contact with a Kafir of any kind; though such little bits of comedy have been acted as one of our gallants peering into doors and gateways only to find an unveiled face turned towards him, and that face generally very plain and unprepossessing. Such dames are of an uncertain age, and are not coy in thus rewarding attention or admiration, though such reward never goes beyond unveiling for an instant.

I had occasion quite lately to visit the house of a merchant in Cabul, a Mussulman of some little standing, and by a lucky accident got a glimpse of the home life of such a woman as I have described shopping in the bazaar. My companion and guide —who or what he was matters not—led me through tortuous streets, so filthy, that to tread them was alone a trial, until at a nail-studded door he stopped and knocked twice or thrice with the large iron "knocker" on its centre. All was still and silent inside for a moment, and then a picturesque-looking ruffian, no doubt

the Afghan serving man of the period, suddenly withdrew a bolt inside, after examining us through the wicket. We stumbled along a passage dark enough to make the few holes about more treacherous than holes ever were before, and then suddenly came a stream of light and we were in an open courtyard. It was commonplace enough: there were no "murmuring fountains, orange trees, or shady nooks," such as Eastern travellers love to dwell upon; simply a brown square plot of ground with rooms, two storeys high, surrounding it on all sides. On the left, facing the south, were the quarters of the owner; his reception-room and *zenana*, side by side; with a narrow doorway, screened by a *purdah* (in Western phrase, a *portière*), leading from one to the other. The rooms were open to the air on the courtyard side, elaborately-carved woodwork in the shape of sliding panels being the only screen from the sun. The interior was comfortable enough: the floors were covered with carpets, over which was laid clean white linen; the walls were either of carved wood or plaster, painted in gay colours. The interior of the *zenana* I could not see while in the reception-room, but from it presently appeared a bedizened youngster, who made friends at once. The sound of whispers behind the *purdah* came clearly enough into the room; and I would not be sure that we were not being examined by feminine eyes, while our host courteously served tea in beautiful little bowls that would have delighted a china-maniac. In an inner room, divided from the reception-room by light wooden pillars, were carved recesses, in which was a wealth of china: teapots from Russia, bowls from Kashgar and China, and others of a nondescript kind, covered with richly-coloured designs in yellow, green, and chocolate, the three colours most in favour among Cabulis.

Our visit was a short one, but as the master of the house led the way to the door, I lingered behind, and was rewarded by a glimpse into the *zenana*. It differed but little in appearance from the other room; the carpets were guiltless of any linen-cover, the walls were more brilliantly painted, cushions and pillows were scattered about, and the three inmates were on tiptoe of expectation as we passed. Two faces I saw; one old and wrinkled, the other young and pleasing. "An old wife and a younger rival"

was the conclusion I arrived at, and their dress bore out this idea. The elder wore nothing but pure white; the younger was gorgeous in green and crimson silk. Just a glance, and it was over: the child I have mentioned was being caressed by the third wife, whose back was towards her companions, and another child was lying asleep among the pillows. But for the presence of the children, it would have seemed dulness personified, as signs of occupation or amusement there were none. So much for the bit of quiet home life in Cabul: how monotonous it must be, none can tell, except, perhaps, those who have to endure it!

The dress of the Afghan women, especially those whose husbands have rank or wealth, is extremely picturesque. A short, tightly-fitting bodice of green, blue, or crimson silk, confines the bust, but buttons so closely up to the throat, that one can only guess at the proportions of shoulders and bosom. The bodice is generally embroidered with gold, and then becomes so stiff and unyielding, that it is virtually a corset. In this cold weather the short arms of this *sari* are continued down to the wrist, and the vest itself is padded with wool for the sake of warmth. Trousers *à la Turc*, baggy and flowing as Fatima's, and tightly fastened at the ankles with gold or silver bands, a broad silk *kummerbund* of almost endless length about the waist, with the ends so disposed that they become skirts; dainty white socks and a tiny slipper or shoe, gold-embroidered—such is the indoor dress of a Cabuli lady; while covering and hiding all save feet and ankles is the voluminous white garment drawn over the head and face, and falling to the heels. These veiled beauties wear jewellery alike about the forehead, hands, wrists, arms, ankles, and ears; while handsome gold loops secure the *yashmak* at the back of the head; the hair being drawn from the forehead and tied tightly into a knot, Grecian fashion. The length of a silk *kummerbund*, which encircles a lady's waist, is sometimes astonishing: one I saw must have been 12 yards long by 18 inches broad, and the end was even then not forthcoming. The slippers and shoes are of Cabuli make, and are very pretty. On a pale green ground beautiful patterns are worked with gold and silver thread and particoloured silk, until the effect is more like that of a fairy slipper than one for daily use. When a stout leathern sole is put on with high heels

rudely bound with iron, the work of art is complete. The stalls in which these slippers and shoes are made are the gayest in the whole bazaar. A Cabuli lady's foot is small, almost to deformity, and the baggy trousers by contrast make them appear exceedingly *petite*.

From the few faces seen, being chiefly those of old or *passée* women, it is difficult to judge of the famed beauty which the Cabulis are said to boast. The children are certainly, as a whole, the prettiest I have ever seen. Their complexions are red and white, with a tinge of olive pervading the skin, eyes black and lustrous, well-shaped features, teeth to make a Western beauty envious, and bright, intelligent looks, that sadly belie the race to which they belong. Their mothers *must* be beautiful, for their fathers are generally villanous-looking: the men losing all the pleasing traits which they possessed as boys. The lady I have described as seen in the *zenana* for a moment was certainly handsome, and was far lighter in complexion than a Spaniard; her eyes were really worthy of the praises sung by Hafiz, but the sensuous lips were a little too full and pouting. It was just such a face as one imagines in a harem, and would be in keeping with the langourous life of a voluptuary, to whom sensuality is a guiding star. Such faces always lack character, and would soon prove insipid in the eyes of the West. The Cabuli lady, when journeying, is either carried in an elaborate wicker-work cage covered with the inevitable flowing linen, or rides, Amazon-fashion, on a pony behind her lord. At times she is coquettish enough to throw warm glances at Kafirs, behind her husband's back, and is no doubt delighted at the admiration bestowed upon her daintily-slippered feet.

What the mission in life is of such women, in such a country as this, may be summed up in a few words. She must play the part of a mother, rather than a wife, for her sympathies go all with the children left to be brought up in the *zenana*, and not with their father, whose course lies in different lines in the busy scheming world outside. That some women of strong character occasionally share their husband's ambition, and aid him by advice and suggestions, is quite true. The mother and wife of Yakub Khan are both women of exceptional ability, influencing

and guiding men, and well versed in state intrigues. But the exceptions are few, and only prove the general rule obtaining in all Mahomedan countries, that woman is a cypher outside the four walls of the *zenana*.

The life of her master is a most difficult subject. To fathom the motives of an Afghan, or to explain his actions, would be a task for a Machiavelli, and I must deal with it in such manner as I can. It has always been held that the distinguishing features of a Cabuli are turbulence and treachery, and late events have only confirmed men in this belief. The arrangement of the city into quarters, each securely shut off from its neighbours by strong walls and fortified gateways, the part played by the Bala Hissar as a citadel dominating the tower below, and affording a refuge for the sovereign during bloody *émeutes*, proved to travellers in past days that the life of the populace was far from a peaceful one. Even now, though the old subdivisions of the city exist but in name, —except the Kizilbash quarter, which has still the means of cutting itself off from outside by strong gateways,—it is apparent that the Amirs never trusted their lives and property to the tender mercies of their citizen-subjects. When our army arrived at Cabul, the Bala Hissar was still a fortress capable of resisting successfully any attack made without artillery, and within its walls were the palace of the Amir, his harem, and his arsenal. Our Envoy, too, was lodged in the fortress, as the fanaticism of the Cabulis might have prompted an attack upon the Residency, if it had been in the heart of the city, with its bazaars re-echoing to the prayers of the *moollahs* and the cries of *fakirs*. That safety was not found even in the Bala Hissar, was due rather to the weakness of Yakub Khan and his contemptuous treatment of an exasperated soldiery than to any independent action of the populace. It is true that the city rabble joined in the attack upon the Embassy, but that was only when military discipline was at an end, and the men who should have guarded the lives of the Amir's guests were in the full cry of mutiny. Again, the building of Sherpur, with its range of barracks and new fortress upon Bemaru (planned, but never executed) was due to Shere Ali's dread of Cabul and its armed mob. With the Bala Hissar on one side and Sherpur on the other, he was sanguine enough to

hope for peace and quietness in his capital; and these he would no doubt have secured if he had not foolishly quarrelled with the Indian Government, whose subsidy gave him the wherewithal to raise and equip a large army and rear the walls of his new fortress.

Every Afghan is a soldier, and the Cabulis are no exception to the rule. Their stalls are to them what homesteads are to the mountain tribes and peasants; and when extortion or taxation grows in their opinion excessive, they are ready to turn out armed to the teeth, and by open menace to intimidate their rulers. A tyrant alone can hope to keep them in due subjection; and, as a rule, Cabul has been under the influence of tyranny for many centuries. As a natural result, when turbulence occasionally subsides, treachery flourishes; and the history of the city is full of instances of treacherous plots, and successful if bloody intrigues. Coming as we have done in the guise of an avenging army, we have greatly modified the normal appearance of things in the city, our proclamation forbidding the carrying of arms having destroyed the picturesque ruffianism which used to stalk through the bazaars armed with gun, shield, and knife, and ready for all emergencies. Not a weapon now is seen except in an armourer's shop, or on the person of some armed retainer of a Sirdar who has thrown in his lot with the British. It is a change for the better in our eyes; but when the people see our soldiers passing along with Martini or Snider slung over the shoulder, they must long to ruffle it again, and bring out from their hiding-places their own rifles and matchlocks. But it is not to be *yet*; though, when we again leave this "God-governed country" to its own devices, the good people of Cabul will once more be able to resume their old habits.

The influential citizens of Cabul are broadly divisible into two representative classes—the Sirdar and the trader; and in taking one from each of these sections, I shall be able fairly to sketch the general life led by the more orderly of the Cabulis. There are, of course, a mass of men: artizans, street-hawkers, retainers, and hangers-on generally, who furnish the rabble which has often made mob-law supreme within the walls; but these may be left to themselves for a little. The Sirdar has always been

a prominent figure in Afghan history; he is to all intents a feudal chief, and answers very much to the Baron who, in the Dark Ages, had so much to say in the government of Western countries. He is generally of royal blood, a cousin (some twenty times removed) of the Amir; but this relationship with the sovereign is not advantageous if the Sirdar is at all ambitious of power. There are so many revolutions of the wheel in the Barakzai dynasty, that the assumption of dignity by a subordinate is always jealously watched by the Amir, and promptly nipped in the bud just when it bids fair to become dangerous. Ties of kin are but little regarded in a country where continually father is arrayed against son, brother against brother; and where human life is held so cheaply that scarcely a man reaches middle age without having blood upon his hands. The Sirdar has either to muzzle his ambition and wait patiently for a chance of suddenly acquiring power; or to accept a colourless life of ease, with nothing to trouble his mind except the caprices of a favourite slave-girl, or the loss of a valuable horse. It is not surprising, then, that in Cabul there are Sirdars perfect in dissimulation and adepts in intrigue; and others mere slaves of their sensuality, to whom the world means merely *pillaus* and pillows, cakes and concubines. Such men are those loved by Cæsar:

> . . . . . "men that are fat;
> Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights."

And the easy-going Sirdar answers so fully to this description, that it would seem as if the cares of life sat very lightly upon him. Such men are too characterless to repay observation; and though we see many of them here, we pass them by contemptuously, except when a mountain of flesh more than usually formidable looms upon us in cantonments. They are not men given to fighting or political intrigue; and such as we have now among us are anxious only as to their allowances which the "Great British Government" guarantees to them while they are faithful to its interests. If they are time-servers, it is simply because they have no idea beyond the present one of comfort and quietness; if we were defeated they would probably make their obeisance to the new rulers, and would settle down calmly to their daily

enjoyment of the fat of the land in their well-stocked harems. There were such men among our own hard-headed Barons ages ago, who watched their more ambitious compeers make and ruin dynasties, and lived placidly through all the turmoil without even being partisans.

But the other type of Sirdar is a very different person: he holds that to be powerful is the salt of life, and his aim from youth to old age is to seek power in all its forms. He is generally rich and a lover of show; valuing money for the advantage to which it can be turned in many ways, and estimating pomp at its real worth—to impress the ignorant and humiliate the inferior. His life as now made up is not to outward seeming one of much importance, but not one of us can hope to penetrate beneath its surface, and examine the many schemes which pass through his mind. He lives in one of the large, high-walled houses which are studded about the city, though he has a "villa" or two in pleasant Koh-Daman, or one of the near valleys. If one visits him, the courtesy with which he receives a guest is that of a polished gentleman, flavoured, perhaps too highly, with the Eastern affectation of humility. His house is reached through byways and along covered-in streets, so dark and noisome that one expects to meet a ghazi at every turn. But all is quiet, and finally a bit of blue sky is seen overhead, a narrow doorway is passed through, and the square courtyard of the house gained. A few horses, saddled and bridled, are standing in a sunny corner; a dozen picturesque-looking ruffians are lounging about; the great man is at home. We find him in a long room squatting on an ottoman with a dozen friends and associates about him, to whom he has doubtless been expounding some new and brilliant idea that has occurred to him. He is politely anxious about his visitor's health, thanking God that it is well with him, and inquires if "the General" also is well. His conversation is guarded, but he makes up for his reticence by his hospitality: it would be derogatory to his dignity if the rite were not duly honoured; and in a few minutes trays bearing little cups of sweetened tea, sweetmeats, nuts and grapes, are being handed round by two or three of the loungers we passed in the courtyard. This tea is a mystery to me; it is always ready; it is always *good*,

and one can sip cup after cup with an enjoyment that positively increases with indulgence. The Sirdar's friends are mostly notable men: that grey-bearded old gentleman on his right is a tribal chief of some importance, who has come from his distant village to see how things move in Cabul after the late *jehad;* that dark-visaged man is a Bokhara trader, whose mind holds news of the White Czar and of the changing fates of the Central Asian Khanates; while his counterpart is another trader returned from Hindustan, where he has, perhaps, seen and learnt much that may shape the Sirdar's views in future. Behind the Sirdar is a richly embroidered *purdah* veiling the entrance to the *zenana*, wherein the quiet life of the women slowly moves. Our conversation is short and purely ornamental, and we take our leave, pleasantly impressed with the courtesy shown, but pondering over the depth of Afghan duplicity which is so cunningly hidden. The Sirdar passes his morning among his friends, and in the afternoon he will probably visit General Roberts or Major Hastings, the Chief Political Officer, to learn much, but to impart little. How far he can be trusted no one knows, not excepting even himself. If by serving us he can make his position secure, he will "sell" his nearest friends; if he thinks his interests are safe with men opposing us, he will thwart our projects with all the skill he possesses. His life now is not so restless as in old days, as our army has broken up all settled government, and the prospect is so hazy, that to dabble too openly in dangerous schemes might land him in distant Calcutta, to bear Daoud Shah company. Our Sirdar has lakhs of money hidden away in his house or buried in some secret spot; but he is cunning enough to swear that he lost greatly when Mahomed Jan held Cabul, and asks the British Government to recoup him, as he has always been faithful to its interests. The new influences at work upon his life are not so welcome to him, as they are novel and not to be easily understood; and he would far prefer the old order of things, when he could pit himself against some rival and gain his ends by crooked ways that he knows we should not countenance. If his chances just now of being shot or stabbed are not so great as formerly, he does not, with his fatalistic ideas, appreciate the change; and at times he grows sullen, and is discontented with our temporary rule.

The trader is a very different personage: he has seen men and cities, and his chief aim is to amass wealth, which he believes to be the keystone of happiness. His vocation now in Cabul is to make fabulous profits out of the British army of occupation which has invaded the sanctity of the city, and cowed its fanatical populace. In his heart of hearts the trader hates us sincerely; but he will endure curses from the Commissariat, or hard words from under-strappers, for the sake of the few lakhs of rupees he hopes to pocket. He will take contracts for anything, from sheep to *charpoys*, and will fleece everyone dealing with him with such calm self-assurance, that one is inclined to adopt, once for all, the theory that the Afghans are, indeed, the lost tribes of Israel. He is a power in the city, for he has money always at his command; and though he may have suffered grievously from extortion, he is shrewd enough to know that complaints are useless. He will visit our friend the Sirdar, and will gain his countenance and help in some nefarious transaction, perhaps such as "bearing" the money market, cutting off our sheep supply, or raising the prices of articles suddenly in demand. He may play the part of political spy in return for the Sirdar's help, or become a principal in some scheme that requires delicate working. The trader has his house, which also serves as a store-house for his goods, in some filthy corner of Cabul; and some near relative acts as a partner, and does the dirty work of retailing his goods from a narrow stall in the bazaar. Should a big transaction be coming off, with some merchant from the Khanates, in silks, furs, or precious stones, the trader has the universal tea-drinking, to which he invites the stranger, and he spends days in ceaseless chafering until the prices are duly fixed and the bargain concluded. In the bazaar itself but little trade on a large scale is carried on, the travelling merchants storing their goods in one or other of the large *serais*, while they let it be known from stall to stall that they have merchandise on sale. The trader is naturally of a peaceable disposition, and as his house is usually stored with rich goods, and his hoards of money are buried beneath the ground in his courtyard, he dreads an outbreak by the populace, who may levy contributions upon his effects. But he has within him the Afghan instinct of sturdy resistance to all assailants.

With his iron-studded door closed against intruders, with half a dozen servants armed *à la Cabul* with gun pistol, and knife, he is no mean antagonist to deal with. He would scarcely join in a tumult except when his fanaticism overcame his better judgment, for there are too many risks to be run when once a populace like that of Cabul has broken free from all control. The trader in this respect is considerably removed from the mere stall keeper, who is always ripe for riot, and is never better pleased than when turning out fully armed. We have seen a great deal since our occupation of the trader, and he does not improve upon acquaintance. He is cringing and subservient when a tight hand is kept upon him, but beneath his plausibility is a fund of cunning, which carries him triumphantly through all his knavery. Like the Sirdar, he is an instrument we are forced to use in this unprofitable country, but which is to be thrown away without compunction when done with.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Afghan Army—The Amir Shere Ali's Efforts to raise Disciplined Troops—The founding of Guns—Surferaz's Failure—A Cabuli Gunsmith sent to Peshawur Arsenal—A Foundry established in Cabul—The Manufacture of Rifled Guns and Small Arms—Cabuli Gunpowder and Cartridges—Percussion Caps—Army Clothing Department—The Number of Guns and Small Arms in Afghanistan—Cost of Shere Ali's Army—Weakness of the Organization—Regulars versus Tribesmen—Their Behaviour in various Actions—The Failure of the Regular Army—Suggestion for the Creation of a Militia—The Ghazi Element among Irregulars—How a Ghazi is Made—His Mode of Fighting.

SHERPUR, 28*th January*, 1880.

AFGHANISTAN is a nation of soldiers, every adult being (apart from any military training he may receive) a ready swordsman and a fair shot. In our old wars we found but little organization existing among the followers of the Dost and his son, Mahomed Akhbar, and the discipline of our troops told in the long run against the masses they had to face. Afghanistan then produced, as a writer has said, nothing but stones and men: the stones made good *sungars*, which thousands of men were always ready to defend. But after Shere Ali had assumed the Amirship, a change

came over the "war department" of the country: that shrewd sovereign had his eyes opened to the necessity of having something more than an unlimited supply of men to fight his battles, and after his visit to India, in 1869, he began to cast about for means whereby he could arm and equip his troops in civilized fashion. Fortunately for his project, he was on the best of terms at that time with the Indian Government, and among the valuable presents he carried back with him to Cabul were a siege-train (consisting of four 18-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers), a mountain battery of six guns, 5,000 Snider rifles, 15,000 Enfields, and no less than 1,000,000 rounds of ball ammunition. This was the groundwork upon which he hoped to build up a well-equipped army, with artillery sufficient to make himself feared by all his neighbours, and respected both by the English and Russian Governments, upon his relations with which might ultimately depend the safety of his kingdom. To a man of less energy than Shere Ali, the project he took in hand would have seemed so full of difficulties, that it might have been reasonably abandoned after a fair trial; but the then Amir was a man of stubborn self-will; and his mind once made up, nothing could turn him from his object. The story of his successful struggle to create an army of all arms on the European pattern can be best told by reference to a report drawn up on information supplied by various sirdars and artisans, since our occupation of Cabul. Lieutenant Neville Chamberlain, Extra Assistant Political Officer, is the compiler of this valuable report, which gives in detail an account of Shere Ali's steady progress in the armament of his kingdom, until he made the fatal mistake of quarrelling with the British. One cannot fail to be struck with astonishment at the rapidity with which guns were made, rifles imitated, and cartridges turned out by the 100,000 in a country which boasts of but few resources.

Shere Ali could easily enough make regiments of infantry and cavalry, dress them after the fashion of the men he had seen paraded in India, and drill them in a few simple movements. If he were guilty of the solecism of making Highlanders mount on horseback, there was no great blunder committed; they were his mounted rifles, and were not likely to come to grief, as every Afghan is more or less a horseman. But in the question of

artillery, the Amir had to face a problem which must have cost him much anxious thought. The old brass cannon which had been used for many years as wall-pieces in the different fortresses of Afghanistan, sank into insignificance when compared with the guns Lord Mayo had given him. The latter were few in number, and it was all-important they should be multiplied, so that if three or four armies took the field, each should have its due complement of guns. There were skilled artisans in Cabul who had made brass guns; and one of these, named Surferaz, was given funds by Shere Ali and peremptorily ordered to turn out guns on the pattern of the siege-train and mountain battery which had lately arrived from India. The unlucky man tried his best; but, at the end of a few months, his work was pronounced a failure; and as he had spent Rs. 12,000 in his experiments, he was summarily thrown into prison, and all his property confiscated. This was his reward for obeying the orders of a tyrant. But Shere Ali was not to be foiled, and rightly attributing the failure to want of technical knowledge, he sent the uncle of Surferaz, Dost Mahomed, a skilled gunsmith, to Peshawur, to be instructed in the mysteries of rifled guns. Dost Mahomed may be allowed to tell his own story, as it is full of interest. He says :—

"I am a Cabuli by birth and a gunsmith. My father was a gunsmith before me. After Shere Ali's return from India, I was sent to Peshawur with a letter to Colonel Pollock, the Commissioner there, in which he was asked to allow me to visit the Arsenal, and see how the rifled guns were made. I remained in Peshawur for three months, until the permission of Government arrived. I then visited the Arsenal daily, and saw exactly how everything was done; and on my departure I was given models of guns in wood, with complete drawings of the details. I returned to Cabul, and with these models and some complete models of rifled breech-loading Armstrongs, which had been given to the Amir during his visit to India, I began work. I had three principal assistants: my nephew, Surferaz (who had then been liberated), Mahomed Ali, and a man named Rashed. Any number of workmen were at my disposal, as I had only to state the number I required, and they were impressed from among the city smiths. Before commencing a gun, a sum of money was given to me,

which I was not to exceed. The following were the prices in Cabuli rupees:—

	Rs.
Field gun	1,500
Royal Horse Artillery gun	1,000
Mountain gun	300
,, ,, (laminated steel)	600

"I never either lost or gained much by my contract. The iron for the guns came principally from India—some through Shikarpur, some from Peshawur. A small quantity was procured from Bajour and Zurmut. The core of the gun was first welded by hand on an iron bar, the required length and diameter. Long strips of iron having been placed all round the core, they were well hammered together, and bands of iron placed over all to keep everything in its place. The gun was then bored out by the machinery at the water-mills of Deh-i-Afghan. The machinery for these mills was set up by a Hindustani, named Muah Khan. He learned his trade from a negro, named Belal, who was taught by one Ibrahim, a native of Ispahan, who came years ago from Persia to the service of Sultan Jan, late Governor of Herat. The gun was then rifled by hand, the breech-block and details completed, polished by machinery, and handed over to the Arsenal. The strength of the guns was never proved by heavy charges being fired out of them, and they were at once taken into use. Out of all the guns I have made only one has burst. I could turn out four or five guns a month if necessary. My pay was Rs. 70 a month, and I occasionally received presents."

This was not a bad example of what perseverance can accomplish, for the guns manufactured are said by our gunners to be very well made, lacking only finish. The Armstrong breech-loaders would be creditable to an English founder, and we are now testing many of them to see if they cannot be used for the defences of Sherpur. A great number of small brass guns for mountain batteries were also made. The old ordnance was broken up, and new guns were cast in the Bala Hissar Arsenal, the boring and polishing being done at the Deh-i-Afghan water-mills. The alloy in these brass guns contains a larger per-centage of copper than we generally use. The water-mills to

which reference has been made can still be seen—a huge wheel with a long wooden shaft in which the boring-tool was fixed. With such simple means it seems almost impossible that heavy guns could be bored, but still the work was done, slowly it is true, but effectually.

The manufacture of small-arms was not such a success. Kootub-ud-din, a Cabul gunsmith, was placed in charge of the Bala Hissar Arsenal, and workmen under his direction made 2,000 Sniders and 8,000 Enfields. The Afghans placed but little faith in their imitation of our rifles; they found that the breech-action of the Snider would not act, the extractor often failing to throw out the cartridge-case after firing, while the grooving of the Enfields was so imperfect, that the barrel quickly got "leaded," *i.e.*, the groves were filled with lead stripped from the bullet as it was driven out by the charge. It is worth remarking that in the Amir's palace were found several rifles of different patterns (the French Chassepot among them), and each had its Cabuli imitation. No doubt various experiments were made before the Snider was finally adopted.

There was never any lack of gunpowder in Cabul, as the Amir employed six contractors to turn out the quantities he needed. Each mill could make two maunds a day, and the total daily out-turn on an emergency would be nearly 1,000lbs. These contractors were also ready to start other smaller mills during war-time, so that doubtless a ton of powder could have been supplied every day as long as funds were forthcoming. The composition of the powder was seventy-five parts of saltpetre, ten of sulphur, and fifteen of charcoal. Bamian supplied the sulphur, with occasional small quantities from Hazara and the Derajat. Saltpetre abounds near Cabul, and excellent charcoal is made from the thousands of small willow-trees which line every watercourse in Chardeh and the near valleys. The coarse-grain powder for muzzle-loading guns was paid for at the rate of Rs. 2 per lb., while that used for breech-loading field-guns and for rifles was Rs. 3 per lb. The powder, as a rule, is far inferior to that of European make, as the Afghans do not understand the final process of glazing, which adds so much to the strength of the composition. Shot and shell were strictly copied from the patterns brought from India, but time-fuses were not understood. A burst-

ing charge—the secret of which was held by a Herati—was used, and not until just before the war of 1879 were fuses made in the Bala Hissar. They are not a success, the delicate nature of the fuse not being properly appreciated. In the matter of small-arm cartridges, the Afghan smiths deserve much credit. Sixty of them were constantly engaged in the Bala Hissar Arsenal making up cartridges, and their Snider ammunition is excellent. The cases are made by hand, and are technically known as "solid cold-drawn brass." The bases are very strong, and the cases can be refilled many times. In a country where there is no machinery for turning out millions of cartridges in a few days this is a great advantage. Two clever Cabulis, Safi Abdul Latif and Safi Abdul Hak, invented a machine for making percussion caps, equal to turning out 5,000 a day. The detonating composition is fairly good, but spoils if the caps are kept for two or three years. Considering there were millions of caps still in the unopened boxes sent from Dum-Dum Arsenal to Shere Ali, native-made caps were not much needed. Gun carriages and limbers were made on the English pattern, the guns captured in the disastrous business of 1841–42 serving as models in addition to the siege-train given by Lord Mayo.

Among Shere Ali's other improvements in his "War Department" was the establishment of a Clothing Department, which had for its object the equipment of his soldiers in proper uniforms. The tunics, trousers, kilts, gaiters, helmets, &c., are all neatly made; and as each soldier received a new uniform every two years, the regular regiments ought to have been smart and well set-up. That they were not so was chiefly due to the laxity of discipline and the incompetence of their officers. Pouch-belts and bayonet frogs on the English pattern were served out, and the cavalry were all furnished with new swords, slightly curved like those used by our own sowars. The steel is generally very soft, but the blade is well-tempered, and takes an edge so keen, that even a slight blow leaves a deep gash. Shere Ali's ambition, while thus perfecting his armament, was to build a fortress of huge dimensions, and Sherpur was accordingly begun. The subsidy paid yearly by the Indian Government gave him money to lavish in this direction, and the cantonments our troops are now occupying were laid

out on a scale that even to European ideas seems enormous. The fortress was to have been in the shape of a huge square with walls 3,000 yards long; and on the Bemaru Heights, in the middle, a strong citadel was to have risen—"the New Bala Hissar." At the foot of the southern slope, below the citadel, a splendid palace was mapped out, the strong foundations of which even now show how imposing the building would have been. Shere Ali's quarrel with the British put an end to his ambitious schemes, and Sherpur remains to this day incomplete; while away in the Hazara Darukht defile, thousands of logs are lying, ready squared, which the Gajis had got ready for the barracks which will now never be built.

Lieutenant Chamberlain, in summarizing the result of his interesting inquiries into Afghan armaments, makes out the following tabular statement:—

NUMBER OF GUNS PREVIOUS TO WAR OF 1878–79.

English Siege Train (Elephant)	...	...	6
Cabuli ,, ,, ,,	...	...	10
,, ,, ,, (Bullock)	...	...	18
Horsed Guns { Breech-loaders, 89 / Brass Guns, 56 }	...	...	145
Mountain Guns { Breech-loaders, 6 / Muzzle-loaders, 48 / Brass, 96 }	...	...	150
Various small guns of Position	...	...	50
Total	...	...	379
Deduct Guns captured, 1879-80	...	...	256
Guns remaining in Country ...	...	...	123

These are believed to be chiefly in Herat and Turkistan.

The number of rifles entered in the Government books as having been issued to the troops are—

English Sniders	5,000
,, Enfields	15,000
,, Rifled Carbines	1,200
,, Brunswick Rifles	1,400
,, Tower muskets	1,000
,, Cavalry Pistols	1,045

Cabuli Sniders	2,189
,, Enfields	8,212
,, Rifled Carbines	589
Kandahari Enfields	453
Herati Enfields	516
Various kinds for Cavalry (double-barrelled, &c.)...	1,553
Smooth-bores (probably many Tower Muskets)	1,418
Flint Muskets	1,300
Total	49,875

Of these 742 English Enfields, 560 English Sniders, and 5,427 muskets, Cabuli Sniders and Enfields, flint muskets, &c., have been given up, leaving 43,146 small-arms in the country.

It is worth noticing that no information could be got as to whence the English rifled carbines, Brunswick rifles, Tower muskets, and cavalry pistols were obtained. The "Brown Besses" were, perhaps, part of those taken in 1841–42. This estimate of arms, it should be remembered, takes no account of the many thousands of *jhezails*, native pistols, &c., in the hands of the tribesmen. The totals are sufficiently great to prove that the late Shere Ali had placed Afghanistan on such a military footing, that he may well have believed he could, with the mountain barriers between Cabul and India, defy any force the British could spare to send against him. He was grievously mistaken; his weakness lying in the want of discipline among his troops, and the incapacity of their leaders.

The cost of the army which he had raised and equipped was a serious item in his exchequer accounts, if he ever kept any. Lieutenant Chamberlain computes it at 19,21,195 Cabuli rupees, of which Rs. 17,81,233 went for pay to the army, Rs. 1,20,235 for Arsenal expenses (not including Herat and Turkistan), and Rs. 19,727 for uniform. Considering that Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer here, has calculated the whole revenue of Afghanistan at only Rs. 79,82,390, it will thus appear that nearly one-fourth of the revenue was lavished in military expenditure. The Amir ought reasonably to have expected his army to have made a better defence of his kingdom against invasion than the weak struggle at Ali Musjid and the Peiwar Kotal. After the present campaign, Afghanistan can never hope

to rise to the position it occupied under Shere Ali. The easy capture of Cabul and 214 guns is a blow that even a Dost Mahomed would find it hard to recover from. Having dealt with the armaments of Afghanistan, there remains the regular army to be considered. We used to hear a good deal, at first, of the regular army of Afghanistan, which Shere Ali had called into being and drilled according to his idea of European tactics. So many "regiments" with a proportionate number of guns were said to be encamped about Cabul, while others were hurrying in from outlying provinces to swell the assembly. Now there had undoubtedly been a determined effort on Shere Ali's part to make every male in the population subject to the conscription, and the carefully prepared lists we afterwards found proved that the enrolments had been on a large scale. But there was one fault in the organization which told against all the Amir's efforts,—and that was the want of competent officers to train the thousands of men who were available for the army. Such officers as were equal to their work were chiefly pensioners of the Indian native army, but these could only teach the sowars and infantry their drill, and could scarcely be expected to manœuvre even a brigade in the field. An intelligent *malik* once said to a British officer:—"We can never hope to fight you with success until we are educated." "Well, why not have schools and colleges, such as the Sircar builds in India for the people?" The answer was one given with a half-contemptuous indignation:—"Not that kind of education; I mean until our army is educated, and our officers can do their work as well as yours." It was military education the petty chief was craving for, and he was unquestionably right in his aspirations. Shere Ali might be able to distribute Enfield and Snider rifles among his sepoys, fit out batteries with every kind of shot and shell, and teach his men such rudimentary discipline as would enable them to march in fairly good order; but he could never get beyond this. Instead of sending his young nobles to Europe to learn the mysteries of military science, he distributed commands among such favourites as were ready to take them with their emoluments; and occasionally he made a good selection from among men of the stamp of Daoud Shah, soldiers of fortune, whose courage was above suspicion, and who could generally keep an army in order.

Then there was the childish desire ever uppermost in the Amir's mind, of clothing his troops in English uniforms, and his "Army Clothing Department" turned out imitation Highland and Rifle costumes, or old Pandy uniforms by the hundred. The plan might have succeeded if less attention had been paid to dress and more to discipline and musketry. The Afghan does not lack native courage, and in hill warfare he is unrivalled so long as it takes the shape of guerilla fighting; but once he is asked to sink his identity and to become merely a unit in a battalion he loses all self-confidence, and is apt to think more of getting away than of stubbornly holding his ground as he would have done with his own friends, led by his own *malik* or chief. In fact, the late Afghan campaign proved beyond doubt that the Afghan "regulars" had reached that most precarious stage where the men are in a transition state: not yet trained soldiers, but a mob led by strange officers whom they scarcely know, and whom they generally dislike because they are the direct means of imposing the irksomeness of discipline upon them. A tribesman who has never been enrolled is always comforted in action by the thought that if the battle ends disastrously he can make good his escape and probably reach his village in safety, there to play the part of a peaceful peasant proprietor if his civilized enemy visits him afterwards. But the Afghan sepoy is in a very different position: if he is true to his salt he must remain with his regiment and retire in some kind of order, which means to his mind that the pursuing cavalry will have a much better chance of overtaking him. The result of this has been that on nearly every occasion the most obstinate resistance has been offered by tribesmen acting as independent bodies, with no organization, but with a cool courage which made them at times foemen worthy of our steel. To deal more particularly with the merits and weaknesses of the regular troops, and to contrast their work with that of ghazi-led tribesmen, may be of some interest.

Upon Sir Frederick Roberts's arrival at Charasia, the Herat and other regiments which had been in the neighbourhood of Cabul at the time of the Massacre were induced by Nek Mahomed and other sirdars to oppose the advance of the British force, and a strong position was taken up to prevent the Sang-i-Nawishta defile

being forced. Guns were placed in position, commands distributed, and an effort made to fight a battle with some approach to European methods. At the same time regiments were strengthened by a number of the city people and by tribesmen from the Chardeh Valley and Koh-Daman. For all practical purposes, however, the action was fought on the Afghan side by regular troops, and the poor show they made against General Baker's 2,000 men, gave evidence of the weakness before suspected. Our enemy was well armed with Enfield and Snider rifles, had plenty of ammunition, and was in a position which well-trained troops could have held against great odds; and yet on their left Major White, with 100 Highlanders, drove them from their most advanced position, while on their right the 72nd and 5th Ghoorkas, with a few companies of the 5th P.I. and the 23rd Pioneers (supported only by four mountain guns), turned their flank and drove them in confusion back upon Indikee. Their rifle-fire was well sustained and very rapid, but badly directed and not under control, and our men passed safely upwards with the storm of bullets rushing far above their heads. There was no counter-attack made, although we had practically no supports to fall back upon, and any rush would have involved the brigade in a very awkward position. On the road leading to the Sang-i-Nawishta *tangi* the enemy had twenty-six or thirty guns opposed to our single battery (G-3), and yet our artillery held its own with ease, and succeeded in dismounting some of their Armstrong breech-loaders. Their leaders had shown great patience and skill in placing their guns on commanding points, but the gunners were firing almost at random, as their training was of a superficial kind. Had the ranges been marked out, as at Ali Musjid, they would have done better; but our rapid advance destroyed what little confidence they might have felt in their own weapons.

Again, on October 8th, they were bold enough to engage in an artillery duel, and from Asmai answered our guns on the Sherderwaza, shot for shot. But not a man was wounded by their fire, although round-shot, shrapnel and common shell were all tried by their leaders. From this moment the Afghan army ceased to exist as a real body, yet in the actions which afterwards took place we had always fiercer fighting and much greater determina-

tion shown on the part of the adversary. The sepoys and sowars dispersed to their homes, carrying their arms and ammunition with them, but sinking their drill and discipline and looking upon themselves as once more tribesmen, but better armed than in the days when they had only matchlocks and *jhezails* as firearms. The rising in December was not a reorganization of the army, but a gathering of all the fighting-men from Ghazni to Charikar in answer to the appeal of the *moollahs* to their fanaticism. The short-lived success which followed was due chiefly to the leading of the ghazis, who knew no more of generalship or discipline than our own dhoolie-bearers. Occasionally we saw some sort of marshalling going on in the leading lines, in which the best-armed men were placed, but this was due more to the desire on the part of the leaders to make the most of their strength than to any idea of forming the mob into battalions. Mahomed Jan and Mushk-i-Alam trusted to numbers and to fanaticism, not to discipline, to win their battles, and their trust was fully justified. The losses they suffered were proportionately small. Our artillery could never be concentrated on a particular regiment or squadron, but had to be directed upon men in small scattered groups, or on a line extending for many miles across the country. Again, when the unsuccessful attack upon Sherpur was made, the retreat or rather dispersion of the 50,000 men was so rapid, owing to no regular army being with them, that we were powerless to overtake the fugitives; they had spread themselves broadcast over the country, hidden their arms, and had once more begun to play the part of an innocent peasantry.

The reason for the signal failure of Shere Ali's system is to be found, as I have said, chiefly in the want of skilled leaders, more particularly of regiments; but there is a further explanation, and one which makes intelligible the comparatively slight losses we suffered when our troops were greatly outnumbered. In our own army, even with all the trouble and care devoted to instructing the men in the principles of musketry, the rifle-fire is deplorably bad; thousands of rounds are expended with very poor results, and company officers grow despondent when volley after volley is fired and no impression is made upon the enemy. If this be the case with our well-disciplined troops, it may be readily believed

that Afghan sepoys are far worse. I learned from one of them in Cabul that although Enfields and Sniders were served out, each man only received three rounds of ammunition per year with which to gain a knowledge of his weapon, and that consequently they knew practically nothing of the capabilities of their rifles. They felt that at close quarters they might possibly hit their man, but at longer ranges they could not hope to shoot well. Their natural steadiness of hand and perfect eyesight, of course, served them in good stead; but position drill, the manipulation and sighting of the rifle, were generally a mystery to them. This was the cause of defeat when opposed to our regiments, though holding positions, such as the Peiwar and Charasia hills, which were capable of grand defence. For a time they fired rapidly and resolutely, but seeing no effect produced, and our skirmishing line always moving forward, they lost heart and abandoned position after position, until they had at last to make a hasty retreat. Again, with the artillery: to each gun issued from the Bala Hissar Arsenal one cartridge was served out, and when this had been fired and the gun had stood the test, no further practice was allowed. Could the gunners hope to attain proficiency under such conditions? This economy of ammunition was doubtless due to the difficulties of manufacture and the necessity of husbanding cartridges; but it was a short-sighted policy, and one which an Amir at all versed in the art of warfare would never have adopted.

If the time should ever arrive when Afghanistan becomes a protected State under the guidance of the Indian Government, and the people should recognize the advantages to be gained by an alliance with the British, the best plan would be, not to create a regular army, but to turn the population into a huge militia. The peasantry would not object to annual trainings, and if the principle were adopted of *issuing breech-loaders only*, instructing the men in their use and allowing them a fairly large number of rounds to be fired under the eye of their officers, and not to be retained under any circumstances, a splendid contingent could be formed. The men might retain their rifles, but the reserve ammunition should be stored in such a way that they could not gain access to it. In time of war they would assemble with rifles in their hands,

but with empty ammunition pouches; and upon the discretion of our officers would depend the number of rounds to be served out to them. The mercenary army we have raised in India owes its strength to the system of class regiments, and Afghanistan could be similarly dealt with. No combination between Pathans and Hazaras would ever take place, and with the latter kept fully armed and equipped doing garrison duty, the militia could be called out as a *Landwehr* when occasion arose. These ideas may of course seem to some Quixotic, but perhaps before another generation has passed away they may be realized. If the French can reconcile Arabs to serve in the Algerian army, there should be but little difficulty in creating, hereafter, an Afghan militia—always provided that our influence is supreme in the country, and the kingdom enjoying the benefits of our administration.

When the irregular levies come to be considered, we are bound to admit at once that the fanaticism which animates many of their number often makes them formidable enemies. Their ghazis make splendid leaders in an attack. The word "ghazi" has come to mean in Western eyes something very different from its legitimate signification. It originally meant a conqueror, or great hero, and in this sense it is used in modern Turkey. Osman Pasha was dubbed "Ghazi" when his splendid resistance to the Russians saved for a time the fate of his country; and the title is one held in the highest respect by Mahomedans. From "conqueror" the meaning has passed into lower grades, one of the commonest being "a gallant soldier" (especially combating infidels); and at last, in the common course of events, it has been appropriated in the all-comprehensive vocabulary of the English language with a distinct and localized meaning. To us, now, a ghazi is simply a man upon whom fanaticism has had so powerful an effect that all physical fear of death is swamped in his desire to take the life of a Kafir, and, with his soul purified by the blood of the unbeliever, to be translated at once to Paradise. A true ghazi counts no odds too great to face, no danger too menacing to be braved: the certainty of death only adds to his exaltation; and, as in the case of other madmen, desperation and insensibility to consequences add enormously to his muscular powers and en-

durance. To kill such a man is sometimes so difficult a task at close quarters, that our men have learned to respect their peculiar mode of fighting, and a rifle-bullet at a fair distance checks the ghazi's course before he can close upon his assailants with the terribly sharp knife he knows so well how to use. If every Afghan were a ghazi, as I once said during the siege of Sherpur, our defences would have been carried, and enormous slaughter would have followed on both sides; but ghazis are few and far between, though a spurious imitation is not uncommon. This imitation is often taken for the real article, whereas *bhang* or some other stimulant is the motive power, and not desperate fanaticism. The misuse of the word "ghazi" is strikingly seen in the accounts of the last war forty years ago. We are told of bands of ghazis, many thousands strong, harassing the retreating army and cutting off stragglers; and these ghazis are always spoken of as being quite out of the control of Akhbar Khan. If they had been true ghazis they would have made short work of our little army long before it reached the Khurd Cabul. Their fanaticism would have carried them into the midst of the soldiers; for what resistance can be made to madmen who desire death, and have thrown all thoughts of retreat to the winds? Only a few weeks after the dispersion of Mahomed Jan's army from before Sherpur, absurd alarmist telegrams were circulated in India and England of a gathering of 20,000 ghazis on the Ghazni Road, only fifty miles from Cabul, and another disaster was foretold by every croaker, who found as much comfort in the awful word "ghazi" as did the old woman in many-syllabled Mesopotamia. If that number of ghazis had been within fifty miles of us, we might, indeed, have had our work cut out for us; but not in the whole of Afghanistan could so many be found. It is not given to every man to rise to such a pitch of religious exaltation, and fortunate for an "infidel" army it is not. To see how thousands of ghazis are always being spoken of, one would imagine they were a powerful clan, similar to the Ghilzais, Kohistanis, or Afridis. Just as the shining light of a missionary meeting at home described "*zenana* missions" as being missions sent to "*Zenana*, a district of Northern India, fruitful and densely-populated, but with its wretched inhabitants steeped in heathen ignorance," so do sen-

sation-mongers dress out these ghazis as a distinct section of Pathans, who gather together in their thousands whenever there is an appeal to arms. To them it would seem as easy to collect ghazis as to gather grapes—and certainly the two products are noteworthy enough in this sterile country—but practical acquaintance with the form fanaticism assumes about Cabul shows only too clearly that out of a crowd of 50,000 armed fanatics, such as lately held Cabul, not one in a hundred rises to the supreme rank of a ghazi. They are not born and bred to the vocation: chance makes them what they are, and our men know that a stray spark of enthusiasm may kindle their fanaticism and send them into our midst. The ghazi in Afghanistan, his true abode, answers to the assassin in Western countries, where enthusiasm in religious or political matters arouses him to shoot a priest at the altar, or stab a king in his palace. How the ghazi, the "conqueror of death," as he deserves to be called, rises into being may be told with sufficient local colouring to make the story more than commonplace.

An infidel army is in occupation of the country, and under the outward cloak of sudden submission is hidden deep hatred of the intruders on account of race and religion. In every village and hamlet the men listen eagerly to the preaching of the *moollahs*, who stir up their passions by lying stories of the coming time when their religion will be insulted and their *zenanas* violated by the Kafirs. The appeal is made first to the two objects most precious in the eyes of an Afghan or of any other Mahomedan—his faith and his women. When passions have been deeply enough stirred, the *moollah* warms to his work. A Koran, wrapped and rewrapped in silks, and carefully protected from defiling influences, is drawn from the priest's breast, and every passage imposing upon true Mahomedans the duty of destroying all unbelievers is quoted with vehement eloquence. The *moollah* is to these ignorant peasants the link between this world and the next; in him they place all trust; and as they listen to his fierce harangues, they are ready to do all that he requires of them. He is vested with mysterious attributes, rising occasionally to miracle-working; and with quiet assurance he promises that, if they attack the infidels "in the proper spirit and in full faith," bullets shall turn harm-

lessly aside, bayonets shall not pierce them, and their poshteens thrown over the cannon's mouth shall check shot and shell. The priesthood in all ages have traded upon the credulity of the people, and have abused their power without qualms of conscience to obtain their ends. Is it any more wonderful that an Afghan tribesman, shut out from the wonders of the outer world, should believe the clap-trap of his priest, than that highly-cultured scholars in the full glare of civilization should accept the dogmas of Papal Infallibility, or a crowd of devotees watch with awe-stricken faces the liquefaction, periodically, of the blood of a saint dead and gone ages ago? Yet such things have been in modern Europe, and the world has forgotten to smile. The *moollah* is merely a clever trickster in his own sphere, though, like many other priests, he comes often to believe in his own supernatural powers, and then sinks to the level of his followers. And the ghazi is the creature of the *moollah*. The latter's eloquence is listened to by some more than usually susceptible villager, whose enthusiasm is aroused to fever heat by a glowing story of a ghazi, who went into the infidel camp, cut down two or three Kafirs, and died the death of a martyr, his soul going straight to the laps of the *houris*, and his name living for ever among his kindred. Shall he not emulate such a glorious example, so that his children and his children's children may hand down his name to all generations as a Ghazi Allah-din—a "Champion of the Faith?" The *moollah's* preaching has had its effect, and a ghazi has been called into being. If a great *jehad* is being preached, that man will always be in the forefront of the battle, and will probably carry the standard of his clan, blessed by the *moollah* who has aroused the tribesmen. The fiery cross, which was sped from end to end of the Scottish Highlands in the old days, when the call to arms was made, was no more powerful than is the Koran now, carried from village to village by the *moollah* of Afghanistan. But a few weeks ago the arch-*moollah*, Mushk-i-Alam, sent out his message from Charkh, and how well it was responded to we are living witnesses. With ghazis in their midst to lead the timorous, and *moollahs* always at hand to fan their fanaticism, Mahomed Jan's rabble did wonders. How the ghazis acquitted themselves our men well know—many poor fellows to their cost.

In the action in the Chardeh Valley the standard-bearers rushed on even when our cavalry charged, and no more reckless rush was ever made. Many went down, but about them were others equal in desperation. A trooper of the 9th transfixed a man with his lance: the ghazi wriggled up like an eel, grasped the lance with his left hand, and, with one stroke of the knife, cut through the lancer's hand and the tough shaft as it had been of tinder. This is not romancing: the trooper is still living, but minus the fingers of his right hand. On the 13th December, when the 92nd Highlanders stormed the Takht-i-Shah Peak, isolated bands of ghazis stood to their posts when their comrades were in full retreat, and were shot and bayoneted in desperate hand-to-hand encounters. On the 14th the ghazis were so prominent that Mahomed Jan owed all his success to their daring leadership up the Asmai Heights, although many a white-clothed figure went down before that success was gained. In the early part of the day the last *sungar* on the Asmai Heights was held by a score of these fanatics when all else had fled. The banners were planted on the rude stone walls; and when Colonel Brownlow and the Highlanders made the final rush, the scene was an exciting one. What could be finer than the desperate leap out of the *sungar* by the ghazi who attacked Lance-Corporal Seller, our first man forward? Nothing but fanatical madness could have drawn a man from the temporary shelter of the *sungar* while there was still a chance of escape down the hill; the ghazi fulfilled his *kismut;* so let us hope all is well with him. Then, when the enemy streamed out from Indikee into the Chardeh Valley, and came straight upon the hills held by our troops, their standard-bearers, chiefly ghazis, were well in front, and the rush upwards was led by these men, who at times were 100 yards in front of the main body. When our men were forced back from the conical hill, the ghazis were the first to crown the rocks; and the splendid way in which they planted their standards on the Asmai Heights as the Highlanders and Guides were withdrawn was worthy of all respect. The steady volleys of Colonel Brownlow's men kept back the main body; but yard by yard, as our soldiers fell back, flags were pushed up from behind protecting rocks, their bearers being at times within fifty paces of our rifles. With such leaders, even

cowards must have rushed on, and it must have been a proud moment for the ghazis when they held the crest of the hill, and watched our troops slowly filing off into Sherpur.

They played the same prominent part during the siege, but they were ill-supported, and though a few succeeded once in placing a flag within 250 yards of the corner bastion looking towards Deh-i-Afghan, not a man remained, when night fell, to remove their cherished trophy: our Martinis had proved too fatal at so short a range. In the final assault on December 23rd the fanatical leaders were again in the van; and if they had been followed by the thousands who hung back so irresolutely, then there might have been a hand-to-hand fight in our trenches. In isolated instances, a ghazi would be seen within a few score yards of our defences, only to go down riddled through and through, though one more desperate than his companions reached the *abattis*, and had begun to pull away the intercepting branches, when he also was shot. To quote more instances of the audacity of the ghazi would be useless. I have said enough to prove his recklessness, and to show that, with an army of such men against us, even our splendid arms and steady discipline might avail nothing. But the true ghazi is a phenomenon—he at least deserves the scientific and sonorous title—and even Afghan fanaticism cannot bring forth many, however great may be the eloquence of the *moollahs*. Of the more despicable ghazi—the man who runs amuck in an infidel camp or waylays a Kafir in the streets of a city—I have nothing to say. Cabul has been free from such pests, and we do not wish to hear the cry of "ghazi!" raised. The fanatic generally takes so much killing that our revolver ammunition would run short were he to put in an appearance periodically.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Outlook at Cabul in February—Appointment of Mr. Lepel Griffin to be Chief Political Officer—Abdur Rahman Khan in Badakshan—Nek Mahomed in Turkistan—Probable Movements of the Two Sirdars—Biography of Abdur Rahman Khan—His Struggle with Shere Ali—Takes Refuge with the Russians in Turkistan—Sir Richard Pollock's Estimate of his Character—His Relations with the Russians—Biography of Mushk-i-Alam, the *Moollah*—His Power over the Tribes—Mahomed Hasan Khan's Life—His Russian Proclivities—Asmatullah Khan and the Northern Ghilzais—Daoud Shah's Career—Serves under Akhbar Khan and Shere Ali—Reasons for his Deportation to India.

It would be scarcely worth while to reproduce letters which dealt chiefly with current rumours of Mahomed Jan's movements, and I will therefore only give extracts sufficient to make clear the course of events. Our Governor of Kohistan was never able to get beyond Baba Kuch Kar, and Mahomed Jan's agents in Logar, Wardak, and Maidan were constantly heard of. Writing on February 1, I said :—

It seems likely that we shall have to visit Ghazni, which is now the head-quarters of the malcontents, unless some declaration of policy by the Home Government puts an end to our occupation of Cabul. General Roberts has asked for the heavy battery to be sent up from Peshawur, and with three 40-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers, we could batter the Ghazni fortress about the ears of its defenders. In Sherpur the guns captured from the enemy in October are being tried, and a certain number found serviceable are being put in order. Some garrison artillerymen from Peshawur are being sent up, and will form our garrison battery here.

The political dead-lock remains unchanged. Our policy of "benevolent inactivity" has not altogether pleased some of the local sirdars, who are nothing, if not place-hunters. They have seen Wali Mahomed made Governor of Cabul, and no doubt it was expected that positions of "trust" would be assigned to them. But they have been disappointed, and, in return, have vented their anger and disgust by posting four or five seditious placards on the

walls of the city. The tenor of these was to point out how much better off the people were under the old Amirs than under General Roberts, whom they accuse of sinning "through foolishness and ignorance"—perhaps of their own personal wants. Such abuse hurts no one, and can have but little effect upon the popular mind, for there can be no mistake as regards our leniency towards Cabul itself. The appointment of Mr. Lepel Griffin to be Chief Political Officer here has been announced by the Government of India, and has given general satisfaction in cantonments, as the political work now done by the General will be minimized, and his hands will be free to deal more fully with matters purely military. One thing is fervently desired, and that is that Mr. Lepel Griffin will come with a programme of policy in his pocket, as it is too aggravating to have a General and his army in the unpleasant position of a ship at sea without orders: liable to be knocked about by every gale that blows, and yet without any port to make for. The best crew in the world would grow discontented under such circumstances. We have had our buffeting, and have weathered it, and now we should like fair weather and clear instructions as to our future destination.

16th February.

It is rather difficult at present to follow the movements of Abdur Rahman Khan, whose name now is oftener in men's mouths than that of any other Afghan chief of importance. As I predicted, Abdur Rahman seems likely to play a leading part in Afghanistan, and his reported arrival in Badakshan shows that his influence may be felt upon local politics at any moment. We have always had much trouble in getting news of Turkistan affairs; and though we heard from European telegrams that Abdur Rahman had been dismissed by the Russians, and had started to try his fortunes again in Afghanistan, we could not gain trustworthy reports of his arrival south of the Oxus. Once, it is true, he was said to be at Balkh; but no confirmation of the report was forthcoming, and it was soon disbelieved. Now, at last, we have new accounts of his movements. Merchants in Cabul have received letters from agents at Balkh, in which it is distinctly stated that the exiled son of Mir Afzul Khan is in Badakshan, with 3,000 Turcomans, and is preparing to make

good his claims to the Amirship. Without jumping to any rash conclusions, it may be possible to explain clearly enough the train of circumstances which have brought Abdur Rahman once more to the front. The death of Shere Ali and the accession of Yakub Khan might have tempted him to make another effort for the throne; but without the assistance and countenance of Russia he could scarcely hope to be successful. To raise an army money is needed; and though the Russians were considerate enough to pay the exiled prince a liberal pension, they were too anxious to keep on good terms with England to subsidize a pretender to the Amirship just when the Treaty of Gundamak had been signed. Abdur Rahman may have been convinced, also, that Yakub Khan would never be strong enough to carry out the treaty, and that his downfall, either at the hands of his own subjects or of the British, would leave Cabul open to other competitors. The massacre of our Envoy, the march of Sir F. Roberts's force upon Cabul, and the dispersion of the rebel army, followed each other so rapidly that the country was paralysed, as far as active resistance went. The flight of Nek Mahomed (uncle of Abdur Rahman) to Russian territory was the signal for the collapse of the Afghan army, and doubtless the fugitive General warned his nephew that, to attempt any campaign while the British were posing as the protectors of Yakub Khan and the conquerors of Cabul would be little short of madness. Besides, if Yakub Khan were to be reinstated, and his rule made secure by a new British alliance, rebellion against him would be full of danger. That, in case of certain contingencies, a plan of action was arranged between Abdur Rahman and Nek Mahomed would appear certain; and it is half-suspected that Russian sympathy was freely extended to them, and a hint given that practical aid would also be afforded when the plan was ripe for execution. They were waiting upon Providence; and the first reward for their patience was the deportation of Yakub Khan to India on December 1st, and the assumption by the British of the temporary sovereignty of Cabul. The Amirship thus became vacant; and Abdur Rahman, as the son of Mir Afzul Khan, eldest son of Dost Mahomed, could fairly lay claim to the throne. Yakub Khan's son was a mere child; there was no one of any great influence in the British camp who could hope

to be successful as Amir; and who so likely to be welcomed by the people as Abdur Rahman, a favourite alike with the army and the tribes? The *jehad* preached by Mushk-i-Alam, and the temporary success of Mahomed Jan's army at Sherpur, must have more than ever convinced the exiles that their chance had come and their plan might be put to the test. What that plan was can only be judged by after-events; but its broad outlines seem to have been the raising and equipping of a body of Turcoman horse and the crossing of the Oxus at two points. Abdur Rahman directed his steps towards Badakshan, where his wife's kinsmen are in power; while Nek Mahomed passed into Turkistan by the Kilif ferry, fifty miles north-west of Balkh. Abdur Rahman's force is said to have been 2,000 or 3,000 Turcoman horsemen; and his treasure-chest, by native report, contained 12 lakhs of rupees in Bokhara gold *tillahs* when he crossed the river. Nek Mahomed's escort is also made up of Turcomans; and his object seems to be to gain over Gholam Hyder, Governor of Turkistan, while Abdur Rahman raises levies in Badakshan. A powerful combination would thus be formed north of the Hindu Kush; and by the spring, which brings with it the melting of the snows and the opening of the Passes about Charikar and Bamian, the pretender to the throne should have under his orders a well-equipped and numerous army. Perhaps the most important work to be done before Abdur Rahman could move out of Badakshan was the gaining of Gholam Hyder's co-operation. In a letter written two months ago I showed that the Governor of Turkistan really held only the country south of the Oxus between Aebak and Akcha; a Kirghiz chief having raided into the districts west of Akcha, while the Khan of Kunduz (120 miles east of Balkh) was supreme in the hill-country between Aebak and Badakshan. Gholam Hyder's power lies mainly in his possession of one or two field batteries, and in having under his orders several regiments of cavalry and infantry, many of whom are well-armed with rifles made on English patterns. From reports which have reached Cabul it would appear that he was very uneasy when the fact of Abdur Rahman's and Nek Mahomed's presence to east and west of him became known. He was at first doubtful of their intentions, and, as a precautionary measure, massed his cavalry and

guns at Mazar-i-Sharif, one march south-east of Balkh. In the meantime Abdur Rahman, with the aid of his 12 lakhs (of which it is shrewdly suspected that at least half was given to him as a subsidy by the Russians), was making it clear in the eyes of the Badakshanis that his new expedition was something more than a visionary attempt to regain Cabul. One of his wives is a daughter of Jehandar Shah, late Mir of Badakshan, whose son now governs at Faizabad, the capital of this northern province. So successful has Abdur Rahman been, that he has not only won over the Badakshanis, but also the Khan of Kunduz, who has offered him help in his new venture. Rumour also states that Gholam Hyder has cast in his lot with the pretender, and that an amicable meeting between their forces is to take place at Mazar-i-Sharif. Of course it is possible that affairs have not run so smoothly as represented; but still native rumour is wonderfully correct as a rule, and the appearance of Abdur Rahman is a new and most important factor in the Afghan problem. He has with him Ishak Khan, son of Sirdar Azim Khan, who was Amir for a short time when Shere Ali's fortunes were at their lowest ebb. I have before spoken of Abdur Rahman's popularity, and his soldierly qualities are universally acknowledged. What his future plans may be can only be conjectured. The timid and characterless sirdars we have now with us are rather alarmed at his approach, and their uneasiness is, perhaps, justifiable. Probably, in the spring, he may march an army from Balkh through Khulm, Aebak, and Saighan to Bamian, or he may try the more easterly route over the Hindu Kush to Charikar and Kohistan. What our course of action will be in such a case I am not prepared to say; but that Abdur Rahman may yet be Amir of Afghanistan is quite within the range of possibility. But for the fatal taint of Russian influence which it is only fair to suppose has affected his character during his stay in Tashkend, he would make a nominee whom we could trust, for his ability is beyond question.

The following is a short sketch of his life—a life which has been stormy even for an Afghan prince. His father was Mahomed Afzul Khan, eldest son of the Dost Mahomed; but on his mother's side he has Populzai blood in his veins. In 1863–64, when the death of the Dost had rendered the throne vacant, Afzul Khan, as

eldest son of the deceased Amir, objected to his claims being set aside in favour of his younger half-brother, Shere Ali, and soon the country was in a state of civil war. Abdur Rahman was placed by his father in charge of Takhtipul, in Turkistan, and showed some genius as a soldier, but was eventually obliged to confess himself beaten by Shere Ali's forces. He made a half-hearted submission, and, being suspected of still intriguing in favour of his father, was summoned to Çabul. This order he refused to obey; but, dreading the consequences, fled across the Oxus into Bokhara, where many other sirdars had taken refuge. Turkistan was still very unsettled, and Abdur Rahman induced many of the garrison of Balkh to desert Shere Ali and cross into Bokhara. The Amir of that Khanate openly espoused his cause, and aided him in many ways. With a small, but well-equipped, force he at last recrossed the Oxus and made for Akcha, then in charge of Faiz Mahomed Khan. The latter, finding himself unequal to any successful resistance, threw over Shere Ali and united his garrison with the force from Bokhara. The Governor of Turkistan, Fateh Mahomed Khan, was not so easily won over, and resisted the new army. His soldiers, however, proved faithless; and, leaving them to continue their own course of action, he fled from Turkistan. Abdur Rahman thus found himself, in a few weeks, at the head of a fairly powerful army; and, pushing on to Takhtipul, he resumed his old position as Governor. Turkistan had thus fallen easily into his hands, and so striking was his success, that he resolved upon a march to Cabul. His uncle, Azim Khan, a man of some ability, joined him; and Shere Ali, still having with him Afzul Khan, a prisoner, was forced to leave his capital. On the 24th of February Abdur Rahman entered the city without opposition; but he had still to deal with Shere Ali, who was collecting an army in the South. In May the two armies came into collision at Sheikhabad, on the Ghazni Road, and Abdur Rahman gained a complete victory. His father was released, and was proclaimed Amir in place of Shere Ali. But Afzul Khan, a confirmed drunkard, was but a weak and incapable ruler, and his brother, Azim Khan, practically held all power in his hands. Abdur Rahman then, full of energy and flushed with success, tried to counteract his uncle's schemes; and the quarrel might have

widened into a serious breach between the two had not the presence of Shere Ali, with a second army at Candahar, made it imperative to sink all differences before a common danger. Uncle and nephew again took the field, and marching southwards through Ghazni, met and defeated Shere Ali's army at Khelat-i-Ghilzai. This was on the 16th of January, 1867. But opposition still had to be encountered, Faiz Mahomed, half-brother of Shere Ali, having raised another army in support of the ex-Amir's cause. Abdur Rahman was again successful in his military operations, defeating Faiz Mahomed at Kila Allahdad on the 17th September, 1867. But, while thus fighting with invariable success for his father, he had to meet the designs of his uncle, whose ambition was to be himself Amir. Afzul Khan died in Cabul while his son was absent with the army; and when Abdur Rahman returned to the capital, he found his uncle, Azim Khan, in possession of the throne. The old quarrels broke out afresh, Abdur Rahman naturally feeling aggrieved that, after all his successes, the Amirship had slipped through his hands. Again fresh complications in Turkistan saved an open rupture: Abdur Rahman started for the northern province and tried to subdue the Usbeg chiefs. In this he was unsuccessful, the Mir of Maemena, a district between Balkh and Herat, sturdily resisting all attack, and eventually forcing Abdur Rahman to fall back upon Takhtipul. The absence of the young soldier in the north had been Shere Ali's opportunity. His forces were successful in Western Afghanistan, and he was soon *de facto* Amir. Abdur Rahman's position in Turkistan then became untenable; his soldiers, hearing that Shere Ali was once more in possession of Cabul, lost heart and deserted; and in January 1869, in conjunction with Azim Khan, he was once more a fugitive. After Azim Khan had appealed to the Indian Government for help, and had been refused, the two sirdars sought refuge in Persia, and afterwards, in the trans-Oxus Khanates. Azim Khan died in October 1869; and Abdur Rahman, still entertaining his idea of regaining Cabul, went to Khiva. Here his intrigues to raise a force with which to conquer Afghan-Turkistan met with such slight success that he turned his steps to Bokhara. Living as a refugee in that Khanate was Jehandar Shah, ex-Mir of Badakshan. This chief had heartily aided Afzul

Khan in his struggle for the throne, and to cement the alliance had given his sister in marriage to Azim Khan, and his daughter to Abdur Rahman. Shere Ali, in August 1869, induced the Badakshan sirdars to depose Jehandar Shah, who was imprisoned in his own capital of Faizabad. He persuaded his late subjects to grant his release, and crossed the Oxus to Kulab, where Abdur Rahman joined him. Their intrigues to gain possession of Badakshan were on the basis of raising a force of Turcomans on the north, while the Mir of Maemena, with an army of Usbegs, co-operated with them from the west through Balkh and Kunduz. The want of money was a great obstacle to success, and Abdur Rahman conceived the idea of supplicating aid from Russia. While Jehandar Shah went to Chitral, to seek aid from Aman-ul-Mulk, chief of that country, Abdur Rahman left Bokhara for Samarcand, and reached Tashkend in May 1870. General Kaufmann received him hospitably, but was deaf to all his appeals for troops to aid him in conquering Afghan-Turkistan. A pension of about £5,000 sterling was assigned to him, but a refusal was given to his request to visit St. Petersburg and represent his case to the Czar. When Schuyler saw him he expressed a confident belief that with £50,000 to raise and equip an army he could once more make himself supreme in Afghanistan. With this one idea in his mind he was saving nine tenths of his pension, and hinted that, under favourable conditions, he might be aided by Russia. Jehandar Shah, after raising an unsuccessful insurrection in Badakshan in 1873, joined his son-in-law at Samarcand in 1875, but has since died.

Of Abdur Rahman's character I have spoken in a previous letter; and the following estimate of his ability by Sir Richard Pollock, late Commissioner of Peshawur, is worth quoting as somewhat confirming my view. Sir Richard Pollock writes:—"Abdur Rahman was well thought of as a soldier and commander when in charge of the army, but showed less talent for administrative work. He has now lost all his possessions, both at his home and his place of refuge, and has no resources by which he could collect a party. Without help as to money or arms, he could do nothing. If supplied with money by Russia or Bokhara, and promised a backing, he might attempt to recover his position. Probably,

such an attempt would be unsuccessful, if made in the Amir's (Shere Ali) lifetime. If later, after the Amir's death, and when Turkistan had Mir Alam Khan as Governor, or some equally corrupt, incapable person, the issue might be in Abdur Rahman's favour, as far as Turkistan is concerned. On the Amir's death such an attempt may be looked upon as likely, unless a good Governor should previously have taken Mir Alam's place. Abdur Rahman's influence has already declined rapidly, and fortune is never likely to favour him again to the extent it did when he was fighting for Azim and Afzul. There was strong sympathy on the part of the nation for the elder sons, who had been set aside by the Dost in favour of Shere Ali Khan. Besides, the King of Bokhara afforded assistance, which he is not likely now or later to give." This memorandum was written before the breach between Shere Ali and the Indian Government; but its remarks are still applicable. Abdur Rahman seems, without doubt, to have been supplied with means by the Russians, and he has an "incapable person" Governor of Turkistan—Gholam Hyder; so that it would not be unlikely if he possessed himself of the northern province in a few months. The old sympathy in his favour may once more be revived, and we could scarcely dispute his authority, unless we were prepared to begin a campaign *viâ* Bamian in the spring. If Abdur Rahman is ambitious enough not only to claim Turkistan, but Cabul also, we shall either have to meet his forces in the field, or to offer him the Amirship and our support in the future. Whether he would prefer England to Russia yet remains to be seen.

What Abdur Rahman's relations have been with the Russians—and, perhaps, still are—may be judged from a letter, written in May 1878, by Shahgassi Sherdil Khan, then Governor of Afghan-Turkistan. He says:—

"Mirza Salahuddin, whom I deputed towards Samarcand and Tashkend to collect news from those directions, has returned and made a statement, to the effect that the Russians intend to induce Abdur Rahman Khan to submit to them a petition, setting forth that he has been putting up there a long time under the protection of the Russian Government; that he has often petitioned them to help him in securing the restitution of his ancestral territory from the Amir of Cabul, but his prayer has not been acceded to; and that he has now heard that the Russians are preparing to fight against the British Government; that they have sent envoys to wait upon the Amir to request him to allow passage through his country to the Russian troops going to India and returning therefrom, should a necessity arise for such a passage; and that, such being the case,

he offered his services in case His Highness refuses to grant the request of the Russian Government to capture Balkh with a small assistance from the Czar, and then subdue the whole of Afghanistan, which is not a difficult task."

The conditions are certainly altered now, as Russia is not meditating any such Quixotic campaign as an advance upon India; but Abdur Rahman may still be credited with a desire "to capture Balkh with a small assistance from the Czar, and then subdue the whole of Afghanistan." In any settlement we may intend making, it would be folly to ignore his existence altogether. If we are not prepared to break up his army and drive him back over the Oxus, we had better give him frankly a chance of stating his case. He might by judicious management—say the promise of a large annual subsidy—prove the best man we could place in power as successor of the incapable Yakub Khan.

While on the subject of biography, I may as well give a slight sketch of the lives of some of the men who have recently played a prominent part in Afghan politics. We have been so shut off from Afghanistan for many years, that, except in a few confidential reports furnished to Government by officers on the frontier, but little has been made known of the character and power of Afghan sirdars and chiefs. Even the *Peshawur Diary*, which has received contributions from men of the stamp of Sir Richard Pollock and Sir Louis Cavagnari, is a sealed book to all but a few favoured officials; and as many of the communications to it are of a secret nature, it would be idle to expect that its contents can ever become generally known. During our present occupation of Cabul, Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer, has been able to collect some data upon which trustworthy biographies have been founded of the chiefs and others who have been hostile to us. Incidentally, it has been found that our Afghan friends have some marvellous pedigrees, one old gentleman claiming direct descent from Adam himself—an ancestor, perhaps, as respectable—all circumstances considered—as any he could have fallen back upon. An Afghan genealogical tree is a fearful instrument of torture to apply to the minds of our young "politicals," for the same name occurs over and over again generation after generation, and the weakness of the men for taking wives of varied nationality causes obscure relationships, which are most difficult to follow. It would be

useless to give genealogies of men who are only of importance as regards their own acts and personal influence; and in now dealing with several of the best known names in Afghanistan I shall merely summarize their pedigrees. The *moollah* who raised the late *jehad* deserves first place, and I will begin with a sketch of his life.

Din Mahomed, known as Muskh-i-Alam (the "Scent of the World"), belongs to the Sayids of Hindustan, but his father's name is unknown. His ancestors were Khwaja Khel, a section of the Lukhan Khel of the Andar tribe, south of Ghazni. He married and settled in Afghanistan, first studying under Mahomed Wasil, Kakar, resident of the village of Kala Ali, in the Shilgarh district, south-east of Ghazni. In the prosecution of his studies as a *moollah* he next went to Lughman, and lived in the house of one Abdul Hakim, a priest, from whom he gained most of his knowledge. In his zeal for learning he travelled to Peshawur and lived with Abdul Malik, Akhundzada. Returning to Afghanistan, he again read with Abdul Hakim for about two years, when his master died, leaving two young sons. Din Mahomed remained with them for a few years, to protect their lives and property, and his devotion had its reward. A learned and influential man, named Mahomed Aslam, Sahibazda, a nephew of the deceased *moollah*, Abdul Karim, took notice of him, and gave him shelter, at the same time teaching him all he knew. In course of time Mahomed Aslam nominated Din Mahomed as his successor. So far his life had been that of an ordinary *moollah*, one of great simplicity and occasional hardship. But we now find him showing signs of great zeal and energy. A war broke out against the Kafiristanis, and he joined Haji Taj Mahomed Saib, known as Haji Shahid (a descendant of one Haji Mahomed Said, of Lahore, who had settled in the Surkhrud district of Jellalabad). Taj Mahomed was killed at Pashgarh, and Din Mahomed carried his body on his own shoulders to the shrine of Abdul Karim, in Lughman. Thence he carried it in the same fashion to Taj Mahomed's own village of Masti Khel, where he buried it. This devotion caused his name to become well known in Western Afghanistan, and his fame as a *moollah* rose accordingly. He returned to his own part of the country, near Ghazni, and was for years engaged in teaching others. Nearly all the *moulvis* of the Cabul and Ghazni

districts are pupils of his, and his influence over such powerful tribes as the Ghilzais, Lughmanis, and Mohmunds, has been and is very great. The late *jehad*, which was certainly one of the most successful ever preached in Afghanistan, was due to his summoning the tribes to arms; and it is worth noticing that, while Sherpur was being besieged by the tribes in its immediate locality, the Lughmanis, under Asmatullah Khan, tried to block the Passes, and the Mohmunds made a diversion on our lower line of communications. Mushk-i-Alam is now ninety years of age, and has lately shown signs of approaching death. Ten years ago he was still hale and strong, and took to himself a young Mohmund wife, who bore him a son, who is still alive, and is called Abdur Rahman. This son is actually younger than one of his grandsons, who is twenty years of age. Mushk-i-Alam has two sons, Abdul Aziz and Abdul Karim, aged fifty and forty-five respectively, and these men are most active in carrying out their father's orders, the old man himself being unable to rise from his bed, except when urgent occasion gives him passing strength.

A man of great ability, now at enmity with us, is Mirza Mahomed Hasan Khan, Dabir-ul-Mulk, late Governor of Jellalabad, who is acting as Mahomed Jan's lieutenant in Logar, and has shown great zeal in his efforts to renew the attack upon Sherpur. He is one of three grandsons of Haji Aka Ashur, called Shamilo Turk-i-Rum. Hasan Khan has long been a prominent figure in the Cabul Court. He first served as an officer under Sirdar Gholam Hyder Khan, and, upon the latter's death, was transferred to the Amir Shere Ali Khan, whom he accompanied to the Umballa Conference in 1869. The Amir, on returning to Cabul, appointed him "Dabir-ul-Mulk," or Secretary of State, and for several years he was his sovereign's chief confidant and counsellor. He was privy to all Shere Ali's intrigues with the Russians, and seems to have been a most trusted agent. Upon the death of Naib Mahomed Aslem, Governor of Turkistan, who was accidentally killed by the kick of a horse, he was appointed, conjointly with Eshak Akasi (Shaghassi) Sherdil Khan, Governor of Turkistan. The Russian Mission soon afterwards arrived on the banks of the Oxus, and Hasan Khan was deputed to accompany its members to Cabul. Further, when General Stolietoff

started on his return journey, Hasan Khan accompanied him, and journeyed as far as Tashkend. What his instructions were from Shere Ali may never be known; but it is interesting to learn that, during the first campaign in November and December, 1878, Shere Ali had one of his ministers in Russian Turkistan. Upon the Amir's arrival in full flight at Mazar-i-Sharif, Hasan Khan joined him. Shere Ali had then great hope that the Russians would aid him, and he sent Hasan Khan, Shere Ali Kandahari, Moollah Shah Mahomed, and Kazi Abdul Kadir to Tashkend. Their mission was a failure, and they returned to Turkistan. When news of the Amir's death reached Tashkend Yakub Khan recalled Hasan Khan from Balkh, and made him again Dabir-ul-Mulk. He was afterwards sent to Jellalabad as Governor, and remained at his post as long as Yakub Khan was in our camp at Sherpur. Upon the ex-Amir being deported to India, Hasan Khan fled from Jellalabad, taking with him a lakh of rupees—revenue which he had collected for his master. He reached Ghazni in safety, and has since been actively engaged in recruiting for Mahomed Jan. He is a man of great ability and keenness, and is said to be ready to take any views which may suit his purpose. This has been shown of late by his sending in messengers to learn how he would be treated if he made submission to the British. There is no doubt that at heart he is thoroughly Russian, his favourite uniform, when in full dress, being that of the Russian staff. In any dealings we may have with him, it will behove us to be on our guard against this side of his character. He has two brothers; one Ali Ahmed Khan, a colonel in a cavalry regiment, and the other Mahomed Ibrahim Khan, once Governor of Hazara. He has seven sons, who are as yet of no consequence.

A tribal chief, who, on the Jellalabad side and about the Passes has given us great trouble, is Asmatullah Khan, Ghilzai, of Lughman. He has far more influence among the Ghilzais than any other leader, Padshah Khan being a very small person compared with the Lughman chief. Asmatullah Khan's family history affords a striking instance of the feuds which are so common in Afghanistan, where father fights against son, and brother against brother, as if ties of blood were of no consequence. Asmatullah Khan's an-

cestors are of the Mariam Khel, a subdivision of the Jabbar Khel section of the Ghilzai tribe. They are called Mariam Khel, after the name of the mother, Mariam corresponding to the scriptural Miriam, just as Ibrahim answers to Abraham and Ismail to Ishmael. In the year of the Hejira 1157 (A.D. 1740), when Ahmed Shah was Amir, Safa Khan, who had succeeded his father, Ashak Khan, as chief of the Mariam Khel, was dispossessed of his Khanship owing to heterodoxy in his religious views. His nephew, Mahomed Ali Khan, succeeded him. But about A.H. 1184, when Taimur Shah was King, it was found that this man was such a tyrant that he also had to be thrust out of power. Taimur Shah was anxious for Safa Khan to resume the Khanship, and he did so; but, on the day of his resumption of power, Mahomed Ali Khan murdered him. Taimur Shah seized the assassin and imprisoned him; but, as it was a blood-feud, would not put him to death. It was necessary that a near relative of Safa Khan should kill Mahomed Ali, and this pleasant duty fell upon Ahmad Khan, son of Safa Khan. He was a mere boy at the time; but, as his elder brothers were away, he was fortunate enough to be the executioner. He killed his uncle, Taimur Shah handing the man over to him, and was greatly respected thereafter as being a youth of good parts. After Taimur Shah's death, Ahmad Khan became very intimate with the Wazir, Futteh Khan, and through his influence was made Khan of the Ghilzais. He met his death at Herat, fighting against the Persians. His son, Abdul Aziz Khan, succeeded him, but being quite a youth, the new Khan entrusted the control of the tribe to his uncle. Abdul Aziz, who was devoted to his religion, had born to him during his Khanship six sons. He was most anxious to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, but was prevented for many years by the elders of his tribe. Taking the matter at last into his own hands, he managed to reach the Ahmadzai and Zurmut country east of Ghazni, and thence escaped to Arabia. He reached Mecca safely, but on a visit to Medina was seized with a fatal illness, which put an end to his wanderings. His eldest son, Niamatullah Khan, became chief of the clan, and was a very popular ruler. Two of his younger brothers, Abdul Hamid and Halim Khan, tried to dispossess him of his inheritance, and some petty fighting followed. The family seem always

to have been in a rabid state of parricide or fratricide; and in the month of Ramzan A.H. 1277 Hamid Khan killed Niamatullah Khan. The second son of Abdul Aziz, the present Asmatullah Khan, then became head of the Ghilzais, and still remains so. During the Amir Shere Ali's reign he was a member of the Council of State. Asmatullah Khan's character is thus curtly summed up :—"He is said to be dull, or slow of understanding, and wanting in pluck; he owes his influence more to his birth than to his capacity." The half-hearted way in which he attacked Jugdulluck a few weeks ago, and his inability to keep his force together, prove that he lacks courage and administrative power, and now that one of our flying columns has marched unopposed through the Lughman Valley, his dignity in the eyes of his followers must have greatly diminished.

My last biographical sketch is of General Daoud Shah, late Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army, who is now a prisoner in India. His father, Mahomed Shah, was of the Lakhan Khel, a branch of the Andar tribe of Sohak Ghilzais (south of Ghazni). Like Nimrod, he was a great *shikari;* but not content with the killing of beasts, he quarrelled with his neighbours most persistently, and was never happy unless engaged in tribal warfare. He lived in the village of Mandi Chinar, in the Safi district of Tagao; and upon the British invasion of 1839 he eagerly took up arms against the Kafirs. His career was ended in a fight before Charikar, in which our troops were successful in beating the tribesmen. His son, Daoud Shah, had his father's warlike instinct, and as a young man took service in the army of the Dost. He was Akhbar Khan's orderly officer, and gained much experience under that General. His promotion was very slow, until Shere Ali Khan made him captain for services rendered at the battle of Kajbaz, in which Sirdar Mahomed Ali Khan, eldest son of Shere Ali, was killed. Daoud Shah showed great bravery during the campaign in Khost, and was raised to the rank of General. He it was who won the battle of Zana Khan, in which Shere Ali defeated Azim Khan and Abdur Rahman Khan. His fame as a General was now bruited all over Afghanistan, and his next campaign added to his glory, as, in conjunction with Mahomed Alam Khan, he defeated Abdur Rahman's forces in Turkistan, and settled the country in

Shere Ali's name. Having quarrelled with Mahomed Alam, he was recalled to Cabul and imprisoned by Shere Ali. The latter could not afford to alienate so able a General, and Daoud Shah was soon released, but was given no employment. When Yakub Khan rebelled against his father, Daoud Shah officiated as Commander-in-Chief, General Faramurz Khan, commanding the Amir's armies in the field, having been killed by Aslam Khan, son of the Dost. Upon the new settlement of Turkistan, Daoud Shah accompained Yakub Khan to Cabul, and reverted again to the rank of General. Upon Yakub Khan's second rebellion, an army was again sent to Herat, in which Daoud Shah was given a command; but Shere Ali, finding that he had no able General at Cabul, recalled him and entrusted to him the management of all army affairs in the capital. When the Amir fled to Turkistan, after the capture of Ali Musjid and the Peiwar Kotal, Daoud Shah was left at Cabul with Yakub Khan, and he accompanied the new Amir to Gundamak. He was at the same time made Commander-in-Chief, and this office he held until the massacre of our Envoy and Yakub's flight to the British camp at Kushi. Of Daoud Shah's conduct during the attack upon the Residency nothing very exact is known. He was said to have tried, with 200 or 300 men, to check the mutineers. He certainly rode into the crowd with half a dozen attendants; but it was then too late, and he was pulled off his horse and beaten by the mutinous soldiery. He probably dared to take no action without the Amir's orders; and these, unfortunately, were not forthcoming. Daoud Shah favourably impressed most of us with whom he came into contact, his striking figure and open manner being very different from the cringing obeisance of the Barakzai sirdars. During the siege it was deemed inadvisable that he should be at liberty in Sherpur; and he was, accordingly, placed under arrest. After such treatment it was, of course, imperative that he should be deported to India, as, if at first inclined to be faithful to the British, his imprisonment must have turned him against us. He was undoubtedly the ablest General in the Afghan army, and his popularity among the soldiers would always have ensured many thousands of men answering to his call to arms. He is between forty and fifty years of age, and is still an active, intelligent soldier.

CHAPTER XXV.

Changes in the Northern Afghanistan Force—Completion of the Chain of Forts about Cabul—Composition of the Force on March 22nd—Arrival of Mr. Lepel Griffin at Sherpur—Declaration of the Government Policy—Candahar and Herat to be separated from Cabul—Discontent among the Barakzai Sirdars—The Future of Herat—Advantages of the Khyber Route—Arguments in favour of the Annexation of the Jellalabad Valley—The Mustaufi's Mission to the Ghazni Malcontents—His Partial Success—Assembly of the Chiefs at Maidan—The Durbar in Sherpur on April 13th—Speeches by Sir Frederick Roberts and Mr. Lepel Griffin—The Policy of the Government explained—Annexation deprecated—Approval of the Policy in Camp—The Exigency of Party Politics in England—Abdur Rahman's Movements at Kunduz.

WITH the near approach of spring there was a recasting of the commands between Cabul and Peshawur, the following being the order of the Commander-in-Chief directing the changes:—

1. The Second Division of the Cabul Field Force, hitherto under the command of Major-General Bright, C.B., will be broken up.

2. The Reserve Division, under Major-General Ross, C.B., will also be broken up, and absorbed into the Line of Communications.

3. The Force in Cabul, under Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts, will be divided into two divisions. 1st Division under Sir F. Roberts's immediate command, and the 2nd Division under Major General Ross, C.B.

4. Major-General Bright, C.B., is appointed Inspector-General of the Line of communications, and will command all troops thereon stationery, in movable columns, or passing along the line. Major-General Bright will report direct to Army Head-Quarters.

5. The Peshawur District will be temporarily commanded by Brigadier-General Hankin, 4th Bengal Cavalry, hitherto in command of the Cavalry Brigade Reserve Division.

6. The line of communications will be divided into three sections:—
   1st.—From Jumrood to Busawul inclusive, under Brigadier-General Gib.
   2nd.—From Busawul to Sufed Sang, but not inclusive of either, under Brigadier-General Doran, C.B.
   3rd.—From Sufed Sang to Butkhak inclusive, under Brigadier-General Hill.

7. The General Staff for Major-General Bright's command will consist of:—
   Colonel Wemyss, Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General;
   Major Thompson, Assistant Adjutant-General;
   Major Creagh, Assistant Quartermaster-General;
   Lieutenant Maisey, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.

8. The Divisional Staff under Major-General Ross, C.B., will consist of :—
Major Boyes, Assistant Adjutant-General ;
Captain the Honourable C. Dutton, Assistant Quartermaster-General ;
and a Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General, to be detailed by Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts.

9. Colonel Evans, Commanding Royal Artillery on Line of communications, will proceed with the Staff to Cabul as commanding Royal Artillery, 2nd Division.

Lieutenant-Colonel Purvis, Royal Artillery, taking up the duties of Commanding Royal Artillery, under Major-General Bright.

Lieutenant-Colonel Limond will proceed to Cabul as Commanding Royal Engineers, 2nd Division, and Major Hill will assume the duties of Commanding Royal Engineer to Major-General Bright.

10. Brigadier-General Roberts (5th Fusiliers) will proceed to Cabul to command a brigade in the 2nd Division.

11. Brigadier-General Arbuthnot, C.B., will command the movable columns at Jellalabad and Sufed Sang.

12. The Force under Sir F. Roberts in Cabul will be styled the Cabul Field Force, and the Force under Major-General Bright will be styled the Khyber Line Force.

These arrangements were all carried out; and the following extracts from letters written in March will indicate what was occurring in and about Cabul :—

SHERPUR, *March 3rd*, 1880.

Brigadier-General Dunham Massy left for Peshawur a few days ago, where he will meet the Commander-in-Chief, and offer certain explanations of his course of action on December 11th, which, it is not too much to say, may modify the harsh step of recalling him from Cabul. The greatest sympathy is felt for General Massy in the force here ; and the decision to be given on what is purely a question for military critics will be anxiously looked for.* Brigadier-General Hugh Gough has taken over charge of the Cavalry Brigade, his duties as Road Commandant being performed by Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Heathcote.

There is no relaxation of the preparations for defending Sherpur and Cabul against all-comers. Certainly there is not now a weak point in the cantonment: the gap at the north-west corner, defended during the siege by a trench and a parapet made out of Cabuli gun-wheels, has now been closed by a wall six feet high on

* I have not gone at length into the question of General Massy's recall, as there were too many points involved for the case to be treated in a work of this kind, which is only a diary of the war. I may state, however, that General Massy was given a brigade command in India, which he still retains.

the inner side of the old barrier; the bastion at the corner, partially destroyed when the mutinous regiments blew up their magazine on October 7th, has been put in thorough order; a zig-zag wall, with traverses, is also being built up on the western slope of the Bemaru hills; and, in addition to the block-house on the top, a platform has been made for guns, guarded by a semi-circular wall, which will eventually be joined to the zig-zag running up the hillside. Looking at these new defences, and also at the block-houses upon the Asmai and Sherderwaza Heights—to say nothing of the strong fort upon Siah Sung—one is tempted to ask, "What will be the fate of all these works when we retire?" We have made Sherpur practically impregnable now against any attack unsupported by heavy guns: shall we leave it so, or shall we order up a few tons of gun-cotton from an Indian arsenal, and have everything in readiness to blow its walls down when it has to be abandoned? Perhaps, as we shall inevitably be forced to annex Cabul in a few years, we may leave the cantonment intact, though it would be cruelty to expect our men to capture it, say in 1883, unless it had been well-pounded by a battery of 40-pounders from Siah Sung. But, for all outsiders may know, there may be a plan lying cut and dry in some secret drawer of our Chief Engineer's despatch-box, in which the fate of Sherpur and its surroundings has been once for all decided. Colonel Perkins has certainly been indefatigable in creating new defences; perhaps he may show equal energy in destroying the work of his own hand when the time comes.*

March 21st.

The garrison of Cabul has been largely reinforced, and we have at last nearly 12,000 troops here. The 45th Sikhs and the 27th Punjabees, who marched in from Butkhak on Friday, are now encamped on the Siah Sung Ridge, and are holding the new fort built thereon. The 45th Sikhs have, for the time being, been attached to General Macpherson's Brigade, and the 27th Punjab Infantry to General Charles Gough's. The various forts we have built upon Asmai and Sherderwaza Heights have had their

* At Abdur Rahman's request all the forts, &c., were left intact when Sir Donald Stewart left Cabul in August.

garrisons told off to them, and are at present held by half the number of men assigned to guard them in case of a new outbreak. Each fort is being stored with seven days' provisions and water, and a liberal quantity of ammunition; and the garrisons are warned against using any of the reserve stores until necessity arises. The fort on Asmai is practically impregnable; even our artillery could not hope to make any impression upon it. The walls are twelve feet thick; and to carry it by assault, if at all well defended, would be impossible. Our cavalry are also showing themselves in the country about, to convince the people that we are on the alert, and also to enable the 3rd Bengal Cavalry and the Guides to become thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the ground they may have to act over. Last week all the available troopers and sowars in cantonment went out into Chardeh and over the ground where the 9th Lancers and 14th Bengal Lancers made their gallant charge on December 11th. Our infantry are also marched out occasionally, to get the men a little into condition, and they go swinging along over the dusty roads in the same grand style they have shown since they left Ali Kheyl six months ago. Drafts for the 9th and 72nd are now on their way up from Peshawur, and soon we shall have each regiment mustering about 900 banquets. All the men here are very fit and hardy after the winter, and are quite ready for another bout of fighting to relieve the monotony, which is now becoming rather trying. No. 1 Mountain Battery is to be relieved by the 6-8th, the screw-gun battery which did such good service in the Zaimukht country with General Tytler; and the 3rd Punjab Cavalry and 17th Bengal Cavalry are to come up to make our cavalry brigade complete. The strength of the Cabul garrison (including the outpost at Butkhak) was yesterday about 11,500 officers and men. The details of the force are:—

BUTKHAK.

	Officers.	Men.
2-9th Foot	3	101
5th Punjab Infantry	1	83
17th Bengal Cavalry	1	133

SHERPUR.

	Officers.	Men.
F-A, Royal Horse Artillery	6	162
G-8, Royal Artillery	6	178
No. 1 Mountain Battery	4	138
No. 2 Mountain Battery	5	201
Hazara Mountain Battery...	4	151
9th Lancers	17	287
3rd Bengal Cavalry	8	372
Guides' Cavalry	4	275
2-9th Foot...	15	442
67th Foot	25	721
72nd Foot	19	691
92nd Foot	20	681
23rd Pioneers	8	759
28th Punjab Infantry	8	651
3rd Sikhs	10	634
5th Punjab Infantry	7	476
5th Ghoorkas	8	636
2nd Ghoorkas	7	532
4th Ghoorkas	7	692
24th Punjab Infantry	8	717
45th Sikhs...	8	670
Guides' Infantry	6	607

The two companies of sappers and miners which belong to this division, but are now at Luttabund, are about 150 strong. Staff and departmental officers number 90. The draft for the 9th Foot is 320 men, and for the 72nd Highlanders about 200. The artillery musters twelve 9-pounders and fourteen 7-pounders. I give the details of our strength here, so that, in case of any further operations, the force at General Roberts's disposal may be estimated at its proper value.

On Friday Sir F. Roberts met Mr. Lepel Griffin on the road to Luttabund, and the General and his new Political Officer rode on to Sherpur together in the afternoon. Sir F. Roberts ordered a guard of honour (one company of the 5th Punjab Infantry) to escort Mr. Lepel Griffin from Siah Sung to the cantonment. This unusual honour was paid to the Political Officer in order that the local sirdars might be duly impressed with a sense of his dignity. The said sirdars turned out in great force, with their usual tag-rag of followers, and formed a picturesque *queue* in rear of the General.

25th March.

Mr. Lepel Griffin has made known to the Barakzai sirdars here what is to be the future of Afghanistan; and although many details of the scheme sanctioned by the Government of India cannot, of course, yet be settled, the outline is distinct enough. As to the difficulties to be overcome before the new arrangements mature, they are incidental to our position as conquerors of Cabul, and will be dealt with either diplomatically, or by force of arms, according to the temper of the tribal chiefs and others. As Mr. Griffin's short speech to Wali Mahomed Khan, Hashim Khan, and the other Barakzai sirdars was of an informal kind—though necessarily carrying weight as an exposition of Government policy—I am only able to give its general purport, about which there can be no manner of doubt. It was to the effect that certain wrong impressions had got abroad concerning Yakub Khan and his possible return to Cabul. Such return the Government had decided could under no conditions take place; tribal chiefs and their followers had believed that if a sufficient turmoil were kept up, and turbulent demands made persistently for Yakub Khan's return, that end might be gained. This was a total mistake. The ex-Amir would never be allowed to resume the power he had forfeited, and all disturbances with that object would be unavailing. It had also been found that during three generations the Durani sovereigns of Cabul had been unable, or unwilling, to carry out treaty obligations with India, and it had now been decided that their power should be curtailed and certain subdivisions made of Afghanistan. While the British Government had no desire to annex the country, they were resolved that Candahar and Herat must henceforth no longer appertain to the sovereign of Afghanistan. They would be separate and distinct, and the future ruler of Cabul would have to look upon them as removed from his jurisdiction.* It had also been determined that the army of occupation should remain in Afghanistan until a new ruler had been appointed strong enough to accept and carry out the obligations to be imposed upon him, and such a ruler would have to be found. He must be strong enough to ensure the

* This was the policy Lord Lytton intended to carry out.

protection of such Afghans as were the friends of the British, in order that, when the army withdrew, there might not be a risk of such men suffering for their fidelity to us. Our friends must be the friends of any ruler placed in power, and he must be prepared to protect them.

Such is the distinct enunciation of what is to happen here, and, as might have been expected, it is not altogether palatable to the Barakzai sirdars. One and all are glad that Yakub Khan is not to return; he has never been a favourite with his kinsmen since Shere Ali's death, and they would look upon his re-assumption of power as fatal to all their hopes. But they feel, and it is only right they should feel, keenly enough, the curtailment of the power hitherto vested in the hands of the Amir. Hashim Khan, who has been buoyed up with the idea that his chance of the Amirship was a very good one—though I must add, in justice to all our officials, that he has never received even a hint from them of what might be in store for him—showed considerable sullenness when he heard upon what terms the next Amir would have to accept power at our hands. He did not scruple to say openly that it would be impossible to guarantee the safety of any faction friendly to the British when our army had marched back to India. No doubt he holds this view as honestly as an Afghan can be said to have honesty at all; but he might modify it when he sees that such a condition will be insisted upon, and no half-hearted promise accepted. Hashim Khan has further said that, in freeing Candahar and Herat from their suzerainty to Cabul, we are reducing the Amir fron the status of a king to that of a Nawab. Herat has always been considered the key of Turkistan and of Southern Afghanistan, and to surrender it either to Persia or to an independent ruler would be a severe blow to the Durani dynasty. Again, Hashim Khan says that to expect a Durani sovereign in Cabul to hold his own against the turbulent tribes in the immediate district, when he has been deprived of the great support he receives from the strong Durani factions about Candahar, is an impossibility. It is true that the Duranis are most numerous in Southern Afghanistan, and at first sight the objection seems tenable enough; but Hashim Khan has forgotten that, by our occupation of Candahar, any Amir of Cabul will receive our countenance and

support from that quarter, and this will be as well known to the turbulent spirits of Kohistan, Logar, and Wardak, as to the Durani faction itself. Hashim Khan's sullenness would be of no importance were it not that he is the only man with a spark of ability among the Barakzais now with us in Cabul; and as I have said in previous letters, he has been favourably thought of in our plans for settling the country on a firm basis. If he will not accept our terms, he will inevitably be passed over, as far as the Amirship is concerned, for the work now before us has to be done so thoroughly that all danger of another *fiasco*, such as the treaty of Gundamak proved, must be guarded against.

Taking the broad lines laid down by Mr. Lepel Griffin, a forecast of what is likely to happen in Afghanistan—putting aside purely military complications, which I will turn to afterwards—may fairly be given. That such a forecast must be tinged with conjecture is, of course, unavoidable; but still, perhaps, a fair estimate of the situation may be given. Candahar will be retained in our possession, but Herat will not yet be annexed. Its future will more probably be that of an independent city, with an important mission to fufil in Central Asian politics. History is full of instances of cities maintaining their independence, and rising in course of time to the rank of Great Powers. Witness Venice, once one of the first maritime Powers in Europe. Herat is self-supporting, and is situated in so fertile a district that its wealth of produce is a proverb among Asiatics. Its strength as a military post is greater than that of any city in Afghanistan; it could be defended against great odds with almost a certainty of coming out victorious from the struggle. If we were to declare that it is to be independent, and to guarantee such independence against all-comers, its future would be assured. That this may be done is within the bounds of possibility, and we should give it a Governor who could be trusted to carry out our wishes. Being our nominee, and relying upon us for support in time of need, he would jealously guard against encroachments on his privileges; and would scarcely dare to risk loss of authority by disobeying any wishes we might make known to him. To do so would be madness with a British army at Candahar drawing its reinforcements by railway from India; and the Heratis themselves finding security and enormously-

increased trade resulting from their new position of independence, would probably be on the alert to check intrigues against their autonomy. So far as regards Southern and Western Afghanistan: there remain the eastern and northern provinces to be dealt with, and here conjecture must be indulged in. Cabul will be freed from the presence of our army when a new Afghan Government has been created; but that our forces will retire behind Lundi Kotal is most improbable. By general consent, the Khyber route seems to be recognized as that most adapted for communication, hostile or otherwise, with Cabul; the Kurram route is worthless during several months of the year, and Thull as a base has not a single advantage. It then remains for consideration whether Lundi Kotal is sufficiently advanced for our purpose. To enable our influence to be supreme at Cabul, we must put ourselves in such a position that our army shall always be within hail of the city. Lundi Kotal certainly does not give such a position; Jellalabad is much better, but its climate is so great a drawback that it also drops out of consideration as an advanced post—such a post being on the plan of a large fortified camp, holding a force fully equipped in the matter of ammunition, supplies, and *transport*, and ready to move at the shortest notice. Gundamak, or a position on the hills near, would unquestionably give the site for the new outpost on the north-west frontier of India, and its connection with Peshawur might be *not* by Jellalabad, but by the valleys along the northern slopes of the Safed Koh, viz., *via* Maizena and Peshbolak. The Lughman route would involve a strong garrison at Jellalabad, which is to be avoided if possible. Besides, Lughman cannot compare with the fertile valleys in the shadow of the Safed Koh, wherein grain, forage, fuel, and water are abundant. I can speak from personal experience of Maizena and Peshbolak, having visited them during the last campaign; and if the pacification of the Shinwaris were once assured, the route would teem with advantages which cannot be found on the Jellalabad Road. It would not be a task more difficult to reduce the Shinwaris to a state of quietude than it was to convince the Afridis of the uselessness of molesting us in the Khyber. As there is always a great outcry against annexation, it might be worth while to abandon Kurram, merely taking a *quid pro quo* in

the Jellalabad Valley. That this will absolutely be done, is very problematical; but it is to be hoped that the Government will be strong enough to disregard any non-annexation outcry if the preponderance of opinion, both among our military and political experts, is in favour of the holding of Gundamak.*

6th April.

The Mustaufi, Habibulla Khan, who was sent by General Roberts some weeks ago to negotiate with the Ghazni malcontents, and induce them to state what their demands really were, has returned to Sherpur and reported that he has the majority of the chiefs now at Maidan, and they are willing to attend a Durbar. Young Musa Khan has, however, been left at Ghazni with Mushk-i-Alam. When General Roberts first proposed to Habibulla Khan to go to Ghazni, and sound the temper of the malcontent leaders, with a view to arrange some basis upon which the settlement of Afghanistan could be carried out, the answer was that it would be useless—the irreconcilables would not listen to him. There the matter ended for the time being, but some weeks afterwards the Mustaufi voluntarily visited the General, and said that he was willing to go to his home in Wardak, whence he could judge if it were possible to gather the tribal chiefs together for purposes of consultation. He accordingly set out, and for the past two months we have heard strange rumours of what was happening in Wardak and Ghazni. The Mustaufi now reports that, on arriving at his home in Wardak, he fell ill, and for some time was unable to do anything in the way of negotiation. Upon recovering, he began to sound the various Wardak chiefs as to their views, and was careful to point out the folly of resistance, now that the British had received large reinforcements and had strengthened Sherpur and the heights above Cabul. At first, no one would listen to him, so he proceeded to Ghazni to interview Mahomed Jan, young Tahir Khan (half-brother of Hashim Khan), and finally Mushk-i-Alam. Here

* The Afghans cannot, of course, be expected to understand the principle of party-government at home; the defeat of the Conservative party and the recall of Lord Lytton put an end to such ideas as the retention of Candahar and the maintenance of the scientific frontier. Our change of policy was misunderstood generally in Afghanistan, where, to this day, it is believed we were too weak to carry out our original plans.

also he met with but little success: Mahomed Jan would not adopt his views, but talked of a new *jehad*, and the driving of the British out of the country: the success of the first few weeks of December was to be repeated on a larger scale, and every tribesman was to rise from Ghazni to Jellalabad. Against such tall talk the Mustaufi could only urge that the *jehad* would come to as bitter and humiliating an end as the previous one had done on December 23rd, when the force sent to attack Sherpur had been beaten off with great loss. Then Mahomed Jan veered round slightly, and said he would abandon all idea of fighting if Yakub Khan were reinstated, or Musa Khan created Amir. The former scheme, he was told, was impossible; the latter might possibly be considered. The Mustaufi was much hindered in his work by young Tahir Khan, who had Musa Khan in his keeping. This young sirdar cordially hates his half-brother, Hashim Khan; and as he knew Habibulla was working solely in the latter's interest, he tried to thwart him in every way. This game of cross-purposes would have been most interesting to an outsider if all the intricacies of the intrigues could have been understood; but it must sorely have tried the temper of the Mustaufi, who had everything to gain by bringing the malcontents to look at matters from his point of view. He was, however, more than a match for a drunken debauchee, such as Mahomed Jan and an inexperienced youth like Tahir Khan. Turning his attention to Mushk-i-Alam, he used different arguments to those employed with the military leaders of the disaffected. He showed to the old *moollah* that the only way of getting rid of the infidels (whom he hated just as much as any reckless fanatic) was by negotiation, and not by resistance: the former course might put Cabul once more into a position of importance; the latter only could result in disaster to Afghanistan, as the British forces were daily growing in strength, and it was fully intended to capture Ghazni from the Candahar direction, and punish every tribe showing overt hostility. The *moollah* was half-convinced, and was left in such a frame of mind that good results might be looked for. Then Habibulla Khan turned his attention to the powerful chiefs of his own tribe, and by means which we are ignorant of, won them all over to his side. They, perhaps, scented future rewards and great power in the direction of the

State when their kinsman should be Finance Minister of a new Amir, and they announced themselves as prepared to consult with the British upon the subject of a future Government. The example of the Wardak chiefs was contagious, and soon the Logar *maliks* made common cause with them. Mahomed Jan thus saw himself being deserted by the tribes upon whom he had mainly relied, and he at last promised to accompany the Mustaufi to Maidan to take part in a great tribal Durbar, although he refrained from pledging himself to any fixed decision. Just about this time the Hazaras raided upon Nani, south of Ghazni, and the Mustaufi was in fear that all his arrangements would be upset, as Mahomed Jan started to repel the raiders. From that point much uncertainty as to what was really occurring was felt in Sherpur; and as it was known that Mr. Lepel Griffin's declaration of the partition of Afghanistan had been sullenly received even by Hashim Khan, it was not unnaturally supposed that the Mustaufi would be left in the lurch by the chiefs who had pledged themselves to follow his instructions.

Yesterday Habibulla Khan rode from Maidan to Sherpur, and all doubts, so far as regards the chiefs being at Maidan, are set at rest. He reports that he left there all the headmen of Wardak, Logar, Ahmadzai Ghilzais, and Zurmut (the district east of Ghazni towards Khost), together with Mahomed Jan, Mir Butcha, Kohistani; Mahomed Hasan Khan, ex-Governor of Jellalabad; Sirdars Tahir Khan, Alim Khan, Surwar Khan, and other notables, including Generals Aslam Khan, Gholam Jan, and Kurrim Khan, who fought against us at Charasia.

The news that General Sir Donald Stewart with a large force left Candahar a week ago for Ghazni has undoubtedly had an effect upon these men. It is difficult to see what our own policy will be hereafter, as the change of Government at home may bring about quite a new departure. All General Roberts and Mr. Lepel Griffin can do is to endeavour to gain the ear of the chiefs, and to obtain a knowledge of their wishes in the matter of a settled Government. The chiefs now at Maidan will be asked to attend a Durbar, shortly to be held in Sherpur. Mr. A. C. Lyall, Foreign Secretary, has paid a flying visit to Cabul, and is now on his way back to India.

14th April.

The Durbar for the reception of such of the chiefs as chose to come in has, at last, been held, and the fullest declaration yet made of the intentions of the Government of India has been listened to by the Cabul sirdars and the men whom the Mustaufi has induced to visit Sherpur. It may be as well, once for all, to state that the chiefs represented only a minority of the tribesmen, although a paper of requests which they have presented was signed by nearly all the Wardak, Logar, and Southern Ghilzai *maliks*. The Mustaufi's personal interest in Wardak was sufficiently strong to bring many of his kinsmen in; but Mahomed Jan's brother, who is head of the clan, would not accompany the rest, considering his signature quite enough for all practical purposes. Mahomed Jan himself would have come in willingly if a *khillut* had been promised and certain honours paid to him as a successful General; but this we very sensibly declined to do, and he is now out in the cold. Mahomed Hasan Khan, ex-Governor of Jellalabad, also declined at the last moment, as he will have no one but Yakub Khan as Amir; while Mir Butcha and Surwar Khan, Purwani, are too busy, levying men in Kohistan for Abdur Rahman's army, to think of wasting their time at Sherpur. We had then, really, at the Durbar representatives of the Wardak, Logar, Zurmut, and Koh-Dahman people, or sections of the people, and also all the Barakzai sirdars with us in Cabul, as well as the three Sirdars—Surwar Khan, Tahir Khan, and Alim Khan—who have been taking care of young Musa Jan, at Ghazni, in the hope that he might some day be made Amir by the British.

The Durbar was held in a large tent pitched near the Engineers' Park in Sherpur. The sirdars and *maliks* rode into Sherpur from the city at eleven o'clock, and spent their time until three o'clock in discussing current events and admiring each other's wonderful raiment. They were marshalled in due order in the Durbar tent before four o'clock, Wali Mahomed, Governor of the city, being placed on the right of the seats assigned to Sir F. Roberts and Mr. Lepel Griffin, the Mustaufi and the Nawab Gholam Hussain being just in rear; while Sirdar Hashim Khan,

Abdulla Khan, and the other loyal Barakzai princes were given chairs on the right. The tribal chiefs squatted on the ground just within the shadow of the tent, while such British officers as chose to attend were seated on the General's left. General Ross, commanding the 2nd Division, and the Brigadiers, with the exception of General Baker, who is lying ill from an attack of fever, were among the British officers present. A guard of honour of 100 men of the 72nd Highlanders, with their band, were drawn up—bayonets fixed, and ball ammunition in their pouches—on the road leading from the General's gateway; while small parties of the 3rd Sikhs and 5th Ghoorkas were stationed in rear of the tent as an extra precaution. Afghan fanaticism takes, at times, such determined shape that even in a Durbar a ghazi might declare himself; and it was therefore only wise to be ready for an emergency. It would have fared ill with any fanatic who might have attempted to amuse himself preparatory to entering Paradise, for the Highlanders, Sikhs, and Ghoorkas are too old soldiers to care for a knife-cut when their bayonets are ready for use. Sir Frederick Roberts, with his personal Staff, and Mr. Lepel Griffin, Chief Political Officer, walked from the headquarters to the tent; and as the General entered after the usual honours from the guard outside, the sirdars and *maliks* rose to their feet and made obeisance with true Oriental humility. The scene was picturesque enough, and yet there was a grim touch of irony in the surroundings; for, preceding the General, came eight Highlanders with the inevitable fixed bayonets, who opened out on either hand in the tent, and stood to attention in the space between the chiefs and the British officers. Sir Frederick Roberts's native orderlies, two long-limbed Sikhs, two wiry Pathans, and a pair of fierce little Ghoorkas, who are always to be found at the General's heels, took up their places behind him, their bayonets shining out among the gold-laced caps of the Staff and the undress uniforms of the officers of the garrison whom curiosity had prompted to be present. After the preliminary shuffling and gathering up of robes, the Afghan notables followed the General's example and quietly sat down, the *maliks* falling upon their knees and folding their hands in an attitude of great attention. There was not much to attract notice either in their faces or

demeanour: they were merely commonplace men, waiting respectfully upon the General's pleasure; but there was presently a stir among them when the names of Surwar Khan, Tahir Khan, and Alim Khan were called out. These three sirdars were presented to the General by Mr. Griffin, and after shaking hands and making respectful bows they returned to their places. Tahir Khan is a young man of nineteen or twenty, with a sullen expression of face, and with none of the dignity of a prince: he might, with a little trouble, be made to look like a decent Cabuli *syce;* but even then he would be a poor figure among his compeers of the stable. Sir Frederick Roberts did not receive any of the tribal chiefs, whose position, indeed, would not have warranted such an attention, but immediately opened the Durbar by a short speech, greatly to the purpose. He said:—

"SIRDARS AND MALIKS,

"I am very glad to meet you here to-day, especially those who through the good offices of the Mustaufi have been induced to come into Cabul to make their wishes known to me. I trust this Durbar is the beginning of the end, and that it will now be possible for us to enter into such an arrangement with the people of Afghanistan as will ensure an honourable peace and lasting friendship between them and the British. Some of you, I understand, hesitated to accompany the Mustaufi, fearing your treatment and reception by us might not be such as we had promised you, and that some evil might befall you. You need never have any such fear when your safety has been assured on the word of a British officer. The British do not say one thing and mean another. You who have come in have been honourably treated, and after this Durbar you are all at liberty to depart. I trust, when you leave Cabul, you will carry away with you a more friendly feeling towards us than some of you hitherto entertained; and that those of your party who are still holding aloof will be wise enough to follow the good example you have set them, and will accept our invitation to come into Cabul. Mr. Lepel Griffin, Chief Political Officer in North and Eastern Afghanistan, with whom you have already become acquainted, will now, on the part of the Government of India, answer the request you have made."

This speech having been translated into Persian, Mr. Lepel Griffin addressed the chiefs. His speech, delivered in Persian, was to the following effect:—

"SIRDARS, KHANS, AND MALIKS OF CABUL,

"It has been my wish, for some time past, to meet you all in Durbar, and to explain to you collectively and publicly, as I have already done privately, the intentions of the British Government with regard to the settlement of Afghanistan. This is a favourable opportunity, when replies have been given to the request of certain chiefs and *maliks* in the neighbourhood of Ghazni who have been long hostile, but who have,

at last, listened to the advice of the Mustaufi whom Sir Frederick Roberts sent to reassure them, and have deputed many of their number to place their requests respectfully before the Government. It is to be regretted that the more important of the leaders have not come in person. When the Government promised them a safe-conduct, there was no reason for even those who had been most opposed to it, to fear for their lives, or their liberty. The British Government bears no ill-will to those who have fought fairly against it, and those of the representatives who have come to Cabul are free to leave when they wish; during their stay they will be treated as friends and guests. But those chiefs who have remained behind at Maidan, must not think their signatures on the paper of requests will be considered as equivalent to their presence; the more so as we know that the reason why some of them have not come is that they have secretly abandoned the cause they profess to support, and have made promises to others. When you return to Maidan, ask Generals Gholam Hyder and Mahomed Jan when they are going to desert you.

"*Maliks* of Ghasni, Maidan, and Logar, and Chiefs of the Ghilzai, Wardak, and other tribes in their neighbourhood,—I have met you more than once in private interview, and have discussed with you, in a friendly way, your requests; and I now only wish to say publicly, and for the information of the sirdars and the people of the city and neighbourhood of Cabul, whom it concerns as closely as it does you, what I have already said to you. You have first asked that the former friendship of the Government of the Queen-Empress of Hindustan should be restored, that the Amir Yakub Khan should be released and reinstated, and that the British Army should retire from Afghanistan. I reply, I would first remind you that the breach in our mutual friendship was made by the Amir Shere Ali Khan. The British Government not only always desired and still desires friendship with Afghanistan, but will not appoint any one as Amir who does not profess friendship; nor will it allow him to continue Amir unless he plainly shows himself the friend of the friends of the British Government, and the enemy of its enemies. For this reason, the Viceroy has decided that Yakub Khan shall not return to Afghanistan. You know whether he observed the promises he had made to the British Government; you know he rewarded those who opposed us in the first campaign; while those who had assisted us he turned out of their lands and appointments. You have told me privately that if Yakub Khan be not allowed to return, you are willing to accept as Amir any one whom the British Government may choose to select. This expression of the wish of a large number of respectable *maliks* will be at a proper time laid before His Excellency the Viceroy, together with that of others who may wish to support the candidature of Wali Mahomed, Hashim Khan, Musa Khan, Ayub Khan, or any other member of the ruling family who may be approved by a large number of the people. Government has no intention of annexing Afghanistan, and will occupy no more of it than may be necessary for the safety of its own frontier. But the province of Candahar will not remain united to Cabul: it will be placed under the independent rule of a Barakzai prince. For the administration of those provinces that remain attached to Cabul, the Government is anxious to appoint an Amir who shall be strong enough to govern his people and be steadfast in his friendship to the British: and if only these qualifications be secured, the Government is willing and anxious to recognise the wish of the Afghan people and of their tribal chiefs, and to nominate an Amir of their choice. But no decision can be given at present. You who have assembled here represent but a small part of the people, and it is necessary to ascertain the views and wishes of many other chiefs and sirdars who are absent from Cabul. But your votes in favour of Yakub Khan's immediate family will be remembered and considered, if, until,

the decision of the Government be given, you absolutely abstain from all hostile action; otherwise do not expect that the Government will consider him likely to be a friendly Amir whose friends are its persistent enemies. The armies of the Queen-Empress will withdraw from Afghanistan, when the Government considers that the proper time has come. As they did not enter Afghanistan with your permission, so they will not withdraw at your request. When the country is again peaceful, and when a friendly Amir has been selected, the Government has no wish to remain in Afghanistan. The army came to Cabul to inflict punishment for the murder of its Envoy in time of peace, which some of you have called a regrettable accident, but which the British Government considers an atrocious crime. It will remain until some satisfactory settlement can be made.

"You have been told that an army from Candahar is now marching on Ghazni, while another from Bombay has taken its place at Candahar. A third army is in Kurrum, a fourth at Cabul, a fifth at Jellalabad, in the Khyber, and at Peshawur. The General has ordered a strong force to march from Cabul in three days towards Maidan, to cooperate with the Candahar army. If you are wise, you will do everything to assist this force, which is not sent against you, nor will it molest you, if only the conduct of the people is friendly. If, on the contrary, you listen to leaders who only deceive you for their own advantage, and commit and excite hostility against the Government, punishment will quickly and certainly follow. The Khugiani tribe three weeks ago attacked the British Fort near Gundamak, at night; they have since had to pay a fine of Rs. 10,000 and five of their towers have been blown up. The Hisarak people have been committing outrages on the road and carrying off men and cattle. A large force has been sent by the General into Hisarak, and a fine of Rs. 15,000 has been imposed.

"The Government is quite willing to be friends with you and to treat you as its friends; but it is also resolved to be obeyed, so long as its armies are in the country, and to punish severely any open opposition. You have a proverb that force and money are the only powers in Afghanistan. It is for you to choose which you wish. Government intends to keep the sword for its enemies and the money for its friends; and if you are wise you will count yourselves as our friends. Those people deceive you who preach a *jehad*, and say the English are the enemies of Islam. In India fifty million Mahomedans enjoy under the government of the Queen greater liberty, happiness, and security than in any country of the world; and it is the British Government which has many times, by a great expenditure of men and treasure, guarded and preserved the empire of the Sultan of Turkey against his enemies. Government is the friend and protector of Islam, and not its destroyer. As to your own requests for the appointment of a Mahomedan agent at Cabul, and a grant of assistance in money and material to the new Amir, I can only say that these requests have been made by you in ignorance, for they are matters which will be decided, by the Government of India, with the chief whom they agree to appoint as Amir. It is not fitting for small persons to discuss them. Of this only be assured, that he whom the Viceroy of India may select will be supported by the Government in every possible way, so long as he shows friendly intentions towards it."

The chiefs listened silently and with the phlegmatic attention they always show in Durbar, and they clearly understood the speeches. Mr. Griffin spoke in Persian, and a Pushtu translation was also read out for the benefit of such as were imperfectly

acquainted with Persian. Such of the British officers as could speak neither language were in the dark as to the Political Officer's declaration, but camp gossip soon furnished them with a fairly-correct translation. The firmness of the language and the uncompromising terms in which the sirdars and chiefs were told of our intentions has been approved in camp in the fullest way. Our great hope is that no exigencies of party politics at home will cause a modification; it would be fatal to our prestige if we had to withdraw from resolutions now made public. The Cabul chiefs had already been told what they had to expect; and the Barakzai sirdars now learned what decision the Government of India had arrived at—Candahar to be the fief of an independent prince; an Amir to be elected by the voice of the people, who should be friendly to the British; and the withdrawal of our army when such a man had been found—these were the main points. Herat was not mentioned, and this is the more significant as it was fully known that the separation of Herat from the Durani kingdom was a sore point, even with our friends in Cabul. The future of that district may well be allowed to drop out of sight for the present, as until it becomes clear who the new Amir is to be, we cannot possibly undertake to say what shall become of Herat. If he is a man equal to holding Turkistan and Herat as well as Cabul, and to be true, at the same time, to his friendship to us, we might so strengthen his hands that he could defy rebellion and intrigue and make his government all-powerful from our north-western frontier to the borders of Persia. The allusion to Turkey was certainly not a happy one; we may, it is true, have gone to war several times to maintain that Mahomedan kingdom, but our late desertion of the Sultan cannot recommend our policy to such fanatical Mussulmans as the Afghans. Abdur Rahman's name, too, was not mentioned; and as he is already knocking at our gates, it might have been wiser to make some allusions to him.

The result of the Durbar has been satisfactory enough as far as the Cabul sirdars are concerned, who fully believe that one of their number will yet be Amir. Sirdars Wali Mahomed Khan and Hashim Khan have accepted the mediation of the Mustaufi, and have pledged themselves to act in concert, if either of them is placed on the throne. They both dread the advent of Abdur

Rahman and the possible encouragement he may receive from the British, if he comes as a friend, and they are very anxious to show that their combined party would be strong enough to keep the Durani kingdom together. They have, as yet, received no distinct promises from us, and it is not too much to say that we are inclined to treat their claims with contempt until we learn more of Abdur Rahman's intentions. The tribal chiefs, too, are not of sufficient importance to justify us in believing that any arrangement made with them would be of a lasting kind; and though we have so far respected their feelings as not to send our force out to Maidan to-day, we still intend to move 4,000 men under General John Ross to Sheikhabad, on the Ghazni Road, there to join hands with Sir Donald Stewart. News from Kunduz is to the effect that Abdur Rahman Khan is collecting men and raising money, and that his agents have been well received in Kohistan.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Force sent to co-operate with Sir Donald Stewart—Strength of General Ross's Division—A Force moved out to Charasia—Hasan Khan in Logar—Abdur Rahman and the Kohistanis—General Ross's Advance on the Ghasni Road—Communication opened with Sir Donald Stewart—News of the Action at Ahmed Khel—Action at Charasia—Colonel Jenkins attacked by Hasan Khan—The Charasia Force strengthened—Description of the Action—General Macpherson's Disposition of the Reinforcements—Defeat and Dispersion of the Logaris under Hasan Khan—Heavy Losses of the Afghans—The Leaders of the Attack.

THE following extracts from letters will explain General Ross's movement towards Ghazni to co-operate with Sir Donald Stewart:—

17*th April*, 1880.

Sufficient time having been given to the chiefs who attended the late Durbar to return to their homes, the force told off to co-operate with Sir Donald Stewart's column advancing from Candahar, has started for Sheikhabad on the Ghazni Road. It left yesterday morning under command of Major-General John Ross, and took the road to Argandeh, halting for the night at Kila Kazi, seven or

eight miles from the Cabul gorge. Its numerical strength was nearly 4,000 fighting men of all arms, made up as follows:—

	Officers.	Rank and File.
6-8, Royal Artillery (4 screw-guns)	4	131
Hazara Mountain Battery (6 guns)	5	200
9th Lancers (1 squadron)	4	100
3rd Punjab Cavalry (2 squadrons)	6	200
3rd Bengal Cavalry	8	350
9th Foot ... ... (General C. Gough's Brigade.) ...	21	700
4th Ghoorkas ... ... (General C. Gough's Brigade.) ...	7	660
24th Punjab Native Infantry (General C. Gough's Brigade.) ...	8	660
23rd Pioneers	8	680
3rd Company Sappers and Miners	2	96
Field Park (Captain Brackenbury)	1	60
Total	74	3,837

The officers of the Staff are—General Ross, commanding; Major Boyes, A.A.G.; Captain Dutton, A.Q.M.G.; and Dr. Macnalty, Staff Surgeon; Brigadier-General Charles Gough, C.B., V.C.; Major Gerard, Brigade Major; Major Kinloch and Major Combe, D.A.Q.M.Gs. Captain Ridgeway is the Political Officer with the Division.

This force is of sufficient strength to hold its own against any force that can possibly be gathered together on the Ghazni Road, but it seems unlikely that it will meet with any serious opposition in that quarter. Mahomed Jan's faction has been so split up, that he will have difficulty in raising large bodies of men in future, particularly as the eyes of the Kohistanis, Cabulis, Logaris, and Safis are all turned northwards, Abdur Rahman's movements beyond the Hindu Kush being far more discussed than any tribal warfare towards Ghazni. To-day heliograms from Argandeh are to the effect that Mahomed Jan has fled to Narkh, the valley wherein are Bahadur Khan's villages visited by us in November last. Two thousand men under Abdul Gaffur, a local *moollah* of some importance, are said to have assembled there; but unless this force is increased tenfold, no opposition worthy of the name can be shown to General Ross. Mahomed Jan's parting shot was a summons to all the Kohistani *maliks* to raise their followers and

march to Ghazni to resist the Candahar force—a summons, it is needless to say, which will not be obeyed, as the Kohistanis are not foolish enough to place themselves in a position where they would be cut off from their homes. Mahomed Hasan Khan and General Karim Khan have gone to Logar to get men together. The Ghazni faction is on the horns of a dilemma, and the next few weeks will probably see our troops promenading through Wardak and Logar, collecting revenue and supplies, without any show of resistance to our orders. Of course, if Abdur Rahman makes a demonstration at Charikar, there may bo another outburst of fanaticism; but, so far as we can judge, that adventurer is not too anxious to cross the Hindu Kush until matters are a little more advanced. If he can see his way to secure the Amirship easily without fighting, he will certainly make overtures to Sir F. Roberts. The rumour that he is running short of funds is very significant in itself; he cannot keep an army together unless he has the means wherewith to pay his sepoys, and he is too shrewd to risk a failure by pushing his force too far south when our army is within five marches of Charikar. We are more on the alert now than we have been since the events of December, and the Kohistanis know this perfectly well, though, perhaps, they do not know that General Macpherson's Brigade is to be held in readiness to move out at an hour's notice should local disaffection require such a step.

22nd April.

General Ross has reached Kila Durani, one march from Sheikhabad, without serious opposition. For the benefit of all humanitarian critics, I may state that strict orders have been given under which hostile villages are only to be punished by the destruction of their towers and fortified places: the houses of the tribesmen will in all cases be spared. Such grain and stores as we require will be taken—a very mild way, indeed, of "living upon the country." We pay such exorbitant prices for everything we buy, that the few maunds of corn taken in this way cannot prove any serious loss to the tribesmen.

In addition to the column co-operating with Sir Donald Stewart, it has been found advisable to send a small force to Charasia.

This is made up of two guns F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, a wing of the 92nd Highlanders, and the whole of the Guides, cavalry and infantry. The reason for this step was that Mahomed Hasan Khan was threatening all villagers who were sending in supplies to Sherpur from Logar, and the roads had become very unsafe for all *kafilas*. The case of the Khan of Kushi will show very clearly the state of Logar at the present moment, and the awkward position in which *maliks* friendly to the British are placed. This old man did all he could to aid our advance when we crossed the Shutargardan in September, and he has since remained faithful to his promises made to us. A few days ago he came in to Sherpur, and asked for advice, his case being that Hasan Khan had ordered him to send all his fighting men to Baraki Rajan and to furnish supplies for the levies being raised in Logar. The Khan would not obey the order, and Hasan Khan then threatened to destroy his villages and seize all his goods. The threat may have been an idle one, but still it was enough to intimidate the *malik*. He was told to return to his home and to keep Hasan Khan in play for a few days, when the advance of General Ross upon Sheikhabad, and General Stewart's arrival at Ghazni, would probably cause the dispersion of any bands under Hasan Khan. In the meantime, to hasten this dispersion, and to keep the roads from Logar to Cabul open, Colonel Jenkins was ordered to Charasia, and there he is now encamped waiting for orders. The effect upon the disorderly spirits in Logar has been most healthy. They dread an incursion into their valley on both sides, and they are now anxious to renounce Hasan Khan and all his works. There are always men to be found in every tribe ripe for adventure and guerilla warfare, and it seems probable that Hasan Khan still has several hundred of these about, and intends harassing picquets and rear-guards whenever opportunity offers. He has always a road of escape open towards Zurmut or the Shutargardan; and unless the *maliks* turn him out of their villages, he will continue to foment discontent in Logar until the Ghazni and Sheikhabad Forces have united and swept through the valley to Kushi. The people are willing and, indeed, anxious to send supplies to Cabul, as the prices paid by us are abnormally high; but until the presence of our troops frees the headmen from all

fear of reprisals by Hasan Khan, the flow of grain and cattle to Cabul will be sluggish and uncertain.

From the north the news of Abdur Rahman's movements is still meagre in the extreme; but the explanation most probably of this is, that he is waiting for events to be a little more distinctly shaped in Cabul before he plays his trump card and formally demands the Amirship. He has sent circulars to all the leading chiefs in Kohistan and the Cabul province, upon whose goodwill he thinks he can count; and having thus put his claims forward, he is content to rest upon his arms and make his position in Turkistan and about Kunduz secure before venturing over the Hindu Kush. His intentions towards the British may be looked upon as unformed so far: they will depend upon the spirit in which his claims are received. If we decline to have anything to say to him—which is extremely unlikely, as it is rumoured that a Mission is to be sent to Kunduz from Sherpur—he will either raise a new *jehad*, or will wait until we have left Cabul, and then quietly swoop down upon any nominee we have placed on the throne, and try his fortune once more for the Amirship. If, on the contrary, we make our usual philanthropic offers of friendship, and invite him to come forward and state his case, leaving it to the decision of the chiefs and people, he will unquestionably meet us half-way, and trust to his old popularity gaining him an easy triumph. His mainstay is Kohistan, whence he looks to receive arms, money, and men; and, so far as can be judged, the Kohistanis favour his claims unreservedly. Knowing this, it has been all the more imperative that we should induce the Kohistani chiefs to come in and make their wishes known: as, once Abdur Rahman is secured in the interests of the British, and his claims allowed by the majority of the tribesmen, our political difficulties would begin to clear away. An agent, Ressalder Mahomed Afzul of the 11th Bengal Lancers, was sent by us into Kohistan to confer with the *maliks*, and he has been successful in bringing between seventy and eighty of these men to Cabul. The chief among these are Jabbar Khan, Gholam Hyder Khan, and Khwaja Abdul Kadir, and it is no secret that they are friends of Abdur Rahman. Mr. Lepel Griffin received them in Durbar yesterday, and took from Gholam Hyder a paper signed not only by the

maliks present, but by Surwar Khan Parwani, Mir Butcha, and the remainder of the Kohistani chiefs. Under the seals of all these men Gholam Hyder was appointed their mouthpiece to confer with the British, against whom all idea of enmity was disavowed. Surwar Khan and the other absentees promised also that if the *maliks* reported favourably upon their reception at Sherpur, they also would come in. The Durbar was not of the formal kind at which the Wardak and Logar chiefs were received, it being understood that the Kohistanis should hereafter formulate their requests, and make them known at a later period. The behaviour of the *maliks* was all that could be wished; and Gholam Hyder in a temperate and respectful speech, thanked Mr. Griffin for the consideration with which he and his friends had been treated, and earnestly hoped that a satisfactory arrangement would be come to, and that perfect friendliness would be established. The chief certainly seemed sincere enough, and his words were received with marked approval by his brother *maliks*, who nodded an affirmative as he quietly stated their desire to aid the British in creating a stable Government in Cabul. The *maliks* will remain in Cabul for several days, and it is probable that in a few days the other chiefs will come in, and then an answer can be given to their representations, which are shaped in the form of a request, that Abdur Rahman's claims to the Amirship be favourably entertained by the British.

26th April.

The foraging parties sent out by General Ross were fired at in the Narkh Valley and on the Bamian Road leading from Maidan, and in consequence of this the Umur Khel Ghilzais were punished by a force being sent into the Darra Narkh. They met with no opposition, and having destroyed one of Bahadur Khan's towers, they rejoined the main body.

After the punishment of the Umur Khel, General Ross marched from Maidan and encamped, on 21st April, at Kila Sher Mahomed, more commonly called Kila Durani, about two miles to the south of the Cabul river, which was found to be easily fordable. There were the remains of what must once have been a

handsome bridge, but time and neglect had made it a complete ruin. News were brought in of a combination of all the neighbouring tribes, and of an intended attack to be made upon three sides. Mahomed Jan, with a large force of Wardaks, was to appear from the south; Mahomed Hasan Khan, with the Logaris, was to try a flank attack from the east; while Bahadur Khan and Abdul Gaffur were to direct the movements of the Maidanis and the Umur Khel from the hills to the west. The combination seemed to be one so likely to take place, that every precaution was taken by General Ross: the camp was made as compact as possible, entrenchments were thrown up, and the troops were ready to turn out at the first alarm. A night attack on the 21st was fully expected, but no alarm was given, and on the following morning the force marched onwards to Sar-i-Tope, ten miles. This left the Maidan villages seventeen miles in rear; and it became daily more apparent that the tribesmen meditated some kind of attack along the road. Parties of men crowned the hills on the west, and fired at long ranges upon the column; but such bullets as fell near our men were all spent, and but little notice was taken of so harmless a demonstration. The road ran through a valley two or three miles broad, with a gradual ascent the whole way. Once only a party of men ventured down the hill sides, probably to get within range of the column, but a shell from the Hazara Mountain Battery dispersed them, and their comrades were not bold enough to repeat the manœuvre. At 9 A.M. Sar-i-Tope was reached, the camping ground being at an elevation of about 8,000 feet, and the Sher-i-Dahan Pass, north of Ghazni, could be seen. Before noon a heliograph flash was noticed on the Sher-i-Dahan Kotal, and Lieutenant Whistler Smith's signallers were soon in communication with the advanced party af the Candahar column. The first message which linked the two forces together was sent in the name of Sir Donald Stewart, and was as follows:—

"On the 19th the division under my command, while marching from Mushaki, encountered an armed gathering of Andaris, Tarakis, Suleiman Kheyls and other tribesmen, who numbered some 15,000 men, horse and foot. Preparation was made to attack the strong position held by the enemy at Ahmed Khel, twenty-three miles south of Ghazni, when a body of some 3,000 fanatic swordsmen poured down on our troops, spreading out beyond either flanks of our line. The fighting lasted one hour, after which the entire body of the enemy spread broadcast over the country. The protection of the

baggage prevented pursuit by the cavalry. The division, however, marched forward nine miles to Nani after the engagement, and the day before yesterday, the 20th, the advanced cavalry entered Ghazni. Over 1,000 of the enemy's dead were counted on the ground, and their loss in killed and wounded is stated to be 2,000. Casualties on our side: 17 killed and 115 wounded. The following are the wounded:—Lieutenant Young, 19th Bengal Lancers, dangerously; Captain Corbet, R.H.A., severely; Lieutenant-Colonel Lawson, 59th Foot, Colonel Yorke, 19th Bengal Lancers, Lieutenant Watson, 59th Foot, Lieutenant Stewart, 2nd Punjab Cavalry, all slightly. No officers killed. All wounded are doing well."

This good news had scarcely reached Sherpur when the cantonment was thrown into a state of excitement by a sharp fight at Charasia. The discontented tribesmen in Logar, foreseeing that in a very short time they would have in their midst a force which they could not hope to contend against, made a desperate effort to cut up Colonel Jenkins's party at Charasia. Since the anxious days of December, no such excitement has been felt at Sherpur as that of yesterday morning, when it became known that the Highlanders and Guides were hotly engaged beyond the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, and that General Macpherson was ordered to march to their assistance. The cantonment was all astir, and the secret orders which had been issued when General Ross moved out were at once put into execution. The 2nd Brigade, under General Baker, knew that in the event of General Macpherson's brigade leaving Sherpur, they had to take charge of all the posts held by the 92nd Highlanders, 45th Sikhs, and 28th Punjabees; and between eight and nine o'clock the 72nd Highlanders, 3rd Sikhs, 5th Ghoorkas, and 5th Punjab Infantry, were all falling in and being told off to their respective stations. Of the Europeans 100 went to Fort Siah Sung, 120 to Fort Onslow (the fort on the eastern end of Bemaru Heights), 100 to the fort on Asmai Heights, and 250 to the Bemaru Gorge as the reserve, where also two guns of G-8 were placed, commanding the *maidan* between the gorge and the Wazirabad Lake. The native regiments also furnished parties for Asmai, Siah Sung, and the detached forts about it, and manned the block-houses and defences at the eastern and western ends of the cantonment. The gate guards were strengthened by small parties held in reserve, and one might have imagined that Sherpur was on the eve of a second siege. These precautions were necessary, as our spies had brought in news of 6,000 or 8,000 Kohis-

tanis being in the neighbourhood of Baba Kuch Kar, and Shahbaz Khan, our Governor of Koh-Daman, had sent in alarming reports of Mir Butcha's and Surwar Khan's intentions. They were said to intend a sudden attack upon Sherpur; and although Mir Butcha had written in to say that his intentions were not hostile, and that he would shortly visit General Roberts to pay his respects, it was deemed wise to take every precaution, and to be ready to check the Kohistanis if they crossed the Paen Minar or other *kotals* to the north of the cantonment. The picquet of 100 men of the 28th Punjab Infantry were withdrawn from Paen Minar, and a troop of cavalry sent out to watch the road from Koh-Dahman. Parties of signallers were stationed on all the commanding points in our chain of defences, and a sharp look-out was kept in every direction. From Butkhak and Luttabund all was reported quiet; while towards Pughman and Argandeh not a sign of any tribesmen being on the move could be detected. The interest, therefore, was concentrated upon Charasia, with which we were in heliographic communication, Colonel Jenkins signalling up to the fort on the Sherderwaza, and the message being flashed down to the signallers on the General's gateway. The news first sent in was that 2,000 to 3,000 tribesmen had opened fire upon the camp at daybreak, and that their attack had since been developed in force. At 9.50 Colonel Jenkins heliographed that his loss up to that time had been three killed and seven wounded, that he was holding his own well, but that the enemy were being reinforced from the Zahidabad direction. By this time General Macpherson was on the move, and General Hugh Gough was also getting together a force to act in support.

General Macpherson took with him the wing of the 92nd Highlanders (278 rifles), still remaining in Sherpur, the whole of the 45th Sikhs (555 rifles), and four guns of Swinley's mountain battery. A troop of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry escorting two guns of the screw battery were also ordered out to join him. The road to Beni Hissar was the route followed by the Brigadier, and in passing the Bala Hissar he was joined by 104 men of his old regiment, the 2nd Ghoorkas. Highlanders, Sikhs, and Ghoorkas, marched along in splendid style, and, making only one halt, they debouched upon the open ground beyond the Sang-i-Nawishta

defile just after the midday gun had been fired. Two companies of Sikhs were left to hold the defile. General Hugh Gough followed with four guns of F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, escorted by a troop of the 9th Lancers, two squadrons of the 17th Bengal Cavalry, and a wing of the 28th Punjabees. These were halted at Beni Hissar, ready to move on in support if the resistance made by the Logaris necessitated such a step. Of the other troops of the garrison it will be enough to say that the 67th Foot and the remainder of the 2nd Ghoorkas were holding the Bala Hissar and Sherderwaza Fort. The heavy battery of 40-pounders was in position in the Siah Sung Fort.

The force under Colonel Jenkins comprised two guns F-A, a wing of the 92nd Highlanders (266 bayonets), and the Corps of Guides (260 sowars and 614 sepoys). As I mentioned in a previous letter, this party had been detached from Sherpur to watch the Logar Valley and keep open the road, as Mahomed Hasan Khan had stopped supplies coming in to Cabul. The object had been fully gained, and it was intended to move back the troops to cantonments yesterday. In fact, on Saturday Colonel Jenkins received instructions from Sir F. Roberts to hold himself in readiness to move at a minute's notice, the rumours circulating about the Kohistanis having given rise to these orders. It was well known that bands of men had gathered in Logar from the villages about Hisarak, and on Saturday horsemen were seen some miles away in the direction of our old camping-ground near Zahidabad. It was not expected, however, that any attack in force would be made, but Colonel Jenkins was on the alert, and before daybreak yesterday morning he had his troops under arms, a few shots fired about five o'clock warning him that the Logaris were lurking about. His camp was pitched to the east of the Charasia villages, and was from 1,000 to 1,300 yards distant from the hills which shut off the Logar river from the Kushi-Cabul Road. In his rear was a low hill overlooking a *jheel* on the east, while still further to the north was "White's Hill," which Major White and a company of the 92nd Highlanders stormed on October 6th. These hills command the road leading to the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, and might serve as rallying points for a force hard pressed by an enemy advancing by the south. On

Colonel Jenkins's right flank were two walled enclosures and the Charasia orchards; while on his left was a precipitous range of hills, with three high peaks, distant 1,300 yards from his camp. To the south was open country, through which the Kushi Road runs, the said road being flanked by two deep ditches or *nullahs*, affording excellent cover for an enemy.

The first shots fired into the camp were from the range of hills on Colonel Jenkins's left flank, and as the enemy had breech-loading rifles, the bullets reached their mark without difficulty. Upon the first alarm the tents were struck, and the baggage-animals loaded up ready for a move. With daylight it was seen that the three-peaked-range was lined with men, who had their standards planted, and were plainly determined to make an attack. Their fire increased from dropping shots to a brisk fusillade, and the baggage-animals were ordered to retire, with tents, &c., to the foot of the hill I have mentioned as lying in advance of White's Hill. As escort, half a company of the 92nd Highlanders under Captain Napier, and a company of the Guides, were told off. Captain Napier occupied the hill, building a *sungar* for the protection of his men, and the baggage remained in safety below with a guard. In front of the camping-ground was a *karez* (a line of walls connected by an underground tunnel), and the earth excavated from this furnished the only cover possible for the infantry, who were extended by Colonel Jenkins in the shape of a semicircle, so as to hold the enemy on the hills in check, and also block an advance along the road. Major White was in command of the Highlanders, and the disposition of the men, it is almost needless to say, was admirably made. They held the front of the position. To guard his left flank, Colonel Jenkins extended three companies of the Guides' Infantry, and on his right he placed a troop of cavalry outside the walls of a fort (held by twenty sepoys), ready to repel any rush that might be made from Charasia direction. When these dispositions had been completed, his strength of infantry was practically exhausted; the main body of Highlanders and Guides were lying along the line of the *karez*, and he had only half a company of Guides as his reserve. The two guns of F-A took up a position about 400 yards in the rear of the infantry, and the cavalry, again, formed up in rear of the guns.

The troops were debarred from anything but acting on the defensive, as their baggage would have had to be sacrificed if an attempt had been made to storm the hills. Besides, as news of the impending action had been heliographed to the Sherderwaza Fort and reinforcements been asked for, the main object was to hold the tribesmen in check until sufficient troops should arrive to sweep them from their positions.

The enemy were bold enough at first, and gradually worked down the slopes of the range to within 800 or 900 yards' range, while at the same time the more determined of their number, led by ghazis, worked along the ditches flanking the Kushi Road, and planted their standards within 200 yards of our line of skirmishers. Their numbers were estimated at first at about 2,000, but some reinforcements began to arrive, and they pushed their skirmishers into the Charasia orchards, whence a sharp fire was directed upon the camping ground. The infantry were well protected by the *karez* mounds, but the cavalry and guns were exposed to a heavy cross-fire from the orchards, the hillside, and the ditches in front. One of the artillery horses having been shot, and several sowars hit, it was thought well to remove the guns 400 yards nearer the hill occupied by Captain Napier. This was accordingly done, and the gunners under Lieutenant Wodehouse found shelter in a ditch, whence they could train their guns upon the enemy, while quite out of range themselves. The cavalry could not seek the same protection, as Colonel Jenkins relied upon them to check any rush by the ghazis attacking him in front. The sowars and their officers had therefore to remain under a heavy fire for several hours, 200 or 300 yards in rear of the line of skirmishers, and their losses were proportionally heavy, both in men and horses. No more trying position for cavalry can be imagined than waiting helplessly in the open until their time shall come, and it speaks well for the sowars that they never flinched, but kept quietly on the move backwards and forwards until their numbers were sadly thinned. The severity of the fire can be understood from the fact that three mounted officers, Major White, Lieutenant Dick Cunyngham (of the 92nd Highlanders), and Lieutenant Robertson (of the Commissariat Department), who were between the infantry and cavalry, had all little casualties to report. Major

White's horse was shot through the cheek, a bullet struck Lieutenant Dick Cunyngham's saddle, and Lieutenant Robertson had his coat-sleeve torn and his field-glasses smashed by a bullet. Colonel Jenkins's horse was also shot, and the Guides' cavalry lost eight horses killed and twenty-four wounded—one-tenth of their sowars were really put out of action. I have dwelt thus particularly upon this class of casualties simply to prove the resolute way in which the tribesmen attacked, and the mischief they can do with good rifles in their hands. Our skirmishers they could scarcely touch, and the men were well under shelter, and exposed themselves as little as possible. The steady courage of the 92nd Highlanders made light of 2,000 or 3,000 men being in front, and their picked shots accounted for many of the ghazis, who tried to advance beyond the shelter of the friendly ditches on their side of the road. Once or twice it seemed as if a rush were meditated; the *tom-toms* were beaten, bugles sounded the advance, and standards were waved; but this only brought upon the enemy a more rapid fire from our men, and a few additional shells from our horse-artillery guns. The movements of the attacking force were directed with some skill, 200 or 300 horsemen keeping up communication with the party on the hill and the skirmishers in the orchards; and it was believed that, when larger reinforcements arrived from Logar, an attempt would be made to close round in the rear of Colonel Jenkins, and cut off his retreat. By noon this movement was beginning to be very apparent, as the orchards about Charasia were swarming with men; but the opportunity never really arrived, for General Macpherson with his reinforcements soon put an end to the whole affair.

General Macpherson, and with him about 1,000 men (of whom 555 were of the 45th Sikhs), and four guns now came up; and his first movement was to clear the orchards. The two companies of the 2nd Ghoorkas under Captain Hill turned off the road to the right, over the irrigated land, and made for the Charasia orchards, wherein they were soon hotly engaged. The wing of the 92nd under Colonel Parker marched on a few hundred yards further along the road and then also turned off to the right, so as to prolong the Ghoorka line of skirmishers and enfilade the enemy's first line. The Sikhs kept straight on, and, as they

advanced, the 92nd under Major White and the Guides' infantry rose from the shelter of the *karez*, and all three regiments went up at the hills from which the enemy had annoyed Colonel Jenkins for nearly seven hours. The whole movement was carried out to perfection; our force swept onward in the shape of a fan, and cleared orchards, hills, and open country of every armed man. A plucky charge was made by the Ghoorkas: General Macpherson sent word that he wished a hill cleared of the enemy without further firing, and Captain Hill telling his men what was expected of them, the brave little fellows fixed bayonets, gave a cheer and carried the hill.

The Guides' Cavalry were sent out into the open over the low Childukhteran Kotal on the Kushi Road, and succeeded in killing some thirty stragglers. The main body kept to the near ranges of hills, or sought refuge in *nullahs* and ravines intersecting them. The mountain guns got into action, and made good practice wherever any small groups of fugitives collected, and by two o'clock the tribesmen were scattered and were making their way as best they could along the hills out of reach of our cavalry and artillery. Their loss must have been very heavy, as over 100 bodies were counted on the ground, and they had carried off many others during the morning. In the ditches where the ghazis had planted their standards, within 200 yards of our men, more than twenty bodies were found, lying just as they had fallen. These were nearly all men shot through the head, showing the good practice made by our advanced skirmishers. Our expenditure of Martini and Snider ammunition was over 70,000 rounds, while the two guns of F-A battery each fired forty-eight rounds. Our loss in men was severe for such a skirmish; 92nd Highlanders, one killed, seven wounded (one mortally); F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, one wounded; Corps of Guides, four killed, twenty-one wounded; 45th Sikhs, two wounded; total, five killed, thirty-one wounded. Of the Guides nearly all the casualties were among the cavalry. When the enemy had been thoroughly cleared off the ground—the cavalry pursued them four miles—orders were given for the whole force to return to Sherpur, and the march back was accomplished without incident, except that the Ghoorkas made prisoners of twelve or fifteen villagers who had fired upon

our troops. General Roberts met General Macpherson at Beni Hissar and rode back with him to cantonments. The Kohistanis had remained quiet and undemonstrative during the day; but it was not thought fit to allow the force to remain out at Charasia for the night, though our retirement *after* a successful action is sure to be misconstrued by the Afghans.

To-day it has been ascertained that the enemy's losses were 400 or 500, of whom at least half were killed. The Chardeh villages alone are said to contain 200 dead. The leaders were Sirdar Mahomed Hasan Khan, ex-Governor of Jellalabad; General Mahomed Karim Khan; Padshah Khan, Ghilzai; Mahomed Shah Khan, of Kalunga; and minor *maliks* of Baraki Rajan and Charkh. The body of men they commanded was 5,000 strong, and included Logaris, men of Chardeh, Safis from Tagao, Kohistanis, and Ghilzais from Padshah Khan's villages. It seems a pity that a faithless scoundrel like Padshah Khan cannot meet with his deserts. He was forgiven for fighting against us in December, and now he coolly breaks his word with us again, and collects his men and attacks our troops as if he had never received any subsidy from us. Hasan Khan's followers were well armed, many with Sniders and Enfields, and a few with Martini rifles, bullets from the latter being picked up by some of our officers.

To-day (Monday) all is quiet again, but our picquets are still stationed on Asmai and the Bemaru Heights.

CHAPTER XXVII.

General Ross at Sydabad—Skirmishes with the Enemy—Junction of the Cabul and Candahar Forces—Sir Donald Stewart assumes Command in Northern Afghanistan—Mr. Lepel Griffin and the Kohistani Chiefs—A British Mission sent to Abdur Rahman Khan at Kunduz—Sir Donald Stewart's March from Candahar to Ghazni—Attitude of the Tribes *en route*—The Hazara Contingent—Scarcity of Supplies—The Battle of Ahmed Khel—General Stewart's Formation of Attack—Strength of the Afghan Force—Attack by Ghazis—Defeat and Dispersion of the Enemy—The Afghan Loss—The March to Nani—Capture of Ghazni—Action of Urzoo—A Second Victory—Mushk-i-Alam's Plans.

May 2nd, 1880.

General Ross had to clear the hills about his camp at Sydabad on two occasions prior to General Sir Donald Stewart's force arriving from Ghazni, but there were scarcely any casualties on our side. It would seem that 1,500 or 2,000 men gathered on the hills to the west of the camp at Sydabad on the 25th, and built *sungars* on several ridges, as if with the intention of holding their position to the last. To clear these hills a strong body of our troops, made up from the 9th Foot, 2nd Ghoorkas, and 24th Punjabees, with some of the mountain guns, were sent out, and they soon drove the enemy from the ridges. The *sungars* were first shelled, and then a rush made up the hills. The Afghans had a few ghazis among their number, as is usually the case, and these stood to their post and were shot down; but the main body fled in confusion. The Ghoorkas killed sixteen men in a *nullah*, and altogether forty bodies were counted on the ridges. Our loss was one Ghoorka killed and two wounded. On the following day, Monday the 26th, the enemy again showed on the hills, and again our men had to chase them away, two companies of the 23rd Pioneers sharing this time in the climbing. Again the enemy fled in confusion from ridge to ridge, losing ten or twelve killed. Much to the disgust of our men, the Afghans would not wait to come under the fire of our Martinis and Sniders at 200 or 300 yards; the shells from the mountain guns being

effective in scattering any groups which for a few moments held together. After this the overt resistance on the part of the *moollah*, Abdul Gaffur, was at an end, and Mahomed Jan and Hasan Khan were no longer heard of. A force visited Lungar, and destroyed the *moollah's* forts, obtaining some small amount of loot in the shape of books and china. Sir Donald Stewart's force left Ghazni on April 25th, having had a second action with the enemy at Urzoo, seven miles from Ghazni. On the 29th of April General Ross started for Maidan with his force, which had been joined by the heavy battery of 40-pounders belonging to the Candahar column. Sir Donald Stewart, with Colonel Chapman, Chief of his Staff, accompanied General Ross. Yesterday (May 1st) the force marched to Kila Gholam Hyder, on the Cabul side of Argandeh. The Candahar column turned off from Sheikhabad into Logar, where it will probably stay, collecting revenue and supplies for the next few weeks. As it is over 6,000 strong, it is not likely to meet with much opposition; and, indeed, it is stated that the chief Logari *maliks* have already made their submission. To-day General Ross marched to Sherpur; the elephant battery is located in Sherpur, while General Gough's Brigade is again encamped on Siah Sung. General Sir Donald Stewart arrived at about ten o'clock. Sir F. Roberts and Staff and Mr. Lepel Griffin rode out a few miles to meet him, and he was received at the head-quarters gate by a guard of honour of the 92nd Highlanders. A salute of fifteen guns is to be fired in his honour to-morrow morning. To-day he has taken over the command from Sir F. Roberts, a divisional order announcing that he commands the whole of the troops in Northern Afghanistan.

In regard to political matters here, we seem to have come to the end of our negotiations with tribesmen pure and simple, for the hundred Kohistani *maliks* who have been staying in Cabul were dismissed to their homes on Saturday by Mr. Lepel Griffin. The text of his speech in Durbar was as follows:—

"Your paper of requests has been carefully considered, and until some decision is given by the Government it is your duty, and it will be to your advantage, to remain quiet in your villages. Do not vainly imagine you will obtain anything by clamour and opposition. You have seen that the people of Ghazni, Logar, Maidan and Wardak have not been able to withstand for a moment the British arms, and have been punished for their hostility. The only fruit of their opposition is that they have to pay every penny;

their revenue would otherwise have been remitted. You will tell those of your leaders who are not now present that the British Government will not tolerate disturbances, and collections of armed men in the neighbourhood of Cabul. All now assembled must disperse at once home. If they do not attend to this advice any misfortune they suffer will be their own fault. Two Sirdars of position are now being sent by the Government through Kohistan, and you will ensure their safety. The hostages sent by Mir Butcha as a guarantee of their security I do not require; the British army is itself to be sufficient guarantee for the observance of promises made by you. Your professions of friendship are accredited, and you may rest assured that while the Government will at once punish any hostile action, its chief desire is to be and remain friends with you."

Two *maliks*, Mir Agha Sahibzada and Mir Gholam Hyder, were especially mentioned as having done good service during their stay, and three other minor chiefs were singled out as deserving credit for aiding the British Government in the current negotiations. The most important feature in the Durbar was the announcement that the chiefs had guaranteed the safe-conduct of two Sirdars on Mr. Griffin's staff through Kohistan. These are Ibrahim Khan, Khan Bahadur, of the Punjab Police, and Wazirzada Afzul Khan, Ressaldar of the Bengal Cavalry: and their mission is to visit Abdur Rahman at Kunduz. What their instructions are I cannot say; but if the Kohistani chiefs, Surwar Khan and Mir Butcha, have promised to ensure their personal safety, it seems probable that we are at last on the eve of direct negotiation with Abdur Rahman, who has unquestionably won the goodwill of the Kohistanis. We can punish any breach of faith easily with the force now in Cabul; and this being known to the chiefs at Baba Kuch Kar, the dispersion of bands of men such as are now scattered about Koh-Daman is probably only a question of a few days.

5th May.

There is, of course, great difficulty in describing an action from hearsay, and in making at all vivid an account of severe fighting one has not seen; but it is the privilege of even the humblest historians to deal with important events almost as confidently as the coolest eye-witness, and I meekly claim that privilege in regard to the late action south of Ghazni. There will, almost of necessity, be errors in the story of the fight, but they are only such as will arise from causes beyond my own control. I can only write upon the lines laid down for me by my informants, and defects of omission are more likely to occur than would

have been the case if I had been a spectator of the engagement. This half-apology, if accepted in the spirit in which it is offered, should absolve me in the eyes of those critics who are most able to estimate the fairness and accuracy of the story, namely, the men who fought in the action. They did their work right nobly and well, and if appreciation of their efforts is lacking, it will be rather because they are too modest to do justice to themselves than to any unwillingness on the part of others to concede to them the honour they so well deserve.

Sir Donald Stewart's march upon Ghazni was uneventful as far as Shahjui, the limit of the Candahar province, but from that point a change took place; it began to be understood that opposition was likely to occur before Ghazni was reached. At Shahjui the Taraki country begins, and the *moollahs* had been so active in preaching a *jehad* that several thousand men had collected on the hills to the east. These were at first Tarakis, ghazis from Candahar, and contingents from Zamindawar and other neighbouring districts. They kept well away from the British force, but marched day by day, parallel to it, along the foot of the high hills on the right of the valley along which our troops were making their way. They gathered strength daily, but it was deemed unwise to attack them, as they would probably have retired up the hillsides out of reach, and our men would have been unable to scatter them. Besides, the baggage train of the column was over six miles in length (the elephant battery with its bullock-teams yoked to the ammunition waggons stretched away for a mile or more), and to have detached a brigade to make an attack upon the enemy would have left the baggage open to molestation from the right flank. The tribesmen, therefore, were allowed to march quietly along, our spies keeping Sir Donald Stewart well informed of all that was happening in their camp. Their numbers, the names of their chiefs, and their probable intentions were made known to Major Euan Smith, Political Officer, and from the first it was certain that they would try issues with the British before Ghazni was reached. The aspect of the country, too, showed that war was meant; the valley was fertile and well cultivated, but every village had been deserted, all supplies buried, and the women and children carried away to the hills

for safety. It was as if the people had fled from pestilence; the *moollahs* had done their work well, and had so wrought upon the fears and fanaticism of the ignorant peasants that they had left their homes to the tender mercies of our soldiery. Perhaps, also, it was believed that by cutting off supplies the march northwards might be retarded or checked altogether; ~~but this belief can never exist again, as our~~ foraging parties unearthed the hidden stores, and the troops were never really short of food. The leaders of the tribesmen were Shir Jan (Taraki), and Mahomed Aslam Khan (Tokhi), and so overawed were the villagers by their threats that even those who would willingly have traded with our purchasing agents had to throw in their lot with the more fanatical spirits.

With the British force were several thousand Hazaras, who, as is usually the case with native allies, were rather a source of anxiety than any real aid. They marched in wild irregularity on the flanks of the column, and every deserted village was plundered by them without compunction. They thus appropriated large quantities of supplies which would have been welcome to our army, and it was at times annoying to find they had cleared a village of grain before ~~our own men~~ could arrive. Their inveterate hatred of the Afghans had full swing, and they hailed our march upon Ghazni with savage satisfaction as giving them an opportunity of wiping off old scores. ~~Now that they find we do not intend staying in the country their spirits are somewhat damped, as their future~~ presents nothing more pleasing than a war of revenge by the southern tribesmen as soon as our armies have returned to India. The excesses likely to be committed when that return takes place can only be thought of with pain and humiliation by us. We may exact what promises we choose from the new Amir, but he will be helpless to check his unruly subjects, and we cannot march again to Cabul to save the Hazaras from their fate. There will be nothing for them but to ~~retire~~ into the fastnesses of their high table-land between Bamian and Herat, there to hold their own until the bitterness of the vendetta shall have died away.

With such allies and with his force well on the alert, Sir Donald Stewart encamped at Mushaki, two long marches south of Ghazni, on the 18th of April, the enemy's camp being a few

miles away. Our spies visited the camp, and returned with the news that ~~on the morrow~~ the tribesmen would attempt to drive back the column, and would probably take up their position on a low spur running eastwards from the Gul Koh Mountains and dominating the road. With this warning to guide him, Sir Donald Stewart formed his order of march, so as to place his infantry on his left flank, upon which the brunt of the attack would be likely to fall. It should be remembered that the column was marching in a valley running almost due north and south, and that the road from Mushaki was much nearer the hills on the west (or left flank) than the Shilghur ranges on the east. The order of march from Mushaki was as follows :—

19th Bengal Lancers, 300 sabres. A-B, Royal Horse Artillery, six 9-pr. guns. 19th Punjab Native Infantry, 470 Rifles. Field Force Head-quarters. { 1 company 2-60th Rifles, 63 Rifles. 1 company 25th Punjab Native Infantry, 85 rifles. 1 troop 19th Bengal Lancers, 50 sabres. Nos. 4 and 10 Companies Bengal Sappers and Miners, 80 rifles.	Leading brigade under the command of Brigadier-General C. H. Palliser, C.B.
59th Foot, 436 rifles. 3rd Ghoorka Regiment, 289 Rifles. G-4th, Royal Artillery, six 9-pr. guns. 6-11th, Royal Artillery. { Two 40-prs. Two 6-3-in. howitzers. 2nd Punjab Cavalry, 349 sabres.	Under the command of Brigadier-General R. J. Hughes.
Field Hospitals. Ordnance and Engineer Field Parks. Treasure. Commissariat. Baggage.	
2-60th Rifles, 443 Rifles. 15th Sikhs, 570 rifles. 25th Punjab Native Infantry, 380 rifles. 11-11th, Royal Artillery (Mountain Battery) six 7-pr. guns. 1st Punjab Cavalry, 316 sabres.	Under the command of Brigadier-General R. Barter.

The length of the column was about six miles, so that the 19th Bengal Lancers were close upon Ahmed Khel when the rear-guard was leaving Mushaki. Upon nearing the spur of the Gul Koh hills the enemy were seen drawn up in the shape of a huge parallelogram at right angles to the road and completely barring the way. The road passes over a low *kotal* just where the spur

loses itself in the valley, and it was clear that Shir Jan and Mahomed Aslam Khan meant to contest the advance at this point. The village of Ahmed Khel was marked in the maps as lying in a hollow below the spur, but really no village exists, though the halting-place at a *karez* is called Ahmed Khel. The enemy were three miles away when first sighted, and Sir Donald Stewart made his disposition to attack by deflecting General Hughes's brigade to the left so as to face the Gul-Koh spur. A squadron of the 19th Bengal Lancers was sent out on the extreme left to reconnoitre the enemy's position in that direction, while A-B and G-4 batteries were placed on the right, under escort of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry and the second squadron of the 19th Bengal Lancers. The heavy battery was halted about a mile in rear on a *low hill*. The Lieutenant-General and Staff with the reserve (composed of the 19th Punjabees, the Sappers, and the General's escort) were on a hill in rear commanding a good view of the country. Soon after seven o'clock orders were sent to General Barter to double forward half his infantry, and to send on two squadrons of the 1st Punjab cavalry without delay. At eight o'clock the troops moved forward in order of battle. The two batteries of artillery with their cavalry escort were on the extreme right; the 59th Foot were in the centre of the line, with the 2nd Sikhs on their left flank, while the 3rd Ghoorkas were in the extreme left with the ranks deflected a little to the rear. There was a gap of 400 or 500 yards between the artillery and the 59th, and to fill this up Sir Donald Stewart's escort of a troop of the 19th Bengal Lancers, a company of the 60th Rifles, and one company of the 25th Punjab Native Infantry were told off; but even then the gap could not altogether be filled. A company of the 19th Punjabees were moved to the left of A-B battery, thus protecting both batteries at the same time. Such was the first formation, but it was afterwards modified, the guns of G-4 being moved to various points between the infantry regiments, and directing their fire wherever the numbers of the enemy seemed to threaten persistent attack. The two squadrons of the 19th Bengal Lancers were also extended upon the left flank to check any turning movement from that quarter, and also a guard to two of the guns of G-4, which were afterwards brought into action in that quarter. The infantry were thus flanked

either hand by a battery of artillery, while the cavalry formed the wings, as it were, of the column ready to strike to right or left, or to charge on converging lines upon a common enemy in front. The baggage stretched away in the rear for several miles, and it was all-important to prevent the head of the column being out-flanked, as in such a case the line would have been broken, and a stampede of men and animals have taken place upon General Barter's brigade. The enemy, seeing the preparations for attack, moved down bodily from the crest of the ridge to the lower slopes with standards waving and *tom-toms* beating; and a fair amount of order was preserved among the horsemen and foot soldiers, who numbered 12,000 or 15,000—the Tarakis, Andaris, Suleiman Kheyls, and Tokhis having mustered their fighting men in obedience to the summons of the *moollahs* sent by Mushk-i-Alam. ~~Our~~ the artillery (A-B and G-4) got into action and began shelling the slopes preparatory to the infantry attack; but suddenly a commotion was observed in the most advanced lines of the opposing army, the *moollahs* could be seen haranguing the irregular host with frantic energy, the beating of the *tom-toms* was redoubled, and then, as if by magic, a wave of men—ghazis of the most desperate type—poured down upon the plain and rushed upon General Stewart's force, The main body of the Afghan army remained upon the hill to watch the ghazis in their reckless onslaught, and to take advantage of any success they might gain. The fanaticism of the 3,000 or 4,000 men who made this desperate charge ~~has perhaps never been equalled~~ was amazing; they had 500 or 600 yards to cover before they could come to close quarters with our infantry, and yet they made nothing of the distance. They advanced, or rather rushed forward, in three lines; many of the men were on horseback, and nearly all well armed with *tulwars*, knives, and pistols. Some carried rifles and matchlocks, while a few—and these must, indeed, have been resolute fanatics—had simply pikes made of bayonets, or pieces of sharpened iron fastened upon long sticks. The ground right and left of ~~our~~ the troops was more open and level than that immediately in front, and consequently the ghazis' attack broke with greatest violence upon our flanks. On our left flank the two squadrons of the 19th Bengal Lancers were still at the trot moving into position when

the ghazis rushed among them. Lancers are always at a disadvantage when infantry have broken their ranks, and the 19th were no exception to the rule. In an instant they were lost to sight in the cloud of dust and smoke caused by the fight; and in the confusion, owing, perhaps, to some misunderstood order, or to the men losing their heads, a troop charged to the right in rear of the infantry line and came smashing into the 19th Punjab Native Infantry, in rear of the Lieutenant-General and his Staff. All was confusion for a moment; the ammunition mules were stampeded, and with the riderless horses of the Lancers killed or wounded in the *mêlée*, dashed into the head-quarters' Staff. The ghazis had continued their onward rush and were engaged in hand-to-hand fighting with our infantry. Some penetrated to within twenty yards of the spot upon which the Staff were watching the action, and so critical was the moment, that Sir Donald Stewart and every man of his Staff drew their swords and prepared for self-defence. The impetuosity of the ghazis on the left carried them right in rear of our infantry, and but for the cool promptitude of Colonel Lyster, V.C., commanding the 3rd Ghoorkas, this rush might have had terrible results. Colonel Lyster formed his men into company squares, and poured volley after volley into the fanatics as they surged onwards. In the meantime the attack had also burst all along the line, and in the hurry and confusion some of our men did not fix bayonets.

The General's escort, filling the gap between the Horse Artillery Battery and the 59th, were driven back, and the 59th were ordered to throw back their right to check the rush. The order was so delivered that it was understood to imply the retirement of the whole regiment, and the movement was carried out. The ghazis were so close that there was a tendency to collect in groups for mutual protection—a fatal course when a general rush has to be checked; but General Hughes, by his example and energy, checked this in time, and after a few minutes' excitement,—an excitement quite pardonable under the circumstances,—our men settled down and began a steady and continuous fire from their breech-loaders, which swept away the ghazis and covered the plain with dead. But there had been persistent hand-to-hand fighting before this fire began to take effect, for the ghazis fought with a

very never excelled, and sold their lives as dearly as fanatics can sell them. Yet the three regiments—British, Sikh, and Ghoorka—to whom they were exposed, held their own, the 2nd Sikhs, in particular, attracting the General's notice for their splendid steadiness in rolling back the attack, and the main body of Afghans holding aloof, the ghazis could not hope to break our line. But with what grand disregard for their lives they must have fought is shown by their charging to within thirty yards of the muzzles of Major Warter's guns, and facing case and reversed grapnel, which at close quarters mowed them down in scores. The gunners never flinched, but stood to their pieces manfully, trusting to the 2nd Punjab Cavalry to clear the enemy away until the infantry fire should begin to tell. The charges made by the 2nd Punjab Cavalry were repeated again and again, and were as brilliant as any made by cavalry during the whole war. This is the deliberate opinion of the men who witnessed them, and who owed much to the sowars who kept the right flank safe. The Horse Artillery guns were retired 150 yards when the first shock had passed, and at a range of a few hundred yards they continued to fire shell into the enemy with admirable precision. The guns of G-4 were in a comparatively safer position among the infantry, and their fire also was well directed and very effective. In the gap I have mentioned between A-B battery and the 59th Foot the General's escort had a tough hand-to-hand fight with a body of ghazis who closed with them. Breech-loader and bayonet told against pistol and *tulwar*, while the few sowars of the 19th Bengal Lancers also gave their aid in the *mêlée*. How desperate the fighting must have been is shown by the casualties among the escort alone, which was merely used to give cohesion to the line. The company of the 60th lost its Colour-Sergeant (Chesham) and two privates killed and a bugler wounded; the company of the 25th had two sepoys killed, and the detachment of the 19th Bengal Lancers had seven sowars wounded. The heavy battery contributed its quota to the engagement as it got into action on a convenient piece of rising ground in rear of the infantry, and shelled a hill south of Ahmed Khel spur, on which large masses of the enemy had congregated, as if meditating a flank attack upon the baggage line. In the early part of the

day Sir Donald Stewart, as I have said, had sent back word to General Barter to hurry up with reinforcements. General Barter started the 1st Punjab Cavalry at a trot, and followed with the 60th Rifles. The 1st Cavalry arrived in time to share in the pursuit of the fugitives, who had been unsuccessful in their attack upon the right flank, and many were killed before they could reach the protecting slopes of the Shilghur Hills on the east. The 60th formed up on the right of the 59th Foot, and the "cease fire" sounded just as they arrived, the enemy by that time being in full retreat. The cavalry pursuit had to be checked, as the six miles of baggage had to be looked after; and with so many regiments in advance, it was feared that detached bodies of ghazis might run amuck in the rear. The action had begun at nine o'clock, and "cease fire" sounded at ten, just an hour's fighting; but the casualties were unusually heavy for Afghan warfare. Of the enemy 1,000 dead were counted on the field, and many bodies had been carried off: while their wounded must, at the smallest estimate, have numbered 1,000 or 1,500. The ghazis killed were all fine, handsome men, well-nourished and of splendid physique, and their fanaticism had given them courage which veteran soldiers might envy. Among the dead was one woman, while twelve others were taken prisoners with arms in their hands. The casualties among our troops were seventeen killed, and 126 wounded; among the latter being six officers whose names have already been published. Lieutenant Young, of the 19th Bengal Lancers, had the misfortune to lose control over his horse, and the animal carried him into the thick of the ghazis, by whom he was cut down and fearfully wounded. From head to heel he was slashed until almost past recognition, and when picked up he was believed to be in a dying state. The surgeons have since given better reports of him, and his recovery seems assured. Of the wounded men, four have since died of their wounds, which in nearly every case were *tulwar* or knife-cuts received in hand-to-hand encounters.* The 19th Bengal Lancers had fifty-three casualties, and twenty-four amongst the horses; the total loss of the whole cavalry brigade was more than 100, and from seventy to eighty horses.

The Hazaras, seeing the Afghans in full flight, pursued them

with ardour, and their knowledge of the country gave them an advantage European troops could not hope to possess. How they harassed the fugitives only their own kinsmen will ever know, as pursuers and pursued disappeared into the hills very shortly after the action came to an end. The prisoners taken after the fight were dealt with by Major Enan Smith, Political Officer, all the wounded being treated by our surgeons and taken onwards towards Ghazni. Two ghazis only had to be shot; they were fanatics of too exalted minds to accept mercy, and when promised liberty in return for an undertaking to go quietly to their homes, they simply cursed all Kafirs, and swore to kill a Feringhi the instant they should be released. In justice to our men, their lives had to be taken, as Candahar experience has shown that such fanatics always keep their word. Our dead were buried on the field by Mr. Warnford, the Chaplain, as Sir Donald Stewart had resolved to march on to Nani without delay; and early in the afternoon the column was again moving northward. As our men passed along, ghazis who had feigned death rose and fired at them, and men severely wounded slashed at the legs of the soldiers; these dying spasms of fanaticism proving that the ghazis were consistent to the end.

On the evening of the 19th the force encamped at Nani, within fifteen miles of Ghazni, and on the following day the cavalry reached the fortress itself without further opposition. The tribesmen had made their grand effort to save the place, and had failed; there was nothing for it but to allow the Kafirs to do as they willed with the city and citadel, since it had fallen into their hands. The infantry and artillery encamped for the night at Chel Butcha Gaum (the Village of the Forty Children), a few miles south of Ghazni. It was noticed at the time that a low hill, some miles away on the right, was occupied by a large force of Afghans, who had their standards flying, but did not seem otherwise bent on hostilities. They were not interfered with then, as it was deemed advisable to push on to Ghazni, under the walls of which the Candahar column encamped on the 21st without further incident. Sir Donald Stewart had orders to make no long stay in Ghazni, and he intended moving out on the 23rd; but it was reported that the gathering of men seen on

the 20th and 21st had largely increased, and that they were the advance-guard of an army of 15,000 or 20,000 which Mushk-i-Alam had raised in Shilghur and Zurmut. The effect upon the native mind, if such a force had been left unmolested when our troops evacuated Ghazni, would have been very damaging to our prestige, and Sir Donald Stewart resolved to disperse the tribesmen before moving northward. The peaceful state of Ghazni itself was an encouragement to this course of action, as he could freely use the regiments at his disposal without fear of an *emeute* in the city.

As a preparatory measure a wing of the 19th Punjab Infantry occupied the citadel, and early on the morning of the 23rd a force under command of Brigadier-General Palliser marched towards Shalez, six miles south-east of Ghazni, said to be occupied by the enemy. The troops detailed for the work were :—

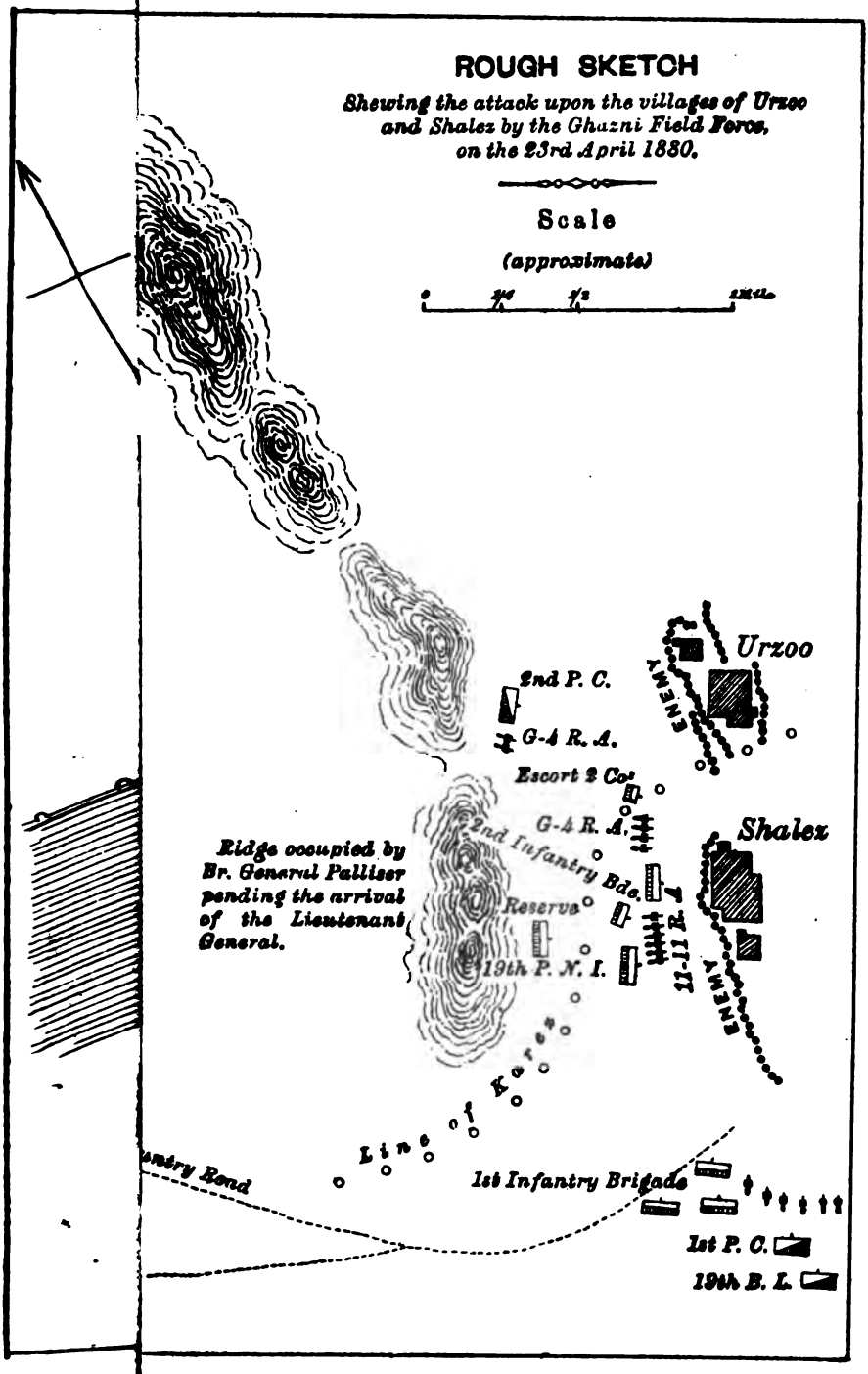
A-B, Royal Horse Artillery. 11-11th, Royal Artillery. 2-60th Rifles, 525 rifles. 15th Sikhs, 578 rifles. 25th Punjab Native Infantry, 458 rifles. 2nd Sikhs, 424 rifles. 1st Punjab Cavalry, 322 sabres. 2nd Punjab Cavalry, 325 sabres.	Brigadier-General R. Barter commanding.	Under the command of Brigadier-General C. H. Palliser, C.B.

On the previous day a cavalry reconnaissance had been made, and 2,000 or 3,000 men had been seen about the Urzoo villages near Shalez. General Palliser, on arriving near the villages, found them occupied in force by 3,000 or 4,000 men. He immediately got his guns into action, and shelled the villages, but without any apparent effect. The enemy remained quietly within the walls, except their videttes, which were pushed forward more into the open, while some of their sharp-shooters lined a narrow ditch in the fields, and began firing at long ranges upon our infantry. The villages consisted of three walled enclosures, two in close proximity to each other facing our right, and a third somewhat in rear of, and removed from, the others. This third village would have borne the brunt of any attack from our left flank, and it had as a sort of screen a small garden outside the walls. General Palliser believed the ground between his troops and the villages

to be irrigated, and thought that much loss of life would occur if he sent his infantry to make a direct attack. He silenced such of the enemy's sharp-shooters as grew troublesome by telling off marksmen to keep their fire under, and continued shelling the villages very vigorously. Still the enemy made no sign either of attacking or retiring, and a message was at last heliographed to Sir Donald Stewart, saying the place was too strong to be taken by the troops then in front of it without sacrificing many lives. Upon news being received, General Hughes's Brigade was ordered under arms, and a half battalion of the 59th foot (253 rifles), and six companies of the 3rd Ghoorkas (191 rifles), were sent out as a reinforcement. Still General Palliser did not consider it advisable to attack, and he withdrew to a ridge 2,500 yards from the villages, whence he continued to shell the enemy. Upon this Sir Donald Stewart moved forward with G-4, R.A., 254 rifles of the 59th, a half battalion of the 19th Punjabees, and the 19th Bengal Lancers. The heavy battery was left in camp with two companies of the 59th, two companies of Sappers, and a complement of guards furnished from each regiment. Sir Donald Stewart reached Shalez at nine o'clock, and found that General Palliser had withdrawn his artillery and infantry to a low hill some distance from the villages, with a view to entice the enemy into the open. The tribesmen were too cautious to be deceived by this manœuvre, and preferred bearing bombardment to coming under infantry fire in the plain. The two batteries had fired the unusual number of thirty rounds of shell per gun, a total of 360 rounds, but 7-pr. and 9-pr. shells can do but little damage against walled enclosures and stout mud walls. When our reinforcements arrived, a sudden burst of fanatical enthusiasm seized the defenders of the villages, and it seemed as if the ghazis' rush at Ahmed Khel was about to be repeated. At first only their videttes were seen watching our troops, while an occasional puff of smoke from the ditch showed the presence of a sharp-shooter; but soon a number of mounted men were seen galloping about, and then out poured a mob from the shelter of the walls. They formed themselves rudely into line, and to the din of their *tom-toms* began to advance. This unexpected boldness on their part was met by our batteries of artillery opening fire at 800 or 900 yards' range, and the first

few shells caused many of the more timid to break and retire. Sir Donald Stewart ordered the infantry to clear the villages without delay, and General Barter's Brigade advanced in line upon the right; while General Hughes, whose brigade had been joined by the 2nd Sikhs, made a direct attack in front, his left swinging round so as to take the detached village of Urzoo in rear. Our troops steadily advanced until within 200 yards of the enemy, when file-firing commenced. The fusillade was terrible, and so stunned were the wretched and ill-armed tribesmen, that they fled in confusion. Some preferred staying crouched in the ditch to running the gauntlet of the bullets. One can imagine the incessant "ping" when six regiments armed with breech-loaders are advancing in one long line, firing as rapidly as men can load. It was natural that an undisciplined mob should melt away before such an attack. The men who lay hidden fought hand to hand with our soldiers as the latter reached them; but there was really no stubborn resistance, and the cavalry and horse artillery were let loose to pursue the fugitives as soon as the villages were surrounded. The total loss on the part of the enemy was 300 or 400; while our casualties were almost *nil*—one private of the 60th and one sowar of the 1st Punjab Cavalry shot dead. Such of the enemy as came to close quarters with our men fought bravely enough, one ghazi making a desperate rush at Lieutenant Legh, of the 60th, who killed him with his sword.

The Tajik villagers of Urzoo stated that there were originally 4,000 footmen and 200 cavalry in the villages when General Palliser first arrived; but that, when our troops did not attack, word was sent to all neighbouring villages to turn out their fighting men, and many Pathans joined their friends just before Sir Donald Stewart's arrival. There can be no doubt that Mushk-i-Alam had worked upon the fanaticism of the local tribesmen, in the hope of retrieving the defeat of Ahmed Khel. His hopes have been completely shattered, but as he has young Musa Khan still with him he may yet give us trouble. General Stewart left Sirdar Alum Khan in charge of Ghazni when the Candahar force moved towards Cabul. The defences of Ghazni were not touched, as they were considered too contemptible to give trouble if a force should ever find itself beneath the walls of the city.


ROUGH SKETCH
Shewing the attack upon the villages of Urzoo and Shalez by the Ghuzni Field Force, on the 23rd April 1880.
Scale
(approximate)
Urzoo
2nd P. C.
G-4 R. A.
Escort 2 Co's
ENEMY
Shalez
G-4 R. A.
2nd Infantry Bde.
Reserve
19th P. N. I.
12-11 R
ENEMY
Ridge occupied by Br. General Palliser pending the arrival of the Lieutenant General.
Line of Kotal
Infantry Road
1st Infantry Brigade
1st P. C.
19th B. L.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"The Divine Figure from the North"—Sherpur during May—Turkish Fugitives from Russian Territory—Cabul in Prosperity—The People enriched at the Expense of the British Government—The Coining of Cabuli Rupees—The Effect upon the People—Street Sketches—Life in the Bazaars—The Hindu and Kizilbash Quarters—Rapacity of the Traders—The Abundance of Fruit—Ice-cream Stalls—An Instance of Fanaticism—History of the Kizilbashes—Their Turki Descent—Elphinstone's Estimate of their Character—Their Strength in Cabul estimated at 6,000 Fighting Men—Their Treatment by the Amirs.

16*th May*, 1880.

THERE is such a holy calm in Sherpur that we begin to question whether all the excitement of the last six months has not been a nightmare. No bustle or excitement, no sudden alarms, no gathering of armed men to pour out upon Asmai, Siah Sung, or Charasia; our cavalry rest quietly in their lines without any expectation of "boot-and-saddle" sounding; and every sentry in the cantonment whiles away his time, not in wondering whether the enemy are near, but in sweet speculation as to when orders will be issued for the march to India. The majority of us believe that, as regards severe fighting, we have satisfied the Afghans, although a last flash in the pan may occur before the final settlement; and there being no amusement in calculating the chances of the next action, we fall back upon discussion of possil e arrangements with the various claimants to the Amirship. Abdur Rahman's name is in every man's mouth, and the news of his departure from Kunduz for Cabul is awaited with almost as much anxiety as the result of the Derby. The Sirdar is our "divine figure from the north," at least just now. But we have to live as comfortably as we can in the meantime; and though our life in cantonments is necessarily a colourless one, it has more points than a hot-house existence in India. First, in the order of comparison, we have an almost perfect climate; next, we have some little amusements; and lastly, by reason of our separation from civilization, we have a less artificial and less blameful life than is possible in the irritating and bilious furnace "down below." It does not say much for civiliza-

tion that this should be so; but we have fewer temptations, and, consequently, fewer faults to atone for. The "grass-widowers" of Cabul, I undertake to say with most serious earnestness, are on a far higher level of moral purity than that easy-living, freely-flirting, and most charming section of Indian society which migrates yearly to the hills when *punkahs* are in full swing. We talk less scandal; we are less covetous of other persons' property, animate or inanimate; we do not turn night into day to the music of the *trois temps* or "Pinafore;" and we do our duty quietly, albeit with a little wholesome grumbling. But as news drifts up from the Khyber line, and we learn how the poor fellows between Gundamak and Lundi Kotal are grilling in their single-fly tents with manifold troubles on every hand, we grow placidly thankful that we are in Cabul, with good thick walls about us, and a foot of mud between us and the sun. Not everyone could be in hill stations if all the troops were back in India; and we are less discontented now at our lot—a wifeless, loverless one though it be—than we were three months ago. Cabul "grass-widowers" will no doubt be in great demand when once more they are transplanted into Simla, Mussoorie, or Naini Tal society, for a war beaten-warrior is far more esteemed than a carpet knight. Fair ears will tingle with pleasure when whispered explanations are given of the days spent in unwonted innocence in Afghanistan—

> "Days when we laughed for joy of summer heat,
> Nor laughed less loud when snow made white the ground."

We have pined for "loot, love, and liberty:" the first we may never get; but every day brings us nearer to the others, and we well know what our reward will be. Will it not be counted in our favour that no band will play "The girl I left behind me" when once more our faces are turned eastwards? It surely should be, or our grass-widowhood will have been precious time uselessly squandered. But, frivolity apart, we take our change at Time's counter with composure, and are not too anxious concerning our immediate fate. There are the current duties of a large camp to be gone through daily: they can never be shirked, but must always be done systematically and thoroughly. Regiments have their guards to mount day and night, spring drill and parades to

attend, recruits to be shaped into good soldiers, embryo signallers to be trained, transport to be kept in good order. Colonel Low has worked a wonderful change in our transport, and we shall soon be able to "march anywhere and do anything." General Roberts is away with a division of 5,000 men visiting Logar, Wardak and Maidan; his troops are in excellent health and are enjoying the trip amazingly.

We have visitors occasionally, other than officers who have taken a short leave from a station down the line to pay a visit to Cabul. A few days ago three Turkish soldiers applied at the Bala Hissar for food and assistance on their journey to India. They were sent to Major Hastings, Political Officer, and told a story full of adventure. They were an old man, his son, and a wild-looking Turk of the Bashi-Bazouk order. The youngest of the party was very intelligent, and a handsome specimen of the Turkish peasantry, while his father was still unbroken in strength in spite of his misfortunes. The "Bashi-Bazouk," as we imagined him to be, though he denied the impeachment, was the embodiment of rude strength: he still wore the long blue coat he had donned when called upon to fight the Russians, and across the breast were a dozen little pockets, each large enough to hold a cartridge, and showing signs of great wear. A Turcoman fur cap, with the tanned skin outside and a fringe of fur showing all round, covered his long, matted hair, and added to the wildness of his appearance. All the men were travel-stained, and looked forlorn enough; but their satisfaction at being among the "Inglis" was without bounds, and they were as cheerful and contented as if the 10,000 miles between Cabul and Istamboul were only a league. Their story was that they were natives of the village of Soghral, ten days' march from Kars, and that when the Russian war broke out they joined Haji Ali's regiment, their captain being Haji Shuman. The latter was killed in action, and the Russians took the whole of the Soghral villagers prisoners. Men, women, and children were marched for eleven days until the railway was reached in the district of the Caucasus, when the whole party were transferred to the rail. After four days' travelling they gained Moscow, whence their families were sent to St. Petersburg, while the men were sent eastwards to Dobiska. Here they were kept

prisoners for two years, being lightly ironed, but having no work to do. They received about two and a half annas in Russian money daily, with which they bought food, and upon which they managed to live. At the end of two years their irons were removed, and they were told to settle down about Dobiska and cultivate the land. At the earliest opportunity a number of them absconded, of whom these three men kept together. For fifteen days they travelled secretly, doing long distances at night, until they reached Kazakia, on the outer border of Bokhara. Here they were safe, as their fellow-Mussulmans willingly gave them food; but they did not dare to go before the Amir of Bokhara, as they believed he was on friendly terms with the Russians. They stayed during the winter at Guzar, as they were told the Passes towards Cabul were closed; but in the spring they left Bokhara and made for Mazar-i-Sharif. Here they found Ishak Khan as Governor: the place was quiet enough, and but few troops were holding it. Thence they marched to Bamian, their poverty no doubt saving them from molestation, and at last they reached Cabul. Their desire was to be sent to Bombay, whence their Consul could forward them to Constantinople. Major Hastings gave them Rs. 50 to get a new outfit in the city, and make themselves clean and comfortable. On Monday they were presented to Sir Donald Stewart, and were afterwards *fêted* and photographed: the native officers of the Guides giving them a great dinner, while Mr. Burke immortalized them with his camera. The poor wretches were immensely pleased, and will no doubt carry back to Turkey good impressions of our kindness to them in distant Cabul.

It has chanced that since December last I have visited the city of Cabul but twice: once when the snow was still lying on the ground, and our engineers were busy raising new fortifications on the Sherderwaza Heights. On this occasion I merely passed from the Bala Hissar along the skirts of the lowest quarters of the city, as the Heights had to be scaled; so that, in wandering through the bazaars a few days ago, the impression uppermost in my mind was the state of Cabul immediately after Mahomed Jan's flight. Then the city was gloomy and terror-stricken: it had gone hand and heart with the ghazi-*log* during the triumphant days of the siege of Sherpur, and it dreaded the

retribution which hung over it. The alien Kizilbashes and Hindus were joyful enough at the re-establishment of order: but their wrecked shops and pillaged houses were sad relics of the fanatical storm which had passed over Cabul. No man of the Mussulman population could foretell what the punishment of the city would be, and the half-deserted bazaars and the still by-streets were eloquent of the fear which cowed the unruly populace. But instead of bloody reprisals and harsh repression, it seemed good in the eyes of our leaders that gentleness and free forgiveness should be the means used to win over the city; and now Cabul is more prosperous and peaceful than it has been for many generations. The rumours of new wars and insidious intrigues of Abdur Rahman's approach from the north, and the gathering of the tribes at Ghazni, pass over the heads of the people like a fitful wind over a lake, stirring the placid surface, but leaving no lasting impression. There have been, since the beginning of the year, long, long days in which the traders and holders of contracts from the British saw their coffers filling with the rupees which are now looked upon in India as having "mysteriously disappeared" from the Punjab treasuries; longer weeks wherein everyone, from Sirdar Wali Mahomed to the commonest Hazara coolie, found how good a paymaster the Sircar is when his necessity is urgent; and still longer months during which lakhs of Indian rupees were melted down in the city mint to be reissued in the form of Cabul rupees and spread broadcast over the land. Cabul has prospered, and waxed proud: its merchants have never been so rich; the common people have never seen such a steady flow of money through the bazaars. Even the Hindus, who know something of our wealth, are astonished; they cannot appreciate the self-denial and honesty of purpose which guide us in our transactions with a conquered race. "Your money is without limit," a Hindu banker said to me; "but why do you give it all to this faithless people (*be-iman log*)? They are your enemies, they hate and revile you; why not *take* what you want?" Any other nation making war would probably requisition the country and forcibly seize supplies; but with the philanthropy which guides our actions, we pay ten times the normal value of the things needed for our army, and plume ourselves proudly as men walking upright before the Lord. To

enrich dishonest men; to give to our enemies that which they most need—sterling money; to encourage chicanery and wanton deceit—this is a poor *rôle* to play when we come to Cabul as an avenging army; but, perhaps there are "exigencies" which plead for all this weakness, and will in the future give a rose-coloured tinge to our balance-sheets. Can Cabul fail to be prosperous under such conditions? can its citizens not afford to wear an insolent air of triumph, and treat such customers as appear among them with an easy assumption of independence, sorely aggravating to officer and soldier alike?

I have called this article "Cabul in Prosperity," and I think the title is justifiable. We have worked our will in the Bala Hissar, and have made it a citadel worthy of the name: but in the city proper we have neither made nor meddled, and the narrow streets, if cleaner, still retain their distinctive features. Buying and selling, money-changing and broking, flourish with an energy that makes no count of changing fortunes or shifting careers. Sirdar Wali Mahomed's governorship can only last so long as British bayonets are at his back; but in the sunshine of our favour he sets the example of amassing wealth, and all his followers tread in his footsteps. Sirdar Hashim Khan is on the eve of departure for Candahar, where Shere Ali Khan has offered him asylum. His departure troubles the minds of the citizens but little, as the stream of Indian silver will not be diverted by his absence. While not understanding our simplicity in dealing, and while looking upon us as madmen in the matter of finance—for are we not taunted with "changing our Rani's head" by ordering Indian rupees to be melted down and turned into Cabuli coin?—the Cabulis, with their keen rapacity, seize every opportunity of enriching themselves. Take the conversion of Indian rupees into local coin; through our benevolent mode of action we have never been able to say that our coin shall have a fixed value, and a "ring" of scoundrels in Cabul have so rigged the market that in the bazaars at the present time the two rupees are constantly of equal value. So some clever financier at once jumps to the conclusion that we may as well pay in Cabuli rupees as in Indian. Now the quantity of silver in 100 Indian rupees permits of 127 Cabulis being made therewith, and so we pour our brand

new coins into the mint (*wherein there is no European supervision of any kind*), and for every 100 sent in Sirdar Wali Mahomed returns us 120! Only a few days ago three lakhs of the treasure with General Hills' force was sent to Cabul to be converted into local rupees. Is the reason for this that the Logar villagers refuse our rupees? If so, it would surely be the mildest form of coercion to force them to take payment in whatever silver coin we chose. The profits on the coining (say five per cent.) go presumably into Wali Mahomed's pocket, as Government is too strait-laced to make profit itself; and yet that Sirdar had the cool effrontery to refuse to coin Cabuli rupees, when a lakh was wanted for the Logar force, until he first received Indian rupees from Sherpur. He was not punished for his insolence; but as we have still to levy the fine inflicted upon the city for the murder of our Envoy, he may yet be mulcted, say, in a lakh. Some of us are curious to know when and how the said fine will be levied; but, perhaps, we may be looked upon as inquisitive.* One thing is clear: we shall never get our money back in the shape of Indian rupees, and our only consolation is that if Afghanistan continues to absorb a few hundred thousand pounds worth of silver monthly, the rate of exchange between India and England must improve.

Having explained the irritating causes of the present prosperity of Cabul, I may now with a clear conscience describe a little more in detail the appearance of the city itself. In the First Book of Kings we are told many valuable anecdotes of King Solomon, not the least interesting of which is the account of the payment made to Hiram, King of Tyre, who furnished "cedar trees, and fir trees, and gold" to assist the King of Israel in the adornment and fortification of Jerusalem. This payment consisted of the gift of twenty cities in the land of Galilee, cities so worthless that, when Hiram saw them, he said:—"What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother?" And the narrative further states that "he called them the land of Cabul unto this day." The word "Cabul" our annotators explain as signifying "displeasing or dirty;" and, strangely enough, the latter epithet is extremely applicable to the modern capital of Afghanistan. The side-streets

* The fine was never levied.

and purlieus, even the walls of many of the houses, are filthy in the extreme, though our strict sanitary system has made the bazaars almost as clean as those of an Indian city. Cabul is not so "displeasing" to the eye when viewed from the neighbouring heights, for the orchards of Deh-i-Afghan and scattered clumps of trees in Chandaul make the place look quite picturesque. But once in the heart of the city, beyond the busy stream of life which pours along the bazaars and renews itself every hour in some mysterious way, there is nothing but dulness and gloom in the dead mud walls of the houses, with their frowning doorways or dark noisome passages leading to unknown dens behind. In the bazaars all is life and bustle. Entering the city by a side-road from Sherpur, one sees the bed of the Cabul river lying waterless on the left, save for a few stagnant pools, where the *dhobies* are at work, or a vendor of *atchcha* salad is washing a donkey-load of lettuce preparatory to the day's business. Over a bridge, on one side of which are a score of shoemakers' stalls—there seems to be one shoemaker to every twenty inhabitants in Cabul—and then into the narrow Shore Bazaar, I find more shoemakers and leather-sellers, whose stalls are oddly mixed up with those of fruiterers, bakers, retailers of ices, and workers in iron and copper. Men on horseback, swaggering sowars of Wali Mahomed or other sirdars; Hazara coolies with heavy loads on their broad backs; idle Cabulis; peasants from the district with blue turbans; stalwart mountaineers who look upon the street as their own; a sprinkling of red-coated British soldiers, and sepoys and sowars in all stages of negligent undress (but with rifles or swords always ready)—all these elements are mingled in noisy but good-tempered confusion; while at every ten yards one's horse has to be pulled on his haunches, because some young Cabul chief is playing at hide-and-seek under his legs. Suddenly a string of camels, with loads of firewood or heavy merchandise, has to be passed—rather a ticklish business occasionally, as the dead weight of the beasts and their loads cleave a way for itself, regardless of obstacles. A few white-clad women glide unobtrusively along, their *yashmaks* hiding whatever charms they may possess; blind beggars and shrill voiced *fakirs* obtrude their wants upon the stranger; *bhistees* clank their metal drinking vessels, or pour out a cool draught

from the ever-ready *mussuk*; salad vendors pilot their sedate donkeys, laden with crisp green food, through the crowd; boys, with their trays of *chupaties*, cry out the goodness of their *rotee;* a marriage procession, with *tom-toms* beating and lusty lungs pouring forth jubilant songs, comes gaily along, a closely covered structure, somewhat in the shape of a beehive, containing the bride, whose weight is not felt by the shoulders of her bearers,—this is the living mosaic which paves the bazaars. There is a vividness in all the types of life, which is very striking, from the matted-haired *fakir*, who does not hesitate to seize a passer-by in his repulsive grip, so resolute is his demand for alms, to the careless youngster who leans over his donkey, idly chewing a young onion, which answers to the straw of Western street-life. An unveiled woman, wretchedly clad, dirty, and with the features of a Seven Dials' hag, takes a handful of the youngster's salad from his donkey's back; he strikes her on the back with his stick, whereupon she turns round, flings the pilferred stalks in his face, and abuses him in choicest Cabuli. This unexpected "knocking of his leek about his pate" so cows the boy that he moves off hastily, leaving the harridan in possession of the field.

I have by this time wandered into the Char Chowk, or principal bazaar of the city, and here the crowd is denser, the stalls more pretentious, the trade brisker. The bazaar is in four lengths, each roofed over and solidly built of masonry, and the stalls are nearly all rented by jewellers and dealers in silks and cottons. On either hand, above the stalls, richly coloured silks, gaudy chintzes, carpets, and caps of brilliant hues are hung out, making a brave show; while the traders, seated cross-legged below, are surrounded by their stock, upon which they seem to keep a careless eye. I have before spoken of their keenness in trade, and I can only add that, since the early days of our occupation they have grown keener and more rapacious, until to buy goods direct from them is to court being cheated in every way. Still, this does not prevent officers and men from purchasing Bokhara silks and various knick-knacks, for all of which absurdly high prices are given. A good Pathan Sepoy is the best companion to have when buying any articles at the stalls, and he will bully the shopkeeper and finally induce him to take about one-fourth of the price first

asked. As the day wears on trade slackens a little, and here and there a shopkeeper pores over a Persian book, while his son keeps watch upon the stock-in-trade. In that silk merchant's stall, though it be in the heart of the bazaar, are three grey-bearded men listening with supreme pleasure to the excited reader, whom, in my own mind, I believe to be reading the songs of Hafiz; in the next stall a burly Mussulman lies sleeping on a pile of Manchester cottons; while near at hand is a pious old villain taking advantage of a lull to submit his hoary head to the hands of a barber. A shrill cry as of a child in pain draws one further on; it is nothing serious: another pious old gentleman is watching his son's scalp being treated in the same way by another barber. The boy, some three or four years old, has never felt the razor's edge before, and shrieks at every stroke, while his father threatens him with a huge stick: the operation is at last over, and the child, still quietly sobbing, passes his hands carefully over his head as if doubtful of it still remaining upon his shoulders. Once convinced that his hair only has gone by the board, he plucks up courage and smiles apologetically upon his father, who gravely strokes his beard in approval. The little incident is only one of many which draw attention, and one might easily elaborate such scenes; but then the charm of simplicity would be destroyed. From the Char Chowk Bazaar to Chandaul is but a few yards, and one passes on the way more fruit-stalls, in which tiers upon tiers of lettuce flank the luscious heaps of apricots, cherries, peaches, and apples which are now pouring into Cabul from Koh-Daman and Chardeh. So much has been written about the Cabul fruit-stalls that it is necessary to say the abundance of fruit has not at all been exaggerated; the stone fruits seem just as abundant as the delicious grapes which we indulged in so freely in the autumn. The vendors of ices are nearly always side by side with the fruit-sellers; the huge blocks of snow which adorn their stalls tempting all sun-dried souls to cool their palates with a little saucer of icy-cold cream flavoured with a sprinkling of mashed fruit. The trade is brisk in these ices, although the dust coats the open trays of cream until it turns a delicate brown. It is not pleasant for any of us to pause at the stall, as the fanaticism of these dealers is proverbial. There is a story afloat, that after an

officer had eaten an "ice," the dealer took the saucer and dashed it to the ground as having been defiled by a Kafir. These people do not love us, however well we treat them. Chandaul Bazaar is only a repetition of the Char-Chowk on a smaller scale, with more fruit shops and a few foul-smelling butcher's stalls, but the traders are nearly all Hindus and Kizilbashes, who, I must in justice say, are just as rapacious as the Mahomedans. And so one wanders back into the main bazaar, where *bhistees* are sprinkling the roadway liberally with water, and the afternoon trade is reviving; past the *kotwali*, where a few sepoys of the 5th Punjabees are on duty; and thence out by the Peshawur Gate, near the Bala Hissar. We have seen Cabul in prosperity, its people insolent enough to check all desire to enter the walls again, and on the ride back to cantonments we are lost in a dream of what the future will be of the city which we have twice occupied, and which has always cost us so dear.

The question of retirement is a serious one to many people in Cabul and the district. The Hindu traders of the city will, it is believed, migrate almost to a man, but the Kizilbashes will trust to their traditional influence in Cabul to pull them through any difficulty in the future. These two trading classes have amassed large sums of money during our occupation; and the Hindu, weak and defenceless, knows too well that a needy Amir would "borrow" most of his gains in a very high-handed way. The Kizilbash is more independent; and as, at a pinch, the Shiahs can turn out 6,000 fighting men, all well-equipped, any Amir would hesitate to make the "red-heads" his enemies. Major Hastings has prepared a short account of these aliens, which is of some interest at the present time, but little having been previously known of this important section of the Cabul populace. Elphinstone, it is true, states that they are members of that colony of Turks which predominates in Persia, and traces its descent from Kijan. To them was given the place of honour in Nadir Shah's conquering army, and when a military colony was formed in Cabul, their quarter was called "Chandaul," which, by interpretation, is "vanguard." Elphinstone's opinion of them was thus expressed:—"The Kizilbashes in Afghanistan partake of the character of their countrymen in Persia. They are lively,

ingenious, and even elegant and refined; but false, designing, and cruel; rapacious, but profuse, voluptuous, and fond of show; at once insolent and servile, destitute of all moderation in prosperity and of all pride in adversity; brave at one time and cowardly at another, but always fond of glory; full of prejudice, but affecting to be liberal and enlightened; admirable for a mere acquaintance (if one can bear with their vanity), but dangerous for a close connection." They are, according to Major Hastings, still distinct in many respects from those around them; and being of the Shiah section of Mahomedans, there is great religious animosity between them and the Afghans, who are Sunis. They all speak Persian, but the Kizilbashes of Aoshahr, in the Chardeh Valley and some of the older men among the Jawansher of Chandaul, still talk Turki in the privacy of their own families. The portions of Cabul city occupied by the "red-heads"—so called because of their distinctive turbans of crimson cloth—are Chandaul, immediately at the foot of the Sherderwaza Hill and Moradkhani, looking towards Sherpur. In Chardeh their chief villages are Nanuchi and Taiba. The total number of families in and about Cabul is 8,220, but these can furnish only 6,000 fighting men—a small proportion compared with Afghan families, every male in which is a fighting unit. In Candahar and Herat there are a large number of families descended from Nadir Shah's vanguard, and a few Kizilbashes are also located in Turkistan. The Jawansher section, occupying the greater part of Chandaul, is the most important clan in Cabul, and has at the present moment several of its members holding commands in the Turkistan army. Appointments under Government, such as those of secretaries, accountants, and similar grades, are always largely held by Kizilbashes; while in years gone by there were several Kizilbash regiments in the regular army. Hussein Ali Khan, of the Jawansher section, was once Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army, and many others of the clan rose to important commands. The red-capped regiments were so powerful in Ahmed Shah's reign that to prevent civil war in Cabul that monarch sent them to Turkistan, with orders to conquer Balkh. This they did with very little trouble, and Ahmed Shah was then possessed with a fear that they would become independent, and finally prove dangerous

enemies. At the suggestion of Morad Khan, Populzai, he recalled them, and assigned to them permanently the portion of Cabul and Chardeh which they now occupy. Moradkhani was called after Ahmed Shah's adviser. In Shah Suja's and Shah Zuman's reigns they were harshly treated, and with their usual independence they joined Haji Jumal and Paenda Khan, the father of the Dost Mahomed. When the Dost was in power, he singled his allies out for many distinctions, the fact of his mother being a Kizilbash lady having, no doubt, great weight with him. The clan refer to their treatment by the Amir Shere Ali Khan and his son, Yakub, in anything but grateful terms. Both Amirs, it would seem, were rather inclined to tyrannize over the Shiahs. Major Hastings gives some carefully-prepared genealogical tables, showing the status and place of residence of the chief families, and concludes his report by stating that, though the Kizilbashes still represent a certain amount of strength in Afghanistan, their power is by no means so great as in former years.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Deportation of the Mustaufi to India—His Sympathy with the Family of Shere Ali—Progress of Negotiations with Abdur Rahman—Arrival of the British Mission at Khanabad—Probable Popularity of the Sirdar's Cause—Reception of the Mission—The Amirship formally offered to Abdur Rahman—Return of Ibrahim Khan to Sherpur—His Report—A Russian Agent in the Khanabad Camp—Treatment of our Envoys as Prisoners—Photograph of the Sirdar sent to Cabul—His Vacillation and Intrigues with the Tribes—Flight of Sirdars Hashim Khan and Abdulla Khan—Arrival of Afzul Khan—His favourable Estimate of Abdur Rahman—Hasan Khan's Movements in Logar—Cavalry Action at Padkhao Shana on July 1st—General Palliser's Success—Two Hundred Tribesmen Killed—Dispersion of Hasan Khan's Force.

THE following letters, written in May, June, and July, will explain the progress of our negotiations with Sirdar Abdur Rahman which eventually led to his assumption of the Amirship :—

26th May, 1880.

Yet another minister of Yakub Khan's has been deported to India. The Mustaufi, Habibulla Khan, has broken down in his

professions of faithfulness to the British, and on the morning of May 20th he left Cabul in a *dhoolie*, under an escort furnished by the 9th Lancers, which accompanied him as far as Butkhak. Here two companies of the 67th Foot were in readiness to escort him to Luttabund. They had been sent out on the previous afternoon, their sudden march giving rise to rumours of an impending attack upon our communications, a rumour strengthened by the 9th Lancers standing to their horses the whole afternoon, as if ready for a gallop out. What may have been the Mustaufi's crime I can only conjecture: officially we are told that "he was summoned to Sherpur, and after a long investigation was found guilty of conspiring against the British, and was at once put under arrest." Camp gossip runs that letters were intercepted, bearing his sign manual, inciting the chiefs to rise again, and that these were produced before Wali Mahomed and other sirdars, who swore to the genuineness of the signature. The old man when found out took the matter quite calmly, and when told that he would be sent at once to India rather welcomed the idea, saying he would go on a pilgrimage to Mecca and afterwards visit England. The Mustaufi seems to have recognized the simple fact that we are bent upon making Abdur Rahman Amir, and this he regards as a breach of faith, as nothing was said of our intention when he was striving so hard to bring the Ghazni malcontents to Sherpur. He knew that he could not hope for power under Abdur Rahman—his partisanship for Shere Ali's family was too notorious—and hence in his extremity he resorted to fresh intrigues to delay or put altogether out of the question Abdur Rahman's visit to the British camp. He has been detected, and as Abdur Rahman's path must be cleared of every obstacle, Habibulla Khan has been summarily sent to India.

Contrary opinions as to the final result of our mission to Abdur Rahman are still afloat both in our camp and in the Cabul bazaars; but so far everything that the most sanguine could have hoped for in the direction of an *entente cordiale* being established between the Pretender and the British Government has happily come to pass. Our Mission has reached its destination in safety, has been honourably and even effusively received, and we are on the eve of receiving an answer from the Sirdar himself regarding the pro-

posals we have made to him. And yet there is a large party in the city who still persist in prophesying that Abdur Rahman will never visit Cabul so long as the British force occupies the city. Their reasons are disjointed and somewhat irrational, but they are repeated with such persistent head-shaking and beard-wagging that, in spite of one's own better belief, it is difficult at times to avoid thinking as these birds of ill-omen think. Not that they deny either the Sirdar's anxiety or determination to be Amir (this they admit most unequivocally), but they argue that he is too wise to ruin himself in the eye of the nation by accepting the Amirship from the hands of a British General. When they are reminded that the British are just as determined that the new Amir shall be simply and solely their nominee, as their work would be incomplete if they left the throne to be filled by any candidate who might get a party together, they cry back on their lines of argument, and insist that Abdur Rahman *will* be Amir, but by virtue of his own popularity and prowess, and not as a man accepting a boon from a conquering army. When it comes to the finer details of ways and means, the prophets can only take refuge in vague hints and inane mumblings which would have shamed even the vilest impostor in the old days, when prophecy had some points to recommend it to the credulous. Perhaps the explanation is that Abdur Rahman has not in Cabul itself a faction worthy of the name. His prestige lies not so much in the sympathy of the citizens as in the support the hardier tribesmen are willing to give him as a soldier and a ruler. There is something in his success in Eastern Turkistan which has drawn the independent and reckless spirits of Kohistan, Koh-Daman, and Logar to him: it may be the boldness with which he has declared himself claimant to the throne, or that his old fame as a successful general still lives in the hearts of the people. Every man born in Afghanistan is born to a soldier's life, not the life of camps and campaigns so much as the constant struggle of intertribal warfare, or time-honoured family feuds. Every man's hand is familiar with the use of *jhezail* or rifle, *tulwar* or knife, and a successful leader is far more honoured and more faithfully followed than a chief who lives by intrigue and begs his way to power by lavish bribery. Abdur Rahman ruled in Cabul, after Dost Mahomed's death and Shere Ali's usurpation, by

mere force of success in arms. He placed his father upon the throne in defiance of Shere Ali, who was never a match for him in the field, even though backed by the support of the Indian Government. Shere Ali won Cabul finally in the absence of his young rival in Turkistan. In an instant his success was magnified, he became the successful warrior, and his power was assured. Abdur Rahman sank out of sight. Later, Yakub Khan blazed into power, a bold leader of armies, full of vigorous life. How success bred success in his case until Herat and Turkistan were practically lost to his father, contemporary history shows; and only when he sank the soldier in the son, and trusted in his father's rotten honour, did his career come to an end. Yakub, free and holding his own proudly in Herat, was a figure to draw men's admiration and support: Yakub, a prisoner in the Bala Hissar, was a fallen star which could no longer dazzle men's eyes. So it has been with Abdur Rahman Khan. In January 1869 he crossed the Oxus a fugitive, and since that eventful year he has been nothing but a lay figure in Afghan politics. Now he is once more clearly outlined before the people, who have been bitterly humiliated by our armies since the murder of our Envoy in the Bala Hissar.

They may at first have looked to the grandson of the Dost to avenge their humiliations by force of arms; but the fall of Ghazni and the appearance of another 7,000 men to swell our numbers in Cabul and the Logar Valley have dashed their hopes once and for all. Now they turn their eyes northward, mayhap their feet also, and await the sign that will free them from the presence of the Kafir armies. So it is that Abdur Rahman seems to them a hero, a deliverer; they are lifted beyond the petty intrigues of the Barakzai sirdars in Cabul, the deep plotting of the Mustaufi, or the empty bombast of Mahomed Jan. Even Mushk-i-Alam, the arch-priest of discontent, is silent for a while: there are no new appeals to their fanaticism, and not 1,000 men are under arms in districts which have been seething with revolt for months. Logar, Kohistan, Wardak, are no longer names to conjure with. Mahomed Jan even has drifted into Kharwar and Zurmut, whose widely-armed tribes are held in contempt by the better trained forces of the provinces about Cabul, the male population of which has been leavened with sepoys carrying firearms equal in part to

our own. The Northern Ghilzais are for a moment sobered by the reflection that Afghanistan is likely to be rid of a foreign army sooner by the advent of the Sirdar now in Khanabad than by listening to suggestions of renewed outbreaks and ceaseless harrying of our posts in the Passes. True, factious *moolahs*, like Khalil and Fakir, are stirring up disaffection about Jellalabad; but that district is somewhat removed from the direct effect of the influences at work about Cabul, and we can afford to disregard such petty outbreaks, which only give us a better chance of showing our power to strike in all directions. The little actions which have lately been fought in Beshud and the Shinwari country will bear their own fruit; every additional tower destroyed is another mark of our current supremacy, another warning that our forbearance has limits—wide though they be. Even the towers of Padshah Khan—ally, enemy, friend, traitor, alternately—are at last in ruins, and his crops may yet be reaped by our soldiers. On the one hand, we proffer honest negotiation leading to a stable settlement; on the other, we are firm to punish the restless animosity which seeks to force us out of the country by incessant annoyance and harassing intrigue.

Perhaps the reasoning which I have mentioned as being in vogue in Cabul as to the probable failure of any negotiations with Sirdar Abdur Rahman may be due to the efforts of the Cabul sirdars, who dread the coming of our nominee more than they loathe our own domination over the city. Ambition is not a passion easily foregone, and both Wali Mahomed and Hashim Khan know that the dreams once indulged in of power and pre-eminence in Afghanistan are now at an end. The offer of the Amirship has been formally made to their rival: his claims have thus been declared pre-eminent, and minor pretenders are cast out into the utter darkness of neglect and contempt. The sirdars know they have nothing to expect at the hands of Mahomed Afzul's son except contumely or even worse; his years of exile have hung heavily upon him; and Shere Ali's family and partisans are in his black list. Petrovsky, the Russian writer, who saw so much of the Sirdar and professed to know him very intimately, wrote, "To get square some day with the English and Shere Ali was Abdur Rahman's most cherished thought, his dominant, never-

failing passion." No doubt Petrovsky believed the hatred towards the English was equal to that against Shere Ali; but time and events have modified the former, particularly as the English are masters of the situation, while it is probable the feeling of revenge against Shere Ali's family is still as lively as ever.7 It therefore behoves Hashim Khan, who, by his marriage with Abdulla Jan's sister, became one of the family, to exert himself to prevent the Sirdar becoming Amir; and this he is doing by intrigues which have, luckily, as yet borne but little fruit. Knowing his own chance has disappeared, he thinks to make Ayub Khan a powerful claimant through the latter's position in Herat. Hashim, it is believed, has also made attempts to seduce the Kohistanis from Abdur Rahman's cause, and how much further his intrigues may go we cannot at all estimate. Probably he has sown distrust, by means of agents, in the mind of Abdur Rahman himself, warning him that the British only wish to get possession of his person with a view to sending him a prisoner to India.

From whatever cause it may be, the fact is clear that Abdur Rahman is somewhat distrustful of our overtures, though welcoming them warmly as becomes a pretender who suddenly finds himself first in the running for a throne. The news which has reached Cabul of the progress of our Mission is highly important; and although official reticence is great, the messengers and others who have arrived from Khanabad a few days ago have spread pretty trustworthy reports of what has really occurred. The little party which left Sherpur on May 3rd passed through Kohistan unmolested, and after trying a journey through the Sir-i-Lang Pass, in parts of which the snow was still lying, they found themselves beyond the Hindu Kush and well on their way to Kunduz. For a day they were delayed by stress of weather, but afterwards their journey was unbroken, Ghori being reached, and finally Kunduz, about the 14th or 15th of May. They had been joined by numbers of men from Kohistan anxious to pay their respects to the Sirdar, and they seem never to have been in any danger from marauding bands which are known to infest the country. Abdur Rahman sent a troop of cavalry to escort them to Khanabad, and on their arrival every honour due to the Ambassadors of the British Government was paid to them. A tent near the Sirdar's

own was placed at their service, and they were treated throughout with great courtesy, though always strictly guarded. Then began their real work, the usual public and private interviews, so much in vogue in the East, taking place daily. Finally, in a great Durbar, the letter from the British was presented to the Sirdar, and the contents were read out. My information goes so far in regard to the letter that I am justified in stating its purport to have been an unfettered offer of the Amirship to Abdur Rahman Khan. Whether Herat and Candahar were specified as being detached from the Durani kingdom, I cannot say; but most probably they were, perhaps with the after-idea of gracefully yielding Herat to the Amir, and so giving the appearance of concession on our part. But for official secrecy, this point could be at once cleared up; but the Government of India are the best judges of what should be made known on their part, and until they contradict the belief here that Herat is to be independent, we must go on believing that the proposal to the Sirdar is that he may become Amir of Eastern and Northern Afghanistan, Turkistan and Badakshan, leaving Candahar in our possession, while Herat is to be "independent,"—though in whose charge is not very clear. The effect upon Abdur Rahman of Mr. Lepel Griffin's letter is described as one of great satisfaction and even joy; he caused alms to be distributed among the poor, and generally rejoiced at the new prospect opened out to him. But he is a cautious and sagacious man, and after eleven years' waiting is not foolish enough to mar his chance by unseemly haste. For himself he declares that the offer is most tempting and highly pleasing; but, that his power as Amir may be unquestioned, he desires to have the opinion of all the chiefs of the country who shall share with him the responsibility of forming a new Government. Thus he does not hasten to leave Khanabad, to rush to Sherpur, assume power, and trust to his own personal energy to retain it; he methodically takes the best course to secure popular election; and until he has gained the ear of the people, he will not leave the Kattagan country, where his camp is now pitched. That distrust, which is so essentially a part of the Afghan character, is also at work in his mind, as his good fortune seems almost too sudden and too unqualified not to have hidden beneath it some

sinister meaning; and until he is convinced of the contrary, and thoroughly reassured, he is not likely to cross the Hindu Kush. He is sending his formal answer by one of the members of the Mission; and upon its arrival we shall, of course, have to take steps to sweep all distrust from the Sirdar's mind and convince him of the honesty of our intentions. This will not be difficult, and then the negotiations will crystallize into tangible shape, and we may, at last, see our way to unravel the Afghan tangle which has so long irritated and perplexed us. The first signs of the new order of things is that a loan of a lakh of rupees has been advanced to the Sirdar by the Hindus and ryots of Kohistan, who are astute enough to see that the British are the real sureties for repayment, as Abdur Rahman must receive their support if he is to hold his own, in the future, in Cabul.

4th June.

Sirdar Ibrahim Khan, one of the members of our Mission to Abdur Rahman Khan, has returned to Cabul, and has proved the possibility of communicating direct with the Pretender. But still we seem no nearer a settlement than before the Mission started; for the Sirdar, acting, perhaps, at the instigation of the native Russian agent, said to be in his camp, is serenely independent in his attitude, and has given no promise whatever on any specific points connected with the Amirship. He seems to be fully aware of our awkward position in the country, and is not at all anxious to aid us in extricating ourselves. Our military supremacy he does not doubt, but the political dead-lock, he knows, has nonplussed us; and secure in his retreat beyond the Hindu Kush, he is working rather to make the British, and not himself, the grateful party in the current negotiations. What the status of the native representing Russia at Khanabad may be, I have but limited means of knowing; but if native report is to be trusted,—and it is all I have to rely upon,—Abdur Rahman is being guided entirely by this man's advice. The result is that any speedy settlement is out of the question, for the crooked ways of Russian diplomacy are difficult to follow; and what the Sirdar may be egged on yet to demand, even the greatest diplomat in Sherpur or Simla cannot conjecture. Ibrahim Khan, it is true,

brought with him a letter from Abdur Rahman, which was couched in cordial terms. But beyond cordiality, which costs nothing among Eastern nations, the letter contains little of value. The Sirdar, like a precocious child, "wants to know too much." There is no spontaneous outburst of gratitude, no eager acceptance of our offer of the Amirship: but, on the contrary, a cool, self-possessed tone of inquiry, as if the writer felt himself master of the situation, and meant to dictate his own terms. This is the more unfortunate, because there is no longer a strong power to back our efforts to settle the question with the high hand of conquerors. The change of front in English politics has reacted upon us here with tremendous effect, and we are appearing in the eyes of the people rather as suppliants than dictators to Abdur Rahman. Perhaps the Sirdar himself is of much the same opinion, but he may find himself wofully mistaken in a few weeks. We shall *not* yield on every point he raises; simply because we have other cards to play. This he will soon be made to understand; and he must then choose once for all. He is trying our patience a good deal now; but there are limits to our forbearance, and these limits are not far distant.

Cabul has, indeed, proved a white elephant which we cannot afford to feed. We are so anxious to get rid of the beast at any price, that we are thrusting it as a gift upon a man who looks upon it as his lawful property, which we have seriously injured while holding it tethered in our midst. The independent spirit shown by the Sirdar, whether real or affected, cannot but have a bad effect upon the tribal chiefs; and if we allow the negotiations to "drag" much longer, serious mischief may follow. The natural restlessness of the Afghans will not permit them to watch and wait for months; and already there are signs of a turbulent spirit manifesting itself. A large body of fanatical Safis have passed from Tagao into Kohistan, and our only means of counteracting the *jehad* they are said to be raising has been to dismiss the Ghilzai and Kohistani deputations hitherto waiting in Cabul. The *maliks* have accordingly been sent to their homes, and it is hoped their efforts to maintain peace will be successful. To send a division now into Kohistan would be to cause greater distrust in Turkistan than already exists, and if our negotiations are to come

to any satisfactory point, this distrust must not be excited. I have learnt from Sirdar Ibrahim Khan, that while our Mission was honourably received at Khanabad, Sirdar Abdur Rahman was so mistrustful, either of his own power, or of his followers' fanaticism, that he had practically to treat our representatives as prisoners. Sirdar Wazirzada Afzul Khan, Ibrahim Khan, and Sher Mahomed Khan were lodged in a large tent adjoining the Sirdar's, as I mentioned in a previous letter, and a strong guard surrounded both. The members of the Mission were unable to move about of their own free-will, and they had but little, if any, opportunity of consulting together. Abdur Rahman can scarcely be blamed for these precautions, as, in case of insult or violence being offered to the Sirdars, he would have been held personally responsible for the breach of hospitality. He does not seem to have had any very large body of troops with him, the want of money, of course, hindering him in his efforts to collect the army of Turkistan, about him. Sirdar Ibrahim Khan describes him as by far the most civilized, intelligent, and able Afghan he has ever met; and though the knowledge has been gained in a short intercouse, it is valuable as bearing out the opinions of Schuyler, Petrovsky, and other writers, who saw the man under the unfavourable conditions of exile and despondency. During his residence in Tashkend Abdur Rahman has kept himself well informed on general Asiatic politics; and this knowledge he is now applying, to the best of his ability, in his negotiations with the British.

Ibrahim Khan saw a number of photographs of the Sirdar on his tent, and one of these was presented to him on his expressing a desire to carry back a copy with him. The portrait is by a photographer of Tashkend, and shows a man of about forty years of age, broad-shouldered and stoutly built, with a face expressing rather stolid self-possession than striking intelligence. A huge black beard covers the lower half of the face, but cannot hide the thick sensual lips, which contrast greatly with the broad forehead and stubborn eyes. The Sirdar is in uniform of Western cut, and wears a curved sword of the kind affected by Afghan nobles. The face shows no marks of trouble or anxiety, and has not that harassed look which was so characteristic of Shere Ali and Yakub Khan. Abdur Rahman is a "well-preserved" man, and, if report

speaks truly, has still left to him the energy and ambition which made him so dangerous an enemy of Shere Ali twelve years ago.

Sirdar Ibrahim Khan will return to Khanabad in a few days, carrying back with him full explanations of our policy; and these once given, Abdur Rahman will be practically in the position of having received an ultimatum. The local sirdars persist in saying that he will never come in; but the last news from the North is that the Sirdar is establishing posts between Khanabad and Charikar, thus securing rapid and safe communication with Kohistan and Cabul. As he has no army worthy of the name, this step can be scarcely a preparation for a hostile advance, but looks more as if he were making his own passage to Sherpur secure when the time comes for his journey to our camp.

2nd July.

One might well apply the words of the Jewish proverb-monger to Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan: "The prince that wanteth understanding is a great oppressor." The people of Afghanistan are now oppressed with the burden of a Kafir occupation, because the prince to whom we have appealed to take the government of the country off our hands lacks understanding. He is cunning and cautious to a fault, but he is in close danger of over-reaching himself. We have so far lowered our pride as to treat with Abdur Rahman in order to secure peace for Afghanistan, and now we are in the awkward position of finding our words twisted, their meaning perverted, and the Pretender posing before the nation as a patriot of the first water. During the past three months Mr. Lepel Griffin, acting under the orders of the Government of India, has been striving to place himself thoroughly *en rapport* with the Sirdar, who seemed at last to be quite earnest in his expressed wish to become and remain on friendly terms with us. There was, however, such hesitation in all his actions, and so strong a current of vacillation in his replies, that in sheer self-defence we had to pin him down to certain definite conditions, which he could either accept or reject as his inclination dictated. An ultimatum, really, was sent to him, though we have avoided using the term under the peculiar circumstances in which we were placed—viz.,

that of being in possession of a kingdom which our armies could easily retain, but which we were most anxious to leave at the earliest moment. In this state document the Indian Government stated clearly and distinctly that the Sirdar would be welcomed as Amir of Afghanistan, and could rely upon our future countenance and support so long as he remained faithful to his engagements with us, *but* that Candahar and the Kurram Valley could not be surrendered to him, as their fate had once for all been settled. So distinctly was the latter part of the proposed settlement laid down, that it was added "No discussion is possible on this subject." Nothing could have been more simple than this: Abdur Rahman could by a word become Amir of Afghanistan less Candahar and Kurram; he had but to say "I accept," and the matter was at an end. But his perversity is so great, that he has chosen to construe our terms into an offer of a united Afghanistan, such as his grandfather the Dost ruled over, and with calm assurance to say that he accepts such offer. This dishonesty of purpose has been pushed to such extremes that he has sent circulars to all the tribes, proclaiming with more or less insolent triumph that the British have given him the Amirship of the whole country, and that he will shortly arrive among them to take up the reins of power. What sinister motive may have prompted such a course we cannot imagine, unless it be that the Sirdar wishes to assume the *rôle* of a great patriotic leader, to accuse us of treachery in our negotiations, and thus to unite all parties in a supreme effort to force us out of the country. It may be urged with equal consistency that he wishes the people to believe he is no friend of the British, and that he only accepted our real terms after holding out for the restitution of territory acquired by us during the campaign. The effect of his extraordinary action upon the people has been a very unhealthy one: they cannot believe, in the face of our protestations, that we have included Candahar and Kurram in the terms of the settlement, and, on the other hand, they are in a feverish state of expectancy as to whether the Pretender will insist upon such districts being surrendered to him—which would mean a revival of the war—or whether he will, under protest, take Afghanistan shorn of two of its provinces. Take Hashim Khan's case: he was about to leave

for Candahar, which place, under our protection, would have proved a safe asylum for him, even if his sworn enemy, Abdur Rahman, were ruler of Cabul. But no sooner did he see the Pretender's circular stating that Candahar was to revert to the new Amir, than he hastened to prepare for flight, suspecting us of having treacherously deceived him regarding the southern province. The circular was received in Cabul fifteen hours before Abdur Rahman's answer reached Mr. Lepel Griffin, and Hashim Khan made an effort to see the Chief Political Officer to gain knowledge, once for all, of the truth of the Pretender's assertions. Unluckily, Hashim Khan could not see Mr. Griffin at once, and refusing to wait, he rode off to Cabul, and in company with Abdulla Khan fled in the night to Chakri, in the Ghilzai country beyond Khurd Cabul. The two Sirdars gave out that they were ghazis, probably to blind the tribesmen, and we have since heard that Hashim Khan is trying to gather about him the disbanded sepoys of Yakub Khan's army. He has two lakhs and a half of treasure with him, and by offering regular payment, both to armed and unarmed men, he has already a little army under his control. As he has so far taken no action against us, a friendly letter was sent by order of General Stewart, inviting him to return, and assuring him that the statement about Candahar was a falsehood. His answer was that he was no enemy of the British, but that under existing circumstances he had been "advised" to leave Cabul and watch events from a safe distance. Abdulla Khan, it is believed, is the "adviser" referred to; that over-fed Sirdar having, like Jeshurun, waxed fat and kicked out savagely. He was apparently tired of playing the part of a nobody in Cabul, and has now incited Hashim Khan to commit himself to a very foolish course of action.

Since penning the above strictures upon Sirdar Abdur Rahman, our envoy, Sirdar Afzul Khan, ressaldar 10th Bengal Lancers, has arrived after a trying journey from Khanabad. Strangely enough, he brings letters of most friendly import from Abdur Rahman, whom he reports to be already on his way southwards. The Pretender marched with 2,000 men and twelve guns from Khanabad on the 28th of June, the day on which he had promised to leave, and on the 29th he was encamped at Chasma, on the

Ishkamish Road. By this time he is probably at Khinjan, where no doubt he will wait the arrival of our messenger, who left Sherpur three days ago. This time, it is hoped, the negotiations will really end, as Abdur Rahman will learn that his fast-and-loose mode of dealing has exasperated the British Government, which will not give him another chance. The arrival of Afzul Khan is most opportune, as he can explain fully, and without the caution he had to use in his letters, what the Sirdar's intentions are, and why it is that he has dishonestly perverted the meaning of the terms so generously offered to him. I believe I am right in stating that both General Stewart and Mr. Lepel Griffin incline to the opinion that the Sirdar will shortly cross the Hindu Kush into Kohistan, and will accept the Amirship at our hands. Of course, his circular came upon us as a great surprise, and it was impossible to reconcile it with his previous avowals of friendship and a desire to come to terms, but Afzul Khan has cleared away some of the mistiness hanging about the affair, and what is facetiously called in camp "the political horizon" is once more looking clearer. There are still, however, many conflicting interests to be reconciled, and the news from Logar shows that the supports of Yakub's Khan's family—whom, to adopt Cavagnari's term, I will call "Jacobins"—are actively engaged in stirring up the tribesmen against the British.

Yesterday (July 1st) the tribesmen grew so bold that they advanced to within a few miles of General Hills' force, and gave our cavalry an opportunity of punishing them, which was not neglected. The Ghazni Field Force had been ordered to march to Charasia, and Mahomed Hasan Khan, the stanchest supporter of Yakub Khan (whose imprisonment in the time of Shere Ali he shared), took advantage of General Hills' march to Charasia to occupy the Logar Valley with a mixed force of men from Zurmut, Kharwar, Maidan, and Wardak; but the gatherings dispersed upon the Ghazni Field Force again marching southwards. Finding General Hills did not move beyond Zerghun Shahr, Hasan Khan took heart again, and induced 1,000 or 2,000 men to occupy the large village of Padkhao Shana, on the Kushi side of the Logar, only twelve miles from the British camp. Here they remained till yesterday morning, when Palliser's cavalry

brigade, 550 strong, came down upon them and scattered them in all directions.

The particulars of the action are as follow:—General Hills heard on June 30th that the village had been occupied in force, and he ordered the cavalry brigade to move out at 3.30 A.M. yesterday. Brigadier-General Palliser's instructions were to reconnoitre their position, and if an opportunity occurred, to attack them in the open. His force was made up of 231 sabres of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, 158 of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, and 188 lances of the 19th Bengal Lancers. Upon nearing the spur which runs down from Kushi towards the Logar River, small parties of the enemy were seen, and the advanced cavalry scouts, on gaining some rising ground from which Padkhao Shana could be seen, reported the main body to be in full retreat in the direction of the Altimour Hills, which separate the Logar district from Zurmut. Their strength appeared to be about 1,500 footmen and a few cavalry. General Palliser detached a troop of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry to watch the village, and with 502 sabres and lance went in pursuit of the enemy. The latter, seeing the cavalry bearing down upon them, broke into detached knots, and took advantage of the difficult ground to make good their flight. The cavalry, however, followed them up very quickly, in spite of the stony nature of the ground and the difficulties presented by *nullahs* and ravines, and the two squadrons of the 1st Punjab Cavalry and the 19th Lancers in the front line were soon hotly engaged. The enemy fought with desperation, and tried to reform their line, but without success. They sheered off to right and left, and were cut down by the supporting squadrons of the 1st and 2nd Punjab Cavalry. The pursuit continued for two hours, until the mouth of the Altimour Pass had been reached. Here the cavalry were halted. They were then about eight miles from Padkhao Shana, whither they quickly returned. Two hundred bodies are said to have been counted on the ground. Our casualties are now reported as four sowars killed, twenty-three wounded, and one British officer, Captain Barrow, wounded. The ground was such as to give many opportunities for severe hand-to-hand fighting, in which Major Atkinson, 1st Punjab Cavalry, and Captain Leslie Bishop, 2nd Punjab Cavalry, are specially mentioned by those present as having displayed determined bravery. There

were many hairbreadth escapes among the officers and men, notably in the case of Colonel Yorke, 19th Bengal Lancers, who received a bullet through his helmet, a second ball grazing his forehead. His orderly was shot dead at his side. This man, Jewand Sing, had distinguished himself earlier in the day, when Captain Barrow was wounded. Captain Barrow, who was acting as orderly officer to General Palliser, engaged single-handed with an Afghan *malik*, who fought with great coolness and bravery. He was armed with rifle, shield, *tulwar*, and the usual long knife. As Captain Barrow rode at him he fired his rifle, wounding the officer's horse in the neck. He then betook himself to his sword, and warded off all blows with his shield. Captain Barrow received two severe cuts, the first disabling his bridle-hand, and the second cutting deep into his right fore-arm. Just at this moment Jewand Sing and Sowar Gholam Khan, of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, rode up, and the Afghan, who had already been badly wounded, was killed out of hand. In the ranks of the enemy was one of the deserters from the Sappers and Miners, who would not fight, but begged for mercy. He was shot in the *mêlée*, and his Snider rifle recovered. Hasan Khan deserted the tribesmen at the commencement of the action, riding away to a place of safety as soon as our cavalry appeared. The cavalry did not reach camp at Zerghun Shahr until half-past six at night, having been fifteen hours uninterruptedly in the saddle, and having ridden over forty miles since morning. As they rode into camp, all the regiments turned out and cheered them heartily. The results of this brilliant little action cannot fail to be most beneficial for a time at least, as Logar is once move cleared of malcontent tribesmen.

It is said that Hashim Khan intended sending a contingent from Chakri over the Ghilzai Hills, but the prompt action taken by General Hills stopped this, and Hashim Khan has again written in to say he is "no enemy of the British." He may well be afraid of putting himself at the head of men in the field when he sees how easily our troops scatter the forces opposed to them. Our cavalry have never done so well as at Padkhao Shana during the present campaign; no English cavalry regiment was present, the honours of the fight resting with the 1st and 2nd Punjab Cavalry and the 19th Bengal Lancers.

CHAPTER XXX.

Arrival of Abdur Rahman at Tutandarra in Kohistan—Preparations for the Evacuation of Cabul—A Deputation sent from Cabul to the Sirdar—The Friends and Enemies of the future Amir—Attitude of the Kohistanis, Ghilzais, and Wardaks—Mahomed Jan and Mushk-i-Alam's Acceptance of Abdur Rahman—Durbar at Sherpur on July 22nd—Formal Acknowledgment of Abdur Rahman as Amir by the British Government—Mr. Lepel Griffin's Address to the Chiefs—Sir Donald Stewart's Appeal to their Patriotism—Abdur Rahman's Departure from Charikar—Resignation of Wali Mahomed, Governor of Cabul—News of the Maiwand Disaster—Probable Movement of 10,000 Troops to Candahar—Interview between Mr. Lepel Griffin and the Amir—Discussion of Terms—The Amir's Demeanour—Second Interview—A Satisfactory Settlement arrived at.

EARLY in July Sir Donald Stewart sent a final message to Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan, requesting him to come to Cabul to discuss the terms of a settlement, and on the 15th of July the Sirdar reached Tutandarra, near Charikar, in Kohistan. His passage over the Hindu Kush had been a very trying one. On the 9th of July we had sent a deputation of Cabul gentlemen to Kohistan to pay their respects to the future Amir. Among these men were Abdul Kadir, the head Kazi of the city, who was the bearer of a letter to Abdur from the chief Political Officer; the Ghilzai Chief of Tezin, and Sirdar Yusuf Khan, Barakzai. The negotiations seemed to be progressing so well that all preparations were made for evacuating Cabul by the 16th of August, and large convoys started daily from the Bala Hissar with stores and surplus ammunition for India.* The following letters describe the close of the negotiations :—

19*th July*, 1880.

There now seems every prospect of a satisfactory settlement being made with Abdur Rahman, who will shortly leave Tutandarra for Charikar, thence coming to any place which the British representatives at Cabul may name. He raises no objection to this; expresses his strong wish to make a firm and friendly

* It will be seen from this that the evacuation of Cabul was decided upon long before the Maiwand disaster was made known.

arrangement with the British, and is more anxious for personal interviews than even we could be. Since his arrival in Kohistan the tone of his messages, and his reception of the deputation of Cabul gentlemen sent to him at Tutandarra, have been more than cordial; and there can be no reasonable doubt that he has finally determined to unreservedly accept the English conditions, and find his strength in an English alliance. This being the case, it is of some importance to know what the strength and party of Abdur Rahman in Northern Afghanistan are; and on this subject we have a good deal to guide us. It may be presumed that the Government did not blindly pin its faith to Abdur Rahman before it had ascertained that there was a sufficiently large party in Afghanistan to ensure some promise of stability if the Sirdar himself was capable and considerate to his political opponents. It is understood that Mr. Lepel Griffin came to Cabul with instructions from the late viceroy (Lord Lytton) to enter into communication with Abdur Rahman, and ascertain if he were a chief suited to the Government purposes, and that communications were accordingly opened with the Sirdar within a few days of the arrival of the Chief Political Officer in Cabul. These have been continued without interruption since, until Abdur Rahman has now felt himself strong enough to respond to the Government invitation; and unless unforeseen accidents occur within the next month, it would seem certain that he will be Amir of Cabul.

Some critics have assumed that, as in the first Durbar held after Mr. Griffin's arrival at Cabul the only candidates for the Amirship actually named were Wali Mahomed Khan, Hashim, Musa Jan, and Ayub Khan, the question of the possibility of Abdur Rahman had then not been considered by the Government. But a comparison of dates shows that this must be incorrect, and it is consequently probable that, looking at the formidable character of the armed opposition at that time, and the ignorance of the Sirdar's character and intentions, his name was expressly excluded, not because negotiations with him had not commenced, but that Yakub Khan's faction—who were then assembling in immense numbers, and would have become far more formidable but for their defeat at Ahmed Khel and Charasia—might not be rendered desperate and be strengthened by the knowledge that the person to

whom they were most opposed had been selected by Government, while it was uncertain whether he would, after all, prove suitable. The delay which had taken place in coming to an understanding with Abdur Rahman is indeed small when the magnitude of the interests at stake is considered, and the distance at which the Sirdar was residing on the other side of the Hindu Kush. It will have been no more than four months from the arrival of Mr. Griffin at Cabul, and the opening of negotiations with Abdur Rahman, before these are virtually completed, and the army can then be withdrawn as quickly as military exigencies or regard for the life and health of the troops will permit.

It is very difficult to say what strength Abdur Rahman possesses in Afghanistan, as it was difficult to know what really constituted the party of Yakub Khan or Musa Jan. One thing certain is that a very large number of undecided persons of all tribes will accept any Amir who may be chosen by the Government, and formally notified according to the Mahomedan religion. Constant efforts have been directed by the Political Department at Cabul to break up all the strong opposition parties; to enlist on the side of the Government nominee the religious feeling of the country, and especially the assistance of the great religious leaders (which has been successfully done); and to break up those great tribes which are under the control of chiefs of more or less importance, so that no formidable organized resistance might be offered to the new Amir. The most important tribe in Afghanistan is undoubtedly the Ghilzais. The Andaris, one of the most important of the southern sections of the tribe, are entirely in favour of Abdur Rahman, as are a great majority of the Tarakis. The northern Ghilzais are very much under the control of their chiefs, the most important of whom is Asmatullah Khan, of Hisarak and Lughman. He, it has just been announced, has addressed Mr. Griffin, and expressed his entire willingness to accept the Amir chosen by the English, even if this should be Abdur Rahman. Another important Ghilzai chief, Khan Mahomed Khan, of Tezin, is with the deputation sent to Charikar to welcome Abdur Rahman. Padshah Khan will be opposed to the Sirdar; Maizullah Khan will probably join him; Faiz Mahomed Khan has openly declared that he will be in opposition. On the whole, it may be said that about half of

the important Ghilzai tribe will be in favour of the new Amir. Others, should his conduct be conciliatory, would be doubtless won over later. The Kohistanis, who are almost entirely Tajiks, and between whom and the Afghans there is not much love lost, can also be counted upon.

There is, however, a strong party in favour of Shere Ali's family; but, roughly speaking, two-thirds of Kohistan and Koh-Daman may be estimated on the side of the Sirdar. It is worth noting, in spite of the reports to the contrary, that General Mir Said Khan, of Istalif, and Mir Butcha Khan have not yet visited Abdur Rahman. They are doubtful of their reception, and with excellent reason, as they have been illegitimately collecting Government revenue, which they know any organized Government at Cabul would compel them to disgorge. The Wardaks, between Logar and Ghazni, are unfriendly, but may be won over by good treatment. They will very much follow the example of Mahomed Jan and Mushk-i-Alam. The latter has for some time past been working honestly in the interests of peace, and has written that he, together with all the important chiefs assembled in Maidan, are ready to accept the choice of the British Government. The Sirdars of the ruling house are naturally unfriendly, as the adherents of the party of Azim Khan and Afzul Khan have long been banished or reduced by Shere Ali to impotence. A good many of the smaller sirdars belong to this party, and are on Abdur Rahman's side; but the men who have money—like Hashim Khan, Wali Mahomed, Ibrahim Khan, Karim Khan—are, as a matter of course, in opposition.

The future depends very much on the Sirdar's own conduct. If he chooses to take a conciliatory course, he may help his own against the strong opposition against him. If he becomes as unpopular in Cabul as he is in Turkistan, by oppressing the people and exacting money from the traders, he will not last very long. Already the news of his exactions has caused the wholesale flight from the city of the Indian merchants of Cabul—two *kafilas* of whom have already marched to India with their families; while trade is almost entirely stopped between Cabul, Turkistan, and Bokhara. The necessities of the Sirdar's position, and his almost absolute want of funds, are, to a certain extent, an excuse for this;

but unless he desires to alienate the trading classes, which will be a very great blow to the prosperity of his kingdom, he will have to entirely change his policy with them.

22nd July.

To-day the first step in the settlement of Afghanistan has been taken, and a new page turned in the history of our relations with Cabul. We have formally acknowledged the Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan, son of Mir Afzul Khan, eldest son of Dost Mahomed, as Amir of Cabul, and have promised him our support so long as he remains friendly to the British Government. Events have marched so rapidly within the last few days that many of us can scarcely realize the importance of to-day's proceedings. Mahomed Jan and the chiefs assembled in Maidan, sent in a friendly deputation, and this was a piece of good fortune which we scarcely anticipated. The old *moollah*, Mushk-i-Alam, had, it is true, written to say he would accept the ruler whom we favoured, but it was not expected that secessions from the Jacobin party would follow so rapidly. The deputation sent by Mahomed Jan to Sherpur offered to make unconditional submission to the British authorities, but this was a proceeding deemed impolitic by Sir Donald Stewart and Mr. Lepel Griffin. Our object is to strengthen Abdur Rahman's hands as much as possible, not to gather a party about ourselves, and the proffered submission was diverted to the Sirdar. This gives the latter the appearance of being chosen of the people rather than forced upon them by our dictation, and our anxiety is to ally ourselves openly with no party, though we are quite willing to acknowledge the strongest man. Two sons of Mushk-i-Alam and seven Wardak chiefs are now at Charikar, where they will be far more useful than in Sherpur, and the effect upon the popular mind is proportionately great. If the champion of Yakub and Musa Khan's claims considers the chances of a restoration to power of Shere Ali's family at an end, it is not likely the lesser lights will continue in factious opposition. My last letter explained at length the then strength of Abdur Rahman's party, and it will be seen that he is now quite powerful enough, with his new allies from Maidan, to hold his own in Cabul. His promise to the traders not to raise forced loans and to repay at

once the money he has extorted from merchants in Turkistan has soothed the feelings of the Cabul people, who have hitherto looked with dismay upon the prospect of his coming to rule over them. It would have been a fatal piece of folly if, as Amir, he renewed his tyranny, and there are already signs on the part of the rich citizens here of readiness to advance him money on the security of future revenue. Once he has funds wherewith to raise and equip an army, the Amir elect may reasonably hope to scatter the remnants of the Jacobin faction and to disperse Ayub Khan's army if it turns away from Candahar and reaches Ghazni. Abdur Rahman will inevitably have to fight some of the malcontents remaining after our armies have withdrawn over the Shutargardan and beyond Jugdulluck, and our belief is that he will be strong enough to crush all other pretenders, though he himself may exhaust his means in the struggle. He must then turn to the British for countenance and support, as there is a strong feeling against Russian interference with the country, and we shall probably revert to the old policy of a liberal annual subsidy. What conditions will be imposed if the subsidy is granted only the Home Government perhaps at present knows; but unless the war is to be fruitless, they must be somewhat on the lines laid down in the Gundamak Treaty—the presence of a British Envoy in Cabul being waived for the present.

The Durbar was held at five o'clock this evening, three large tents having been pitched in the Cantonment, about 150 yards from the Head-quarters' Gate. All the afternoon, sirdars and persons of lesser note came streaming through the 72nd Gateway, with their wild-looking retainers on horseback and on foot. The order against the carrying of arms, so wisely enacted by Sir Frederick Roberts in October, is still in force; but privileged persons, such as Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan and the three representatives sent by Abdur Rahman from Charikar, were to-day allowed small escorts of armed men. With carbines, or Enfield rifles, slung at their back, a sword dangling from their waist-belt, pistols and knives stuck in their *kummerbunds*, these horsemen trotted about full of their own importance, evidently looking upon the Durbar as held for the special honour of their masters. The said masters were, as usual, gorgeous in crimson,

purple, and gold; but I have so often described the greasy Cabul Sirdar in all his glory that I am loth to trot him out again, even on such an historic occasion as the present. We missed the handsome Arab Hashim Khan used to ride, and that mountain of flesh, Abdulla Khan, awed us no more; the two Sirdars are brooding over their wrongs in Kharwar or Zurmut, and their hearts will be full of bitterness when they learn of the success Abdur Rahman has scored. Wali Mahomed, as Governor of Cabul, was a person of some importance in his own eyes, though his tenure of power is now a very weak one, for he will be scarcely rash enough to court death by remaining at his post when our army files out of Sherpur. Sirdars and servants were the chief living features in cantonments, between the Club and the Head-quarters, all the afternoon, for in his anxiety to secure a "good place" each petty member of the Barakzai family took time by the forelock, and hastened to the Durbar tents an hour or two before the hour fixed for the solemn proceedings. The guard of honour of 100 men, furnished by the 72nd Highlanders, under the command of Captain Garnett, fell in about half-past four o'clock, and to the cheery quick-step of "Scotland yet," marched off to where the gathering crowd of British officers and Afghan notabilities had begun to arrange itself. We have not the means wherewith to arrange a grand spectacle, and nothing could have been more commonplace than the three tents in which the Durbar was to be held. Facing Bemaru Heights was the largest of all, towering above its near neighbour, which again dwarfed the Durbar tent proper, an old weather-beaten canvas affair, dull red in colour, once the property of the Amir. The guard of honour formed up at the entrance to the northernmost tent, the lines of bayonets shining out in the sunshine, and duly impressing certain weak-kneed sirdars, who shuffled along to their places in very undignified fashion. There had been an effort made to give some picturesque colouring to the interior of the small tent wherein sirdars knelt on one side while British officers sat comfortably on their own particular chairs and camp-stools on the other. Persian carpets covered the dusty floor, shawls were thrown over the chairs of state reserved for the representatives of the British Government, while the very shabby tent-poles were swathed in *kinkob* work.

The dusky faces of the sirdars showed no more sensibility, after once the crowd had settled or wriggled itself into something like order, than would so many masks on lay figures: our policy is so inscrutable to men like Wali Mahomed that any new declaration is placidly awaited with almost benevolent indifference. The rows of turbans, many-coloured and full of strange peculiarities in shape and folding, covered the shaven scalps of men whose thoughts turned, doubtless, upon what new phase the affairs of Afghanistan were about to take. Sirdar Wali Mahomed looked anxious and dispirited, as must a man whose power is slipping rapidly away; the stuttering Shahbaz Khan, our whilom Governor of Kohistan; Ibrahim Khan, who has worked all along heartily in our cause; Sher Mahomed Khan, a man who has studied Western politics and knows which of our Generals hails from Ireland, which from Scotland, and which from England; Yusuf Khan, who has unreservedly thrown in his lot with Abdur Rahman Khan; Sarwar Khan, who fought against us in December; all these princes of the Barakzai dynasty were hiding whatever curiosity they felt with a kind of listless dignity which deceived no one but themselves. Three strangers were in the first row of the sirdars: these were General Katol Khan, Mahomed Amin Khan, and "the Saiad Sahib," sent by Abdur Rahman to represent him at the Durbar. They were rather sorrily arrayed for such an occasion, their long residence in Tashkend having perhaps made them indifferent to the beauties of oriental attire, but as the representatives of the future Amir they had to be treated with every consideration. Contrasting with the flowing white robes or richly-coloured coats of the Afghan portion of the assembly were the quieter uniforms of the officers of the garrison, lighted up here and there by the gold and glitter of the Staff, always the "show-men" on occasions of this kind. A few of our friends from Logar and "down the line" had come in on leave, so that the force in Northern Afghanistan was well represented. With military punctuality, Sir Donald Stewart, accompanied by Sir Frederick Roberts, Mr. Lepel Griffin, and the members of the Head-quarters' Staff in Sherpur, reached the Durbar tents; the usual formalities of presenting arms, &c., were gone through, and then the three men with whose names the present settlement

will henceforth be most closely associated took their seats in solemn Durbar. The representatives of Abdur Rahman were presented, hand-shakings exchanged in Western fashion, and the proceedings began.

Sir Donald Stewart, with a soldier's brevity, said he wished to explain to the Sirdars, Chiefs, and people assembled, the reason for holding the Durbar and requesting their presence and that of the English officers stationed in Cabul. It was that the public recognition by the Government of England of Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan as Amir of Cabul should be made known with as much honour as possible. Mr. Lepel Griffin would explain more in detail the views and wishes of the Government on this important subject. Major Euan Smith, Political Officer with General Hills' Division, translated this short preamble into Persian, after which Mr. Griffin read the following speech in the same language:—

"SIRDARS, CHIEFS, AND GENTLEMEN,

"It is little more than three months ago that, by command of His Excellency the Viceroy of India, I explained to you in Durbar the intentions of the British Government with regard to the future of Afghanistan. I then told you it was not intended to annex the country; but that the armies of Her Majesty the Queen-Empress would be withdrawn so soon as the prospect of a settled administration had been assured, and a chief acknowledged as Amir who should not only be animated by friendly sentiments towards the English Government, but have the cordial support of his own countrymen. Since that time General Sir Donald Stewart, General Sir Frederick Roberts, and myself, have endeavoured to carry into effect the wishes of the Government, and you are summoned here to-day to hear that our efforts have been successful. The course of events having placed Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan in a position which fulfils the wishes and expectations of the Government, the Viceroy of India and the Government of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen-Empress are pleased to announce that they publicly recognise Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan, grandson of the illustrious Amir Dost Mahomed Khan, as Amir of Cabul.

"It is to the Government a source of satisfaction that the tribes and chiefs have preferred a distinguished member of the Barakzai family, who is a renowned soldier, wise, and experienced. His sentiments towards the British Government are most friendly; and so long as his rule shows that he is animated by these sentiments, he cannot fail to receive the support of the British Government. He will best show his friendship for the Government by treating those of his subjects who have done us service as *his* friends.

"CHIEFS AND GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with assurances already conveyed to you, the armies of the Queen-Empress will shortly withdraw within those frontiers which were decided by treaty with the ex-Amir, Mahomed Yakub Khan. We trust and firmly believe that your remembrance of the English will not be unkindly. We have fought you in the field whenever you opposed us; but your religion has in no way been interfered with; the honour of your women has been respected, and every one has been

secure in possession of his property. Whatever has been necessary for the support of the army has been liberally paid for. Since I came to Cabul, I have been in daily intercourse with you; but I have never heard an Afghan make a complaint of the conduct of any soldier, English or Native, belonging to Her Majesty's army.

"The British Government has always been well-disposed towards Afghanistan. You all know how it supported and assisted the former rulers of the country. It has no other wish than your happiness and prosperity; and it is with this object alone that to-day it recognizes Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan as Amir of Cabul."

Mr. Griffin then read the speech in English for the benefit of the officers of the garrison, and a Pushtu translation was read by Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Griffin's Secretary. Not a sign of intelligence, nor an expression of approbation or dissent, was made in the assembly. From the Sikh and Ghoorka sentries standing in rear of the tent to the fringe of tatterdemalion retainers peering in over the sirdars' heads, all were quiet as if cogitating upon the new policy enunciated. Our late envoys to the Sirdar, Afzul Khan and Ibrahim Khan, standing behind Sir Donald Stewart, stroked their beards silently and proudly; this was the outcome of their dangerous journey to Khanabad. Those of us who had marched with Sir Frederick Roberts over the Shutargardan, and borne the heat and burden of the day when the cry of "retribution" was raised after Cavagnari's death, were delighted that our General's name had been linked with those of Sir Donald Stewart and Mr. Griffin in regard to that work of settlement which the Government view with such satisfaction. There is a tendency to forget, in the present political turmoil, the work done last autumn—work for which no reward has been given; and this is more ungenerous in the case of a soldier, such as General Roberts proved himself, than it would be with a diplomat who can always look with confidence to future chances of distinction.

The Durbar was brought to an end by an earnest appeal on Sir Donald Stewart's part to all the Sirdars and Chiefs, who were asked to sink their private quarrels and unite in supporting the new Amir. Major Euan Smith rendered this appeal in Persian so earnestly and with such emphasis that its effect was to stir a little ripple of animation in the dead sea of faces that had made no sign hitherto. Sirdar Yusuf Khan promised on his own part so to act for the good of his country; and with his spontaneous little outburst the Durbar closed. In a few minutes Generals

and subalterns jostled each other, Sirdars and servants mingled in familar groups, the tents were clear, the guard marching off, and thus our acknowledgment of Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan as Amir was publicly made. To-day is the 22nd of July; it was on the 24th of July last year that Cavagnari made his entry into Cabul under the auspices of Yakub Khan. Then all seemed plain-sailing; now the outlook is nearly as placid; but all who have soldiered over the Indus since November 1878 pray that the present "satisfactory settlement" may not prove as deceptive and rotten as that consummated at Gundamak.

The Sirdars present in Durbar were as follow:—

Wali Mahomed Khan.	Mahomed Asaf Khan.
Yusuf Khan.	Gholam Khan.
Sher Mahomed Khan.	Mahomed Karim Khan.
Nur Mahomed Khan.	Shahd Mahomed Khan.
Mahomed Sarwar Khan.	Mahomed Ali Jan.
Shahbaz Khan.	Abdul Kaium Khan.
Amin-ud-dowla Khan.	Mahomed Samir Khan.

27th July.

There has been a lull since the sudden outburst of political activity shown in the Durbar on the 22nd of July, but there is nothing to indicate that the wheels of the Indo-Afghan mill which is grinding out a new Government for Cabul are at all clogged. The new Amir has just left Charikar, but he has little if any armed gathering about him, and if he is to take over Sherpur and the Bala Hissar when we leave he ought to have at least 5,000 men at his back. Our acknowledgment of his claims has of course given him new prestige in the eyes of many of the chiefs; and as, at our advice, he is wisely adopting a conciliatory tone both towards the Cabul citizens and people hitherto devoted to Shere Ali's family, there is great hope that his power will steadily expand. Being a man suspicious and reticent in the extreme, he does not take us much into his confidence; but his anxiety to have personal interviews with Sir Donald Stewart and Mr. Lepel Griffin is not all concealed. It is well known here that there are many points of detail to be discussed and settled before we

leave, and such settlement can be far more easily brought about by personal interviews than by continuous letter-writing. Mr. Lepel Griffin is about to go out to General Gough's camp at Kila Dushman,* and it is understood that the Amir will pitch his camp at Ak Serai, five or six miles further north on the Istalif Road. It would be unwise for our representative to go out before the Amir has actually left Charikar, as a loss of dignity would surely result from any appearance of "waiting upon His Majesty's pleasure." On Friday Mr. Griffin leaves for Kila Dushman, and upon his report Sir Donald Stewart will time his own visit to Koh-Daman. Then we shall be able, at last, to take an exact estimate of the new Amir's strength, and form some judgment of his feelings towards the British Government. An exile for so many years from Afghanistan, he may push his inquisitiveness as to our intentions to an awkward extent. We are not prepared to promise too much either in the way of subsidy or moral support, and before any conditions are made we may have to probe his relations with his friends at Tashkend pretty deeply. The fate of Shere Ali should serve as a warning to Abdur Rahman; but prompted by Kaufmann and others, he may look upon England under a Liberal Government as a friend and ally of Russia. But, if I mistake not, he will be given clearly to understand that while the Courts of St. James's and St. Petersburg may be on the best terms with each other, it is not part of the British policy at least that minor kingdoms such as Afghanistan should conduct their foreign relations independently. There are too many interests involved for us to tolerate intrigues by any foreign power in a country bordering on India; and if in our generosity we sink our claim to station an English officer at Cabul, we shall demand that no other European State shall be represented there. "Perish India!" is not yet the cry of the Radical party in England, and until that watchword has been accepted by the English people, our best efforts will be directed to warding off danger from our Indian possessions. In our late acknowledgment, while advising the Amir to remain friendly with us, we made no mention of the conditions under which that friendship could be best maintained.

* General Gough's brigade had moved into Koh-Daman in consequence of the turbulence of the Safis.

That task still remains. Whatever the Indian Government may have decided, there must be some line laid down to guide the Amir in his course of action when he has made his power supreme over all rivals. If he be left to his own devices he may invite all his friends from Russian Turkistan to visit him in the Bala Hissar, and India may again be startled by news of the honour done in Cabul to the representatives of the Czar. The stories told of two Russian agents being in the camp at Khanabad have never really been discredited, but it is unlikely the Amir will allow them publicly to accompany him when he leaves Ak Serai for Zimma on Saturday. The next few days will see the final details of the settlement of Cabul discussed and formulated, and when we turn our backs upon the city next month we shall be content in our knowledge that we have left the most powerful prince to succeed us, and that the difficulties he will have to face are sufficiently great to prevent him meddling with foreign politics for some time to come.

We have withdrawn our guard of sepoys from the Kotwali in the city, and Sirdar Wali Mahomed has so little confidence in any but British bayonets that he has promptly resigned his Governorship of Cabul. Sirdar Yusuf Khan, who has done much to aid us in re-establishing a settled Government, has been made Governor, and holds the city now as the representative of the Amir. As a consequence of this, the citizens have begun to swagger again in all their turbulent boastfulness, and our soldiers are warned against entering the bazaars. Armed men are now constantly seen, and many of us think it is perhaps a little premature to repeal the law forbidding the carrying of arms. It is not an uncommon sight now, even in Sherpur, to meet men on horseback or on foot with Enfield rifles at their backs, and knives in their girdles. To-day I saw one of the military police "showing the door" to three Afghan sepoys. These men had cross-belts, pouches, and bayonets, but carried their rifles slung over their shoulders in a very unsoldier-like way. How they had crept into cantonments no one could find out, but they were quite self-possessed, and were very observant of all that was going on. They are probably sepoys, who being sent from Charikar to recruit men for the Amir's army, had taken advantage of some Pathan

being on sentry at one of the gates to walk into Sherpur and criticize our arrangements.

2nd August.

Interest has been divided, during the past week, between the startling news from Candahar* and the near approach of the new Amir to Cabul. The Candahar news is serious enough, but we are still in the dark as to the exact extent of our defeat on the Girishk Road, and consequently can only speculate vaguely upon the results of the action. Already a strong division has been told off to march southwards, if the Government of India should consider the necessity sufficiently urgent. Sir Frederick Roberts will have command, and his old troops will be quite equal to dealing with Ayub Khan, if the latter tries to follow up his first success. It may be disappointing to regiments just on the eve of returning to the civilization of the plains to find themselves marching away to Candahar; but the work has to be done, and our soldiers sink their feelings, or calculate that "after all it is only reaching the railway at Sibi instead of Rawal Pindi." The plan is to take a division made up of British, Ghoorka, and Sikh infantry, with a fair allowance of cavalry and two or three mountain batteries (including the screw-guns), and march steadily upon Candahar, doing our fighting on the way, but never halting or going off the route to meet the enemy. Of course the flower of the force about Cabul having been taken away (say 10,000 men), it would be imperative that the army left in Sherpur should retire upon the Khyber line, letting in the new Amir to assume power in Cabul without further delay. To remain in occupation of Cabul would be false policy, as not only would the people be irritated at our presence and tempted to harass our weakened force, but the Amir would grow unpopular, as he would seem to be allying himself too intimately with the Kafir intruders. The diversion of troops to Candahar must not be looked upon as settled, for there

* The news of the Maiwand disaster reached Sir Donald Stewart on July 29th, the first telegram speaking of the "annihilation" of General Burrows' brigade. Later telegrams showed that the defeat, while serious enough, was not so terrible as at first reported. The news was kept as secret as possible, as it was feared that the negotiations with Abdur Rahman might be delayed if the new complications in Southern Afghanistan were made known.

are many considerations yet to be thought of before such a step could be taken. The defeat of the brigade at Khusk-i-Nakhud may have been exaggerated, or Ayub's success not pushed to its full extent, in which case the force under General Phayre at Peshin might suffice to re-establish our power in Southern Afghanistan. Again, Ayub may not choose to waste his strength against Candahar itself, but may turn northwards and march leisurely to Ghazni, gathering strength day by day. In this case, we certainly should not send a force from Candahar to follow him, and if we did not occupy Ghazni in strength, the tenure of Abdur Rahman's power in Cabul would be very short indeed. All the Jacobin faction would be united at Ghazni, and the prestige attaching to Ayub Khan would make him a leader whom the new Amir might well dread.

But, as in a few days our course of action will probably be made clear, the Candahar matter can be left where it stands, while local politics are dealt with. Our representatives have at last met Abdur Rahman Khan face to face, and although part of their programme—a public Durbar—has not been carried out, still it is believed such satisfactory arrangements have been made that Cabul can be evacuated during the current month. On Friday, Mr. Lepel Griffin, Chief Political Officer, and his Staff went out to Brigadier-General Charles Gough's Camp at Kila Hajee, about nine miles due north of Sherpur, on the Charikar Road. Mr. Griffin was to meet the Amir, who had come down from Charikar to Ak-Serai, and was to smooth away such difficulties as might crop up prior to the holding of the Durbar on Monday. Sirdar Yusuf Khan, Governor of Cabul, and Captain Ridgeway, Assistant Political Officer, made arrangements for the interview, which was supposed to take place about midway between Kila Hajee and Ak-Serai. A vineyard near Zimma was first proposed by Yusuf Khan, but this was objected to, possibly because the temper of the Amir's followers was known to be very uncertain, and it is always well to be on guard against Afghan fanaticism. Finally, a hill was chosen a little off the road, and on this a large tent, sent out from Sherpur, was pitched. The hill was five miles from Kila Hajee, and only two from the Amir's camp at Ak-Serai, but of this little account was made. At half-past seven, on Saturday

morning, a squadron of the 9th Lancers, the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, and the 3rd Punjab Cavalry,—the whole under the command of Colonel Mackenzie, of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry,—formed up at Kila Hajee as escort to Mr. Griffin, who was accompanied by Major Hastings and his political staff, and a few officers whom curiosity prompted to turn out. A few Ghoorkas held the Kotal a mile from camp, but beyond this no display of infantry was made. The Lancers and the 3rd Bengal Cavalry trotted on ahead, and the road to Zimma was followed, up hill and down ravine, until the Durbar tent was sighted on the crest. The country about was very fertile, vineyards and orchards abounding, while northwards towards Istalif a mass of vegetation was seen. On arrival at the Durbar tent a halt was called, the 9th Lancers forming up near the entrance, while the native cavalry drew off to some distance below. About 200 yards to the north the Amir's private tent had been pitched, and about this some 100 of his retainers were seen to be gathered. Mr. Griffin sent Captain Ridgeway, Mr. Cunningham, Rajah Jehandad Khan, and Afzul Khan to escort the Amir up the hill, and with the remainder of the British officers, about twenty in number, waited near the Durbar tent. The Amir met the party of four, as it appeared, at the entrance of his tent, and after the usual formal salutation, a move was made up the slope. One of the Amir's attendants unfurled a large red umbrella, his white charger with gorgeous trappings was led in rear; and with a small mob of armed retainers following, his Highness walked slowly along. Mr. Griffin, as in courtesy bound, met him halfway, hands were cordially shaken, and then everyone made for the large square tent which offered grateful shelter from the sun.

The troopers of the 9th Lancers formed a striking contrast to the 100 men of the Amir's body-guard, none of whom were clad alike, and whose "uniform" deserved its name on one ground—it was of uniform irregularity. The arms of these men of motley were equally curious: Martinis, Sniders, Chassepots, Miniés, such were some of the rifles; while double-barrelled shot-guns, matchlocks, and *jhezails* were also conspicuous. The guard had been chosen probably from among men whom the Amir could thoroughly trust, as he could from his Turkistan regiments easily have taken

two companies armed with rifles of the same pattern. Within the tent a semicircle of chairs had been placed at the head of three long narrow tables, on which were some English sweetmeats and Cabuli confectionery. The Amir, with whom was Sirdar Afzul Khan, the Khan of Kulab, and half a dozen personal attendants, including a favourite slave-boy, went through the ordeal of receiving all the officers introduced to him with quiet self-possession and good-humour. Behind him, in the verandah of the tent, were clustered his wild-looking body-guard, with their weapons carried in every picturesque style of carelessness; each man looking upon the ceremonious introductions with more of contempt than curiosity. The Amir's demeanour was a surprise to every one, from Mr. Griffin downwards. From the photograph brought by Afzul Khan from Khanabad, one was led to expect a gross, sensual-looking man on the usual stereotyped pattern of Barakzai Sirdars. The reality was quite different: a man of middle-age, broadly-built but not obese, with features marked and worn by care and anxiety, but lighted up by a smile which gave character and pleasantness to the whole face. His dress was quiet and unostentatious; a blue coat, half uniform, with gold epaulettes; a pair of cloth breeches, short riding boots, a handsome sword and belt, and a cap of Astrakan fur, with the ribbon of an order (perhaps Turkish) let in deeply in front. So winning a manner had the Amir that men who came quite prepared to revile him, went away most favourably impressed. He is not the "brute" an Afghan Sirdar usually is, and his after-conversation with our political officers showed him to be familiar with Western ideas, and to have made good use of the time he has spent in Tashkend.

After the introductions had been got through, the tent was cleared of all but those who were to take part in the "discussion." I am not sure if the word should be used; but as there is a great objection to the use of the term "negotiations," I will let it stand. With Mr. Griffin remained Major Hastings, Mr. Cunningham, C.S. (Secretary), and Mr. Christie (the officer in charge of the Political Intelligence Department); with the Amir, Yusuf Khan, and a Moonshee, who took notes of what was said. Out of ear-shot in the tent sat, also, the Khan of Kulab, who dozed

during the interview in happy unconsciousness of what was going on. Outside, in the verandahs, the sweetmeats were served round to all who chose to partake of them, and the Amir's servants also handed round cups of tea, which Afghan and Britisher alike sipped while the three hours of the interview slipped away. The tents of the Afghan army could be seen amid the vineyards, a couple of miles away; but no sign of the 5,000 or 6,000 armed men known to be in rear of the near hill could be detected. Our cavalry were the chief figures in the landscape, which was as peaceful as could be wished. The interview with the Amir lasted from 9 o'clock till noon, and no doubt many state secrets were aired, and much mutual cross-questioning gone through. The following may be taken as the purport of the conversation: —The Amir expressed himself most anxious to do everything to secure the throne for himself, and to remain on friendly terms with us; but he confessed his present weakness, and asked what we were prepared to do for him. Quoting our generous conduct towards Shere Ali, and the gifts of guns, ammunition, and money we had made to that monarch, he let it be inferred that he also should expect the same kind of treatment. What answer he got I am not prepared to say; but if it were that he would receive money but no arms, I should not be surprised. He was told that necessity might arise for marching troops from Cabul to Candahar, as Ayub Khan had shown unexpected strength in the south; and in answer to the question whether there would be objections raised to such a march, he said he should like to consult the people with him. No doubt the three hours were profitably filled, and our representative at least learned that the 2,000 Turkistan troops with the Amir were exceedingly suspicious of all his dealings with the British, and particularly objected to his visiting General Gough's camp. They had an idea that treachery was contemplated, and that Abdur Rahman might be spirited off to India to keep Yakub Khan company. At noon the Amir appeared with Mr. Griffin at the door of the tent, the Lancers saluted, farewells were exchanged, and in a few minutes our representative and escort were cantering back to Kila Hajee, while the Amir was thoughtfully returning to his excited followers at Ak-Serai.

It was still believed on Saturday that a Durbar at Kila Hajee could be arranged, and Sir Donald Stewart, Sir Frederick Roberts and their Staffs rode out to General Gough's camp. The Guides' cavalry and four guns of G-3, R.A., with blank cartridges for saluting purposes, also moved out to Kila Hajee. On Saturday night the Amir's troops occupied the Kotal, a mile from our camp, evidently fearing a surprise, and only withdrew at daylight on Sunday. General Gough equally mistrusted them, and a company of each regiment slept fully accoutred in their respective quarter-guards. A second interview between Mr. Griffin and the Amir took place yesterday (Sunday) morning, but in view of the uneasiness among the Turkistani troops, the precaution was taken of sending four companies of our Infantry to within a mile of the Durbar tents, and the Kotal in rear was also held in force. The conversation of the previous day was renewed, and I understand the Amir said the tribes might object to a force marching to Candahar, but that if no long halts were made on the way, there could be no objection on his part. Finally, the Amir asked that all English and native officials might withdraw, and for an hour he remained in conversation with Mr. Griffin. As we have since heard that everything has been satisfactorily settled, it is to be supposed that the "bargain"—if a rude mercantile term may be imported into high politics—was closed, and that the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan has declared his readiness to occupy Cabul, as we march out in a week or more, and will thereafter abide in his friendly sentiments towards the British. No Durbar, therefore, was held this morning, and now our Generals and Politicals are once more safe within the walls of Sherpur, and we are all discussing the chances of 10,000 men having to return to India by way of Candahar and Quetta.

A little incident occurred at Zimma on Sunday, which shows that the pestilent *moollah* is always taking occasion to arouse the people's passions against us. While the Amir and Mr. Griffin were closeted together, a ragged-looking man (a *fakir*) approached the tent and began shrieking out, whereupon old Nakshband Khan, an ex-Ressaldar of Native Cavalry, called out to the Amir's sentries to drive him off. There was a sentry at each corner of the tent, and one of these men promptly stoned the *moollah*, Nakshband explaining,

with much energetic abuse, that such beasts did all the mischief in the country. The *moollahs* have been very quiet of late, but with Ayub's success as a text, they may again begin preaching war to the knife against all Kafirs.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Further Details of the Maiwand Disaster—A Force ordered to march from Cabul to Candahar—Aid given by the Amir—Farewell Dinner to Sir F. Roberts—Details of the Force destined for Peshawar—Closing Scenes of the Occupation of Cabul—Interview between the Amir and Sir Donald Stewart—A Friendly Leave-Taking—The Evacuation of Sherpur on August 11th—Peaceful March to India—The Arrangements made with the Amir—Grant of £190,500 and Thirty Guns—The Forts left intact about Cabul—Weakness of such a Policy.

6th August, 1880.

On the 4th of August orders were received from the Government of India for a force 10,000 strong under Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts to march from Cabul to the relief of Candahar; but it was not until last evening that the full meaning of the sinister news from Candahar was generally recognized in camp. So much secrecy had been kept regarding the earlier despatches, no doubt in the hope that later news would show the disaster to have been exaggerated, that until Colonel St. John's long telegram giving details of the losses was issued in the Club, we could not accept the defeat at Khusk-i-Nakhud as a reality. In a large camp like this wild rumours obtain ready circulation; they are believed for a day, or a week, until some new theory is broached and a new turn given to the current of men's thoughts. First we believed that General Burrows' Brigade had indeed been annihilated; then the affair sank into a reconnaissance in which two companies of the 66th had been cut up to a man, and two guns lost; and at last, when it became known that General Roberts was to form a division to march southward, the belief became general that our army in Candahar had been roughly handled, and that Ayub Khan's success was growing with alarming strides. When Colonel St.

John's telegram was read outside the Club-house to an audience of twenty or thirty officers, we could scarcely realize that 1,200 of our men had been killed in open fight, and that the remainder of the ill-fated brigade had made the best of their way back to Candahar over an almost waterless country. But there was no mistaking the hard facts set forth; the list of officers killed and wounded; and the ominous closing paragraph that the British garrison was preparing for a siege. Our past experience in December had taught us one salutary lesson; the Afghans respond to the call of a successful leader with a readiness which defies all ordinary calculations; and we saw that there might indeed be good cause for marching even such war-worn regiments as those about Cabul right down to distant Candahar. Our hearts were light a fortnight ago at the prospect of an early return to India, for the campaign has been a trying one, and officers and men have grown very weary of the endless see-saw in the political world wherein Mr. Griffin and Abdur Rahman are the chief figures. All hopes were dashed when the order went forth for a new and arduous march, with the prospect of guerilla fighting half the way; and it must be confessed that at first there were hearty curses bestowed upon the heads of those responsible for the change in the programme. But when the details of the disaster were made known, the duty of relieving Candahar was accepted quietly and with a certain pride, all sense of personal discomfort and danger being sunk in the feeling that the credit of our army must be vindicated without useless delay. To form one of a picked force such as General Roberts has now under his orders is no common fortune, for certainly not in the whole of India could be a better lot of fighting men be got together than that now waiting the final order to march. We are self-conscious of our own strength, and are just a little impatient that it cannot be put forth at once, while our enemies are still in the flush of success. To meet 10,000 British, Sikh, and Ghoorka soldiers—for Sir Frederick Roberts's force is made up almost entirely of these races—would try the mettle of a better armed and disciplined army than the Afghans can ever hope to put in the field; and if this force cannot do the work marked out for it, then our military supremacy in the East must indeed be coming to an end. I do not care to play the part of a trumpeter

to the Cabul army, but the merits of the regiments now brigaded are too great to be lightly passed by. The trust which is placed in the infantry and their breech-loaders appears at once from the fact that no field artillery is to be taken. General Roberts will have only three mule batteries (7-pounders), although one of these is of course the screw-gun battery, which has a reputation for accuracy and range that cannot be equalled by our 9-pounders. With these three batteries (in all eighteen guns), we have to meet Ayub Khan's thirty or forty guns, and we are going out upon our errand without any fear of results: our screw-guns can silence one or two of the batteries which were turned upon our little force at Khusk-i-Nakhud, and our infantry can deal with the rest. We shall meet Ayub Khan, presumably, either within sight of Candahar, or on the Ghazni Road, and then his army of regulars and ghazis will have a fair opportunity of measuring itself against a British force worthy of the name. We shall not make the fatal mistake of scattering our brigades over the country side, each liable at any moment to be taken in detail and broken up by overwhelming numbers. Our march has not yet begun, and there are soothsayers in our midst who foretell a journey to Ghazni only, and then a backward movement towards the Shutargardan—Candahar having been relieved in the meantime by General Phayre; but if it should be our lot to cut ourselves off for three weeks from the outer world, there need be no anxiety as to our fate; we are well able to take care of ourselves.

The behaviour of the Amir, since he has learnt that a strong force will march to Candahar, has been all that could be wished. He is sage enough to see that Ayub Khan is the only dangerous rival he now has in Afghanistan, and if we break up the Herat army, Cabul will be made quite safe. The Amir has also sent several men of importance to travel a day's march ahead of our army, and arrange with the *maliks* for the provision of supplies. If these officials of Abdur Rahman really do their work properly, our Commissariat officers will find their task of feeding 15,000 fighting men and followers greatly lightened. South of Ghazni we shall have to trust mostly to our own foraging parties, and we shall doubtless be on half-rations before Khelat-i-Ghilzai is reached. Sir Donald Stewart on the march to Cabul had at times difficulty

in collecting supplies, as the villages on the road were deserted, and if the peasants have not since returned to look after their crops the country will not furnish much food. However, our own resources will carry us over half the distance at least, and a few double marches will make Khelat-i-Ghilzai seem not so far off after all. Mushk-i-Alam has accepted the new order of things in such a thorough-going spirit that he now talks of coming in with Mahomed Jan and accompanying Sir Donald Stewart's army to India. Both our late foes are anxious to make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Last night the Political Officers gave a farewell dinner in honour of General Roberts, at which Sir Donald Stewart and the chief officers of the force were present. In responding to the toast of his health Sir Frederick Roberts made the following characteristic speech:—

"Mr. Griffin, Sir Donald Stewart, and Gentlemen,

"I scarcely know how to thank you all for the kind way in which you have drunk my health, and that of the Column under orders for Candahar. To the very flattering terms in which Mr. Griffin has spoken of me I should have considerable difficulty in replying, were it not that I can honestly say that any successes which I may have attained hitherto have been due entirely to the experienced commanders I have had with me, the most capable Staff that ever accompanied a General Officer in the field, and the gallantry and discipline of the troops under me. I do not think there ever have been, and I doubt if there ever will be, more efficient troops sent from India than those which General Stewart and I have had the honour to command for the last two years. With such troops success is a certainty. Without wishing to underrate the dangers and difficulties of the task before us, I feel quite confident that the efficient force which Sir Donald Stewart has placed at my disposal will succeed in reaching Candahar as quickly as possible, and in effectually disposing of any Afghan army that may be brought against us. As Mr. Griffin has said, we must all deplore the cause which requires Cabul troops to be now sent to Candahar. A few days ago we were all congratulating ourselves upon the prospect of a speedy return to India. Some of us had laid in a store of Nipal pepper for use at home; others, I have heard, had actually named an early date for leaving Bombay for England. Well, Sir Donald Stewart is willing to guarantee—and were it not an indecorous thing for an officer so high in rank—would even bet—that we shall reach India again, *vid* Candahar, in November next. Gentlemen, this is a country of great uncertainties. We have been living in a state of uncertainty for many months; but, thanks to the political skill of our kind host, affairs have during the last few weeks, progressed so rapidly and favourably that we have reason to hope the country may now have comparative rest and quiet, and that some settled form of government will be established. However, we must not be too sanguine: and I trust that our fellow-countrymen, who have not had the same opportunity that we have had of knowing Afghanistan and the Afghans, will not be disappointed if matters do not go altogether smoothly after the British troops leave Cabul. No Amir has ever yet occupied

the throne for any time until he has proved himself capable of governing the country, and it is not likely that Amir Abdur Rahman will be an exception. We all know what difficulties Mr. Griffin has had to contend with, and we all rejoice at the great success which has attended his efforts—efforts so ably assisted by the Political Officers now with him. It now remans for Abdur Rahman to show that he is capable of filling the great position in which he has been placed. From the commencement of this campaign, the Political Officers have borne as important, if not as active, work as the soldier. First and foremost the gallant Cavagnari, known to and mourned by us all, and more than liked by many of us: with him many brave men fell, and it was to avenge their base and treacherous murder that this force came to Cabul. It is a great satisfaction to me to think that at present, at any rate, no officers will be required to remain at Cabul, and that all the Political Officers I see around me will return to India with the troops. But I feel quite sure if the decision had been otherwise, officers would have been found to accept the dangerous post, either officers of the civil service, or amongst those military politicals who have gained for themselves a reputation on the frontier and other parts of India."

The foregoing was the last of my letters from Sherpur, as on the 8th of August I joined the force destined for Candahar. Accordingly, I will here briefly summarize the events which occurred at Cabul after the march upon Candahar had been begun. The force left in Sherpur and in the fortifications about Cabul were the 2nd Division under the Command of Major-General Hills. They were brigaded as follows:—

1st Brigade.—General C. Gough—9th Foot, 28th Punjab Native Infantry, 45th Sikhs.

2nd Brigade.—General Hughes—59th Foot, 3rd Ghoorkas, 19th Punjab Native Infantry.

3rd Brigade.—General Daunt—67th Foot, 5th Punjab Infantry, 27th Punjab Native Infantry.

Cavalry Brigade.—General Palliser—1st Punjab Cavalry, 2nd Punjab Cavalry.

Artillery.—11-11 R.A., and G-4 R.A.

With camp-followers and servants there were about 20,000 men in the Division. Sir Donald Stewart waited until Sir Frederick Roberts had entered the Upper Logar Valley and heliographic communication had ceased before giving the order to evacuate Sherpur. The troops were all under canvas ready to file out at a moment's notice. The following extract from a letter written by a trustworthy correspondent will give an exact idea of the actual evacuation:—

"BUTKHAK, 11*th August.*

"Late in the evening of the 10th instant arrangements were finally concluded for an interview between His Highness the Amir Abdur Rahman Khan and the British representatives in Cabul. Whether a meeting could be arranged was doubtful, I understand, up to nearly nine o'clock; and if it had not taken place, Sir Donald Stewart would have had to forego the pleasure of seeing the Amir whom his efforts have done so much towards placing on the throne of Cabul. But good fortune favoured Sir Donald. The camp of the Amir had been moved during the morning of the 10th to Deh Gopak, a small secluded village about three miles from, and within easy sight of, the Sherpur cantonments. Prior to this, the camp had been at Kila Murad Beg, six miles from Cabul, and on the other side of the first low range of hills beyond the lake. His Highness did not, however, arrive at Deh Gopak till eight o'clock in the evening; and here he was agreeably surprised to find Sirdar Mahomed Afzul Khan waiting for him. This distinguished gentleman, who, it will be remembered, was the leading member of the Mission to Turkistan at the beginning of negotiations with Abdur Rahman, had been fitly selected as the bearer of the Government presents to the Amir. They consisted of a handsome grey English horse, a rifle, a pair of pistols and a gold watch. The Sirdar arrived at Deh Gopak about six o'clock, and had to wait two hours before the Amir arrived. He was greatly pleased with the presents; insisted on the Sirdar's dining with him; presented him with a Kashmir shawl and a few other articles of dress; and on dismissing him sent a message to the effect that he would be glad to meet the British officers at seven o'clock the following morning. It will thus be seen that the Amir has got the better of the absurd suspicions which not only made him backward in dealing with us, but actually led him to throw away the food near which a stranger had merely passed, from fear of being poisoned.

"Before the return of Mahomed Afzul Khan, a tent had been pitched within a couple of hundred yards of the cantonment walls, in anticipation of the Amir's consent to come in; so that though the interview was not decided upon till so late, there was no bustle

or confusion. Sir Donald Stewart and the Chief Political Officer had moved under canvas in the centre of the cantonments, and as all tents and baggage had to be ready to start by 5 A.M., there was a weary period of waiting in the open air, under a sun sufficiently warm even at six o'clock. At a few minutes before seven the escort of Guides' Cavalry rode up; the General mounted, and followed by a string of some thirty or forty officers approached the tent, which was in a field about twenty paces from the road-side. As soon as the British party got outside the Head-quarters' Gate, the Amir and his followers were seen coming from the opposite direction. Half a mile in his rear on the side of a hill were a large number of his troops, both cavalry and infantry; but the number of followers with His Highness was hardly more than sixty; and only two of his sepoys were on sentry at the tent itself. The two parties met exactly in front of the path leading to the tent. Abdur Rahman had with him Sirdar Yusuf Khan. Sir Donald Stewart was accompanied by Mr. Lepel Griffin, all the rest standing at some few yards' distance. The Chief Political Officer introduced the Amir to the Lieutenant-General as they met; and then walked towards the tent, followed by all the British officers present. There were not more than five chairs. His Highness occupied the centre seat: on his right were Sir Donald Stewart and General Hills; on his left Mr. Griffin. The conversation was conducted in Persian by Mr. Griffin on behalf of the Lieutenant-General, His Highness having little or no command of Hindustani. After the usual formalities were concluded several officers were introduced to the Amir; amongst others were the three Brigadiers under Major-General Hills; Colonel Lockart (Chief of the Staff), Dr. Smith (Chief Medical Officer), Colonel Fryer, Major Morgan, Major Lance, and others. His Highness was dressed in a drab suit of striped cloth, with his 'continuations' tucked into long black boots; a black Astrakan cap, in which a diamond star glittered, covered his head; his arms consisted of a revolver only, which he carried in an ordinary waist-belt. Though still nervous, I thought he was less so than on the former occasions when I saw him; and all who observed him were greatly pleased at his appearance. In the course of conversation he said that his whole heart was full of gratitude to the British, and he

begged that his best thanks might be conveyed to His Excellency the Viceroy. The interview was public throughout; no business was entered into (indeed it is said that all matters of business were concluded at Mr. Griffin's last meeting with the Amir); and we took our leave in less than a quarter of an hour, His Highness shaking hands with all who cared to wish him good-bye and good-luck.

"The Amir deputed his right-hand man, Sirdar Yusuf Khan, to accompany the General out of Cabul, himself returning almost at once to Deh Gopak. The British officials did not return to the cantonment, but went by the road along the outer wall, out by Siah Sung, and thence by the main road to Butkhak. As we rode along we could see the forts on Bemaru already occupied by small parties of the Amir's infantry. The Asmai fort had been occupied the night before as soon as our own picquets left it; the big fort on Siah Sung was occupied during the day, as were the Sherderwaza and other forts. The Bala Hissar was taken over by General Gholam Hyder Khan, with one regiment of infantry and about a hundred cavalry. Sherpur itself was garrisoned by the Haz Danari, a celebrated Turkistan cavalry regiment, and 500 khasidars, a force scarcely strong enough to defend any single corner of the huge cantonment. The Amir on his way back to his camp at Deh Gopak was preceded by a band of music, and on his arrival there received a salute of thirty-one guns. Considerable enthusiasm was evinced among his followers; for, incredible as it may appear, there were many of them who believed that the Amir would be made a prisoner by us, even up to the last moment of the interview. Had anything happened to him, they knew well what would be their fate with any new-comer who might be chosen, and they feared any mishap to the man with whom they had thrown in their lot.

"Up to the present the Amir has not made his entry into Cabul. His nine years' residence in Russian territory has in no way removed or lessened his Oriental superstition; and he left the choice of an auspicious hour and day to the astrologers, of whom he has several attached to his court. The chief of these has named eleven o'clock on Sunday next for the public entry, and has decreed that no luck can attend the occasion unless His

Highness wears an emerald ring. One is accordingly being prepared, and the words 'Amir Abdur Rahman, 1297,' are to be engraved on it. Meantime Sirdar Yusuf Khan is still carrying on his duties as the Governor of Cabul. He has established picquets on all the approaches to the city, and the passport system is again in full swing. All went perfectly well the first day of our absence, and if His Highness prove wise and conciliatory, his reign at Cabul may, with the support already given him, possibly be longer than that of either of the last two Amirs. This letter, however, purports to be an account of our evacuation of Cabul, and I must keep to my subject, and not concern myself with either the present, past, or future politics of Afghanistan.

"The three brigades arrived at Butkhak to-day, after a dusty march, before noon. The first march has been got over without a single accident of any description, and too great praise cannot be bestowed on Sir Donald Stewart, on the Chief Political Officer, and on the officers and troops themselves for the excellent result of their exertions. The country is perfectly quiet, though there are plenty of marauders ready to drop on any unfortunate straggler. Accompanying us to India are a few of the Cabul Sirdars, including Wali Mahomed Khan and Tahir Khan. Several Hindu merchants from the city have also grasped the opportunity of our march to proceed unmolested to India, as well as two Khokandi pilgrims travelling to Mecca."

The march thus begun was carried out without the slightest opposition on the part of the tribesmen between Cabul and Peshawur; and it may be said that not a shot was fired after Cabul had been left. The heat was very trying in the Jellalabad Valley and the Khyber, but the men bore up bravely, and they had not this time to fight against cholera. It was believed that Gundamak or Jellalabad would be held until General Roberts reported that Candahar had been relieved, but the Indian Government were anxious to get the troops over the frontier, as the garrisons of Northern India were very weak. Lundi Kotal, therefore, once more became our outpost in North-Eastern Afghanistan, and the regiments composing General Hills' division were sent to various

stations in India, except such as were required to hold the Khyber posts.

Regarding the arrangements with the Amir: he received thirty guns (chiefly of small calibre), which we left behind us in Sherpur, and 19½ lakhs of rupees (£190,500). Of this sum ten lakhs (£100,000) were given as an earnest of British friendship, and 9½ were "restored" as merely belonging to the State. This was the sum seized in Yahiya Khan's house in October 1879, upon our first arrival at Cabul. It was spent in purchasing supplies for the army, as our treasury was nearly empty at that time. The Prize Committee had regarded it as prize-money, but this view was not countenanced by the Government.

A concession was made which I strongly condemned in one of my former letters; the fortifications we had built about Cabul were not destroyed. The rather sophistical reason given for this course of action was that the Amir made many requests to us, all of which were at first refused with the exception of one respecting money. One request which he urged with singular pertinacity was that the forts, &c., we had built might not be destroyed. Again and again he was told his wish could not be granted, but he returned to the charge, pleading that his prestige would be lowered in the eyes of the people if we showed such open distrust of him at the commencement. The Government at last yielded to his insistance, and we left the chain of forts about the city intact: they will give our soldiers, perhaps, some amusement when we return in three or four years to annex the country. We refused to make any treaty with Abdur Rahman, and also to promise him gifts of arms and ammunition in the future, but with our rupees he should be able to equip an army pretty rapidly, and to consolidate his power.

PART II.

THE MARCH UPON CANDAHAR AND DEFEAT OF SIRDAR AYUB KHAN.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following is a bare summary of the facts connected with General Burrows' advance upon Girishk, and the defeat of his brigade at Maiwand. I have gone more into the details of the defeat in letters written after my arrival at Candahar, my informants being officers engaged in the action.

At the end of June 1880, reports, which were thought trustworthy, reached Candahar that Ayub Khan had left Herat early in the month with all his troops, amounting to eleven regiments of infantry, thirty-six guns, and a very large number of cavalry, regular and irregular. He was said to have told the troops that the English had spent millions of rupees in Candahar, which, with all other property and the women of the people would be at their disposal after they had driven out the English. A strong body of cavalry under the Luinab, formerly Governor of Turkistan, was supposed to form Ayub's advance-guard. On July 11th it was officially reported by the Government that Ayub Khan's army had actually reached Farrah, half-way to Candahar, on June 30th. In the meantime the following force under Brigadier-General Burrows had moved out westwards on the Herat Road:—

Three hundred sabres, 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, under Major Currie, 200 sabres, 3rd Scind Horse, under Colonel Malcolmson, six guns E-B, Royal Horse Artillery, under Major Blackwood, two

companies of the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, and forty Sappers; the whole under the command of Brigadier-General Nuttal, with Major Hogg as Brigade Major. The infantry were:—six companies of the 66th Regiment under Colonel Galbraith, remainder of the 1st Grenadiers under Colonel Anderson, Jacob's Rifles under Colonel Mainwaring; the whole under Brigadier-General Burrows, with Captain McMath as Brigade Major and Captain T. Harris, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General. Surgeon-Major Edge and Surgeon Earle were in charge of the Field Hospital; Captain Dobbs had charge of the Commissariat; and Lieutenants G. S. Jones and E. E. M. Lawford of the Transport. Major Leach, R.E., V.C., had charge of a Survey party. The force was accompanied by Colonel St. John, Chief Political Officer, and the Nawab Hasan Ali Khan. The Wali Shere Ali Khan, Governor of Candahar, with a battery of six-pounders and a force of cavalry and infantry, was at Girishk, on the Helmund, collecting supplies and watching the road to Farrah. General Burrows reached Khusk-i-Nakhud on July 7th, and Girishk on July 11th. We found the Helmund River fordable everywhere. On July 15th Shere Ali's infantry mutinied. His cavalry had reported Ayub's scouts to be within 20 miles, and this fact caused great excitement among his men. They were encamped at Kadanak, on the bank of the Helmund, General Burrows' camp being on the eastern side. On Shere Ali ordering his force to retire from Camp Kadanak towards Girishk, the infantry deserted in a body, taking guns, arms, and ammunition, and went off towards Zamindawar. A British force crossed the river in pursuit, overtook them at Shoraki, and completely dispersed them, killing 200, and recovering guns and baggage. Shere Ali's cavalry did not share in the mutiny. On July 16th, General Burrows made a night march to Khusk-i-Nakhud, some 25 miles nearer Candahar, where he awaited Ayub's advance. By the 23rd, the main body of the Herat army had crossed the Helmund, and encamped at Hyderabad, above Girishk, and Afghan cavalry were seen pretty frequently by our reconnoitring parties. On the 27th, General Burrows marched to Maiwand, to intercept Ayub's army, and the same day the disastrous action which resulted in the siege of Candahar, was fought. The British loss was upwards of 1,000

fighting men *killed*, alone. The published despatches have already given full details of our losses on this occasion, therefore I will not enumerate. It was to relieve Candahar and scatter Ayub Khan's army that General Roberts was ordered to march southwards from Cabul.

CHAPTER I.

omposition of the Cabul-Candahar Force—The Scale of Equipment—Food Supplies—Reasons for choosing the Logar Route to Ghazni—The March from Beni Hissar to Zahidabad—Arrival at Zerghun Shahr—Communication cut off with Sir Donald Stewart—The Transport of the Force—The Success of the March dependent upon our Baggage Animals—The March through Logar and the Shinis Valley—Plentiful Supplies—Arrived at Shashgao—Reconnaissance over the Sheri-i-Dahan Kotal—The State of Ghazni and the District—An Obituary Notice.

CAMP NEAR ZAHIDABAD, *9th August*, 1880.

YESTERDAY the force destined to march to Candahar, under the command of Sir Frederick Roberts, left Sherpur Cantonments, equipped for rapid marching and sharp fighting. Sir F. Roberts holds the supreme command; Major-General John Ross commands the whole of the infantry battalions; Brigadier-General Hugh Gough the cavalry; and Colonel C. A. Johnson the Artillery. Colonel Perkins is commanding the Royal Engineers; Colonel Chapman is Chief of the Staff; Deputy Surgeon-General Hanbury, Chief Medical Officer; Colonel Low, 13th Royal Bengal Lancers, Chief Director of Transport; and Major Badcock, Chief Commissariat Officer. Major Gorham, R.A., is Judge Advocate, and Captain Straton, 22nd Foot, Superintendent of Signalling. The Political Staff consists of Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer; Major Euan Smith, Political Secretary; Major Protheroe, and Captain Ridgeway. Of these, Major Euan Smith accompanied Sir Donald Stewart in his march from Candahar, and his knowledge of the route and the tribes about it will be invaluable. The following are the troops now brigaded:—

1st Brigade.—General Macpherson, V.C., C.B.—92nd Highlanders, 2nd Ghoorkas, 23rd Pioneers, 24th P.N.I., 6-8 R.A. (screw-guns).

2nd Brigade.—General Baker, C.B.—72nd Highlanders, 2nd Sikhs, 3rd Sikhs, 5th Ghoorkas, No. 2 Mountain Battery.

3rd Brigade.—General Macgregor, V.C., C.B., &c.—60th Rifles, 15th Sikhs, 4th Ghoorkas, 25th P.N.I., 11-9 R.A.

Cavalry Brigade.—General H. Gough, V.C.—9th Lancers, 3rd Bengal Cavalry, 3rd Punjab Cavalry, Central India Horse.

The detailed strength of the force is as follows:—

		Europeans.		Natives.
		Officers.	Men.	
6-8 Royal Artillery		6	95	139
11-9 Royal Artillery		6	95	139
No. 2 Mountain Battery		5	—	140
9th Lancers		19	318	—
3rd Bengal Cavalry		7	—	394
3rd Punjab Cavalry		9	—	408
Central India Horse		11	—	495
1st Brigade.	92nd Highlanders	19	651	—
	23rd Pioneers	8	—	701
	24th Punjab Infantry ...	7	—	575
	2nd Ghoorkas	7	—	501
2nd Brigade.	72nd Highlanders	23	787	—
	2nd Sikhs	7	—	612
	3rd Sikhs	7	—	570
	5th Ghoorkas	8	—	561
3rd Brigade.	2-60th Rifles	21	616	—
	15th Sikhs	10	—	650
	25th Punjab Infantry ...	7	—	637
	4th Ghoorkas	8	—	629
Staff Officers		79	—	—
Total		274	2,562	7,151

This gives a total of 9,987 fighting men, or for all practical purposes say 10,000. There are about 8,000 followers. We have thus to feed 18,000 men for three or four weeks, while 1,977 chargers, 750 artillery mules, and 7,235 transport animals have also to be provided for. The Amir sent in 700 baggage animals (*yaboos*),—a most acceptable gift,—and has despatched his agents into Logar to prepare the people for our coming. He has particularly asked that foraging parties may not be sent out between Cabul and Ghazni, as he believes that his power over the *maliks* is great enough to secure all supplies without trouble. Once well on the march, we shall be able to test the extent of his power by the willingness of such unruly clans as the Wardaks to bring in corn and sheep without coercion of any kind. The Commissariat

Department are carrying for the British troops tea, sugar, and rum for thirty days, preserved meat for two days, bread-stuffs for five days, 500 lbs. of army food, 200 gallons of lime-juice, and all available preserved vegetables are also being carried. Sheep for ten days are being driven with the force. The scale of baggage is very low, of necessity. Each British officer is allowed one mule, on which his tent and his kit have to be packed; but as arrangements have generally been made to "double up"—*i.e.* two officers to sleep in one tent—the allowance is quite enough. The allowance for each British soldier, as kit and equipage, is 30lbs., and for each native 20lbs.

Prior to our moving out all was hurry and confusion in Sherpur—not a confusion resulting from indecision and conflicting orders, but rather that exciting rush of work which follows sudden orders to reduce an army's equipment. If Sir F. Roberts is to reach Candahar in time to be of any service to the garrison his division must really be a flying column, able to make forced marches, and so mobile that the fighting of an action in the morning shall not necessarily detain the whole line twenty-four hours. In order that the troops may be in the lightest marching order, their great-coats are being carried for them, and the relief thus afforded is greater than at first sight appears. Six pounds is not in itself a heavy weight for a soldier to carry, but the rolled greatcoat presses upon a man's chest, impedes his breathing, and makes him hot and uncomfortable on a long march. The 92nd Highlanders have sold all their greatcoats except a few for men on picquet duty; the Highlanders are of such physique that they do not dread the change of temperature which we are sure to experience when once Ghazni is reached. Our route, it will be seen, is *viâ* the Logar Valley, and not by way of Argandeh and Maidan (the shortest route). The reason of the Logar Road being chosen is that supplies are plentiful in the villages on the route. The late sojourn in Logar of General Hills' force showed the great capabilities of the valley in the matter of corn and sheep, and the people are only too anxious to deal with us.

The order of march yesterday morning was:—Cavalry Brigade under General Hugh Gough to Charasia; 1st and 3rd Brigades under Generals Macpherson and Macgregor to Beni Hissar; and

2nd Brigade under General Baker to Indikee by way of the Dehmazung Gorge. Accordingly the cantonment was full of warlike pomp and circumstance—chiefly the latter—from 5 o'clock in the morning. All the troops told off for the Division were under canvas, with their kit ready at hand, and there remained nothing but to strike tents, load up baggage animals, and march away to a merry quick-step. Everything had been carefully prepared, all the men's kits weighed and tested to a pound; and with little confusion, but much soldier-like energy, the line of march was formed in two columns, and the evacuation of Cabul began. Ten thousand men of the present garrison moved out, and their comrades, who filed in from Siah Sung to take their places, will probably start on the 11th for India. We are going so roundabout a road that civilization seems a long way off: our friends are within twenty days of Peshawur, where the untold luxuries of dak-bungalows and gharries begin. Sir Donald Stewart's march will, it is expected, be a very peaceful one, for the chief Ghilzai leaders are with the Amir, who has been quietly warned to keep them with him and out of mischief until the troops have got to the east of Gundamak. What may happen to Sir Frederick Roberts between Cabul and Candahar no prophet, Kafir or Mahomedan, can venture to say. There may be a most resolute opposition at Shahjui or nearer Candahar, or the fanatical enthusiasm of the ghazis who beat back General Burrows at Khusk-i-Nakhud may have cooled somewhat, and our army may have only a few scattered bands to pursue. How far our pursuit will extend, also, cannot be foreseen. If Ayub shows the white feather, shall we tamely allow him to retain the 1,200 Snider and Martini rifles, and the two Horse Artillery guns he has captured? If so, his wisest course would be to retire upon Herat, raise and drill three or four regiments, whom he could arm with breech-loaders, and in a year try his fortune again, avoiding Candahar altogether, but striking for Cabul by way of Turkistan and Balkh. There are many questions involved in this march to Candahar, and whispers of "Herat!" are already being heard in camp. Every step we move threatens Abdur Rahman's position in Cabul, so far; but unless we completely break Ayub's power our nominal Amir will have a hard fight for his kingdom hereafter.

But I have wandered off from our march out. General Baker, with the 72nd Highlanders, 2nd and 3rd Sikhs, 4th Ghoorkas, and a Mountain Battery, reached Indikee during the morning, while the other two Brigades pitched camp in the fields beyond Beni Hissar. The tail-end of a thunderstorm laid the dust in the afternoon, and when Sir F. Roberts rode out in the evening to assume command of his division it was delightfully cool and fresh. Sir Donald Stewart, General Hills, and some of the Staff of the new 2nd Division, accompanied General Roberts, and much had to be said during the short ride. Some of our friends, who were bound for Peshawur, also came out to camp, and hand-shakings and cries of "good-bye and good-luck" were all the order of the evening. There were certain little signs of seriousness in some cases, which showed our errand was looked upon as spiced with danger; but in the majority of instances the farewells were as loud and merry as soldiers' partings should be.

Sherpur looked the ghost of its former self when we left it in the evening. The barracks of the south-western end were nearly all empty; there were no figures visible beyond those of Cabuli *chiffonniers*, intent upon looting everything, from old tin cans to *charpoys* and newspapers; and, saddest of all, our well-beloved Club was no more. The walls were still standing in skeleton bareness, but the large tent which had seen many a genial rubber played, and heard many a quip and crank—"bar-made jokes" we call them—over good wholesome liquor, was a prey to the Afghan. It had been bought for a song, equally with the "fittings" and spare stores, and was being carried off to the city. How we have hated our sojourn in Afghanistan of late, when the hot weather found matters not yet settled, only the record of our curses, an' it be kept, can never reveal. The bare, brown hills of Bemaru and the higher ranges about had grown so wearisome in our sight that we bore with philosophy the dust-storms which visited us daily: they hid the hated landscape for a time, and made us forget everything but the dust in our eyes and the dryness of our throats. Sherpur is not a "desirable place of residence," although it has had its pleasures and fortunes, which I have faithfully chronicled; and can we be blamed for shaking its dust from our feet with unholy joy, even though we know that

many a weary mile lies between Cabul and the Sibi Railway? Last night General Roberts issued an order to the troops which stirred our blood a little, for if Candahar and Khelat-i-Ghilzai have really to be *relieved*, there may be some pretty work cut out for us. The order was as follows:—

"It has been decided by the Government of India that a force shall proceed with all possible despatch from Cabul towards Khelat-i-Ghilzai and Candahar for the relief of the British garrison in those places, now threatened by a large Afghan army under the leadership of Sirdar Mahomed Ayub Khan. Sir Frederick Roberts feels sure that the troops placed under his command for this important duty will cheerfully respond to the call made upon them, notwithstanding the privations and hardships inseparable from a long march through a hostile country. The Lieutenant-General wishes to impress on both officers and men the necessity of preserving the same strict discipline which has been so successfully and uniformly maintained since the commencement of the war, and to treat all the people who may be well disposed towards the British with justice and forbearance. Sir Frederick Roberts looks confidently forward to the successful accomplishment of the object of the expedition, convinced as he is that all ranks are animated with the proud feeling that to them is entrusted the duty and privilege of relieving their fellow-soldiers and restoring the prestige of the British army."

We are not letting the grass grow under our feet, for we have only mule and pony carriage, and our progress is not delayed by camels or bullocks persistently casting their loads. To-day we have marched (that is the 1st and 3rd Brigades, and Divisional Head-Quarters) about 14 miles, while General Baker, who is encamped higher up the Logar, must have done 16 or 17. To-morrow the whole force crosses the river, and then we shall push on for Ghazni, which we hope to reach in four or five days. This will, in all likelihood, be the last letter which I can hope to get through, though runners may try to reach Sir Donald Stewart as he retires upon Gundamak. The troops are all very fit, and march splendidly; the mornings are cold and bracing; while during the day a cool wind prevents the sun from making itself felt. We shall have a most enjoyable march for the next few

days so far as climate is concerned, and we hope for the best in the matter of supplies. To-day they are coming in very fairly. The *moollah*, Abdurrahim, the eldest son of Mushk-i-Alam, who is accompanying the force, has been created Khan-ul-Alam, or chief *moollah*, by the Amir. This appointment has had a good effect, and Mushk-i-Alam with his party is reported to be proceeding to join the Amir.*

ZERGHUN SHAHR, 10*th August*.

To-day we look upon as the last we shall be in communication with Cabul, and consequently with India; but we are not in the least depressed thereby, as we have our work before us and have made up our minds to do it thoroughly. The diary of our march should be of interest, as it is of a kind not often undertaken. We have cut ourselves off completely from any supports; we are self-supporting in every sense of the word; and we have as our objective point a town nominally held by our own troops, but which may, before our arrival, be surrounded by an army far surpassing our own in numbers and guns. The effect of the disastrous action at Khusk-i-Nakhud will have raised the whole country about Candahar against us, and Afghans never show so bold a front as when living on the fruits of a victory. If Candahar were held in force by an unbeaten army of British soldiers, we should have little to do beyond making the best of our way to the place and joining hands with the garrison; there would be little danger and less glory in such an undertaking; but as it is we are a body of 10,000 men, making forced marches and not knowing from day to day what may be before us. So long as we are south of Ghazni we shall have no anxiety regarding supplies, but once we have passed that fortress our very food will have to be sought for at every halting-place, and the prospect of deserted villages and crops secretly stored is not a very encouraging one. But it will be time enough to deal with our difficulties when they occur, and as we are now in the rich Logar Valley, where corn and forage are plentiful, I will not speculate further as to what the marches to Khelat-i-Ghilzai may bring forth. Our chief source of anxiety is

* The old *moollah* kept his word and took a prominent part in the ceremonies attending Abdur Rahman's coronation.

that the Herat army and its ghazi allies may not give us a fair chance of what the soldiers call "getting at them." That would indeed be a disappointment too grievous to be borne.

The march from Beni Hissar to Zahidabad was as trying as any we are likely to have between Cabul and Ghazni. The rear-guard of General Macpherson's Brigade did not reach camp until after seven o'clock, having been under arms for fourteen hours, and the 92nd Highlanders and 23rd Pioneers were so tired and worn out that many threw themselves down in their tents without energy enough to take more than a mouthful of food. It was not the actual distance (16 miles) which told upon them so much as the long halts in the sun while the baggage was being pushed forward; while a dust-storm the whole afternoon added greatly to their discomfort. The sun is stronger than was expected, and the men, not being yet in thorough marching order, felt its effects rather severely. The camp was pitched in the open fields near where we encamped in October last, when our mission was to punish Cabul. Our force now is nearly as strong again as the old Cabul Field Force, "the avenging army" as it was termed; but the brigades are not yet united, the cavalry and General Baker's Brigade being a few miles in advance. This is to enable us to march with greater rapidity. That rapidity naturally depends upon our transport, the marching power of our men not being a doubtful factor in our calculations. We are provided with mule and pony carriage, camels being unsuitable for forced marching, and I am glad to say we have an unusually strong staff of transport officers, with Colonel Low at their head, who are equal to all the demands made upon their knowledge and endurance. Upon the efforts of this staff much will depend, as if carelessness were once to creep into the management and care of the animals a dead-lock would follow. In the first campaign the stupid experiment of trying to work camels without food was tried, and the result, as Government found to its cost, was terrible failure. Now, Sir Frederick Roberts is determined to try what can be done when the animals are given grain and forage with a liberal hand, and when we have reached Candahar I will note the result in *this* case also. The Transport Staff, to which I, in common with the whole force, look with great confidence, is as follows:—

Lieutenant-Colonel Low, Chief Director.
Lieutenant Booth, Staff Officer.
Captain Wynter, 33rd Foot, General Transport Officer.
Lieutenant Fisher, 10th Hussars, Cavalry Brigade.
Lieutenant Wilson, 10th Hussars, 1st Brigade.
Captain Elliot, 3rd Bengal Cavalry, 2nd Brigade.
Captain Macgregor, 44th Native Infantry, 3rd Brigade.
Lieutenant Robertson, 8th Foot, Ordnance Park.
Lieutenant Elverson, 2nd Queen's, also attached to 3rd Brigade.

But even this staff cannot ensure the service being kept up to its present state of efficiency unless regimental commanders and other responsible persons see that orders are strictly carried out. The Lieutenant-General issued an order at Zahidabad reminding commanding officers of the necessity for exercising the closest supervision over the transport animals. In this General Roberts says:—"The performance of long and continuous marches such as those which will be undertaken by the force can only be successfully accomplished if the animals are regularly fed and the adjustment of loads attended to. Recognizing that the success of the undertaking in hand must depend upon the rapidity with which Candahar is reached, the Lieutenant-General relies confidently on the exertions of all ranks to aid in maintaining the transport animals in efficient condition."

To-day the cavalry under General Hugh Gough joined the 2nd Brigade (72nd Highlanders, 2nd and 3rd Sikhs, 5th Ghoorkas, and Swinley's Mountain Battery) on their camping-ground over the Logar above Zahidabad, and skirted the right bank of the river past Deh-i-Nao to the ground near Paza and Wazir Kila, from which villages they drew their supplies. The 1st and 3rd Brigades, with General Roberts's and General Ross's head-quarters, struck camp at three o'clock, and General Macpherson's Brigade moved off first. The only difficulty was at the bridge over the Logar; but as the stream was fordable, the baggage animals had no trouble in wading across. General Roberts watched the brigade cross, and it was pleasant to notice that the men seemed in the best of spirits, doubling up the bank and hurrying along as if Candahar were only 10 miles away. One company of the 23rd Pioneers recognized the General, and raised the Sikh war-cry of *"Guru! Guru! Futteh Guru!"* Once the river had been left behind open ground was reached, and after a march of 14 miles

camp was pitched a short distance beyond Zerghun Shahr. Here supplies and forage were obtained in abundance, the villagers being quite willing to give all that was required. The agents of the Amir accompanying the force did good work in aiding the Political Officers in making all smooth for the Commissariat.

CAMP SHASHGAO, 14*th August*.

We are now within an easy march of Ghazni, and our cavalry have already reconnoitred over the Sher-i-Dahan Pass without meeting an enemy. Ayub Khan's influence does not seem to extend so far north, while Hashim Khan and his followers have fled southwards, declaring they have no wish to fight the British, but will return when we have passed and make preparations for a struggle with Abdur Rahman. Since my last letter we have made four marches, the halting-places of General Roberts's head-quarters having been Padkhao Barak in Logar, Amir Kila at the mouth of the Tang-i-Wardak, Takia in the Shiniz Valley, and Shashgao. There has not been a shot fired, and all our efforts have been concentrated in keeping our baggage animals up to their work, and in drawing supplies from the country passed through.

On August 11th, the 1st and 3rd Brigades with head-quarters turned out at 2.45 A.M., and moved off at four o'clock towards the Baraki group of villages which cluster about the Logar River, where it turns to the north. The brigades moved in parallel columns of route across an open stony plain, and the first 10 miles were made in grand style, there being nothing to impede the troops. Cultivation was then reached, and as the crops of Indian-corn, lucerne, &c., were still on the ground, much delay occurred in getting the baggage along. The water was cut off from two or three of the deepest canals, and the road improved; but there was a "nasty bit" just outside Baraki Rajan, where the bed of a tributary of the Logar had to be crossed. The camping-ground was on a ridge, with water close at hand, and fields of half-grown Indian-corn, which were bought up at Rs. 50 a *bigah* and used as forage. The 2nd Brigade and the cavalry were encamped 8 miles away at Baraki Barak, having crossed the river at Hisarak. The Logar Valley presented a picture of fertility

perhaps unequalled in Afghanistan. It is well-wooded, and the irrigation from the river is admirably carried out. On either hand the cultivation extends for several miles, and the villages are surrounded by orchards and plantations of willow and other trees for firewood. The number of the people visible all along the line of march showed the valley to be thickly populated. To the south the valley is bounded by the barren Altimour Range, shutting out Zurmut, while to the north-east are the Shutargardan and the mass of mountains about it. Our faces were turned westwards towards the Tang-i-Wardak, the barrier of hills through which that Pass leads being overtopped by the more distant Pughman Range.

On the 12th the cavalry and General Baker's Brigade had a long and trying march from Baraki Barak, past Amir Kila, over the Samburak Kotal to Sydabad in the Shiniz Valley. This placed them on the direct Cabul-Ghazni Road, the Shiniz Valley extending from the Sher-i-Dahan Kotal to Sheikhabad. The Lieutenant-General watched the Cavalry Brigade pass Amir Kila, and a gallant show it made. The horses looked in grand condition, the Central India Horse seeming none the worse for their hurried march from Jellalabad. The road was so narrow that the baggage animals had in many places to go in Indian file, and, although the advance-guard started at four o'clock, only part of the cavalry baggage reached Sydabad. The remainder was halted for the night, just above the Amir Kila, near the camp of the 1st and 3rd Brigades, which had marched only nine miles from Padkhao Barak. The Samburak Kotal is to the north of the Tang-i-Wardak, and is comparatively easy; but there was only one road over it—that made by the Candahar Force in April for the Horse Artillery and Field guns. A few hundred yards of this road near the crest were so steep that some of the cavalry ponies cast their loads; but on the transport officers going up early on the morning of the 13th, the baggage was found to have been left untouched by the villagers, and only one pony was lying exhausted on the road. General Macgregor moved off by way of the Tang-i-Wardak to Hyder Khel, which had been fixed as the halting-place of the 1st and 3rd Brigades; and then Colonel Low, Director of Transport, saw to the clearing away of the baggage of General Baker's Brigade. Fatigue parties were told off to carry the loads lying

on the road, to the top of the Kotal, and then the stream of mules and ponies was set in motion. Working parties also improved and widened the road, and two "diversions" were made which allowed of three lines of animals moving upwards at the same time. By three o'clock in the afternoon the whole of the baggage was clear of the Kotal; only *three* animals having had to be abandoned. This will show in what good condition our transport now is: not a load was left behind and the regiments with General Baker had once more the pleasure of seeing their tents and kit. The men had bivouacked at Sydabad, and the cold air of the early morning had been too keen to be comfortable. General Roberts with head-quarters joined the 2nd Brigade which encamped at Takia, two miles beyond Hyder Khel, the distance from Sydabad being about 12 miles.

To-day (August 14th) the whole force is concentrated about Shashgao, within three miles of the Sher-i-Dahan Kotal, the cavalry and General Baker's brigade having marched fourteen miles from Takia, while the troops commanded by Generals Macpherson and Macgregor have covered between sixteen and seventeen. The Shiniz Valley is from six to ten miles across, and runs almost due north and south. High rolling hills rise gradually on either side, and there is a gentle rise from about 7,000 feet above sea level at Sydabad to 8,000 feet at Shashgao, where we are now encamped. There is only a narrow strip of cultivation about the river, and scarcely any trees after Takia is left. The villages are all strongly fortified, each consisting of a number of walled enclosures with flanking buttresses. These miniature forts are usually built in echelon, and against anything but artillery could make a stout resistance. The Shiniz is a very small stream at this season of the year, but there are numerous springs which give an excellent supply of water. Shashgao is almost surrounded by a barren stony plain, the cultivation extending but a mile or so from the village. On this plain the whole of our force is now encamped, this being the first time the Lieutenant-General has had the four brigades concentrated. It is a huge encampment, and if Sirdar Hashim Khan has caught a glimpse of it he may well be pardoned for hastening away to Zurmut. Supplies have not come in so abundantly as in Logar, the country being much poorer; but still good

green forage has been got for the cavalry and transport, and enough food for the troops. It should be remembered that for the last three days we have been in the Wardak country, and that the Wardaks are no great friends of the new Amir, whose agents therefore we expected to do little for us. But the people have shown no hostility, and Major Hastings and the Political Officers have had no difficulty in dealing with the *maliks*. This is a good sign, and proves that Hashim Khan has really no party worthy of the name in this district. To have reached within one march of Ghazni without a sign of opposition of any kind must convince even the greatest alarmist that the effect upon the Afghan mind of Ayub's victory has been purely local. The whole country about Candahar may be up in arms, but there is no corresponding movement among the warlike population between Cabul and Ghazni.

The troops are improving in health daily, and in spite of long and trying marching there is the best spirit among all ranks. Men falling out on the march are mounted on spare ponies, but their lot is not a cheerful one, as they are unmercifully "chaffed" by their comrades, who go swinging along with many a cheery allusion to what is to be done at Candahar. The greatest anxiety is for plenty of wholesome fighting to reward them for their weary tramp, and nothing would please them more than to see the Sher-i-Dahan Kotal covered with Afghans to-morrow morning.

In the midst of our new excitement relative to Candahar a little incident carries many of us back to the old days of December, when the Cabul Field Force was fighting against great odds about Sherpur. To-night in the Field Force orders appears the following *in memoriam*:—

"Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts is sure that all ranks of the late Cabul Field Force will share the regret he feels at the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland, 9th (Queen's Royal) Lancers. On the 11th December last, in the Chardeh Valley, this officer was dangerously wounded whilst gallantly leading his distinguished regiment against the enemy. From the effects of that wound Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland died at Murree on the 7th instant, after many months of severe suffering. By the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland, Sir F. Roberts, in common with a

large number of officers and soldiers, has lost a valued friend, whilst Her Majesty's Army has been deprived of the services of a most promising and gallant officer. The Lieutenant-General desires to express the deep sympathy he feels with the officers and men of the 9th Lancers in the personal loss they have sustained."

CHAPTER II.

The Advance through the Sher-i-Dahan Pass—The Tomb of Mahmood at Roza—Arrival at Ghazni—State of the Citadel—A Miserable-looking City—Condition of the Camp-Followers—Splendid Marching—Losses by the Road—Cavalry Scouts—The Battle-field of Ahmed Khel—A Raid on Powindah Traders at Chardeh—News from Khelat-i-Ghilzai and Candahar—Mukur to Panjak: a Trying March—Sir F. Roberts and the Troops—The Candahar Province entered at Shahjui—Heliographic Communication with Khelat-i-Ghilzai—Relief of Colonel Tanner's Troops—Disastrous Sortie at Candahar—Ayub Khan Raises the Siege—Cavalry March to Robat—Heliographing with General Primrose—General H. Gough meets Colonel St. John—"In Touch" of Ayub Khan—Diary of the March from Cabul.

GHAZNI, 15*th August*, 1880.

NOTHING occurred to disturb us last night in our camping-ground at Shashgao, and we turned out as usual at three o'clock and loaded up for the day's march. It was well known yesterday that no armed gathering was at Ghazni; but in this country no one can say what a night may bring forth, and orders were accordingly issued for the advance through the Sher-i-Dahan Pass to be made as if an enemy were actually at hand. With between 8,000 and 9,000 baggage animals to be guarded, great precautions had to be taken to make the line of march as compact as possible, and this object was gained by the following disposition :—

1.—
- 1 Regiment of Cavalry.
- 1 Company 23rd Pioneers.
- 2 Guns No. 2 Mountain Battery.
- 1 Regiment Infantry from 1st Brigade.

2.—Remainder of 1st Brigade with 4 guns No. 2 Mountain Battery preceding 6-8 Royal Artillery in order of march.

3.—2nd Infantry Brigade.

4.—Cavalry Brigade, with the exception of one troop attached to 3rd Brigade.

5.—Baggage Column, marshalled by Lieutenant-Colonel Low.

6.—Rear-guard, consisting of the whole of 3rd Brigade with a troop of Cavalry.

Owing to the darkness of the morning and the nature of the road

it was found necessary to modify this disposition; the 92nd Highlanders went first, with the Cavalry Brigade following, until the southern end of the Pass was reached, when a squadron of cavalry trotted forward to reconnoitre the country towards Ghazni.

The Sher-i-Dahan Pass might, from its name (the lion's mouth) be expected to be very formidable, whereas it is one of the easiest in Afghanistan. The rise from the Shashgao plain to the Kotal is only 400 feet, and is so gradual that it is scarcely noticeable. The road is not at all shut in for the first 2 miles, the hills rolling away on either hand in easy undulations. The Kotal is marked on our maps as 9,000 feet high, but it was found by aneroid measurements to be only 8,200. The road is sufficiently broad to allow of four horsemen riding abreast, and is in very good order. For about a mile after the Kotal is crossed there is a gradual descent and the hills close in; but they soon recede, and one enters upon an open plain, basin-shaped, in which is a line of *karez* furnishing water for a few score acres of cultivation. The road crosses the plain, and goes in nearly a straight line up a second low Kotal, from the top of which the Ghazni plain is overlooked. The villages of Kila Hindu and Khodobad are seen on the left; Roza is directly in front; while in the distance, over a mass of vegetation, rises the Ghazni citadel, the town itself not being visible. The Sher-i-Dahan could scarcely be held against any large force, as it can be turned on either hand, all the hills being accessible to infantry and mountain guns. There are no positions such as can be held by a few hundred men, as in the Khyber, Shutargardan, and Jugdulluck Passes; only sloping sides of hills, many of which horsemen can ride up. These hills are as bare and barren as Afghan hills generally are, not a tree being seen for miles.

It was, therefore, a great relief to enter upon the fertile country about Ghazni itself. At this season of the year the crops of Indian-corn and lucerne grass cover the fields with greenness, while the walled orchards surround the villages with belts of foliage, promising shade and coolness most grateful to wearied men. Vineyards also abound, the ground being rich and water plentiful, and delicious grapes are retailed at prices lower than in Cabul itself. A donkey load made up of two large baskets, each weigh-

ing 40lbs. or 50lbs., cost us only three rupees when our advanced guard was at Roza, though prices rose enormously as the day wore on. The troops passed by a narrow lane through Roza, the outskirts of which are a mass of vineyards, while the village itself boasts of several high, well-built houses as well as of the tomb of Mahmood of Ghazni. A running stream of pure water pours through the village and crosses the road near the gate, and about this some hundred men were gathered to watch our army file past. Some of us turned into Roza, and made our way to Mahmood's tomb, to which we were directed with every show of eagerness. It stands in a walled garden, and there is a rude building about it which probably serves as a mosque. In the garden are richly-carved stone gargoyles and images resembling the Assyrian bull, probably the spoil brought by Mahmood to his capital when returning from some of his successful expeditions. The tomb itself is still well preserved, the marble being beautifully polished and kept clear of even a speck of dirt or dust. In place of the gates of Somnath, which Nott carried back to India nearly forty years ago, are richly-carved doors of a wood made to resemble sandal wood, while hundreds of horseshoes and other tokens are nailed on the lintel. The tiger-skin mentioned by Vigne as being the largest he had ever seen, still hangs on the wall just outside the gate. Bits of rich carving and elaborate inscriptions can still be traced on the walls of the room built about the tomb; but there is an air of decay about everything except the marble slabs of the tomb itself. These are about 8 feet long by 2 in breadth, and are raised some 2 feet above the cracked stone flooring. The Kufic inscriptions are still very well preserved. Particoloured banners are stretched across the roof to prevent dust falling from above, and a janitor sits stolidly at the entrance to see that the tomb is not desecrated. The remains of the King who invaded India eleven times rest peacefully enough in the picturesque village overlooked by the Ghazni citadel, but glory has departed from the neighbouring city, once the capital of a most powerful kingdom.

Ghazni is situated at the foot of a long undulating spur which runs down from the west of the Sher-i-Dahan Pass and gradually loses itself in the plain. Two minars—high tapering pillars, said

to have been built ages ago by Mahmood—mark the road leading from Roza to the Cabul Gate, with which Durand's name is inseparably connected; and in the shade of these pillars Sir Frederick Roberts and his Staff halted, while Major Hastings, Chief Political Officer, rode to the citadel to bring in Abdul Reschid, who is nominally acting as Governor of the city in these troublous times. That worthy presently appeared with a score of mounted retainers, all more or less ragged and disreputable, and the General rode on to visit the Bala Hissar and the city itself. From a military point of view the citadel is badly placed, as a knoll on the spur of the hill commands the building at a distance of only 800 yards. Artillery on this knoll could make the fortress quite untenable, while guns could scarcely be worked on the walls in the face of rifle-fire from breech-loaders. But the walls are by no means in the state of ruin reported by Sir Donald Stewart's force. There are certainly two breaches on the south-western side, but they could be easily repaired, and the walls are so thick and high that to send a storming party against them would involve heavy loss of life, and success would be very problematical if the garrison were at all resolute in defence. The moat is nearly dry, but an irrigation channel runs alongside, from which the water could be diverted. A low wall, 2 feet high, pierced for musketry, and with small flanking bastions on the escarp 8 or 10 yards above the moat, is in utter ruin; but of the main walls above, the parapet only is fallen away, the roadway along the top being still practicable for men lining it. An engineer officer gave it as his opinion that the Cabul Bala Hissar was really in very little better repair, when we entered it last October, than is that of Ghazni now. The approach to the Cabul Gate is by a road over the moat, but the gateway itself is hidden from view, as two flanking walls, 38 feet high and 20 yards in length, stretch out in nearly semicircular shape. Between these one can only see a few yards in advance, until a sharp turn shows the gateway right in front. There is nothing distinctive in its appearance; it is of the pattern common in all Afghan forts: two high wooden doors opening inwards, of great thickness and studded with iron bolts. The masonry on either side and above it is blotched and scarred by time, but is still fairly substantial. A drinking fountain is on the left, the

water being carried into the city by a channel from the hill above. The immediate approach from outside is rather steep, but is broad enough to admit a regiment marching up in fours. A crowd of curious citizens blocked the gateway, but they readily gave place as we rode in. Immediately within the gate is an open space some 50 yards square, and rising in front on a mound 100 feet high is the citadel. Two well-worn roads lead up to it at an angle sufficient to make riding up rather difficult. It was down these that a swarm of swordsmen rushed and cut up our leading companies when Nott stormed the place. Two old field-guns, 6-pounders, were standing on the left, mounted on carriages of very recent make, while a mud building with barricaded doors was said to be the "magazine" and to contain two more guns and some ammunition. The interior approaches to the walls were in bad repair; but there were pathways along them, and plenty of materials in the shape of sun-dried mud and debris to build a new parapet.

Conducted by Abdul Reschid, who, by the way, is fonder of strong liquor than a true Mahomedan should be, Sir F. Roberts and some twenty officers rode up to the citadel, which was found quite deserted. It is rectangular in shape, and has only one gateway facing towards Roza, the mound on which it stands falling down on the other sides almost perpendicularly. The walls are thirty feet high, and are built of brick and mud, each of the four corners boasting of embattled towers, which at a distance seem very imposing. The eastern half overlooking the city has been built within the last few years, and has some pretension to architecture, but the western section is just as it stood in 1840-41. An open courtyard is entered after the narrow gateway has been passed, and two tiers of rooms look down upon the blank space below, which shows no signs of being the keep of a citadel. Abdul Reschid explained that in the old rooms on the right the English prisoners were confined, while the Governor always lived in the new quarters commanding the city. Into these we accordingly went, and from the upper rooms a grand view was obtained of the surrounding country, thickly dotted over with villages embowered in orchards and vineyards. One could appreciate the fertility of the Ghazni province at once, and our hopes of

plentiful supplies being forthcoming for the troops mounted high. At our feet lay Ghazni itself, with its encircling walls, and a more miserable-looking city could scarcely be imagined. The "houses" are low mud huts, nearly all of one story, and streets there appeared to be none. The 24th P.N.I. had marched in through the Cabul Gate directly in our wake, and their band woke the echoes of the place right cheerily as we listened to Abdul Reschid's chatter concerning Hashim Khan and young Mahomed Ali Jan, who had fled four days before—not in fear, but because they had no wish to fight the British, their quarrel being with Abdur Rahman alone. Presently we rode down into the town, and found it as miserable as it looked from above. There was an attempt at a covered bazaar, the covering being twigs and branches of trees to afford shelter from the sun; but the street was so narrow that we had to go in single file, and in places one could step from shop to shop across the roadway without effort. I have called them shops out of courtesy, for Ghazni was once a great city, but they are really wretched stalls, in which grapes, fruit, corn, and *attar* are retailed. A few blacksmiths' and shoemakers' shops were alone worthy of the name, and after ten minutes' inspection we rode out of Ghazni by a second gate, some 200 yards distant from the one by which we had entered. This gate was also in fairly good order, and a storming party entering by it would get entangled in the narrow streets, all commanded by the citadel above. Ghazni, while not so ruinous as it has been painted, is certainly rapidly decaying, and another generation will probably see it at its lowest ebb.

Our camp was pitched on a large sandy plain almost due east of the city, and to-morrow we begin our march to Khelat-i-Ghilzai, which we hope to reach on the 28th or 29th of the month, the rapidity of our movements depending now upon the capacity of the country to furnish forage for our cavalry and our transport animals. The excitement known to exist about Candahar has not extended northwards yet, and there seems more interest in Cabul affairs consequent upon the accession of Abdur Rahman than in the movements of Ayub Khan. Supplies of grain, flour and forage have been got in abundance to-day, and if we could only be sure that the crops of Indian-corn have been sown about

the villages on the route our prospects would be very bright. We have hitherto got along wonderfully well; our troops are getting in better marching order daily, and our transport animals having been well rationed are as fit for heavy and continuous work as can ever be expected. The disappearance of Hashim Khan and Mahomed Ali Jan proves that the people have no stomach for fighting, for if the Sirdars could have raised an army in this district they would undoubtedly have tried to harry us on the march. Our force numbers in all over 18,000 men, soldiers and followers, and our line must straggle a little in spite of all precautions. The weakest link in our chain is the state of the dhoolie-bearers and followers, who lack the stamina of the sepoys, and are left more to their own resources than men under strict regimental discipline. Dr. Hanbury, Chief Medical Officer, is doing all he can to keep the *kahars* in health, and as *ghee* is not obtainable he has procured the issue of a small meat ration to all followers. The quantity will be increased if sheep can be got at the villages, and under this system break-downs are likely to be reduced to a minimum. To avoid placing in dhoolies men who are only foot-sore, Colonel Low is buying up all the donkeys he can find, and on these such men will be carried until they are again able to walk. There is really no sickness in the force, except mild forms of fever and diarrhœa, from which men are detained in hospital only a few days. No messengers have as yet arrived from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, but we expect to receive letters in a few days.

CAMP KHELAT-I-GHILZAI, 23*rd August.*

To-day is the fifteenth from Cabul, and the eighth from Ghazni, and so far Sir F. Roberts's march has been most successful. We have come through an enemy's country without any show of opposition being made, and the merit of the march is therefore its unequalled rapidity. From Ghazni we have covered 136 miles in eight days, giving an average of 17 miles per day, continuous marching; while, taking Beni Hissar as our starting point, we have done 236 miles in fifteen days, or on an average 15·7 miles per day. For a regiment alone to do this would not be extraordinary, but for a force numbering 18,000 souls with

between 8,000 and 9,000 baggage animals, to cover this distance without a day's halt, is a feat in marching which is perhaps unrivalled. Sir F. Roberts's march upon Cabul last year proved what can be done by a determined General in the face of enormous difficulties, but our present work is a more remarkable achievement; and even if there should be no second Charasia at the end both officers and men will have deserved well of their country. When there is no butcher's bill there is a tendency to underrate the importance of military movements; but it is to be hoped there will be little detraction in regard to the relief of Candahar. Only those who have shared in the march can form an idea of the discomfort and hardship involved; and I, as a non-combatant, with no one but myself to take care of, have had many opportunities of seeing how splendidly the men have behaved, and how officers have not spared themselves in carrying out the orders of the General directing the movement. The regiments forming the fighting line have, after marching for eight hours, often through sandy soil or over rough ground, to furnish on arrival at camp parties for all kinds of duty; one party for wood, another for *bhoosa* and green forage, a third for guards, while sentry-go and picquet duty at night have allowed what is technically known as only "three nights in bed." Then the rear-guard work has been terribly heavy: regiments on this duty reach camp sometimes as late as nine o'clock, having been under arms since four o'clock in the early morning. The next day's march begins at 4 A.M., and the men have had to turn out at reveillé (2.45 A.M.), load up their baggage animals, and fall in as if they had enjoyed a long night's rest. The nights have luckily been deliciously cool, and the early mornings even bitterly cold; but two hours after sunrise the heat makes itself felt, and from eight o'clock until four the sun beats down upon the open treeless country with great fierceness. Marching, one does not feel it so much, but in the trying pauses when cast loads have to be replaced upon broken-down mules, and when waiting in camp for the tents to come up, the heat punishes the men fearfully. Blistered hands and faces were common enough during the first days of the march, and although these have come to be little regarded, there remain that bodily exhaustion and lassitude resulting from long exposure in the sun and a

short allowance of sleep at night. The extremes of temperature may be appreciated when I state that the thermometer at 4 A.M. registers 45° in the open, and at 4 P.M. 105° in a double-fly tent. For the last two marches we have turned out at 1 A.M. and marched at 2.30, in order to get the main body into camp early in the day, and as we have had a bright moon to light up the road, the marching has been excellent. The rear-guard gets in by about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the troops have ample time to prepare their food before "turning in," at half-past seven.

It is well for us that food has been plentiful along the route, for without liberal rations no men could stand the constant call upon their powers; and we have been lucky also in getting plenty of green forage for our animals. The villages which were deserted when Sir Donald Stewart marched to Cabul, we have found all fairly well peopled; the villagers had sown their crops of Indian-corn, which we have been able to purchase for transport requirements. We expected to find a howling desert, whereas we have found a strip of cultivation, narrow enough, but still sufficient for our needs. We could not possibly have maintained our rate of rapid marching if this had not been so, for continuous work will break down the best mule ever bred if the animal be not properly fed. General Hugh Gough's cavalry brigade has also been kept up to its efficient state, and the horses look nearly as fit as when they left Cabul.

I have already alluded to our followers as being the greatest drag upon us, and the *kahars* have undoubtedly had a struggle to keep up. They are such fatalists that they believe it is part of their *kismut* to wander off the road into obscure *nullahs*, there to fall asleep, and take the risk of being cut up by Afghans. Of late the troops of cavalry forming the rear-guard have quartered the country like beaters at a tiger hunt, and the sleeping *kahars* have been rudely wakened and brought along. Baggage animals with sore backs have been utilized for carrying the poor wretches into camp, a mule gone in the withers being quite equal to bearing a man astride his back. Wonderful to say, men straggle into camp long after midnight, unharmed and perfectly self-satisfied. They have enjoyed their sleep in obscure ravines, and have then resumed their march as if in a friendly country. Some of them

tell strange stories of having been stripped by Afghans and then allowed to escape; but these are Mahomedans who have claimed fellowship in religion with the tribesmen. Our actual loss in dead and missing since we left Cabul is, I believe, as follows:—Died—Europeans, one; sepoys, four; *kahars*, five; followers, five; missing—forty-three. Of the men who have died, one private of the 72nd and one sepoy of the 23rd Pioneers committed suicide: three sepoys died from obstruction of the bowels caused by eating unripe Indian-corn, and then drinking large quantities of water. Of the missing many are known to have been *kahars* trying to get to the Khyber line, and Hazara syces who have gone to their own country. There were 494 soldiers in hospital on the 24th August.

Regarding our transport, we have at work now 2,664 *yaboos* and ponies, as against 2,919 when we left Cabul; 4,426 mules as against 4,509; 934 donkeys as against 929; and 150 camels. Many of the donkeys and all the camels have been obtained on the road. Our total transport now consists of 8,174 animals of all kinds, while the Khelat-i-Ghilzai garrison will furnish 301 camels, 132 mules, ten ponies, and 265 donkeys. The garrison is made up of two companies of the 66th (141 men), the 2nd Beluchis (675), squadron 3rd Scind Horse (107 sabres), with two guns of C-2 R.A. (forty-seven men), two medical officers, one commissariat officer, and various details, amounting in all to a total of 1,005 men. They have stored in the fort a large quantity of tinned meat and soups, *attar*, corn, and *bhoosa*, which will be a most welcome addition to our stores. To-day, also, a wing of the Beluchis have moved out to Jaldak, our next stage, where they will collect supplies for the force. We are to halt here to-morrow to give men and animals a short rest.

Having summarized some of our difficulties and drawn attention to the merits of the march, considered apart from its ultimate ending, I will now give in detail the stages marched from day to day and the actual distances covered. On August 12th we left Ghazni and marched to Yergatta, just past the battlefield of Ahmed Khel—20 good miles. The brigades got into motion at 4 A.M., and the cavalry began the work which they have since performed daily, and which I will now allude to once for all.

They were spread out all across the valley, and worked steadily along, examining every yard of ground and feeling for an enemy who has never yet shown himself. A bright moon favoured their movements, and when one got a little ahead of the infantry it was a weird sight to see a chain of phantom-like men and horses stretching away on either hand, until lost in the early morning mist. Too high praise cannot be given to General Hugh Gough and his fine cavalry brigade for the way in which this covering movement was done. The infantry could march along in perfect security with the knowledge that some 1,500 troops were in front and on the flanks, that the "eyes of our army," as the Germans have it, were wide open. Sowars, when properly handled, make excellent Uhlans, as they are all light-weights and their horses seldom tire. Our more heavily accoutred English cavalry are of course handicapped at such cross-country work, but the 9th Lancers are so eager to reach Candahar and capture a few of Ayub's guns that they make light of the burning sun and bitter fatigue; their want of knowledge of the language and habits of the people is more than compensated by extra vigilance and care in scouting. The cavalry marches were always several miles longer than those made by the infantry, by reason of their constant scouting; while before camp was pitched patrols were sent out five miles in advance on reconnoitring duty. A troop was detailed daily to act with our infantry rear-guard, and they were always last in, as they had to sweep all stray animals and followers before them. But for this arrangement many lives would have been lost, as the apathy of a tired *kahar* or other follower is extraordinary.

This first march out at Ghazni was very trying. After passing through the walled gardens about the town, and turning to take a farewell look at the Bala Hissar, most imposing when viewed from the south, we got into the open country, and before us was the plain stretching right away to Khelat-i-Ghilzai, with no break in its continuity. The hills which bound it may send out minor spurs, and the lower ranges on the east between the Ghazni River and the high Khonak mountains may seem at times about to close in upon the road; but there is not a kotal to be crossed, and the valley is always broad enough to allow of three columns of route.

The characteristics of the country north of Khelat-i-Ghilzai are

very accurately detailed in official route books: the villages, with their orchards and patches of cultivation, are numerous enough for the first few miles. They then grow fewer and fewer, and the plain becomes a waste covered with the camel-thorn scrub and intersected by deep ravines running from the foot of the hills on either side down to the river bed. These are formed by the streams resulting from the melting snows, and their banks are so steep that they are at times formidable obstacles to baggage animals. Streams of water, chiefly from *karez* sources, cross the road at right-angles from time to time, and near these are generally a few fields of Indian-corn, lucerne and melon beds. In this first march, for example, we crossed a broad river bed three miles south of Ghazni, and then got upon a sandy plain which lasted almost as far as Nani, where a number of small streams furnish water for the crops. Here an hour's halt was called (which only served to stiffen the men), and then we moved towards Ahmed Khel over an arid plain which led to the rolling hills on which Sir Donald Stewart fought his action. Nothing could be more desolate than the country of Ahmed Khel and the battlefield itself, but we got water at Yergatta, and a few fields of Indian-corn for our worn-out animals. The scarcity of wood all down the line of march was also a source of constant trouble—at Yergatta camel-thorn scrub having to be collected and burned. The order of march from Ghazni was: 2nd and 3rd Brigades leading, and 1st Brigade (with troop of cavalry) acting as rear-guard. The leading brigades marched in parallel columns of route and reached Yergatta about 8 P.M. A terrific dust-storm was blowing, and the task of getting in the baggage was unusually hard. The 1st Brigade lost its way in the storm, and the rear-guard did not arrive in camp until long after dark. Men and animals were alike exhausted by this long march, the longest save one made on the route.

Such officers of General Stewart's force as were with us explained the positions in the Ahmed Khel action, and our surprise was indeed great that even ghazis could "rush" infantry armed with breech-loaders over ground on which there was not a bit of cover. There were between 400 or 500 graves on the battle-field showing where the enemy's dead had been buried: in place

of headstones there were, in a few cases, the scabbard of a sword or knife sticking up, transfixing a bloody cap or a pair of old shoes belonging to the dead ghazi. I am sorry to say the graves in which our dead were buried had been torn open and dishonoured. On one of the largest graves had been found a small piece of paper tied to a stick. On being unrolled an inscription was seen, stating that the spot was sacred to the memory of the "martyrs" who had fallen in fight against the English army—the date given was 1297 A.H. But for the interest attaching to Ahmed Khel our camp at Yergatta would have seemed doubly dreary. Fortunately our animals had been fed at the halting-place at Nani, which somewhat lessened the soldier's work when camp was pitched.

On August 17th a comparatively short march of twelve miles was made to Chardeh by way of Mushaki. The previous day's march had sorely tried our transport, but we got in after much straggling of animals on the road. Sandy stretches also tried the men's feet a good deal, numbers of sepoys falling out of the ranks from foot-soreness. The Chardeh group of villages covers a wide stretch of country, but many of the walled enclosures were deserted, and forage was difficult to get. Numbers of Powindah traders were seen, and there was a little excitement in the evening, thanks to these men. We were anxious to hire or purchase a number of camels to aid our transport, and the Powindahs at one large encampment promised to provide 500 of their beasts. They afterwards refused to send in even 100, and Colonel Low, with 300 men drawn from Macpherson's brigade, surrounded their camp at dusk. The Powindahs had hidden the camel-saddles, and they turned the camels loose, while the women and children rushed among the soldiers, abusing them heartily and making a terrific din. Some shots were fired at the Ghoorkas, who returned the fire, but our officers prevented any serious fight. Lieutenant Gordon, of the 4th Ghoorkas, had a narrow escape from being hamstrung; as he was passing one of the tents, a man struck at his leg with a knife, thrusting it out from below. Gordon's sword saved him, the knife cutting through the scabbard to the steel. Eventually 150 camels were captured and brought into our camp. On this day we received

our first news from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, a messenger arriving with a letter from Colonel Tanner, 2nd Beluchis, commanding the garrison. He set our minds at rest on several points, for the Powindahs had alarmed us by stating that Candahar had fallen, and the Khelat-i-Ghilzai garrison were hard pressed. In place of this we learned that all was well at the latter place, the country not having risen. A letter from Colonel St. John, dated August 8th, was also enclosed, its purport being that Candahar was completely invested, but that the garrison had supplies for two months and *bhoosa* for fifteen days; 15,000 Afghans had been turned out of the city, which was held by our troops. At Chardeh most of the Hazaras who had marched with us from Cabul left camp for their own country, which lay beyond the range of hills on our right. Our cavalry found about a thousand Hazaras with their horses and cattle in a fort near our camping ground. Their story was that they had been shut up since April by the Afghans, who had sworn to kill them for aiding Sir Donald Stewart. They regarded us as their deliverers, and made a hurried exit over the hills, glad to escape while our army was holding Chardeh.

On August 18th we marched 16 miles to Oba Karez, our way being lighted for a mile by the blazing ruins of the fort lately occupied by the Hazaras, which the Afghan villagers had fired. We could see villages dotted about for the first five or six miles, and running streams gave ample water for the troops; but the last eight or nine miles was barren plain, with nothing growing but camel-thorn; not even a stagnant pool to relieve the men's thirst. There is no village at Oba Karez, which is merely a halting-place, where a delicious stream of water from a *karez* bursts out at the foot of a mound 150 feet high. A number of villagers from a distance had brought a few supplies to this mound, and also donkey-loads of water-melons, which our men fell upon most ravenously. The want of water told most of all upon the followers, whose state at times was pitiable. We camped about a mile beyond the *karez*, near the stream flowing from it. To-day we received another letter from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, under date 13th August. It was from Captain Yate, Political Officer with Colonel Tanner. Captain Yate wrote:—

"I send you a copy of Colonel St. John's letter of 8th August, received yesterday, our only communication with the outer world since July 26th. That letter will give you all the information we possess. I shall be glad if you will kindly send me by the return messenger a copy of your route to Candahar, to enable me to make what arrangements I can for supplies along the road. Everything is quiet about here and down the road, I believe, as far as Shahr-i-Safa or Khel-i-Akhund, and I hope to be able to have *bhoosa* and flour stored ready at the different stages. The Shahjui district has been very unsettled of late owing to the continued presence of Mahomed Aslam, the Tokhi Chief, but he, I fancy, will move off as soon as he hears of the approach of your force. Directly I know where you are for certain I will send out Mahomed Sadik, a friendly Tokhi Chief, who will help to get in supplies for your force . . . . Yesterday we received letters from Sir R. Sandeman and Wyllie at Quetta, who were anxious concerning our safety."

I quote this letter, as the news that the country was quiet north of Candahar was very satisfactory to us in camp.

KHELAT-I-GHILZAI, *23rd August.*

On August 19th our eleventh march from Beni Hissar was made to Mukur, about 15 miles. When we were at Ghazni we were warned that a great tribal gathering would bar our road at Mukur; but the people have not yet forgotten the action of Ahmed Khel, and not an armed man presents himself at any village we visit. For the first 6 miles out of Oba Karez, not a drop of water was found on the camel-thorn desert. Our route took us gradually nearer to the range of hills on the west, which rise almost perpendicularly out of the plain. The order of march was changed, the three brigades advancing abreast with their respective baggage in rear, and a regiment of cavalry arrayed on either flank. The country was so flat that our line extended for 2 miles, at times; and a brave show was thus made of our fighting strength. At about the seventh mile we were cheered by a line of trees in the far distance, showing where the Mukur villages were scattered on the headwaters of the Turnak River. Without any perceptible

rise or fall we crossed the watershed of the valley, and by noon our advanced guard of infantry was resting under the shade of the trees about a village at the foot of a hill 700 feet high, rising sheer above the springs from which the Turnak takes its rise. The camping-ground was on a rolling plain in rear of the village, and was the best on which we had yet encamped. Supplies were abundant, and we got such luxuries as fowls, eggs, and milk at reasonable rates. The villagers turned out in great numbers, and were generally fine, handsome fellows, good-natured, but very independent. We had to pull down a few of their houses for firewood; but as the owners were paid handsomely both for the wood and the "ruins," they did not lose their good temper, and we believed in the end that similar terms would have induced them to pull down the whole village.

August 20th will always be remembered, by those who survive the operations now being carried out, as a day full of privation, and calling for much endurance by officers and men. We marched from Mukur to Panjak, covering 21 miles by the direct road. Water was so scarce that followers fell exhausted on the roadside, and we had to send back *bhistees* with *mussuks* of water to save the *kahars* and others from dying of thirst. The heat was greater than ever in the day, although in the early morning the air had been bitterly cold. One company of a native regiment lay down in an irrigation channel, the water of which was too muddy to drink. Not a tree gave shade in any direction, and the arid plain with its scrub-growth seemed to grow red hot. I do not wish to exaggerate the sufferings of the army; but it should be counted in our favour hereafter that we are marching day after day through a half-desolate land, with no supports to fall back upon in case of disaster, and uncertain of what lay before us; with nothing but thin tents to shield us from a sun which laughed to scorn 100° in the shade, and with a water-supply so uncertain that we never knew in the morning where our camping-ground in the evening might be. At Panjak itself were good villages belonging to Aslam Khan, the Tokhi Chief, and we had water and supplies more than enough for our force; but the struggle to reach this oasis broke down many a man and beast. The troops were rewarded by the issue of an extra ration of rum, non-drinkers

receiving an extra meat ration; and as the heat had been so trying, it was debated whether, in future, reveillé should not sound at 1 A.M., and the march begin at 2.30 A.M., a bright moon favouring this arrangement.

We had again news from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, and in the evening Sir F. Roberts issued the following Divisional Order:—

"The Lieutenant-General has received news from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, dated the 18th instant. All was well with the garrison, and the neighbouring country was still quiet. A letter has been received from Major-General Phayre, C.B., dated Quetta, 12th August, in which he states that he is marching with a large force of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, British and native, and expects to reach Candahar not later than the 2nd of September. Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts takes this opportunity of thanking the troops under his command for the admirable manner in which they have executed this march from Cabul hitherto. If the present rate of marching be continued, Khelat-i-Ghilzai should be reached not later than the 23rd, and Candahar not later than the 29th. By the latest accounts the Afghan army under Ayub Khan is still at Candahar. The Lieutenant-General hopes it may remain there, and that the honour of relieving the British garrison may fall to the lot of the magnificent troops now with him."

At Panjak we heard from Mahomed Sadik, who met us in accordance with previous arrangements, that Ayub Khan had written to Aslam Khan ordering him to collect supplies, but all that the Tokhi Chiefs had done was to raid upon a village the previous day and carry off two *maliks* and a quantity of grain. Native report also stated that Ayub's men were driving three mines into Candahar, but rocky ground had prevented them from making much progress.

On August 21st we reached a camping-ground called Garjui, 3 miles short of Tazi, our march being 18 miles. Shahjui, the northern limit of the Candahar Province, was passed, and here again some little interest was excited, as we could see the hill on the right where Sartorius won his V.C., when Sahib Jan was defeated and killed. The country was very open and water fairly plentiful. Camp was pitched on the right bank of the Turnak. Captain Straton, with a small party of signallers, had gone on

ahead with the cavalry and climbed the Tazi Hill, whence he expected to communicate by heliograph with Khelat-i-Ghilzai. Seeing a hill in the distance, which seemed to answer to the description of the fortress, he directed his light upon it, and within ten minutes came back an answering flash. In half an hour General Roberts and Colonel Tanner had exchanged messages, and then we learned of the disastrous sortie of the 16th and the death of General Brooke and the other brave fellows who fell with him. Colonel Tanner informed us that he would send a company of his regiment to Baba Kazai to encamp there and collect supplies for us.

On August 22nd, reveillé sounded at 1 A.M., and we marched at 2.30, the heat of the few previous days having been so great that night marching was decided upon. The troops turned out with alacrity, but in the half-darkness it was hard work to get all the baggage animals clear of camp, particularly as the face of the country had quite changed, the road passing over rolling hills which shut out the view on either hand. All cultivation ceased except in the bed of the river, which lay in places 200 or 300 feet below the road. Here and there were fields of Indian-corn which promised rich crops in the future. After 17 miles we reached Baba Kazai and found the company of Beluchis awaiting us with piles of *bhoosa* and corn ready to our hand. We pitched on the hillside, within 200 yards of Turnak, and were busy all day exchanging heliograms with Khelat-i-Ghilzai.

On the following day (August 23rd) the force marched again at 1 A.M., this being our fifteenth march from Beni Hissar. We covered 17 miles, and were heartily glad to see the fortress of Khelat-i-Ghilzai rising before us. As our force marched to its camping-ground to the south of the solitary hill, great crowds of villagers lined the road and watched with curiosity the appearance of regiment after regiment. The number of Ghoorkas and Sikhs astonished them greatly, and they plainly respected the composition of the army marching to the relief of Candahar. A letter from Major Adam, Assistant Quartermaster-General with General Primrose, was handed to General Roberts, and we learned more details of the Deh-i-Khwaja sortie, and of the position in the city. The following are the more interesting portions of Major Adams's letter, which was dated 17th August:—

"Ayub's forces, dislodged by our guns from their camp close to the Ghoorka lines, have taken to the ground between Mir Bazaar and the Argandab River, where they are sheltered by the high range of hills west of this. He had two guns (an Armstrong and one of our 9-pounders captured at Maiwand) on Picquet Hill. One was dismounted by our fire yesterday. He has also a 6-pounder in an embrasure near the Head-Quarters' Garden; one in Deh-i-Khwaja 900 yards east of the Cabul Gate, and a third in a garden 1,100 yards from the Shikarpur Gate. The villages all round the walls are held, as is also a portion of our old cantonment walls. Some of the regular regiments are cantoned in the villages, which contain besides very large contingents of outsiders. Yesterday morning, hoping to get into Deh-i-Khwaja to pull down the loopholed walls facing the Cabul and Bur Durani Gates, we made a sortie with 300 cavalry and 900 infantry drawn from the 7th Fusiliers, and 19th and 28th Bombay Native Infantry. The village was found to be strongly held, and honeycombed with loopholes. Our infantry managed to pull through, but could not gain a hold upon the place, though the enemy's supports got a good 'slating' from our cavalry, and from our infantry and artillery fire. We had to get back to the walls of the city under heavy fire from the village walls: and our loss, in officers particularly, was very heavy . . . . . The enemy must, however, have seen that we have some fighting power in us, and we heard that the regular regiments under Ayub would not turn out to reinforce the village, so that an effect had been produced, and the *morale* of our troops here is still good. The misfortune is they have so few officers to native regiments: wearing helmets makes them a conspicuous mark, of which the enemy fully avail themselves. Our supplies are abundant, with the exception of mutton and *bhoosa*. Of the latter we have about ten days' full ration, which we can make last fifteen, and good luck may produce hidden stores in the town. We are in daily search, and get nearly 20,000lbs. per day. . . . . The enemy here, I fancy, begin to think the game is nearly up, and if they mean to assault, they must do so within a day or two. We are very secure: the buildings round the walls have mostly been cleared away, *abattis* of trees, wire entanglements, *chevaux de frise*, traverses, flank defences, blue lights,

shells, small mines in drains—all have been got ready; and if they do attack it will be at a great loss of life to them. They say they have many ladders ready, but as they will require at least from ten to fifteen men to carry them, and most will have to be got over 600 yards of open ground, you can imagine that their chances of success are very small. They ran away like hares yesterday when our cavalry got them in the open, and also when our sappers turned round and gave them a volley. Ayub's position is well chosen: his right flank cannot be turned, resting as it does on a high hill that cannot be crossed, and his left is on the Argandab, while along his front he has a number of orchards and canals which can only be crossed at a few points. Artillery fire is required to cover any infantry movement to attack his centre, and before that can be attempted Picquet Hill must be taken. You will recognize how thoroughly he has protected himself, and how powerless we are to attack until strongly reinforced. We find it most difficult to get news. The whole place is covered by groups of villages; and the ghazis are spread about in the old cavalry lines and the cantonments. I only got a view of Ayub's camp the other day by going out at dark, getting on a hill before daybreak, and waiting until daylight. Phillips, supporting with cavalry, had a narrow escape. Thinking to capture two men on *yaboos* I gave chase, but they were too far ahead, and raised an alarm. Their artillery turned out and opened fire, not at me, but at Phillips' squadron. One shell burst under his horse's nose, and although Mayne and two orderlies were standing by, the only damage done was the orderly's horse shot. Altogether there is no want of excitement."

This letter shows the thorough nature of the investment of Candahar and how helpless the garrison has become in the face of Ayub's overwhelming strength.

I have not energy enough to say much about Khelat-i-Ghilzai itself: the character of the fortress is well known, and with the thermometer registering 105° in tents, and a hot wind blowing, I find the task of climbing up to the gates too much. Picture a hill rising out of a plain some hundreds of feet, with a strong wall, loopholed and bastioned encircling it near the top, and above all a huge rock springing out of the middle of the

enclosed space, and you have Khelat-i-Ghilzai. It boasts a hot and a cold spring within the walls, and has other natural features which might interest the geologist. Its barracks will accommodate a sufficiently large garrison to man the walls, against which no infantry assault could be successful, but there is a long, flat-topped hill about 3,000 yards away from which artillery could command the place and make the garrison very uncomfortable. The country about is not at all attractive, barren rolling hills stretching away as far as the eye can reach. We all pity the unlucky fellows who have had to hold the place for so many months.

CAVALRY HEAD-QUARTERS, ROBAT, 27*th August.*

To-day we have established heliographic communication with the Candahar Garrison, and we have now in our camp Colonel St. John, Chief Political Officer, Major Adam, A.Q.M.G., Major Leech, V.C., R.E., and Captain Anderson, commanding the escort of Poona Horse. This morning, when the garrison saw the first flash of Captain Straton's mirror, they could scarcely believe that it was the heliograph. We were three days in advance of the time laid down by the wiseacres for our appearance. To-day is the 19th from Beni Hissar, and although the infantry is one march in rear, here we are with two regiments of cavalry exchanging notes with officers of the lately besieged garrison, and coolly camping within one march of Ayub's camp on the Argandab. I do not wish to boast of the work done by troops whose marches I have shared, and with whom is all my sympathy; but it has been "grand going," to use a hunting phrase, and we hope the finish will be as good, for Ayub has *not* fled, although he has raised the siege of the city. Our troops are perhaps a little tired with their hard work, but a day's rest will give them new strength, and this rest they can now take without anxiety, for Candahar is safe, and there is every sign that the enemy will await our approach, and defend the strong position they hold with great determination.

We have of late marched at 2.30 each morning, and consequently I have seen but little of the country passed through. My general impression is, that it is wild and bleak, the road

following the course of the Turnak River, which is not a very large stream at this time of the year. On August 25th we marched to Jaldak, sixteen miles. As we were striking camp at Khelat-i-Ghilzai, some bands of robbers tried to get past our picquets near the river, the mist rising from the water covering their movements. They plainly hoped to pick up a few stray mules with their loads, as there is always great confusion when a large force has to move off in the darkness, for the moon is now a very poor substitute for daylight. The thieves, unfortunately for themselves, found that Ghoorkas are unusually keen-sighted, and the result was that four Afghans were killed before our rear-guard had left the fortress in rear. We watched the shooting while our advance-brigade was waiting for orders to move, and the reports which followed us were satisfactory. Nothing was lost, although a *kahar* who straggled had a narrow escape. He was enjoying a peaceful "smoke" over the dying embers of his fire on the camping-ground, when a small party of Afghans came upon him. He cried out vigorously for help, and the Subadar of the 5th Ghoorkas, with a few of his men, ran back from the rear-guard. For a moment the Afghans faced them, but the Subadar cut one man down with his sword, and another being shot the robbers decamped. This is the only occasion on which our men have been troubled on picquet.

Yesterday (August 25th) we reached Tirandez, sixteen miles, a rather troublesome march, as the road skirted a low range of hills on the right, and was in places too narrow to admit of the troops marching in open formation. At Tirandez, the General received letters from General Primrose and Colonel St. John, in which it was stated that Ayub Khan had become alarmed at the near approach of the Cabul Force, and had raised the siege of the city on the 24th. Sir F. Roberts thereupon resolved to put himself into direct communication with the garrison as quickly as possible, and General Hugh Gough was ordered to hold two regiments of cavalry in readiness to march to Robat, whence heliograms could be exchanged with Candahar. Robat is thirty-four miles from Tirandez, and about eighteen from Candahar. The 3rd Punjab Cavalry and the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, who could muster the most available sabres, were told off by General Gough, and at 1 A.M.

they started from camp, their baggage following on the wiry little ponies which serve as baggage animals. I accompanied the cavalry, with the permission of the General. Sir F. Roberts, with Colonel Chapman, Chief of the Staff, Major Hastings, and Major Euan Smith, intended to ride with the cavalry, in order to meet Colonel St. John, who, it was thought, might ride out from Candahar to Robat. When, howevever, we reached Khel-i-Akhund, where the Beluchis were encamped, word was sent to General Hugh Gough that Sir F. Roberts was so weak from an attack of fever that he could not proceed further. The cavalry were ordered to complete their march, Colonel Chapman alone of the original party going on with them.

We rode quietly onwards, halting every seven or eight miles to give our horses a feed in the fields of Indian-corn, and allow the baggage ponies to close up in the rear. We did not know what might be in the front of us—had not Ayub some thousands of Aimak horsemen, who were great at surprises?—and we kept in as compact a body as possible, while our advance-guard and scouts on the flanks were on the watch for any signs of the enemy. But all was quiet, though a few unarmed men were met who were believed to be returning from Ayub's army to their homes. They reported Candahar as no longer besieged, and added that all the villages about it were quite deserted. This news was confirmed by a number of men, well mounted and armed with rifles and swords, who had been sent out by the Wali Shere Ali to meet our army. At about the twenty-seventh mile we had our last halt at a running stream, where forage was plentiful, and we then pushed on over a series of low stony hills until the open desert plain lying north-east of Candahar was reached. The range of hills on our left trended away to the south, but on the right we could follow the line separating us from the Argandab, and could see distinctly the high-rounded hill (called, I think, the "Brigade Major") which juts up on the eastern flank of the Baba Wali Kotal. "Ayub's army is behind that; let us hope he will stay there"—was the substance of our talk for the first few minutes as we looked down from the last rolling hill above the Robat villages; and then came inquiries as to the position of Candahar. Some distance to the left of the "Brigade Major," and separated from

it by a break in the range, rose a conical hill at the foot of a higher ridge. Candahar was said to lie, in our line of vision, directly beneath this hill. Captain Straton had brought with him some of his mounted signallers, and at half-past eleven a light was directed towards Candahar. We could not see the city, even with our telescopes, as a thick haze hung over the country about it, and for a quarter of an hour no answer was given. The first signal station was on a low hillock to the left of the road, but Captain Straton took another instrument to the slope of a rocky ridge on the right, whence also he could communicate with the main body of our troops halted for the day at Khel-i-Akhund. He had scarcely left the road than Sergeant Anderson, with the first heliograph, saw a faint flash at Candahar. It was so weak a glimmer that nothing could be made out, but in a few minutes we read a message:—"Who are you?" The answer given was "General Gough and two regiments of cavalry," and then Captain Straton's light was evidently seen by the signallers in Candahar, who, puzzled by two flashes, asked:—"Where are you?" After this, our first station was closed, and the signallers with Captain Straton began sending messages from Colonel Chapman to General Primrose. We learned that all was well with them in Candahar, and that Colonel St. John would ride out to Robat in the afternoon. The two cavalry regiments then moved down to Robat, and as all their baggage had arrived at half-past twelve, camp was at once pitched. This forced march of thirty-four miles was in itself quite a little success, and that the baggage animals should be only an hour behind the sowars proved that with proper management there need be no difficulty in moving cavalry long distances, even when tents and all the belongings of a regiment are brought on. The heat has been terrific all day, and without tents we should have suffered much discomfort.

At four o'clock this afternoon, as Colonel St. John had not arrived, Colonel Chapman started for the camp at Khel-i-Akhund with a small escort. His day's ride will be fifty-four miles, but his untiring energy will carry him through, and it is important Sir Frederick Roberts should have his Chief of the Staff with him owing to his own illness. About five o'clock our videttes looking toward Candahar sent word that a body of cavalry was coming across

the plain; and the sowars, only too anxious to have a brush with the enemy, raised a cry that the Afghan horsemen were coming. We fully believed it to be merely Colonel St. John and his escort, but the 3rd Bengal Cavalry were ordered to stand to their horses, and we saddled up to be ready for an emergency. In half an hour the cloud of dust which the videttes had seen resolved itself at first into two horsemen, Colonel St. John and Major Leech, V.C., R.E., who were soon shaking hands with General Gough and his Staff. They had ridden ahead of Major Adam and the troop of Poona Horse under Captain Anderson, which was acting as escort, and which our own party had hoped was a detachment of Ayub's cavalry. We made our guests as comfortable as our limited camp equipage would permit, and then we listened to long stories of the disaster at Maiwand, the terrible retreat back to Candahar, the abandonment of cantonments, and the subsequent investment of the city, with its leading incident of the sortie of the 16th inst. So many serious charges could be framed on these stories, that until I have had full time to examine quietly into the whole affair I will refrain from mentioning them. The necessity for the assembling of a court of inquiry as soon as we have re-established our military supremacy is so great that both the Indian Government and the military authorities will utterly fail in their duty, if they do not order such a court to be formed. There can be no lack of evidence, and the blame should fall on those primarily responsible for rendering possible such a disaster as we have now come to retrieve, while the charges against individuals and regiments should be investigated without fear of consequences. I hope hereafter to tell the plain story of the action at Maiwand and the retreat upon Candahar, as also to see what justification there was for abandoning cantonments before General Burrows and the Chief Political Officer had arrived. Serious reflections may have to be cast. If we are successful in crushing Ayub, there may be a feeling that ugly truths should be slurred over and everything made pleasant all round, but this would be a fatal mistake. A repetition of the events of the last month might seriously imperil our military prestige in the eyes of Asiatic nations, and re-act dangerously upon our Indian Empire.

CANDAHAR, 31*st August, Evening.*

We are at last "in touch" with the enemy, and while I am writing a sharp interchange of shots is taking place between our picquets near the Abasabad village and certain bloodthirsty Afghans who have been stirred up by a reconnaissance made this afternoon. Ayub's guns on the Baba Wali Kotal are also booming out, and one or two shells have fallen into camp, but have done no damage. Before describing our position here I may as well bring to a close the story of Sir Frederick Roberts's rapid march to relieve the Candahar garrison.

On August 28th, the main body of the Cabul Force marched from Khel-i-Akhund to Robat, a distance of twenty miles, all the sick and footsore being left about ten miles short of Robat, in charge of Colonel Tanner with the 2nd Beluchis. Our forced marching was now at an end; Candahar was relieved, and as our spies reported that Ayub had no intention of running away, there was no necessity for hurrying under the walls of Candahar itself. On August 29th we enjoyed a halt while Colonel Tanner brought in the sick, and on the 30th we quietly changed camp to Momand, some eleven miles nearer the city. General Roberts's forced-marching may therefore be looked upon as ending with Robat, when the extraordinary distance of 303 miles had been covered in twenty days. I may be wrong in stating that such a march of 10,000 fighting men is unprecedented, but there can only be one opinion as to the energy of the General who could direct such a movement, and the endurance of the men to carry it out. From Beni Hissar to Robat our marches (as marked by head-quarters) were as follows:—

August	9th to Zahidabad	16 miles.
,,	10th to Zerghun Shahr	14 ,,
,,	11th to Padkhao Barak	18 ,,
,,	12th to Amir Kila	11 ,,
,,	13th to Takia.	12 ,,
,,	14th to Shashgao	17 ,,
,,	15th to Ghazni	13 ,,
,,	16th to Yergatta	20 ,,
,,	17th to Chardeh	12 ,,
,,	18th to Oba Karez	16 ,,
,,	19th to Mukur	15 ,,

August 20th	to Panjak	21 miles.
,, 21st	to Garjui	18 ,,
,, 22nd	to Bala Kazai	17 ,,
,, 23rd	to Khelat-i-Ghilzai	17 ,,
,, 24th	*Halt.*	
,, 25th	to Jaldak	16 ,,
,, 26th	to Tirandez	16 ,,
,, 27th	to Khel-i-Akhund	14 ,,
,, 28th	to Robat	20 ,,

Thus, as I have said, in twenty days more than 300 miles have been covered, giving an average (including one day's halt) of fifteen miles per day. I will leave it to military critics to decide as to the merits of such a march. Our hospital returns at Robat show 68 Europeans, 448 sepoys, and 291 followers, to be under treatment; a small percentage out of 18,000 men.

CHAPTER III.

The Arrival at Candahar—Meeting of Sir F. Roberts and General Primrose—The Entry into the City—Loyal Sirdars—Reconnaissance along the Herat Road—Demonstrations in Force by the Afghans—Steadiness of our Native Troops—The Battle of Candahar—The Enemy's Position—Sir Frederick Robert's Plan of Attack—Occupation of Gundigan by Ayub Khan—Strength of the British Force—Storming of the Village of Mullah Sahibdad by Macpherson's Brigade—Bombardment of the Baba Wali Kotal—General Baker's Movement on the Left Flank—Difficult Nature of the Ground—Death of Captain Frome and Colonel Brownlow, 72nd Highlanders—A Charge by Ghazis—The Turning of the Pir Paimal Ridge—Major White's Gallantry—Bayonet Charge of the 92nd Highlanders and Capture of Two Guns—Dispersion of the Afghan Army and Advance upon Mazra—Capture of Ayub's Camp and Thirty-three Guns—Description of the Camp—Recovery of Small-Arm Ammunition—The Death of Captain Straton and Lieutenant Maclaine—The Cavalry Pursuit—The Casualties in the British Ranks.

CANDAHAR, 31*st August*, 1880, *Evening*.

OUR entry into Candahar has been made without any great parade, and with rather a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the garrison we have relieved. This morning our force left Momand and marched slowly towards Candahar, where the leading regiments of Macpherson's brigade piled arms outside the Shikarpur Gate

soon after 9 o'clock. Sir Frederick Roberts was still so weak from fever brought on by exposure to the sun, that he was carried in a dhoolie to within two or three miles of the city. Here he managed to mount his horse, and, with General Ross and his Staff, to ride forward. He was met some distance east of Deh-i-Khwaja by General Primrose and his brigadiers, with their respective staffs, Colonel St. John, and other officers of the garrison. There was much hand-shaking and hasty introduction, and then the united party rode across the cultivated ground and made for the southern face of the city. Deh-i-Khwaja was passed with its doomed houses, and strong enclosures half-hidden by trees, wherein so many men fell on the 16th, and then we passed fatigue parties of Bombay sepoys at work clearing out the *karez* on that side of the city. Outside the Shikarpur Gate was a crowd of natives and soldiers, a rude sort of bazaar having been established, and it was with some difficulty a way was made through the throng. It was arranged that our troops were to halt outside this Gate and breakfast quietly, prior to any movements which might afterwards be decided upon. General Roberts and Staff rode into the city with the usual cavalry escort, and here a rather ridiculous ceremony was gone through. We had been much impressed by sand-bags on the parapet and in the flanking bastions, wire entanglement and *abattis* outside the walls, and other signs of the late stern business on hand, when suddenly, as we rode bravely up the broad streets towards the citadel, we came across the Wali Shere Ali "and the rest of the royal family," as they were irrelevantly dubbed, drawn up on horseback on the right of the road. They were clad in most gorgeous attire, so dazzling to the eye that in the sunshine the effect was overpowering; while their helmets of velvet, or whatever stuff they might be, were so bespiked, besilvered, and made generally beautiful, that our poor *khaki* headpieces sank into insignificance. Their chargers were tail-down in the dirty drain skirting the road, but when they were spurred forward and shook their crests and curvetted in all proud wilfulness, one quite expected a riding-master to step forward and cry "Houp-la!" for there never was a better imitation of a circus pageant on a small scale. General Roberts was politeness itself to the unlucky Wali, whose only anxiety, I hear, is to retire to

India on a pension, and the cavalcade went prancing up the street to Char Soo, where the two main roads of Candahar bisect each other. Here a turn to the left was taken along a sort of boulevard, and then the Wali and suite plunged into a narrow by-path which led to the Nawab's house. Rooms were placed at General Roberts's disposal therein, but I am unable to say if any real circus does exist within the walls, as no one under the rank of a first-class aide-de-camp was admitted.

It was not long before the first movement paving the way to an attack upon Ayub Khan's position was made. That position may be roughly described as lying between the Argandab River and Candahar, from which it is separated by a high range of hills, through which on the right is a path leading over the Murcha Kotal (commanded on all sides), while the Baba Wali Kotal gives direct access in front. This Kotal has now three or four guns upon it, and our spies report the narrow road over it to have been destroyed. To the south-west of this Kotal runs the Pir Paimal Hill, a precipitous ridge protecting Ayoub's right, but liable to be turned as it ends abruptly in the plain. As this plain is covered with orchards and walled enclosures, with scores of deep water-cuts and channels running in every direction, any turning movement we may make must have for its first object the clearing of the ground in front of the south-west face of the ridge. Fortunately there is on the southern face of Baba Wali Kotal and the Pir Paimal Ridge an inferior ridge, quite detached from the main ranges, and with from 1,000 to 2,000 yards of fairly open country intervening. This ridge has on the east a point known as Picquet Hill, commanding the cantonments, while the portion to the south-west is called Karez Hill from certain wells of pure spring-water near its foot. It was thought our brigades could encamp safely in rear of these, as they would be protected from shells thrown from the Baba Wali Kotal, and accordingly General Ross directed Macpherson's Brigade, with the screw-guns and two of the C-2 Battery, R.A., to push forward and occupy Picquet and Karez Hills. The troops moved off from the Shikarpur Gate before noon, and in an hour Colonel Chapman heliographed to General Roberts, who was still resting in Candahar:—"Line of advance secured without opposition." A few shots were fired, but they

were at long ranges, and it was found that the village of Gundigan, in the heart of the orchards and enclosures, had not been occupied by the enemy, which was a great point in our favour. The other two brigades of infantry under Generals Baker and Macgregor were accordingly ordered by General Ross to take up their positions under Picquet and Karez Hills; and the relative position of our infantry is now as follows:—In rear of Picquet Hill, and consequently nearest to cantonments, General Baker's Brigade; on his left General Macpherson's Brigade, sheltered by Karez Hill; and again to the extreme left, nearest Gundigan and the Herat Road, General Macgregor's troops, which are partly in orchards.

Finding the enemy not in position in front of the Pir Paimal ridge, Colonel Chapman thought a reconnaissance should be made to "draw" Ayub's army more from its shell, and this afternoon the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, under command of Colonel Mackenzie, supported by the 15th Sikhs and two mountain guns, moved out along the Herat Road to some low hills, whence a view of the basin in rear of Pir Paimal and Baba Wali Kotal could be obtained. General Hugh Gough and Colonel Chapman accompanied the reconnoitring party in order to direct its movements. The cavalry met with no opposition, and made their way for 3 or 4 miles without any difficulty, but presently armed men were seen running from orchard to orchard and from enclosure to enclosure, plainly hoping to get between the reconnoitring party and our main body. Accordingly it was determined to retire, and no sooner did the Afghans see the sowars get into motion than they swarmed out from the rear of Pir Paimal and opened a hot fire with Martinis and Sniders. But our cavalry were well in hand and retired at a walk, the 15th Sikhs skirmishing out to protect them. The enemy unmasked five guns about Pir Paimal and shelled our men with great energy, but this did not hurry our movements. The cavalry completed its retirement with only four casualties, and then the 15th Sikhs found they had to bear an attack from some 5,000 men, who pressed them very closely. Ayub's regulars must have been amongst them, as bugle-calls were sounded, and there was an attempt at regular formation now and then when charges were made. The Sikhs behaved

admirably, although crowds of Afghans were at times within 50 yards of them. From the firing it seemed as if Ayoub were about to risk a general action, the meaning of our reconnaissance being misunderstood. General Macgregor turned out the 4th Ghoorkas and some of the Rifles to cover the final retirement of the 15th Sikhs, and steady volley firing checked the onward movement of the enemy. The Ghoorkas occupied the village of Chilzina and the near heights, thus making our left flank secure. It was not, however, until after six o'clock that the firing lulled, the rattle of musketry being increased by the gunners on the Baba Wali Kotal firing over the breaks in Picquet Hill upon the 1st and 2nd Brigades. The 15th Sikhs have had one man killed and four or five wounded—a very slight loss indeed, considering the heavy fire they were exposed to. The reconnaissance has been a great success, for we have ascertained that Ayub is holding Pir Paimal in strength, and has at least five guns in position there. To-morrow we shall direct an attack on his right flank, and once Pir Paimal is captured, we can take the Baba Wali Kotal in reverse. The firing from that Kotal has only resulted in frightening a few mules, most of the shells not bursting. Our picquets are likely to be kept well awake by the sharp-shooters of Ayub, who are in the orchards skirting the Herat Road.

CANDAHAR CANTONMENTS, *3rd September.*

The reconnaissance made on the afternoon of the 31st of August had demonstrated that Ayub Khan had with him a large body of men anxious to meet our force at the earliest opportunity. The picquets of the 60th Rifles holding Karez Hill were fired into all night by small parties of the enemy, who took shelter behind the rocks on the northern slope of the hill, and among the orchards and enclosures below. From what we have since heard there can be no doubt that the Afghan army were much elated with the affair of the previous day, and did not at all understand that our object had been merely to draw them a little from their position, so as to feel our way cautiously before delivering a decisive attack. We have been told that they looked upon our reconnaissance as an attempt to force the left of their position by way

of Pir Paimal, and consequently made up their minds that, having failed in that quarter, we should next turn our attention to the Baba Wali Kotal. I do not know whether I have already explained quite clearly the relative positions of our own and Ayub Khan's army, and I will therefore once more sketch the ground on which the action took place.

Taking the city of Candahar itself as a point from which the bearings may be fixed, there lies to the north-west, at a distance of between two and three miles, a range of hills which may be considered an offshoot from the chief range trending away to the north and forming the eastern boundary of the Argandab Valley. Due north of the city is a break in the chief range known as the Murcha Kotal, which leads into the rich Argandab Valley beyond. The hills to the south-west from this Kotal are a good deal broken and are generally extremely precipitous. At some pre-historic period there has been a great convulsion, in which the range has been shattered and a series of half-isolated ridges and detached hills formed. Thus, from the Murcha Kotal, in a south-westerly direction, stretches a high ridge, then a slight dip, then a rounded hill rising to a height of nearly 1,500 feet (known by the name of the Brigade Major), with sides naturally scarped, then a rapid fall and a break in the continuity of the ridge which allows a road to pass over the range at a moderate incline. The Kotal thus formed is known as the Baba Wali, and as the crow flies it lies exactly two miles and a half from the north-west bastion of the city. To its eastern front are some low rolling hills on which Ayub Khan usually stationed a cavalry picquet. From the Baba Wali Kotal the ridge gradually rises again until its highest peaks are 1,200 feet above the plain: it never loses its precipitous character, and, looked at from Candahar, appears quite inaccessible on its southern face. It stretches about a mile, always in a south-westerly direction from the Kotal, and then ends abruptly in the plain, there being a sheer fall of several hundred feet at its western end. It is here that the gap occurs through which the road from Candahar to Herat passes, and the canals from the Argandab are conducted which supply water to the city and the neighbouring villages. Looking from Candahar westwards, one sees on the right the precipitous ridge known as the Pir Paimal

Hill, and on the left another high ridge overlooking the ruins of old Candahar. The intermediate space has in the background a striking conical hill and various other disrupted masses thrown off from the higher ridges. The foreground is simply a network of orchards, gardens, and walled enclosures, between which and the city walls lie the cantonments built by us forty years ago. Fortunately there also lies, some 2,000 yards south of the Pir Paimal Ridge, a detached ridge which would serve as a screen to any force making a demonstration against the Kotal, or attempting a turning movement round by way of the Argandab canals. The eastern part of this subsidiary ridge is known as Picquet Hill, a picquet being generally posted upon it as a guard to the cantonments and to watch the Kotal; while the remainder of the ridge is called Karez Hill, from the springs found a little to the south of it. Both these hills are within range of field-guns placed on the Kotal, but troops encamped beneath them on the southern side are well sheltered. The walled enclosures previously mentioned cluster very thickly on either side of the Herat Road, and with the orchards give good cover to the troops encamped about them. Such an encampment was formed by General Roberts on the afternoon of the 31st August; the 3rd Brigade (General Macgregor) being across the Herat Road and in rear of the westernmost point of Karez Hill; the 1st Brigade (General Macpherson) coming next on his right below the low line of rocks connecting the two hills, and the 2nd Brigade (General Baker) being half a mile in rear of Picquet Hill and close to the western part of the cantonments. General Roberts had taken up his head-quarters in Rahim Dil Khan's house, formerly used as the habitation of the Royal Engineers. This house was in rear of the 1st and 2nd Brigades, and the enemy tried to get its range; but only one blind shell was pitched within the walls of the garden. A telegraph office was opened in one of the lower rooms, the wire being laid from the Candahar citadel, to enable direct communication to be kept up with the city. On the evening of the 31st the plan of attack was finally decided upon, its main features being a heavy cannonade and demonstration of infantry against the Baba Wali Kotal, whilst the 1st and 2nd Brigades were to force the enemy's right by way of Pir Paimal, take the

Kotal in reverse, and then storm Ayub's "entrenched" camp at Mazra, two miles or more up the Argandab Valley. The Bombay brigade of cavalry were to watch the Murcha Kotal, while General Roberts's cavalry, under command of General Hugh Gough, were to cross the Argandab River and cut off the enemy's retreat westward. It may be as well, now, to mention that the cavalry could not get direct to the river as was expected; the village of Gundigan, which they had found deserted on the previous day, and through which they had to pass, having been strongly occupied by the enemy during the night. This village was in the midst of the orchards lying westwards of Karez Hill, and it showed great enterprise on the part of Ayub to occupy it after our reconnaissance had been made.

The brigades told off to make the turning movement round the Pir Paimal Ridge mustered the following strength (including officers) at roll-call on the morning of the 1st:—

1st Brigade, commanded by General Macpherson.

9-8, Royal Artillery (six screw-guns)	218	officers and men.	
92nd Highlanders	501	,,	,,
2nd Ghoorkas	411	,,	,,
23rd Pioneers	600	,,	,,
24th Punjab Infantry	361	,,	,,
Total strength	2,091		

2nd Brigade, commanded by General Baker.

No. 2 Mountain Battery (six guns)	200	officers and men.	
72nd Highlanders	561	,,	,,
2nd Sikhs	495	,,	,,
3rd Sikhs	441	,,	,,
5th Ghoorkas	477	,,	,,
2nd Beluchis	444	,,	,,
Total strength	2,618		

The 3rd Brigade, commanded by General Macgregor, was held in reserve on its own camping-ground. Its strength was as follows:—

3rd Brigade, commanded by General Macgregor.

11-9, Royal Artillery, Mountain Battery (six guns)	.	126	officers and men.
2-60th Rifles	.	517	,, ,,
4th Ghoorkas	.	516	,, ,,
15th Sikhs	.	498	,, ,,
25th Punjab Infantry	.	526	,, ,,
Total strength	.	2,183	

From the Candahar garrison the following troops were detailed by General Primrose, and from this list and that which follows, the strength of the garrison when relieved can be made out:—

Corps.	British.		Native.
	Officers.	Men.	
Divisional Staff	6	—	—
Cavalry Brigade Staff	3	—	—
1st Brigade Staff	2	—	—
2nd Brigade Staff	2	—	—
E-B, Royal Horse Artillery	6	139	—
C-2, Royal Artillery	5	135	—
5-11, Royal Artillery	3	92	—
2-7th Fusiliers	13	376	—
66th Regiment	11	229	—
1st Grenadiers Native Infantry	3	—	152
4th Rifles Native Infantry	4	—	335
19th Native Infantry	6	—	508
28th Native Infantry	3	—	400
No. 2 Company Sappers	1	—	38
Poona Horse	4	—	125
3rd Scind Horse	4	—	410
3rd Bombay Light Cavalry	5	—	218
Total	81	971	2,186

The total strength of this force of Bombay troops amounted to a little over 8,220, with fourteen guns, viz., four 40-pounders, four 9-pounder Horse Artillery, and six 9-pounder field-guns.

There were left in garrison in the citadel and guarding the city the following troops:—

2-7th Fusiliers—two officers, 132 men; 66th Regiment—two officers, 146 men; 1st Grenadiers—one officer, 152 men; and 30th Native Infantry (Jacob's Rifles)—three officers and 330 men; or a total of 768 officers and men.

Our troops breakfasted at eight o'clock, and an hour later they were ready for the hard day's work before them. Sir F. Roberts moved his head-quarters to Karez Hill, Rahim Dil Khan's house being allotted for the day to General Primrose and his Staff. Captain Straton had established heliographic stations at various points, linking the force together wherever it should move, the three chief stations being on Karez Hill, the roof of Rahim Dil Khan's house, and on a spur commanding the Herat Road above the village of Chilzina, near old Candahar.

The enemy had been firing intermittently both from the Baba Wali Kotal and the Gundigan direction from daybreak, and it looked as if they were full of fight and not inclined to shirk joining issue with us. Our original plan had to be somewhat modified owing to Ayub Khan or his generalissimo, the Naib Hafizulla, having pushed their men round to the southern face of the Pir Paimal Ridge. Gundigan had been occupied during the night, and the order that Gough's cavalry with the four guns of E-B, R.H.A. (escorted by two companies of the 7th Fusiliers and four companies of the 28th Bombay Native Infantry), should form up on the low hill above the village could not be carried out. The movement was attempted, but it was at once seen that the place must be cleared by our infantry before cavalry could hope to get past. The movements of the cavalry on our left, which were to have been simultaneous with those of the two attacking brigades, were therefore delayed, General Gough having to take his brigade some eight miles round before he could strike the Argandab River. This was one forced modification of our plans, and a second was that the village of Mullah Sahibdad, on a low mound between Karez Hill and the Pir Paimal Ridge, had to be taken first by General Macpherson's Brigade, as some hundreds of Afghans had established themselves in it after nightfall the previous day. But all this was known long before General Roberts moved to Karez Hill, and preparations were made accordingly. General Ross had command of the infantry attack, and directed General Macpherson's Brigade to move forward through the gap between the Picquet and Karez Hills, clear the village of Mullah Sahibdad in their left front, and then pass on under the Pir Paimal Ridge, working their way between the canals along the lower slopes. General Baker

was ordered to take his brigade out to the left of Karez Hill, skirmish through the orchards, clear Gundigan village, and all the enclosures about it, and join hands with the 1st Brigade in the final movement round the Pir Paimal Ridge. Macpherson's Brigade was to be the brigade of direction, as it was moving on an inner line, and would probably first reach the Pir Paimal village on the northern slope of the ridge, to capture which would ensure the Baba Wali Kotal being taken in reverse. The action commenced soon after nine o'clock by our demonstration against that Kotal. In Kalacha-i-Haidar, near our old cavalry lines and some 2,200 yards from the Baba Wali Kotal, Brigadier-General Burrows had in position four 40-pounder breech-loading Armstrong guns, with four companies of the 7th Fusiliers, the 4th and 19th Bombay Infantry, and some Sappers. Six guns of C-2, R.A., were also in position at the Childukhteran village, between Karez and the Picquet Hills. Brigadier-General Daubeny, with four companies of the 66th Foot and four companies of the 28th Bombay Infantry, was holding a line between Chilzina on the left nd Picquet Hill on the right; the latter hill being crowned by o companies of the 1st Grenadiers. Further away on the right igadier-General Nuttall was watching both the Baba Wali and archa Kotals with the 3rd Scind Horse, 3rd Bombay Light valry, and the head-quarters of the Poona Horse. This made good display of force on our right, and at 9.15 A.M. precisely e 40-pounders began a vigorous cannonade of the Baba Wali otal. The shells seemed to burst with great accuracy, but the ree guns of the enemy in position there answered bravely ough, the shells showing that two breech-loading Armstrong pounders and one of our own Horse Artillery guns were ounted in the Pass. There was much stir and excitement ong such of the enemy as could be seen on the hills, but this s greatly increased when the guns of C-2 began shelling the lage of Mullah Sahibdad. Bullets from Martini and Snider les could be heard singing overhead, as if the Afghan marksmen ed long shots in the direction of the battery; but the enemy in e village kept well under cover, and when six guns of the screw ttery also opened upon the houses from just in front of the arez Hill, the shelling was so continuous that no one dared show

himself beyond the walls. Under cover of this fire General Ross began the infantry movement. General Macpherson moved the 2nd Ghoorkas and 92nd Highlanders out to the right and front of the village, the 23rd Pioneers (who had furnished an escort to the screw-guns), and the 24th Punjabees following the leading regiments as supports. At the same time General Baker got his brigade into motion and entered the orchards and enclosures which shut him out from Gundigan.

To follow the movements of General Macpherson's Brigade first: the 92nd and 2nd Ghoorkas had orders to "rush" the village without a halt, and they carried out their orders to perfection. It was the turn of the Ghoorkas to lead the brigade, and they were first out into the open, skirmishing rapidly forward under Colonel Battye and going straight for the southern front of the village. The 92nd under Colonel Parker worked round to the right, never pausing and doing but little in the way of returning the enemy's fire, which now became very rapid, the Afghans appearing on the roofs of the houses and lining every available wall. C-2 and 6-8 batteries renewed their shelling over the heads of our men, and this had a good moral effect, as the roofs of the houses were swept by shrapnel. At half-past ten the village had been carried at the point of the bayonet, the Ghoorkas, having the shortest distance to cover, entering first from the Karez Hill side, while the 92nd rushed in from the opposite side. A stubborn resistance was offered to their advance, the 92nd losing several men killed and wounded; among the latter being Lieutenants Menzies and Stewart. Lieutenant-Colonel Battye of the 2nd Ghoorkas was slightly wounded on the right shoulder, but he continued to lead his men. The village was full of ghazis, who sold their lives dearly, many shutting themselves up in underground chambers and firing upon our men as they passed. Some 200 Afghans were killed in this village alone. Lieutenant Menzies had a narrow escape. After he had been wounded he was placed in an empty room, for the sake of shade and comfort, when a ghazi, hidden in an inner room, rushed out, cut down one of the guard, and slashed Menzies over the head and back. The fanatic was killed before he could do any further mischief. C-2 and 6-8 batteries advanced when the village had been taken, and were

soon again in action, firing at the lower slopes of the ridge and into such bodies of Afghans as could be seen in the enclosures in front. So many men remained hidden in the village that Lieutenant-Colonel Battye remained with some of the Ghoorkas to clear them out; and two low hills north of the village had also to be cleared by part of the brigade, as the enemy, scattered about, occupied them in considerable numbers. But the main advance could not be delayed for these considerations, and the 92nd and two companies of the 2nd Ghoorkas (under Major Becher), with the 23rd Pioneers and 24th Punjab Native Infantry in support, disregarding a few shells from the Baba Wali Kotal, moved towards the south-western end of the ridge above them. They soon became involved in dry water-cuts, orchards, and enclosures, every yard of which had to be skirmished through, while a smart fire was poured down upon them from the crest of the ridge where the enemy mustered in force. General Macpherson told off picked marksmen to keep down this fire from above, and their steady shooting checked it to a great extent. Leaving Major White with the leading companies of the 92nd and Major Becher with his Ghoorkas to continue their hard fight round the corner of the ridge, I must turn now to the 2nd Brigade, which had penetrated into the maze of walls, trees and water-cuts on the left of General Macpherson's line of advance.

General Baker, upon moving out to the left of the Karez Hill, had, in his first line, the 72nd Highlanders, under Colonel Brownlow, and the 2nd Sikhs, the latter being on the right. In the next line, in immediate support, were the 5th Ghoorkas (in rear of the 72nd), No. 2 Mountain Battery, and the 3rd Sikhs (in rear of the 2nd Sikhs), with the 2nd Beluchis in reserve and escorting the Field Hospital. I have indicated the work which lay in front of the brigade, which had to work its way through walled orchards and gardens, where it was difficult to keep touch, and where at times the men could only see a few yards on either hand. But the work was done splendidly, the order of the day being to keep moving, and when once engaged to go steadily onward until the ridge should be turned. The right wing of the 72nd Highlanders, under Major Stockwell, carried orchard after orchard; but one check occurred where Captain Frome's company, resting for a

moment in a dry watercourse, was subjected to a terrible enfilading fire from a loopholed wall which the 2nd Sikhs were trying to turn on the right. Captain Frome and several men were shot down, and just when the fire was hottest Colonel Brownlow came up. He was on foot, and had just entered the watercourse, and was ordering a rush forward to be made when he was struck in the neck by a bullet and mortally wounded. He was dragged a little under cover, but died in a few minutes. His second in command, Major Stockwell, hearing of his death, hurried to the watercourse where Captain Frome's men were lying under such shelter as they could get, and forming them up round a protecting elbow of the channel made a rush at the wall. Once under the loopholes, the men were safe; and the defenders of the wall beginning to waver, the Highlanders placed the muzzles of their rifles through the loopholes from outside and poured a few volleys into the enclosure, completely demoralizing such of the enemy as remained. From this isolated struggle, which cost the 72nd so dear, an idea of the severity of the fighting may be formed. The right wing of the 72nd and the 2nd Sikhs were forced by the enemy's tactics to cover so much ground to the right that they left Gundigan on their left rear; but the left wing of the Highlanders under Major Guinness, and the 5th Ghoorkas, under Captain FitzHugh, cleared it with ease; so shaken were the men left to defend it by seeing their fellows running from the orchards beyond. General Baker's right had cleared the densest part of the gardens a short distance in advance of the 92nd on the right, but no sooner did they come a little into the open than the masses of the enemy in front tried to "rush" them; while three guns in position at the foot of a high hill, Kharoti Ridge, north of the Pir Paimal Ridge, opened fire upon them. Some of the ghazis actually charged into the ranks of the 2nd Sikhs, but could make no impression. The 72nd, seeing a large body of men preparing for a rush, fixed bayonets and charged out, completely dispersing the armed mob in front of them. One ghazi, more resolute than the rest, was shot by a sergeant at five yards' distance. Captain Murray had just given the word to charge, and had leaped out of a ditch with his men, when he was struck in the shoulder by a bullet fired from the ridge and severely wounded.

The 92nd Highlanders and Major Becher's Ghoorkas were now in alignment with the right of General Baker's Brigade, and the time had come for the final rush round the ridge. The enemy's right rested on the northern slope of Pir Paimal Ridge and extended across a basin (it can scarcely be called a kotal) between that ridge and the high Kharoti hill to the north already referred to. Behind the northern hill the large canals and watercourses from the Argandab River run, the river itself being a few hundred yards beyond the series of channels. It was in this basin that Ayub's army made its final stand. It had no real entrenchments to line, but a deep water-cut 12 feet broad, with banks 2 or 3 feet high, and with cultivated fields in front, served as an excellent defence. The banks had been ingeniously loopholed for rifle-fire. There were two camps of twenty or thirty tents each in rear of this channel. The first was well away to General Baker's left under the northern hill, and in it were three guns; the second was in the middle of the basin and had two guns in position. The village of Pir Paimal was on the slope some distance to the left front of the second camp and right in the path of Macpherson's Brigade. The latter were moving in an inner circle close under the ridge, while General Baker's troops had to work well round to the left so as to close with the guns under the northern hill and block all escape from the basin in that direction.

The action from this point can best be understood by following the movements of the 92nd Highlanders and 2nd Ghoorkas. They rounded the south-western face of the Pir Paimal Ridge, and succeeded in capturing the village of that name by a series of "rushes" and by turning the walls on the right. Major White, with the leading companies of his regiment, then found himself face to face with some thousands of men, who seemed determined to make a final stand about their two guns in the basin. The plan of our attack was for the two brigades to sweep steadily up the basin in line; but General Macpherson saw that as he had advanced so far, and there was a tendency among the enemy to surge forward in overwhelming numbers, there was nothing for it but to continue his advance. Whenever the 92nd and Ghoorkas halted and tried volley-firing the enemy ceased to retire, and began skirmishing back to the places from which they had been

driven. The 23rd Pioneers had also worked up on the left to aid the Highlanders, and Major White got his men together for a charge. The enemy had tried, by turning the water into another and a dry channel, to check our advance; but this was a complete mistake. Our men were faint from thirst, and they welcomed the water as giving new life and strength. Major White rode along the front of the watercourse in which the Highlanders were lying under cover and called out to them: "Highlanders, will you follow me if I give you a lead for those guns?" There was but one answer—a ringing cheer, and the next moment the men were rushing across the open ground led by the pipers, playing the *Slogan*, while Major White rode serenely on in front drawing upon himself a terrific fire. The guns were in rear of a watercourse with high banks, and sheltered by this the Afghans fired rapidly and well. A small building protected their right, and some 300 or 400 riflemen lying on the slopes of the Pir Paimal Hill poured in a heavy cross-fire upon the 92nd. But the Highlanders were not to be checked, and though upwards of forty men of the leading companies fell, killed or wounded, they carried the guns at the point of the bayonet. Major White leaped into the watercourse some yards ahead of his men, and found that his horse could not climb up the steep bank. He therefore remained quietly watching the enemy firing almost into his face, one Afghan deliberately aiming at his head at a few yards' distance. This man and some ghazis were killed where they stood, Major White getting his horse out of the ditch just as the Highlanders jumped into the water. The artillerymen had deserted their guns some time before, and had left both pieces double-shotted. A story, which is well found if it be not true, is told of a Ghoorka who had attached himself all day to the Highlanders. He managed to reach one of the guns first, and leaping up on it he waved his cap and cried in Hindustani:—"This gun belongs to *my* regiment—2nd Ghoorkas! Prince of Wales's!" Then he thrust his cap down the muzzle, in order that there might be no dispute as to future ownership. The brilliant charge of the 92nd, ably seconded by Major Becher and his two companies of the 2nd Ghoorkas, with the 23rd Pioneers rushing up in support, was one of the leading incidents of the day, the rapidity of the whole

affair being almost as startling to General Roberts and General Ross as it must have been to the enemy.* The mass of men, said variously to have numbered from 8,000 to 10,000, who had gathered in the orchards and been driven into the basin and towards the rear of the Baba Wali Kotal, were hopelessly broken by the steady wave of men which swept them backward. General Baker's brigade harried them whenever they tried to cling to cover in the lower watercourses, and the 92nd were driven like a wedge between them and the slopes of the ridge, smashing into their midst when they tried to rally at the two guns, and utterly breaking what little cohesion they still possessed. The first stream of the fugitives poured out from the orchards, and made for the Argandab in the direction of Kokaran, many of them falling into the hands of our cavalry; the next stream poured back into Ayub's camp, carrying the news of the defeat, and attracting to them the escort of the guns on the Baba Wali Kotal. The last two shots fired by these guns were in the direction of Karez Hill; the first, pitched three hundred yards short of where General Roberts was sitting on the crest of the ridge, did not burst, while the second went whizzing overhead far into the gardens beyond. The screw-guns of 6-8 battery fired a few parting rounds at the fugitives making for Mazra, and then Macpherson halted his brigade and formed up his regiments at the foot of the northern slope of the Pir Paimal Ridge. General Baker had called a halt some time before, any serious firing directed against his fighting line having ceased when the orchards had been cleared, and the line had swung round to make the turning movement round the ridge. Nearly all the enemy, so far dealt with, had been irregulars, and the bayonet charge of the 72nd had checked whatever latent ghazi-ism there might be among them. During the halt the fighting line of the 2nd Brigade was reformed as follows:—5th Ghoorkas on the left, 3rd Sikhs in centre, and 2nd Beluchis on the right. The 72nd and 2nd Sikhs, with Swinley's Mountain Battery, were in rear, replenishing their ammunition pouches. In this new order the 2nd Brigade advanced at about 11·45, and as they came into the open between the two ridges, a half battalion

* Major White was recommended for the Victoria Cross for his gallantry on this occasion.

of the 3rd Sikhs, under Colonel Money, moved off to the left to hold the point of the northern hill overlooking the Argandab River. The three guns and the twenty or thirty deserted tents in the advanced camp at the foot of this hill fell into the hands of Colonel Money, whose later movements I will refer to presently. The rest of the brigade changed direction to the right, and marched up the basin, the 72nd taking the place of the 5th Ghoorkas in the first line. Only stray shots were fired by ghazis, who had perched themselves on the hills. The action was really at an end. General Ross had joined the advanced infantry brigades, and General Roberts was also coming round the ridge with General Macgregor's reserve brigade. A spur running down from the hill on the left flank of the Pir Paimal basin hid Mazra from view; but as the leading troops of General Baker's Brigade passed over this spur, they saw a mile before them Ayub's chief camp, with all the tents standing in regular rows. Fugitives were rushing out of the camp, and 200 or 300 cavalry were moving off among the trees beyond. The 72nd Highlanders and 2nd Beluchis reached the camp a little before one o'clock, the 3rd Sikhs (half battalion) close at their heels, while General Macpherson also moved his brigade leisurely forward in the same direction. The 72nd advanced a mile beyond Mazra village, and fired dropping shots at such runaways as were still within range. But the powers of flight of an Afghan are marvellous, and as no cavalry were at hand most of the enemy made good their escape. Colonel Money, with his half battalion of 3rd Sikhs, had found that beyond the point he was sent to occupy was another hill, giving a more commanding position. He pushed on with some 150 men to this point, and to his surprise looked straight down over the village of Baba Wali into Mazra and the enemy's camp. At that time it was packed with men, and he sent back word to General Baker asking for reinforcements, as he could not venture upon an attack with his handful of Sikhs. It was too late for any regiments to be re-directed, and Colonel Money had to watch with much chagrin the flight of the Afghans led by a large number of cavalry, probably Kizilbashes. However, he came upon five guns, including a 24-pounder howitzer, placed on the slopes of the hill near Baba Wali village, so that his

half battalion held eight pieces in their possession. When General Roberts and his Staff rode through Mazra in advance of Macgregor's Brigade the rout of Ayub's army was complete, and nothing remained but the cavalry pursuit. In four hours our force had scattered the hitherto victorious Afghan army, driving them from a position they had chosen deliberately, and with a full knowledge of our strength, and capturing their camp as it stood, as well as thirty-one guns and two of our own Horse Artillery 9-pounders. No more brilliant ending of the rapid march from Cabul could have been wished, and the vindication of our military prestige is now full and complete. Lieutenant Maclaine was found to have been murdered by his guards, and this incident has embittered every man's hatred of the Afghans. That the Afghans did not anticipate defeat is proved by the appearance of their camp; not a tent was struck, not a saddle-bag carried away; all the rude equipage of a half-barbarous army was left at our mercy —the meat in the cooking pots, the bread half-kneaded in the earthen vessels, the bazaar with its *ghee*-pots, dried fruits, flour and corn—just as it had been deserted when the noise of battle rolled up from Pir Paimal.

But to describe these matters more in detail: When our troops found themselves in rear of the Baba Wali Kotal with the enemy's deserted camp lying before them, all opposition was at an end, and our work was to collect the guns which had been abandoned on our approach, and to examine the contents of Ayub's tents. I had lingered to discuss the fight with Captain Darvall, in command of a company of the 92nd Highlanders, guarding the guns White had captured, so that the 1st and 2nd Brigades had passed on when I rode up the road to Mazra. General Macgregor was following with the 3rd Brigade; but by this time we all knew that the stories furnished by our spies, relating to an entrenched camp and a defensive position, arranged on the principles of European engineering, were fables. The 3rd Brigade were balked of their fight—for the 60th Rifles and the regiments brigaded with them were to have assisted in the final attack upon Mazra, if Ayub had taken up a second position. Scattered on the open stony road and on the hill slopes were bodies of men killed by our volleys when the Afghan retreat began. There seemed

few dead men, but the *nullahs* and watercourses could have told their own story; for within their sheltering banks were lying clusters of white-clad peasants who had been foremost in the ranks all day. If the cowardly regulars in Ayub's army had fought side by side with these men, our losses must have been much heavier; but they left the ghazi-led mob to bear the brunt of the attack, and took to flight when the Pir Paimal Ridge was turned. The most desperate spirits seemed to have been killed, for in the pouches of several men whose rude waistbelts I examined there was not a single cartridge left. The rifles of such as were armed with Martinis, Sniders, or Enfields, were taken by our soldiers as trophies; while matchlocks or *jhezails* were broken to pieces and cast away. One man killed was completely equipped in the uniform of the 66th Regiment, and had with him a Martini rifle and bayonet. A number of men, trying to preserve some form of order in their retirement, were clad in *khaki*, and at a distance were actually mistaken by one of our own officers for the 23rd Pioneers. As they got out of range very quickly we could not secure one of their number as a specimen. Of the 50 or 100 bodies which I myself passed at close quarters, I only saw some three or four men in what might be called uniform. These had on dark-coloured jackets, and turbans, surmounted by small yellow *pompons*, such as were worn long ago in European armies. There were also men shot down with stray portions of Indian uniform upon them, but they were plainly peasants or villagers who had joined Ayub after his great success. It is said that Maiwand was won for him by ghazis, or by a mob of rudely-armed ryots led by those fanatics; and one certainly saw much to confirm the idea that the strength of an Afghan army lies in its irregulars. The defenders of the Mullah Sahibdad village, the men who tried to "rush" the advanced companies of the 72nd in the orchards, the mass which finally was broken up by the 92nd at the two guns—all these were white-clothed peasants, each fighting for his own band, and fighting right well too. They were seen to kneel down, take deliberate aim at our ranks, and fire without any sign of hurry: having fired they rose to their feet, retiring at a walk and re-loading their muzzle-loaders coolly and calmly. It was these undrilled units in Ayub's force who gave us most

trouble, and who were killed as they fell back before our steady advance.

The bodies of the enemy's killed ceased almost entirely as soon as the spur running out from the northern hill above the Baba Wali village on our left was passed. This spur had sheltered them from our bullets, and the shrapnel from our 40-pounders would scarcely reach them beyond it. The road to the Mazra camp, from this spur, was at first strewn with the accoutrements which the Afghans had thrown away in their flight. Thus packets of Martini and Snider cartridges were come upon, with stray powder-flasks and ball-bags, the flight having become a rout as our brigades pushed up the Pir Paimal basin. A few hundred yards nearer the camp were the guns which had been withdrawn from the basin itself. They had been left by the artillerymen just as they had come out of action: here and there a bag of powder lay near the muzzle, as if a gunner more stanch than his fellows had tried to load his piece for a farewell shot; while the *caissons* were full of live shell. The traces lay stretched out along the road where they had been dropped when the horses were taken out, and we could imagine the gunners mounting and riding off before our cavalry pursuit began. We were delighted to see one of our own Horse Artillery guns standing on the road none the worse for its captivity, and word was sent back for a team to remove it to the rear. The other 9-pounder lost at Maiwand was, as conjectured, in position on the Baba Wali Kotal. More accoutrements and packets of ammunition were found scattered near the first line of tents, and once within the camp we could see how hasty had been the flight, and how little the enemy had expected a crushing reverse in a few hours. Our reconnaissance of the 31st seems to have been fatal to them; they looked upon it as a first success for their own arms, and had consequently made no preparations for securing an orderly retreat. Their camp was pitched in a very orderly way, the tents being arranged in streets with their front looking towards Candahar. The rows of tents stretched away fully half a mile in rear until the small village of Mazra was reached. Ayub's tent, one of the kind in which we usually hold durbars, and large enough to have accommodated all the princes of the Barakzai family, was on the right of the camp near the canal which carries water to Can-

dahar. A handsome carpet still covered half the floor, and when the Beluchis first entered it there were, I believe, many evidences of recent occupancy. Within a few yards of it was a small tent with a small enclosure formed by upright canvas walls—the *zenana*, in fact, wherein the Cabul ladies with Hashim Khan had lived. Ayub himself was said to have had only one Kizilbash concubine with him. In this tent there was a small circle of carpet round the central pole, the remainder having been cut away, probably when the order to take to flight was given. Another tent near Ayub's had been used as a dispensary, and was full of native drugs and of the hospital stores lost by General Burrows. Some of our native doctors were busy in removing such medicines as were still of value. Poor Maclaine's tent was forty or fifty yards away on the bank of the canal. In every one of the common tents it seemed that some ten or twelve men had been tenants, and the strength of the regular regiments must have been very considerable. Rude screens of branches and boughs of trees had also been raised about the village, no doubt by the host of irregulars swarming in the camp.

An examination of a few of the tents showed a vast amount of rubbish, in the shape of clothes, bedding, cooking vessels, horse-gear, and miscellaneous equipage, with valuable stores of English ammunition. Dried figs, grapes, melons, flour, were scattered about, and in saddle-bags and wallets were all kinds of "portable property" more or less valueless. One bag which I saw ransacked by a *kahar*, contained a packet of Persian books, carefully wrapped in half a dozen covers of cloth; a store of raisins and a bag of flour; a silk pugree; a change of white clothing; a bridle and stirrups; a purse with a score of copper-pieces in it; a pistol and 100 Enfield cartridges. The ammunition found in the tents must have amounted to many thousands of rounds. Each man seemed to sleep with packets of Martini and Snider cartridges at his side, while the packets made up for Enfields were in heaps in odd corners. One large tent, which had evidently served as the magazine, was filled to the roof with bags of powder and boxes of our breech-loading cartridges. How many rounds we lost on July 27th I do not know, but we have retaken large quantities, while some of our regiments filled up their pouches while in the camp. Brass helmets, kettle-drums, some of the

band instruments lost by the 66th, bugles, gold and silver laced coats, were among our loot, and some boxes of Cabuli rupees were also found. But important above all were the thirty-one guns and our two Royal Horse Artillery 9-pounders: the loss of these will break Ayub's prestige, for when he returns a fugitive to Herat the citizens' first question will be concerning the artillery he took with him to batter down the walls of Candahar.

I returned to our camp behind Karez Hill by way of the Baba Wali Kotal, and found Ayub's guns still in position on the platform whence they had fired upon us. He himself had viewed the capture of the village of Mullah Sahibdad from this point. Here considerable engineering skill had been shown; sloping roads had been cut, up which the guns could easily be taken, and a natural line of rocks had been well utilized as a screen for the pieces placed in position. There were no embrasures or gunpits, but the guns were placed so that having been fired over a wall of rocks 4 or 5 feet broad they might then be withdrawn a few yards below, reloaded and run up again to answer our fire. Our 40-pounders had of course made no impression upon the rock, although the shells had pitched upon the wall itself. The gunners could rest in perfect safety when not firing, as a space had been cleared below the rocks and the hill sloped sharply downwards. The narrow road over the Kotal was to the right of the guns, with rocks overhanging it on either side; it had not been interfered with, the enemy knowing that such a converging fire could be brought to bear upon it that it could scarcely be forced. There was a higher position above where the 9-pounders and the two Armstrongs were posted, and here a 7-pounder mountain gun was found. There was splendid cover for infantry lining the rocks, and this had been improved wherever practicable. So strong indeed had the Kotal been made, and so clear of all obstacles was the slope below—a natural glacis—that to have attacked in this direction would have been to court heavy loss, if not a disastrous repulse.

Two sad incidents marred the success of the day: the death of Captain Straton and the murder of Lieutenant Maclaine, who had been a prisoner in Ayub's hands since the eventful 27th of July. Colonel Brownlow and Captain Frome died gallantly in action, and though we sorrow for the loss of these brave men, there is the consolation that they were at the head of their regi-

ments and in the fore-front of the battle. But Captain Straton's death occurred at a moment when all seemed over, when we had but to count our losses and collect our spoils. When General Ross had joined Macpherson's Brigade, halted in rear of the Pir Paimal Ridge, the shells from our 40-pounders were still coming over the Baba Wali Kotal, endangering the safety of any troops pushing on towards Mazra. It was, of course, all-important to stop this shelling of the Kotal, now virtually in our hands, and the easiest way was to send a party of signallers up the hillside to the right of the Kotal, whence the news of our rapid success could be flashed down below. Captain Straton with two mounted signallers was with the brigade, and he was ordered to establish a station on the ridge above. But as there were a few ghazis lingering about, two companies of the 24th P.N.I. were told off to skirmish well in front of him, and clear the ground. Before they could move off, Captain Straton, a man with no sense of personal danger, rode slowly up the slope with his two signallers. He had not gone more than 50 or 60 yards from Generals Ross and Macpherson when a shot was heard, and Captain Straton fell from his horse. A dark figure was then seen to rise from a dip in the ground, fix a bayonet on his rifle and rush forward. The two signallers, men of the 72nd Highlanders, had dismounted by this time, and they fired at 40 yards' distance, bringing the Afghan down. His bayonet had passed through Captain Straton's coat, but had not touched the body. The man was bayonetted as he tried to rise. It was discovered that he had already been severely wounded, and could not have hoped to escape; he was not clad in the orthodox white of a true ghazi, but had on a sort of blue uniform, which seemed to indicate that he was a regular soldier, whose fanaticism had prompted him to shoot the first officer who passed him. The bullet from his rifle had passed through Straton's heart. The decease of Captain Straton is a great loss to the force; the perfect way in which he had controlled the signalling was universally recognized. He never spared himself when hard work had to be done, and the soldiers under him shared his enthusiasm. General Roberts always relied implicitly on him, both on the march and in action, for he knew that if it were possible for heliographing to be done Captain Straton would have his men in position and his instruments at work. The 22nd Regiment have lost as good

a soldier as ever wore sword, and there is a gap in Sir Frederick Roberts's Staff which he will find hard to fill. The second incident is yet again on different lines, for the murder of Lieutenant Maclaine is full of horror. As Sir Frederick Roberts rode into Ayub's camp word was brought by some native soldiers, belonging to Jacob's Rifles and the 1st Grenadiers, who had been prisoners with Maclaine, that his body was lying near Ayub's tent. Major Euan Smith was sent down to test the truth of the story, and found the sepoys had spoken only too truly. Poor Maclaine, with his throat cut deeply across, was lying some short distance from the tent in which he had been confined, about 40 yards from Ayub's own tent. The story told by the sepoys is that Ayub fled at eleven o'clock with the Cabul sirdars, leaving his prisoners in charge of their guard, with no instructions beyond a verbal order that they were not to be killed. Some hour or more after this the guard rushed into the tents where Maclaine and six other prisoners were kept, and ordered them all out, as they were to be killed. One sepoy was shot through the head, and Maclaine was seized by several Afghans, who threw him down and cut his throat. He was weak and ill from sickness and bad food, and submitted to his fate without a word. Immediately upon this there was a great shout that the English were upon the camp, and the guard fled without touching the five sepoys remaining. The bitterest rage is felt against Ayub, who might, by confiding the officer to the Kizilbash cavalry, easily have ensured his safety. For the future there can be no question of treating with a prince who has thus followed the worst precedents of Afghan history. He is held responsible for Maclaine's assassination just as much as if he had witnessed it, and our only regret is that the sirdar did not fall under the sabres of our cavalry in the pursuit. Maclaine's body was carried into the Citadel and was buried with military honours yesterday morning.

The cavalry pursuit resulted in some 400 of the enemy being killed, while our casualties were trifling, only two officers, Lieutenant Baker, of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry, and Lieutenant Chamberlain, of the Central India Horse, being very slightly wounded: the former got a cut on the hand and the latter had his sword-arm bruised a little by the point of a *tulwar*. General Hugh Gough, with the 9th Lancers, 3rd Punjab Cavalry, 3rd Bengal

Cavalry, and the Central India Horse, cut off groups of fugitives who had crossed the Argandab and were making for Khakrez; but no large masses of men were encountered. The delay in not being able to cross the Kokaran ford until eleven o'clock, of course militated against the pursuit being of the harassing kind it would otherwise have assumed. Once the river had been forded the cavalry galloped along on three parallel lines, the 9th Lancers forming the reserve. The 3rd Punjab Cavalry killed over seventy men in one charge alone. General Nuttall, with the 3rd Scind Horse and 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, also pursued during the afternoon, up the Argandab Valley to the east of the river, killing 100 stragglers.*

Our losses so far as they have been ascertained were, on August 31st and September 1st, as follows:—

	British.				Native.	
	Officers.		Rank and File.			
	K.	W.	K.	W.	K.	W.
R-B, Royal Horse Artillery	—	—	—	1	—	—
C-2, Royal Artillery	—	—	—	2	—	—
6-8, Royal Artillery	—	—	—	1	—	2
Staff	1	—	—	—	—	—
2-60th Rifles	—	—	—	2	—	—
72nd Highlanders	2	2	7	20	—	—
92nd Highlanders	—	2	14	66	—	—
3rd Bengal Cavalry	—	1	—	—	1	1
3rd Punjab Cavalry	—	1	—	—	—	5
Central India Horse	—	1	—	—	—	5
2nd Ghoorkas	—	1	—	—	10	19
23rd Pioneers	—	1	—	—	2	12
24th Punjab Native Infantry	—	—	—	—	1	10
2nd Sikhs	—	1	—	—	3	23
3rd Sikhs	—	—	—	—	—	6
4th Ghoorkas	—	1	—	—	1	5
5th Ghoorkas	—	—	—	—	1	2
15th Sikhs	—	—	—	—	2	4
25th Punjab Native Infantry	—	—	—	—	—	2
3rd Scind Horse	—	—	—	—	—	1
3rd Bombay Cavalry	—	—	—	—	1	1
2nd Beluchis	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total	3	11	21	92	22	99

* Six hundred and forty-nine bodies were afterwards buried on the Candahar side of the Pir Paimal Ridge. The enemy's total loss must have been about 1,200 killed, and a large number wounded.

This gives a total of killed of all ranks, 46, wounded 202. Two followers were killed and fifteen wounded; twenty horses and three mules were killed; twenty-one horses and three mules wounded.

The list of officers killed and wounded is as follows:—

Officers Killed.

Lieutenant-Colonel Brownlow, commanding 72nd Highlanders.
Captain Frome, 72nd Highlanders.
Captain Straton, 2-22nd Foot, Superintendent Army Signalling.

Officers Wounded.

Captain Murray, 72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant and Adjutant Munro, 72nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant Menzies, 92nd Highlanders.
Lieutenant Stewart, 92nd Highlanders.
Major Willock, 3rd Bengal Cavalry.
Lieutenant Baker, 3rd Punjab Cavalry.
Lieutenant Chamberlain, Central India Horse.
Lieutenant-Colonel Battye, commanding 2nd Ghoorkas.
Lieutenant-Colonel Rowcroft, commanding 4th Ghoorkas.
Major Slater, 2nd Sikhs.
Lieutenant Chesney, 23rd Pioneers.

The wounds of the last eight officers are not severe.

The death of Colonel Brownlow is a terrible loss to the 72nd Highlanders, and indeed to the army generally. Brave to a fault, he was a model of coolness under fire, and always handled his men with judgment and decision. He was marked for future distinction, his tried ability in the field raising him far above his peers. His untimely death will be felt most keenly by his own officers and men, to whom he had greatly endeared himself.

CHAPTER IV.

Candahar during the Siege—Improvement of the Defences—Sketch Map showing the Disposition of the Garrison—The Attitude of the Enemy—Their Plan of Attack—Deh-i-Khwaja Village occupied in force by the Afghans—The Sortie of August 16th—Determined Defence of the Village—Retirement of the Troops—Death of General Brooke—The Sortie falsely called a "Success"—Description of the Afghan Siege Works—Engineering Skill shown by the Naib Hafizulla Parallels—The Training of Guns upon the Shikarpur Gate—The Afghan Karez Trenches on the South—Attempt to form Breaching Batteries—Explanation of the Engineering Skill shown.

CANDAHAR CANTONMENTS, *9th September*, 1880.

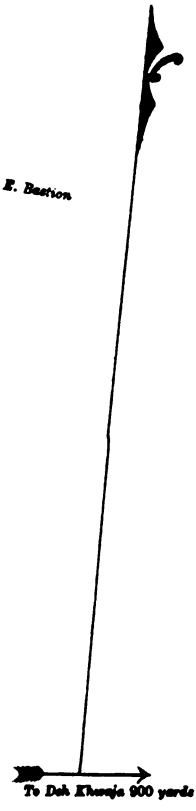
SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS'S troops were so soon pushed into action after their arrival at Candahar, that the state of the city on the 31st August and the evidence the enemy had left behind of their late uncomfortable closeness to the walls, have been partly forgotten by many of us. When we rode up on the morning of the 31st there was indeed every sign, both within and without the walls, that an enemy had been at the gate. Candahar rises out of the plain quite abruptly; its walls, with their tower-like bastions, obtruding themselves upon one's notice in rather an unsympathetic way. They shut out from view everything that lies within them, except the tomb of Ahmed Shah and the tower of observation in the citadel. No point of 'vantage enables one to examine what the walls may hide; not until the gates are passed does the character of the city disclose itself. It has been too often described for me to venture to sketch its two broad roads bisecting each other at right angles near the centre of the city; its citadel guarded by a deep ditch; its high walls of a breadth sufficient to make breaching a work of great difficulty even to heavy artillery, and its narrow gates, guarded each by flanking towers which stand out on either hand of the doorway as if the mud-work of the walls had been cut through and folded back to admit of entrance being given. It will be sufficient to say that the defences had been strengthened during the siege by such contrivances as are usually employed to check assaults upon

walled towns, and that the gaps and breaks in the bastions and parapet had been filled in with sand-bags, which still remain in all the rough-and-ready state in which they were hastily piled up. On August 31st our first view of Candahar was from near Deh-i-Khwaja, the village against which the sortie of the 16th had been directed. We did not, however, enter by the Cabul Gate, on the eastern face, but by the Shikarpur Gate, facing southwards. It was here that the outer defences had been made strongest, as the enemy's attack in force was expected from the group of villages lying to the south and south-west, some of the walled vineyards and gardens of which were within 300 yards of the south-west bastion, and less than a mile from the Shikarpur Gate itself. The temporary bazaar outside this gate, established for the benefit of our force marching in from Momand, was formed amidst the *abattis*, wire entanglements, *chevaux-de-frise*, and broken-down walls which cumbered the ground and would have impeded the rush of an attacking force. The bastions and parapet bristled with sand-bags, over which the sentries on guard looked down, no doubt with hearty relief as our troops drew up and piled arms preparatory to breakfast. And yet there was no enthusiasm shown at our approach; not a band turned out to play us in, not a cheer was raised to welcome us. Perhaps we had been so near for the last few days that the novelty of being released from a dangerous situation had passed away from the minds of the garrison; perhaps—and I am afraid this is the more likely explanation—the prevailing tone among General Primrose's troops was one still of depression and want of "heart."* The reaction had not set in, and the disastrous defeat at Maiwand and the sad result of the sortie, were still remembered with great vividness. There had been undoubted demoralization existing within the walls during the siege, caused by that unreasoning dread of an enemy which always arises after defeat. How far the demoralization spread only commanding officers could really know; but it was impossible that the remnants of a beaten brigade could be brought once more into contact with the main body without producing some ill-effect. Letters

* On August 3rd General Primrose informed Colonel St. John that, acting under the advice of his brigadiers, he assumed chief political authority.

which reached us after we left Khelat-i-Ghilzai spoke of the "long faces drawn," and the depression of which they were the too visible sign. And yet there were over 4,000 effective soldiers, British and native, under General Primrose's orders. One panic-stricken man may infect a hundred; one panic-stricken regiment an army; and to judge by the stories told by soldiers of the garrison to our own men of the Cabul force, there was a tendency to foster the "ghazi scare," and to nurse and nurture it until it grew to formidable proportions. Thus our sowars told of the terrible Aimak horsemen who feed their horses on raw meat and charged with such effect that no one could withstand them; that our cavalry would wither away before the flame and smoke breathed from their horses' nostrils. Our sepoys, nearly all Sikhs and Ghoorkas, were so self-confident that they made no secret of their desire to meet the much-bepraised ghazi-*log:* they were warned that they did not know what the local ghazis' fighting powers were, and there was what in Western life would be called "head-shaking" at our rapid movement towards the Pir Paimal Ridge on the 31st. We seemed to local wiseacres to be going right into the jaws of death, whereas our firm belief was that we were rushing into the arms of victory. Our men were impatient to wipe out the disgrace which had fallen on our arms.

To revert to the appearance of the city when we formally relieved it: The flanking bastions which stud the wall at regular intervals are seventy in number. They are really circular towers with that part of the circumference cut away which looks city-wards. As they were in a wretched state of repair as regarded their upper layers of sun-dried mud, there was much to be done in building up a new parapet with sand-bags, and their appearance is now most uncouth, each tower seeming "top-heavy" and suffering from an excrescent growth which may yet be in its infancy. The south-west bastion, overlooking the Shikarpur village wherein the enemy were always swarming, was strengthened greatly by these means, embrasures being left through which our 40-pounders could be trained to the east, west, and south. A fantastic appearance was also given to the main walls of the city by cutting down the parapet for 18 inches at points equi-distant from the bastions, and placing upright sand-bags to fill in the gap



SKELETON PLAN OF KANDAHAR.

DISPOSITION OF GUNS.

Guns.	Position.	Officers Comds. Face.
9-Pr. M. L. R. Gun, C-2, R.A.	N. E. Bastion	Major Greig, R.A.
9-Pr. ditto ditto	Durranee Gate	
9-Pr. ditto ditto	Cabul Gate	
40-Pr. B. L. R. Gun	S. E. Bastion	Capt. Hornsby Comg. 5-11 R.A.
6-Pr. S. B. Gun	Shikarpoor Gate	
40-Pr. B. L. R. Gun	S. W. Bastion	
9-Pr. M. L. R. Gun, E-B., R.H.A.	Herat Gate	Capt. Slade, R.A.
9-Pr. ditto ditto		
9-Pr. ditto C-2, R.A.	Topkhana Gate	
40-Pr. B. L. R. Gun	N. W. Bastion	
9-Pr. M. L. R. Gun, E-B., R.H.A.	Bedgah Gate.	
9-Pr. ditto ditto		
40-Pr. B. L. R. Gun	S. W. Bastion of Citadel.	

thus made. Ten riflemen were told off to man each of these gaps, which were 10 feet in length. The necessity for thus improving the parapet was due to the defective system of loopholing in vogue among the Afghans. They pierce their walls with narrow slits, through which it is impossible to see more than a few square yards of ground below; and at night not an object can be seen from nine-tenths of the loopholes. The effect of combined breech-loading fire would be minimized if rifles had thus to be blindly fired into space; whereas by giving men a chance of seeing over the wall and grouping the defenders into tens at fixed points, their fire could be always well-aimed and kept well under control. To repel, for instance, an attack of 5,000 or 6,000 men led by ghazis determined to scale the walls or die in the attempt, fire from the ordinary loopholes would have been thrown away, and only the cross-fire from the nearest bastions could have told; but once the defenders could fire at almost any angle, through the ten-feet gaps I have described, the ground in front of any given point could be swept by continuous volleys. Inside the city one could not fail to be struck with the open display of force made at every available point. There was quite a crowd of European soldiers and Bombay sepoys filling the Shikarpur Gate as General Roberts and his Staff entered the city, and nearly every man seemed to have his bayonet fixed or sword drawn. No doubt Candahar bears an ill-reputation for ghazi-ism, and there were many discontented spirits within its walls even after the 18,000 Pathans had been turned out; but the display of naked weapons certainly struck us poor pilgrims from quieter Cabul as unusual and alarming. Our own revolvers were comfortably reposing on our hips, while we found it was the fashion to carry the pistol in the hand, or a drawn sword, or a hog-spear, or a bayonet fixed on a long stick *à la ghazi*. In the Char Soo, the covered, arched bit of bazaar, where the chief roads cut through each other, were more men with drawn swords and fixed bayonets. The guards at the gates, at the entrance to the citadel and elsewhere, seemed of great strength; but without wishing to be rudely critical, one could not help feeling that numbers were necessary where the sepoys were of such poor physique. It is dangerous to say a word against the Bombay regiments, as a swarm of eager defenders will start up at once to justify them and to challenge com-

parison with the army of Northern India. But I must humbly submit that the weedy under-grown sepoys of one or more of the regiments now in Candahar are no more like soldiers than a stage army is like those "cull'd and choice-drawn cavaliers" who won Agincourt. I have not seen a regiment paraded, and I do not know the distinctive dress of any particular regiment, but there the men were before my eyes, and they were certainly sorry apologies for sepoys. The appearance of the citadel was as warlike as that of the city we had passed through, sand-bags and bags of flour, &c., being well to the fore wherever there was a gate to be strengthened or a wall to be made more imposing. The tower in the citadel upon which Captain Keyser, of the 7th Fusiliers, had his chief heliograph station, was topped by a circular wall of bags some five feet high, and from this point there was a good view of all the surrounding country. The northern wall, with the Eedgah Gate, looking towards Mazra, had its complement of the ever-repeating sand-bags, and in the north-west corner bastion was the 40-pounder which had shelled Picquet Hill and our cantonments, when Ayub rashly pitched his tents within range.

It is difficult of course, after a lapse of time, to pick up the threads of a story, especially when that story has for its moral indecision and disaster; and therefore, in dealing with events before and during the siege of Candahar, I have to guard against being led away by the hasty criticism or loose talk of irresponsible persons. I would rather leave such facts as I have gathered to speak for themselves than formulate conclusions which must of necessity be based upon other men's evidence. Not having seen with my own eyes movements and actions which had most serious results, I can only present them as they were pictured to me by eye-witnesses. To make the story clearer, reasons must be given for certain positive moves made by those holding authority among the besieged garrison; the more general question of passive defence being governed by other conditions, such as the *morale* and strength of the force at the Lieutenant-General's disposal, the numbers and capacity of the enemy, and their probable intentions.

Ayub Khan's forces made their appearance about Candahar on the 7th of August, ten days after the Maiwand defeat, and such was their confidence at that time that they occupied part of our

cantonments, and pitched their camp well within range of our 40-pounders. They were soon aware of their error, when shells began to burst even in the Surteep's tent, and they withdrew to a safer distance, and set to work in a less obtrusive but more systematic way. Against the northern face of the city wall, and, for the most part, against the western face also, they could do nothing; there were no villages or enclosures to cover their movements. To the north the plain is covered with graves, while on the west there is a clear space at least one mile in breadth between the cantonments and the Herat Gate. On the south-west were groups of enclosures with high mud walls, twelve or eighteen inches thick, guarding the orchards and vineyards of Shikarpur and Deh Haji villages which lay in rear of them. These gave cover to their sharp-shooters, good positions for their guns, and accommodation and food to any large body of men they might mass within them. The deep water-channels of an open *karez* were also available as shelter-trenches and first parallels, if the Afghans so far understood the art of war; and altogether the Shikarpur Gate and the south-west corner bastion of the city wall were likely to be menaced. How admirably the Naib Hafizulla, who was said to be the guiding spirit of Ayub's army, recognized the advantages of an approach from this direction I will explain presently. There was open country (cultivated fields lying fallow) facing the portion of the southern wall to the east of the Shikarpur Gate; but there were many low walls in this direction also. The eastern face, equally with the Shikarpur Gate and the south-western line of defence, might be looked upon as attracting an attack, or at least a strong demonstration, owing to the nearness to the Cabul Gate of the large village of Deh-i-Khwaja. The distance in a direct line from the gate to the village walls was less than 1,000 yards, and the intermediate space was not, as on the western face, clear of every obstacle, but was traversed by lands with low boundary walls and by a water-channel running alongside the road leading from the city through the village. Deh-i-Khwaja covers several acres of ground, and as each house has an independent door, and is connected with its neighbour by stout mud walls, the place presents no salient point to a storming party where a position could be seized and made good. In the hands

of resolute men each house would become a miniature fort to be taken before the next one could be approached. I suppose this fact was known to the officers who were responsible for the attack ultimately made upon the place. In addition to the cover offered by the low walls between the village and the eastern wall, there was, a few yards outside the Cabul Gate, a pile of buildings used as a *serai*. We could not of course occupy these, and we had not had time to destroy them. They would have formed the connecting link, and a very strong one, between Deh-i-Khwaja and any party told off to assail the Cabul Gate.

The enemy in their over-confidence, or by wrongly estimating our military power in Afghanistan, intended to reduce the garrison to weakness by starvation, and then to assault two or more gates, the irregulars led by ghazis being anxious to carry the city at the point of the sword. To avoid such a complication as our army cutting its way out, the villages on the south and Deh-i-Khwaja on the east were occupied in force, and earthworks thrown up along the line of *karez* near the Shikarpur group of villages. Guns were mounted at several points from which shells were pitched with fair accuracy into the citadel or burst over particular bastions. One gun, said to be a 6-pounder, was placed in Deh-i-Khwaja, an embrasure being formed by cutting through a mud wall some twelve feet high, and piling up on either side earth and the *débris* of a house which these amateur engineers demolished. This gun did little or no damage when it was fired at the Cabul Gate, but the rifle fire from the walls of the village seriously annoyed such working parties as were sent out by the garrison to destroy the low walls bounding the roads through the fields. General Primrose at last ordered that no more parties should go outside the gates, so that the cover existing for an attacking force was left intact. Day by day it was noticed that Deh-i-Khwaja was crowded with men, and suspicion became rife that preparations were being made for forcing the Cabul Gate and "rushing" the defences on that side by a swarm of irregulars. Now the word "ghazi" carried dismay into the hearts of many of the garrison—as it does still no doubt—and it became an open question whether it was not time to break through the inaction which prevailed, and force a fight on a small scale outside the walls. It was impossible

to shell the place effectually, as three of our 40-pounders were in position on the north-west and southern bastions, and our 9-pounders over the Cabul and Durani Gate could not hope to be of any great use against thick mud walls and domed houses. The two mortars of the heavy battery might plump shell into the midst of the houses, but they would not scare its defenders away. The original plan of the sortie was, I believe, conceived by Major Hills, Commanding Royal Engineers, who advised that a party of cavalry should be sent out in the early morning by the Eedgah Gate (facing north) and work round in rear of the village of Khairabad, which should then be "rushed" by some 500 or 600 infantry. Khairabad was within 400 yards of the northern walls of Deh-i-Khwaja, and the latter village was to have been taken by an attack in rear, where it was probably undefended. The 6-pounder gun was to be spiked, or brought away if time allowed, and the loopholed walls fronting the city were to be destroyed. There was nothing impossible in this plan, and the sortie, if at all well managed, ought to have proved a success. But certain modifications were made which spoiled all. On the morning of the 16th of August, 300 sabres, under command of Brigadier-General Nuttall, swept round in rear of the village, and, as was expected, the men in Deh-i-Khwaja began to leave, seeing their retreat thus cut off. The usual garrison which flocked in every morning and left at nightfall had not arrived, and they would probably have known but little of the affair until afterwards, if a fatal blunder had not been committed before the infantry went out. This was a cannonade of half an hour's duration, from the 9-pounders and the two howitzers. General Brooke, commanding 600 men chosen from the 7th Fusiliers, 19th and 28th Native Infantry, asked that the village might be shelled before his troops went out. The unusual noise aroused every armed man in the southern villages, and even those further away on the east; and they poured out to see what was the meaning of the cannonade. They soon learnt Deh-i-Khwaja was being attacked, and they hastened to its assistance. In the meantime our cavalry had a splendid chance at some 400 or 500 men on ground which could not have been better for a charge. But General Nuttall considered the time had not yet come to use his sowars, and he contented

himself with following the enemy, who were making for broken ground on the south. Eventually a troop was ordered to charge, and they did good execution; but the fugitives had then got cover and opened a smart fire upon the cavalry, who had to draw off a little, particularly as more men were pressing up from the Shikarpur villages. In the meantime the half-hour's cannonade had come to an end, and the infantry had moved out; such men as still held the village were on the alert, and our troops were met by a heavy fire from the long line of loopholed walls. The attacking force was divided into three parties of about 200 men each, General Brooke taking the centre party, whose object was to penetrate the village by the road from the city, while the other parties moved off to right and left. It was this central party which suffered the heaviest loss. They rushed along the narrow road with a dry watercourse of some depth on their left hand, passed the gun and got into the village. But they were little better off than before; for every wall was loopholed, every door blockaded. All they could do was to press forward and watch for an opportunity of seizing one or more houses in rear, whence they could work back, clearing the walls and courtyards, so as to allow of the Sappers demolishing the outer wall facing the Cabul Gate. To attempt street fighting was hopeless, as our men could see no enemy; only the muzzles of rifles, many of them breech-loading, looked down upon them. General Brooke forced his way right through the place, and as the rear walls were not loopholed his party had a respite for the time. He then moved along towards the north, but returned when he could find no point which served to give him a chance of making his hold good. The party to the left under Colonel Heathcote did not enter the village but lined the walls in the fields, keeping up a heavy fire to draw off the defenders' attention. On the right, Trench of the 19th Bombay Infantry had got possession of a large walled garden to the south of the village, whence he drove such of the enemy as made a stand. The sortie was being watched by General Primrose and the garrison from the walls; but owing to a thick haze little could be seen of what was going forward. The continous firing showed the village had not been captured, and swarms of irregulars could now and again be distinguished running across the open country as if making

for Deh-i-Khwaja. General Primrose therefore ordered the troops engaged to be recalled, and directed the artillery and infantry on the walls to cover the retirement. The orders were passed on to General Brooke. The two parties under Colonel Heathcote and Trench (killed about this time) began to fall back, leaving the third batch of 200 men, still in the rear of the village, quite unsupported. The cavalry also made for the Cabul Gate; the rifle fire from the enemy, who were following them up, costing them many horses. Our retirement was the signal for the advance of every Afghan who had been held in check by the cavalry in the open. The garden Trench's party had held was occupied by them, and every wall in the fields in the south-east was lined with their skirmishers. For General Brooke to withdraw safely under such conditions was almost impossible. He tried to make his way back by the road leading through the heart of the village; but the fire from the loopholes was too terrible, and he turned off to his left, coming out into the fields just where a few walls gave cover to his men and enabled them to rally. In the confusion which prevailed his party were mistaken for "ghazis," and a 40-pounder began to shell them. Fortunately the shells were too high, and did no mischief. No supports were sent out to aid him, though appeals were made to General Primrose to allow skirmishers to line the low walls outside the Cabul Gate in a south-easterly direction.* General Brooke had supported Lieutenant Cruickshank, R.E., severely wounded, and had brought him out of the village. They rested behind a wall while a handful of men were got together to cover their retreat towards the walls, still a thousand yards away. But the fire from the loopholes was too heavy, and as the General tried to cross to the shelter of another wall he was shot down. A sergeant of the 7th Fusiliers with him was killed, and two Bombay Sappers wounded, and then the two officers had to be left to their fate. Their men were harassed by continuous fire at almost point blank ranges, and the sortie ended by forty of our dead being left on the ground, while twice that number of wounded were received within the walls. The details of the killed and wounded, officers and men,

* The withdrawal of the original supports before General Brooke's party had left the village was the fatal mistake of the day.

are given in the despatches. The total casualties were about 200; and this short story of how the sortie was made and how little it bore the character of a "success," which I see it has always been called by General Primrose, may help you to appreciate what occurred. There is no charge against the soldiers, all are said to have fought well and to have shown great steadiness; but the departure from the original plan was fatal, and no supports being left for General Brooke's party to fall back upon, gave the enemy the chance of cutting our men up in detail. There are other features of the sortie which I have no doubt men who were in it can fill up. I have been through Deh-i-Khwaja and over the ground outside, and I can fully appreciate how General Brooke failed to make good his hold of the village.

CANDAHAR, 12*th September*.

I have described the position taken up by Ayub Khan's forces on the eastern side of Candahar, and the sortie made on August 16th against the Deh-i-Khwaja village. Major Hills, the Engineer officer commanding, had warned General Primrose that he would not be responsible for the safety of the city if Deh-i-Khwaja were left untouched, so high an estimate was placed upon the capacity of the enemy. On the 17th the guns directed against the city, more apparently for the purpose of annoying the garrison than with any idea *then* of systematic bombardment, were the 6-pounder in Deh-i-Khwaja, an Armstrong breech-loader, and one of our Royal Horse Artillery 9-pounders on Picquet Hill, a 6-pounder in an embrasure near the Head Quarters' Garden facing the western wall, and another 6-pounder in a garden to the south-west, distant 1,100 yards from the Shikarpur Gate, and somewhat nearer the south-west corner bastion. The guns on Picquet Hill were answered by a 40-pounder in the north-west bastion, and their fire was plainly meant to make the citadel as uncomfortable as possible for the troops crowded within it. One of these guns was silenced on the 16th, and was believed to have been dismounted. The 6-pounder near the Head-Quarters' Garden was fired at uncertain intervals at the bastions on the western face, in the hope, apparently, of injuring whatever men might be

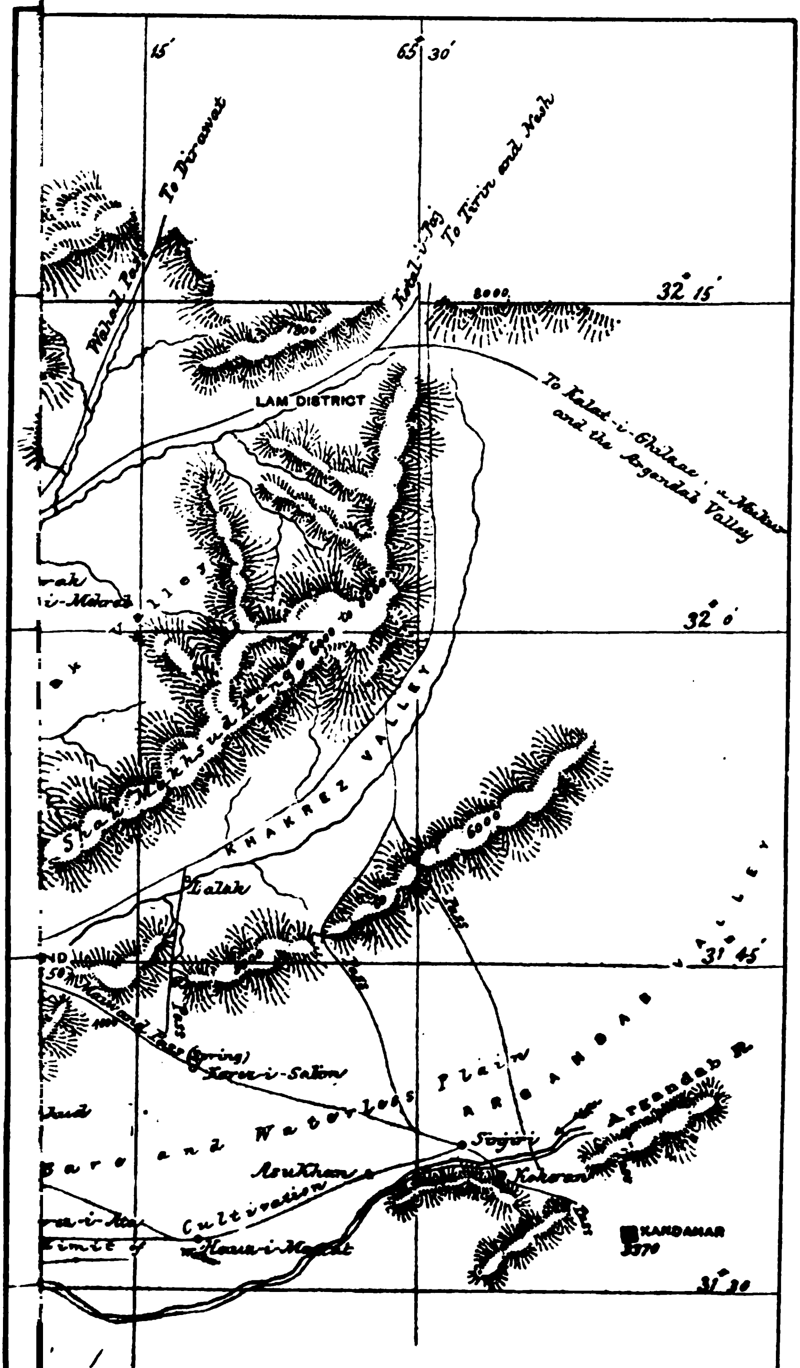
on duty on the wall. It was on the south-west that the greatest pains were taken by Ayub's amateur "engineers," and here the contour of the ground favoured them immensely. The group of villages known to the garrison under the general name of Shikarpur was protected by many walled gardens and vineyards, which had in their front two deep *karez* water-channels, then quite dry, as the canals from the Argandab River and local springs had been blocked so as to cut off the usual water supply of Candahar. The *karez* in vogue in Southern Afghanistan is different to that we have been accustomed to further north. Instead of an underground canal, with openings at stated intervals, wherefrom the earth excavated is thrown up in mounds, there is a deep open channel cut from six to twelve feet deep, along the banks of which the earth and mud are thrown up so as to form a formidable ditch. The stream at the bottom is of no great depth, and courses along to lower levels very quietly, no rapid fall being allowed. There are usually minor channels running out from the main *karez*, unless the water has to be taken to a level several miles away from the original spring. The Shikarpur gardens and villages afforded ample cover for a large body of men, and the *karez* channels in front were seized upon as offering ready-made trenches in which to form batteries and a line of breastworks for riflemen. The "works" raised by the enemy still stand almost untouched, and a few days ago I went over them with an engineer officer who was in Candahar during the siege. From his explanation, and my own observations, I may be able to give a fair idea of the engineering skill which some, at least, of Ayub's officers could boast. That nothing came of this attempt to raise batteries and breastworks is due to the rapid advance of the relieving force from Cabul, the enemy not having time to complete their lines, and being forced to abandon the siege when it was yet in its infancy. In the sixteen or seventeen days they were at work they made very creditable progress; and, left undisturbed, they might have caused the garrison much trouble and annoyance.

It is believed that the first plan of the Naib Hafizulla, who controlled the Afghan army, was to raise a number of batteries to play upon the Shikarpur Gate and that part of the wall lying between that gate and the south-west bastion; riflemen were

to be pushed as near the bastion as possible, sheltered by protecting walls and ditches in the fields; and then an assault was to be made by the fanatical irregulars led by their ghazis. Scaling ladders were to be used, and, under cover of a terrific fire directed upon the defenders of the southern wall, the grand attack was to be delivered. There would probably have been other attacks made from the south-east and east, and the ghazis were confident of success after their victory over General Burrows's Brigade. The affair of the 16th warned Hafizulla that it was dangerous to have guns exposed to a sudden sortie, and in the Shikarpur direction he took every precaution to guard against an attack from the garrison being successful. Every enclosure had its walls loop-holed above and below, to give a double line of fire, and along every ditch and water-channel clods of earth were piled to form a low projecting parapet for the men lining them. The ground is much broken and cut up in every direction, mounds of earth being scattered at intervals where the cultivators had been compelled to excavate deeply for the *karez*. Riding towards the outward belt of walled vineyards and gardens—many of the latter containing trees of large growth and thick foliage—we followed the narrow road leading from the city; and at about 1,000 yards from the walls we came upon what our engineers would call the trenches. These were the upper and lower channels of the *karez*, quite dry, as I have before mentioned. The channels were connected by narrow cuttings eight feet deep, in the most approved manner, in exact imitation of the zig-zag way in which parallels are pushed forward in civilized warfare. These cuttings were not very numerous, it is true, but then the works had not been completed. Instead of the men having to expose themselves by climbing up and down the deep banks of the *karez*, openings were cut leading to the enclosures and villages in rear. One bend of the *karez* left the line exposed to flanking fire from the walls of the city, and to negative this traverses of earth and mud had been built up at every 20 feet. This portion of the works was very skilfully done, the parapet in front, as being exposed to shell-fire, being two or three feet thick. In rear of these "trenches" were the batteries in their half-completed state. The low mounds of earth I have spoken of were cut down, and a semicircular

space, open in rear, cleared away, the earth being banked up so as to form a substantial parapet facing citywards. Two embrasures had been cut through in each battery, branches of trees being used to strengthen them and allow the earthwork to settle down into solid form. The parapet and its protecting embankment were of sufficient strength to resist the heaviest shell that could be thrown from our own guns. On looking through the embrasures in one battery we found that one gun could be trained upon the Shikarpur Gate and the other upon the south-west bastion. Every thing was completed in this battery, and the marks of wheels showed that a field gun had been in position. A little to the right was a more pretentious battery, plainly meant for three or four guns, judging from the size of the space cleared. The ground was sloped gradually down to the fields in rear of these batteries, and cover could be given to the horses and drivers belonging to the guns. The 6-pounder which fired daily upon the walls had a snug corner to itself in a clump of trees. The embrasure had been made very ingeniously. A bank of earth, 12 or 15 feet thick at its base, had been built up, with its right resting on the trunk of a stout tree with long over-reaching branches. One of these branches, which stretched out at right angles four feet above the ground, had the earthwork piled above and below it, so that it formed a strong support to the embankment. There were two embrasures, one, as usual, pointing upon the Shikarpur Gate; and I believe the gun was so hidden by the foliage of the trees that from the walls it was difficult to detect the embrasures except by the flash of the gun. Some of our shells had been, however, well pitched, the trunk of the tree being barked and splintered. The gunners were quite safe, of course, unless a shell actually burst in the embrasure itself, which was extremely unlikely. Standing in rear of the earthwork one could appreciate the security of the men who had held it, and with what impunity they could bang away at our bastions. The line of *karez* was followed in a westerly direction, and all along its banks we traced the low parapet formed of clods of earth. The walls of the enclosure had their rows of loopholes, and when working parties were sent out from the city three days after the raising of the siege, they found that good cover existed to within 300 yards

of the corner bastion. There was always lively rifle-fire going on whenever any one showed on the parapet of the city wall, but the Afghans outside had generally the best of the position, as they were quite hidden from sight. A piece of open ground in rear of the *karez* between two enclosures was rather a dangerous place for them to cross, although 1,000 yards from the walls. Marksmen with Martinis fired volleys whenever they saw a group hurrying across, and the bullets generally told. Many of the walls have been thrown down by our working parties; and in one garden, full of large trees casting a pleasant shade, is the Field Hospital of the garrison. Thence we passed towards the Head-Quarters' Garden (now occupied by General Phayre and his Staff), and had a look at the embrasure whence a 6-pounder used to fire into the city. The gun was placed on the steep bank of the main *karez*, and was banked up to its muzzle, which was some ten feet above the bottom of the water cut. There was broken ground in front, intersected by irrigation channels, and in rear some low-walled enclosures in which are now located a number of our transport animals. Here my interesting journey came to an end, and I returned to quarters in cantonments, favourably impressed with the rude evidences of the enemy's skill. It was at first believed that a European adventurer was with Ayub Khan, from the admirable way in which his artillery was handled and the dispositions made for investing Candahar; but this idea is now exploded. It is more probable that there were in Herat men who had seen service in the Turkish army in Asia Minor, or even north of the Bosphorus, in the late war against Russia. These men could have picked up some idea of entrenchments and be able to apply their knowledge under the direction of the Naib, the only Afghan General who seems to know how to handle his men. Others there may be who have learned a smattering of the principles of civilized warfare in Persia or the Russian Khanates; but in any case there was a decided improvement in their method to that of the men we fought in and about Cabul.



15'
65° 30'
To Dirawat
To Tirin and Nesh
Kotal-i-Toj
Wahad Pass
8000
7800
32° 15'
LAM DISTRICT
To Kalat-i-Ghilzae, Maiwar and the Argandab Valley
32° 0'
KHAKREZ VALLEY
Shah Maksud Range
6000
Kalah
31° 45'
Pass
Maiwand Pass (Spring)
Karez-i-Salim
Bare and Waterless Plain
ARGANDAB VALLEY
Argandab R.
Sinjiri
Asu Khan
Kokeran
Cultivation
Hauz-i-Madat
Limit of
KANDAHAR
3370
31° 30

CHAPTER V.

An Account of the Defeat of General Burrows at Maiwand—The Disaffection among the Wali's Troops—Intrigues between Local Sirdars and Ayub Khan—The Desertion of the Wali's Infantry—General Burrows at Girishk—His Orders—Ayub Khan's Line of Advance from Farrah—The Helmund River Fordable at all Points—The Routes from Girishk to Candahar—Strategical Importance of Girishk—General Burrows' Council of War on July 15th—Retioement of the Brigade upon Khuskl-i-Nakhud—Defective Cavalry Reconnaissances—Ayub Khan's Advance upon Maiwand—His Arrival at Sangbur—General Burrows' Movement from Khusk-i-Nakhud to intercept the Afghan Army—The Action at Maiwand—Comparative Strength of the British and Afghan Forces—General Burrows' First Disposition of Attack—An Artillery Duel—The effect upon the Brigade of acting on the Defensive—Advance of the Afghan Irregulars—The Behaviour of Jacob's Rifles on the Left—Confusion among the Native Troops—Defeat and Rout of the Brigade—Ineffectual Attempt to make the Cavalry Charge—The Retreat to Candahar.

CANDAHAR, 13*th September.*

FROM such sources as I have been able to draw upon, I have gained a fairly exact idea of the circumstances attending General Burrows' defeat on the 27th of July, and I am now writing what, perhaps, is the first unofficial account of the Maiwand disaster. Taking up the story from the mutiny of the Wali's troops on the 14th of July, it would seem that though General Burrows succeeded on that occasion in recapturing the 6-pounder smooth-bore battery, there was not that severe punishment inflicted upon the mutineers which would have been their just reward. The disaffection in the Wali Shere Ali's army was well known in the British camp, and decisive measures might have been taken for disarming the 2,000 infantry soldiers before they had fully made up their minds to desert. But that indecision which was the ruling power in the Girishk Brigade was all-powerful even in the early days of July; and there was, perhaps, also the feeling in the political mind that it was too early to acknowledge how mere a shadow the Wali's authority was, and how worthless was his so-called army. The fact that Nur Mahomed Khan, "the Surteep," had been wholly won over to Ayub's side, must surely

have been known to the Wali, who was no doubt also tempted to throw over the British. One of the Candahar regiments, even before it marched to the Helmund, was greatly disaffected; but as the Wali had officered his "army" from this particular regime nt there was a disinclination to disband it, as the other regiments might have given trouble. Thus the Surteep was allowed full scope to work out his plans, and his subsequent desertion followed in the natural order of things. His character as a hospitable entertainer of British officers had won him some goodwill; but there were those who suspected his loyalty to us, and were doubtful of his relations with Ayub Khan. For months there must have been secret correspondence between this man and the Herat leaders, who were no doubt kept fully informed of all our movements, and furnished with exact details of our local strength. That such a truly Afghan intrigue should not have been detected, proves how small was the sympathy really felt for us in Candahar, and the question arises was the Wali unacquainted with the plot to seduce his army when the occasion served? If he were not, he must indeed be an exception to the general rule, for Afghan sirdars are so well versed in intrigue that they can usually detect danger when our political officers believe all is going smoothly and satisfactorily. But on July 14th the plot came to a head, and General Burrows found himself left, with a weak brigade, alone on the Helmund. Nominally, he had been supposed to act in support of the Wali's army; but this farce had come to an end, and his position was defined only too clearly: he had to meet single-handed whatever force Ayub could muster. Our late "allies" were in the ranks of the enemy; the Wali's army had ceased to exist; and the Surteep's desertion would probably be followed by the rising of the armed peasantry of Zamindawar and the surrounding districts, for the Sirdar's example could not fail to influence ignorant men. If a chief of such importance had declared for Ayub, surely, it would be argued, the British were in great straits. Now comes the moot point as to what were General Burrows' orders, and what expectation he had of being reinforced from Candahar. Regarding the first, I believe I am perfectly right in stating that he was ordered to "stop Ayub Khan and disperse his troops if possible." On the question of reinforcements I am more doubtful; but I

state pretty confidently that General Primrose had decided that Candahar could not spare another regiment to strengthen the Girishk Brigade, even under the altered conditions reported to him after the mutiny. General Burrows was not relieved of his task of "stopping Ayub," and there must have been an over-weening confidence in the mind of the General commanding at Candahar in respect to the fighting power of the regiment with his absent Brigadier. That there was not the same feeling among the officers of the brigade itself is now well known, and one paragraph from the letter of an artillery officer, dated July 19th, and published soon afterwards, is so true an estimate of the situation that I cannot refrain from quoting it. He wrote:—

"We are now waiting for Ayub Khan, who is about 30 miles off, with thirty-six guns and about 6,000 men. It will be a stiff fight if he comes to the scratch, as this is a perfectly open country, and we are only 1,500 infantry, 500 sabres, and six guns."

This forecast of a "stiff fight" proved only too true, but instead of the 6,000 men referred to, our soldiers had to meet a host of irregulars led by fanatical ghazis.

It devolved upon General Burrows to decide what course would be most calculated to bar Ayub's progress, and on July 15th he wisely called together his commanding officers and held a small council of war. The day was not wasted in idle discussion, as while opinions were being exchanged our gunners were horsing and equipping the captured guns, the teams of which had been used by the mutineers to aid them in their flight. Many considerations had to be weighed in council. First, the position of the enemy the brigade were bound to "stop and disperse if possible." Such information as Colonel St. John possessed favoured the belief that the enemy's cavalry under the Naib Hafizulla were still distant 30 miles from the bank of the Helmund, and that the main body with the guns was several marches in rear of this advanced party. Ayub's line of advance was along the main Herat Road, and he would probably enter the Helmund Valley near the Khoja Baba Peak, a high point of the range of hills which run parallel to the course of the river. This peak is 30 miles in a bee-line from Girishk, and between it and the river is an open plain, waterless, but otherwise quite easy for a force of all

arms to cross. There was this plain still between the brigade and Ayub's advanced cavalry, so that the two forces were scarcely "in touch," more particularly as it was imperatively laid down in instructions from the Government of India that the Helmund River was not to be crossed under any circumstances. General Burrows was to wait for the enemy to appear before him, and his council of war had to decide at what point so to wait. The Helmund is usually fordable at only four points: Sangin on the south, Hyderabad, Girishk and Kalabist (at the junction with the Argandab). From these fords four roads converge on Candahar: the northern by way of the Malmund and Maiwand Passes, practicable for wheeled artillery; the two central passing through Khusk-i-Nakhud, and the southern route *viâ* Balakhana and the Bund-i-Taimur. Of these four routes, that most commonly used, on account of its directness, water and other supplies, is the road passing through Khusk-i-Nakhud from Girishk. Hence the value of Girishk as a strategical point at which to hold in check an army advancing from the west upon Candahar. But that strategical value had almost disappeared, as the Helmund, owing to an exceptionally dry season, was everywhere fordable for men on foot, thus allowing Ayub to cross it wherever he might choose and avoid Girishk. Furthermore, when the question of supplies was entered into, it appeared that the brigade had been quite dependent upon grain and forage collected by the Wali and stored near the fort on the eastern bank of the river. What supplies had existed on the 13th had either been carried off or destroyed by the mutinous regiments, leaving Girishk practically unable to provide longer for our troops. The necessity of at once finding supplies made a move from Girishk unavoidable, and General Burrows and his officers had determined what direction should be taken. The opinion of the majority favoured a retirement to Asu Khan, whence all the roads could be commanded and supports easily drawn from Candahar. This, of course, took it for granted that Ayub Khan meant to march direct upon Candahar and not turn off northwards for Ghazni and Cabul; and the retirement was advocated also on the ground that the brigade was not strong enough, unsupported, to meet the enemy in an open fight. There was a bolder proposal to move northwards to Hyderabad, retaining

the Helmund as our advanced line, but this found little support. Finally the middle course of a partial retirement was agreed on, the brigade to fall back instantly upon Khusk-i-Nakhud. This would place General Burrows upon the central road to Candahar, and therefore commanding, to a certain extent, the northern and southern routes; the force would also be only some 50 miles from head-quarters, whence it was hoped new orders would be received, and possibly reinforcements. This was the result of the little council of war held at Girishk, and it seems to have been just and reasonable. To have stayed at Girishk was almost impossible, as supplies were exhausted: to have moved to Hyderabad would have involved serious risk if Ayub's army were joined by the people of the district; while to have fallen so far back as Asu Khan before a shot had been fired would have seemed excessive timidity. Khusk-i-Nakhud was an admirable point from which to watch Ayub's passage of the Helmund, and thence to ascertain his strength and probable intentions.

On July 15th a night march was made, and on the morning of the 16th the brigade encamped on their old ground at Khusk-i-Nakhud. On the following days the troops moved two miles nearer to Mis Karez, and took up a position which they occupied until the morning of the 27th. The stores were placed in a small walled enclosure, and the baggage laagered up ready for all emergencies. Spies, furnished by the Wali, were busy during the next few days in bringing news of Ayub's movements. Their story was that the Afghan force was distributed in the dry river-bed between the Girishk and Hyderabad fords; it made no signs of moving eastwards, and the opinion began to prevail that Ghazni and not Candahar was Ayub's objective. Reconnaissances were made every day by General Nuttall's cavalry, but they were not of the kind to preserve touch with an enemy. Thus a troop or so visited Garmao, Sangbur, and the Bund-i-Taimar daily, as if for a constitutional ride, baited their horses, looked around, and returned. Their movements were so beautifully regular that every peasant knew at what time to expect them. Ayub's movements were never really watched at all, though sufficient cavalry were with the brigade to have allowed of regular outpost work being done, instead of a few hours' visit daily to the same villages.

It was not until the 21st that Ayub's cavalry pushed forward from the Helmund and exchanged shots with our reconnoitring party at Sangbur. The next day the village was found to be held by them, and news reached camp that 500 sowars were to seize Maiwand within twenty-four hours. There were stores of grain lying in the fields about Maiwand, and fearing they would fall into Ayub's hands, General Burrows ordered a squadron of cavalry to destroy the grain. They had only gone a few miles from Khusk-i-Nakhud when they were fired upon by a large body of Afghan cavalry, who were reconnoitring our position with some boldness. Our cavalry scouts, deceived by the haze, reported that two regiments of infantry were supporting the hostile cavalry, and the Horse Artillery and some infantry were sent out from Khusk-i-Nakhud. It turned out to be a myth; there were no Afghan infantry, and by this time their cavalry were retiring in perfect safety. The guns certainly fired a round or two after them, but our sowars missed their chance of a charge, scared by the report that infantry were hidden under some low hills. Sangbur contained no enemy on the 24th, but in the same neighbourhood on the 25th two of the Scind Horse were killed, the Afghan sowars being again on the move. So late as the 26th it was believed all Ayub's guns were at Hyderabad, and that no movement in the direction of the Malmund Pass had been made. The Afghan army was then believed to be about 12,000 strong, counting regulars alone, while the number of ghazis and irregulars from Zamindawar was said to be very large. Ayub's advance could not be exactly foreshadowed, but from his position at Hyderabad it was most likely that he would try to reach Maiwand through Sangbur, as none of his troops were reported to be on the longer route *viâ* the Malmund Pass.

The camp at Khusk-i-Nakhud was once more aroused on the afternoon of the 26th by positive news of a demonstration in the Maiwand direction, that village having been occupied by 200 irregulars, while Garmao, five miles away, was said to be held in strength by cavalry. The conclusion arrived at upon this becoming known was that Ayub meant to occupy Maiwand by a sudden move without joining battle with our troops, and that not improbably he would thence try to slip away through the Maiwand Pass

so as to place himself between the brigade and Candahar.* Spies also led General Burrows and Colonel St. John to believe that the main body must be still a march in rear of the cavalry at Garmao.† In view of this, it seemed important to seize Maiwand before it could be occupied in force, more particularly as the brigade had been for some days drawing its supplies from that village, and stores of grain still remained in its neighbourhood which would fall into Ayub's hands. The distance from Khusk-i-Nakhud to Maiwand was twelve miles, and a rapid march to the latter place might anticipate Ayub's movements and enable the brigade to clear Germao of the Naib and his advanced cavalry. All this was of course on the supposition that the main body of the Afghan army with the thirty odd guns was well in rear of the cavalry—an unfortunate supposition as it afterwards turned out, but one due to the wretched information resulting from the cavalry "reconnaissances."

General Burrows, on the night of the 26th, issued orders for the whole brigade, baggage and stores included, to march at daybreak on the following morning. At such short notice the large quantity of reserve supplies in the walled enclosures could not be got out in time, and it was not until half-past six that the troops left Khusk-i-Nakhud. The route taken was along the right bank of the Khusk-i-Nakhud river-bed, then quite dry. There was a strip of cultivation near the bank, but beyond, on either hand, lay arid, stony plains. The brigade halted at eight o'clock at Mushak, to enable the baggage to close up. This occupied half an hour, and then the march was continued, the next place reached being Karezak. Here, for the first time, the unexpected news was brought by our spies that the *whole* of Ayub's force was on the left front, marching on Maiwand. The cavalry were sent

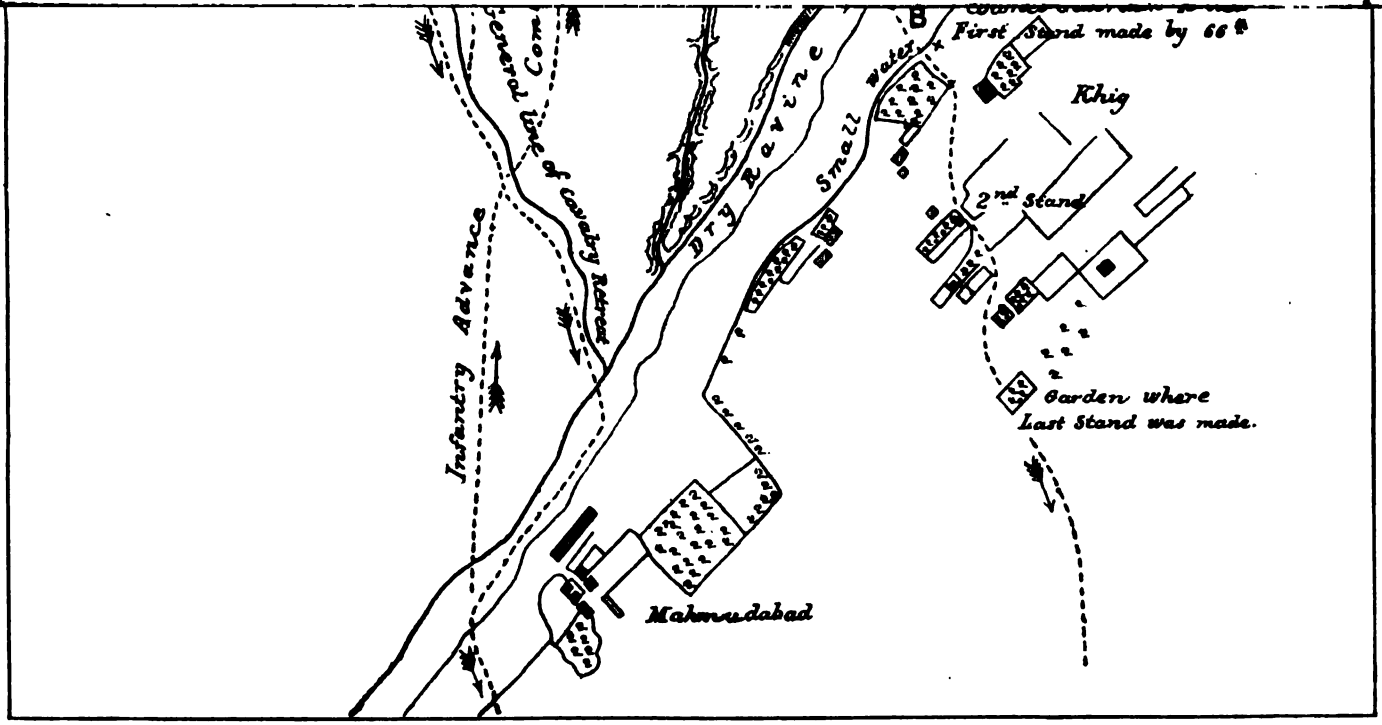
* This, according to the statement of Ayub's colonel of artillery (now a prisoner in our hands), was really Ayub's plan. He meant to reach Sinjuri by forced marches.

† In justice to Colonel St. John, I must say that I have since learned that he reported later in the day, to General Burrows, that the *whole* of Ayub's army was at Sangbur. This report was disregarded for the following reason: A British officer of the 3rd Scind Horse stated that he had visited Sangbur that day with a cavalry patrol, and that only a few irregulars were found there. Colonel St. John's information was quite correct, as our prisoners told us after the battle of Candahar. What village did the officer really reconnoitre?

out to reconnoitre, and found large bodies of horsemen moving in the direction indicated; but the haze and mirage prevented our sowars making any estimate of what force was covered by the cavalry. This was about 10 o'clock, and yet even with the aid of telescopes little could be seen of Ayub's army. Spies reported that the guns were there; but this news was looked upon by the General with great mistrust, natives being so given to exaggeration. General Burrows moved his troops at once rapidly towards Maiwand, meaning to occupy one of the large walled enclosures wherein to stow his 3,000 baggage animals and their loads, thus leaving the brigade freedom of movement in attacking the Afghan army. It was too late. Before the intervening village of Mundabad was gained, a large number of white-clothed figures, irregulars who follow their *moollahs*' dictation and their ghazis' lead, were seen pouring out from Maiwand itself. The enemy's cavalry ceased to retire, and along the slopes of the low hills above Garmao could be distinguished masses of men in some sort of organized formation. The haze still lay over the country, and it was impossible to make out in detail the strength of the army thus suddenly confronting the weak brigade. The ground on which the action which followed was fought is thus described to me by an officer present:—"A small stream, rising in the hills immediately north of Maiwand, formed almost the only drainage line intersecting the barren waste in our front. It ran successively past the villages of Mundabad, Karezak, and Mushak, eventually disappearing in a *karez*. Between this stream and the dry bed of the Khusk-i Nakhud river the ground was level and cultivated, dotted occasionally with high walled enclosures, but generally open." General Burrows had with him, approximately, 1,500 rifles, 550 sabres, and 12 guns, of which 6 formed the smooth-bore battery, manned by one officer and 42 men of the 66th Foot. He resolved to force the fighting; and four guns of the Horse Artillery Battery (E-B) with the cavalry crossed the dry *nullah* forming the bed of the Khusk-i-Nakhud stream, followed by the 66th Foot, 1st Bombay Grenadiers, and Jacob's Rifles with the smooth-bore guns. The baggage crossed in rear under an escort of two companies of infantry, a squadron of cavalry, and two horse artillery guns. The *nullah* having been crossed, the troops advanced about a mile and

SKETCH

OF


First Stand made by 66th
Khig
2nd Stand
Garden where
Last Stand was made.
Small water
Dry Ravine
General line of cavalry Retreat
Infantry Advance
Mahmudabad

formed up in line in the following order:— 66th Foot on extreme right, guns in the centre, with a wing of Jacob's Rifles and the Sappers as escort, Grenadiers on left, a wing of Jacob's Rifles in reserve behind the guns. The cavalry were at first on the extreme left guarding the flank of the Grenadiers.

It was not until nearly noon that the action began. Lieutenant Maclaine with two horse artillery guns and a small cavalry escort galloped out on the extreme left, and got his guns into action at a range of 1,800 yards, firing shrapnel at the Afghan cavalry. General Burrows disapproved of his boldness, and ordered the guns to retire, an order which Lieutenant Maclaine was very loth to obey. However, the guns were withdrawn, and by the time they had resumed their place in the line the enemy's strength had begun to be developed. Large numbers of irregulars, led by the usual ghazis, were seen swarming over the low hills, and they presently moved down upon the 66th, evidently meaning to turn the right flank. To check this, General Burrows ordered his right to be thrown back on the front extended, Ayub's cavalry being on the move to the left as if to carry out a flanking movement in that direction.* Accordingly two companies of Jacob's Rifles were sent to the extreme left, while the remaining companies of that regiment and detachment of the Bombay Sappers and Miners filled up the gap between the 66th on the right, and the guns in the centre. Two guns were placed in position to support the 66th on the right, the remaining ten between the Grenadiers and the main body of Jacob's Rifles. Every rifle was thus in the line of attack, it not being possible to form any reserve worthy of the name for such a small force. The cavalry (3rd Scind Horse and 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry), under General Nuttall, formed up in rear of the left centre of the line, where they remained during the action. Our guns began shelling the enemy, whose artillery did not reply for quite half an hour, confirming the idea that Ayub's guns were far in rear. By half-past twelve, however, this delusion was cleared away, for some five batteries opened upon the brigade, and their shells fell

* Major-General Greaves, Adjutant-General in India, in his remarks upon General Burrows' despatch, points out how fatal it was to form up with both flanks *en l'air* before an enemy vastly superior in numbers.

with fair accuracy. The effect of our own artillery fire could not be followed, as the haze continued. Under cover of their thirty or more guns the irregulars advanced to within 600 or 700 yards of the 66th; but the Martini fire from the latter swept them down wherever they appeared; and so cowed were they that, planting their standards, they sought cover in a dry ravine, firing upon our men without doing much damage. Our infantry were lying down under such cover as the ground afforded, and two of the smooth-bore guns were sent to the left to shell the Afghan cavalry. Then came the fatal mistake in the action: instead of following the usual tactics which our generals have found so successful all through the war—taking the initiative and attacking with his infantry—General Burrows entered into an artillery duel, which lasted for two hours. The brigade had twelve guns (six of which were inferior smooth-bores, worked by volunteers from the horse artillery, and infantry men trained during the halt at Khusk-i-Nakhud) the Afghans had nearly three times that number, and their gunners were unusually expert. "They soon got our range," says an officer present, "and shot and shell came crashing into us." Shrapnel, round-shot, and afterwards grape, were freely used by the enemy; and while our infantry were fairly safe at first, the horses of the cavalry and the gun-teams suffered severely. The latter had to be renewed constantly; and it was evident that in a trial of strength with artillery the brigade was greatly over-matched. Little did our men know that the Herati regiments suffered so from their shell-fire that twice they retired, and were quite ready to have fled at the first direct attack. The enemy's artillery fire was so well sustained that casualties soon began to be reported all along the line. Harris, of the staff, and Blackwood, commanding E-B Battery, were among the first hit: but Blackwood, after having his wound dressed (he was hit in the thigh), returned to his battery—a rare example of true bravery and endurance. The want of water told heavily upon all our men, and the slackness resulting therefrom was only too plain—men leaving the ranks to get water from the *nullah* in rear or from the water-carriers. Our three regiments were still out of range of any musketry fire, except stray shots from irregulars; but the artillery fire had a demoralizing effect upon the sepoys. Jacob's Rifles are

said to have had nearly 100 men who had never fired ball-cartridge, so that they could not be looked upon at all as trained soldiers whose fire could be relied upon.

At about two o'clock the smooth-bore guns were reported as running short of ammunition. Sixty rounds per gun had been made up since their capture, and with these they went into action. There were no reserves to fall back upon. Captain Slade had taken charge of these guns, but returned to his own battery when they ceased to fire. There was nothing for it but to order the four six-pounders and the two howitzers forming the battery to retire and this movement was at once carried out. No sooner did the enemy notice that half our guns were out of action than they advanced along their whole line. Their batteries were brought forward in the boldest manner, and some of their guns actually came into action, on the right, from behind a depression in the ground only 800 yards from our infantry. Two or three thousand cavalry manœuvred on the left flank of the brigade, trying to get well in rear; while on the right a large number of mounted men and irregulars on foot, who had made a wide detour, got into the villages, and were firing upon the baggage escort. The 66th had still the ghazi-led mob in front of them in check, steady volleys keeping the ground clear. At this time the casualties all round must have been considerably over 100, while many horses had been killed.

At about half-past two the two companies of Jacob's Rifles on the extreme left began to waver. Their two officers had been killed, and their two native officers, who had kept them together for some time, had also fallen; there were none of the enemy's infantry near them, but the artillery fire had demoralized them; and the last straw which broke the back of their courage was the retirement of the smooth-bores out of action. They thought such a move could only mean that all was over, and they broke their ranks and fell back in utter confusion, breaking into the ranks of the Grenadiers, who had up to that time been steady. Their bad example was quickly imitated, and the Grenadiers likewise gave way. The remaining companies of Jacob's Rifles shared the panic, and with a quickness that carried consternation into the heart of every European officer, all the native infantry

were surging upon the 66th. The Grenadiers fought bravely and tried to form square but could only get into a V shape with the apex towards the enemy: in the *mêlée* they were cut down literally "in hundreds." The Sapper detachment under Lieutenant Henn, with the guns, stood bravely to their post, but so small a party could not hope to save the guns without immediate help. Lieutenant Henn was killed after behaving most gallantly. The enemy saw their advantage, and a rush of irregulars led by ghazis was made from the right front. The guns fired canister into the mass; but it was useless, and Slade limbered up and retired. Maclaine remained with two guns firing, until the ghazis were actually at the muzzles, and these two guns had to be left behind. The 66th were broken by the rush of sepoys upon them. The confusion was hopeless, many of the sepoys being so cowed that they allowed the Afghans to pull them backwards from among their comrades and cut them down. No attempt to use the bayonet was made by the recruits among Jacob's Rifles, who scarcely seemed to know that they carried arms wherewith to defend themselves. A cavalry charge was ordered; but the men were out of hand, and though two squadrons rode out, they never really charged. One of their officers had his horse shot, and the sowars would not go on, but veered round and came back to add to the disorganization of the infantry.* The 66th and the Grenadiers rallied twice in walled enclosures and sold their lives dearly, but they were outnumbered, and could not help to check the Afghan advance. Colonel Galbraith was killed outside the first

* Brigadier Nuttall commanding the cavalry says in his despatch: "I ordered the cavalry to form line, and by a charge stem the rush of ghazis on the infantry; but I bitterly regret to have to record that although I was most ably seconded by the officers, only portions of the 3rd Light Cavalry and 3rd Scind Horse formed up, and we charged, but the men bearing away to the right and rear, the charge was not delivered home, and was but of little effect. All subsequent attempts made at this time by myself and the officers to induce the men to rally and face the enemy failed. The men seemed totally demoralized by the combined effects of the very heavy artillery fire which had, during the action, killed and wounded 149 of the horses, and about fourteen per cent. of the men engaged in the front. There was now nothing left but to fall back on the rear-guard, which had advanced a short way towards us, but it was not till we reached the four guns Royal Horse Artillery, brought out of action by Captain Slade, that the men, through the exertions of the officers, staff and myself, were formed up facing the enemy."

enclosure, and the 66th lost nine other officers killed. Major Blackwood, commanding E-B Battery, was also shot down, one of his subalterns (Lieutenant Osborne) having been killed in the rush. By three o'clock the brigade had been routed, and the enemy were in hot pursuit. Fortunately that pursuit lasted only two or three miles, the enemy returning to Maiwand to loot General Burrows' camp.

The following extract from a letter from an officer who was engaged in the action may well close this sad record:—

"When I realized that we were defeated, and had to retreat some 50 miles to Candahar, my heart sank within me, and never shall I forget the agonies of that fearful night march without water, hundreds of poor wretches lying strewn about the road calling aloud for a drop of water. It was agonizing, but one was obliged to steel his heart, as nothing could be done, we all being in the same box. The order to march on Maiwand from Khusk-i-Nakhud was only given at 10 P.M., on the 26th July, and the march commenced at 6.30 A.M. (on the 27th). We had no idea that Ayub's army was at Maiwand till we had marched half-way there, and then we only half believed it: however, after going a few miles further we sighted the enemy moving towards Maiwand. Our troops seemed to consider that they would have it all their own way, and advanced very boldly; but the demoralizing effect of thirty odd guns and the being outnumbered, obliged them to retreat, and the retreat became a rout. From prisoners lately taken we hear that we inflicted a fearful loss on the enemy, and that if we could only have brought a fresh regiment we could have won the day. Our heaviest losses were during the retreat, as all the villagers on the line of route turned against us. I was among the last to leave the field, and walked half the way, having given up my pony to a wounded soldier. I was not fired on by the villagers till within six miles of Candahar, when I, with two sepoys and the wounded soldier, had to ascend a hill, and take refuge behind a rock, where we remained a good while, till the country was cleared by the cavalry under General Brooke, who had come out from Candahar to meet us. I then continued my journey, and when arriving at the village near the cantonments

some 10 European and 15 native soldiers had joined me. The native soldiers were utterly demoralized,* and I could not get them to obey me. Some 100 or 150 Afghans were congregated on a little hillock commanding the road to Candahar, and seeing the hesitation of my party they streamed down the hill, yelling, and I was obliged to fall back and take up a position on another hillock. Then the native soldiers came to me and expressed their opinion that we ought to run for it. However, I abused them, and made them lie down and point their guns towards the enemy, who at once retreated to their former position. I felt perfect confidence in the European portion of my party, and if I could have felt the same in the native I would not have minded an attack from 150 half-armed Afghans. When General Brooke returned with the rear-guard of the Girishk column, he shelled the hills where the Afghans were collected, and we marched peaceably into cantonments."

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE not gone into the details of the movements of the Cabul-Candahar force after the Battle of Candahar, as there was no further opposition, and the military programme carried out was only of local importance. The brigades were marched back to India as quickly as possible, with the exception of the 9th Lancers and 6-8 R.A., which were left at Candahar. The following letter, written in Candahar, will throw some light on the strategy of the action on September 1st :—

CANDAHAR, *20th September.*

There is but one opinion here as to the unsoundness of the criticisms upon General Roberts's action of the 1st ; it is that the critics have jumped to conclusions on imperfect reports, having taken the first meagre telegrams as their guide. By an incessant study of small-scale maps they gained a superficial

* The 3rd Scind Horse only lost fourteen men killed and five wounded out of 260 men : they had forty-nine horses killed and wounded. There were thus always over 200 sabres available for a charge in this regiment alone, but the men were out of hand.

knowledge of the Argandab Valley, and were fully convinced that the proper mode of directing the attack would have been to throw an intercepting force 30 or 40 miles in rear of Mazra, and then to have attacked Ayub from Candahar—no doubt by way of the Pir Paimal village. They point their arguments by adding that our cavalry pursuit was really inoperative, as only 400 of the fugitives were killed, while the great mass escaped. Admitted that after we had rolled them back from Pir Paimal the great majority got off scot-free, this by no means proves that a weak brigade could have cut off their retreat; for it seems to be forgotten that not one, but many, roads were open to them, while the mountainous nature of the country on the higher reaches of the Argandab was all in favour of trained hill-men such as Afghans always are. Their cavalry and many thousands of footmen made straight for the Khakrez Valley, knowing well that once the range of hills, eight miles west and north-west of the Argandab, was reached, they were quite safe. There was no necessity at all for their retirement northwards up the Argandab—or rather north-eastwards—and it is quite an open question if any brigade we could have spared would have even seen many of the fugitives. General Roberts's first and greatest duty was to induce Ayub Khan to give him battle, and not to cause a scare in his camp by premature strategical movements, 30 or 40 miles up the Argandab Valley. It may not be known, also, that when the infantry was encamped near Shar-i-Safa, one march from Robat, on August 27th the news from Candahar led us to believe that Ayub might possibly forsake Mazra and try to escape in the Ghazni direction by way of the Argandab stream. General Roberts at once recognized the necessity of barring any movement *in force* in this direction, and a column of about 2,000 men was told off to march by way of Bori, and Dala, and block the road up the Argandab. But when heliographic communication with Candahar was opened up later in the day, and Colonel St. John's reports showed that Ayub was busy strengthening his position at Mazra, the order given for the column to move out was at once countermanded. It was known that the Afghan force was mainly composed of men from Zamindawar, Candahar, and Herat—the Cabuli element being very small, and the Kizil-

bashes and Kohistanis being already in treaty with Colonel St. John to desert at short notice. The main body of real fighting men, therefore, would seek safety in flight, after defeat, not northwards towards Khelat-i-Ghilzai, but to the west and north-west, where the hills offered them shelter until they could regain their homes. This line of flight was really taken; but as our cavalry brigade under General Hugh Gough could not reach the Kokaran Ford until Gundigan and the orchards about had been cleared by General Baker's Infantry Brigade, Ayub Khan and his cavalry escort—leaving Mazra, it should be remembered, at 11.30 A.M.—had easily covered the seven or eight miles of ground between the river and the slopes of the hills bounding the Khakrez Valley on the south. Besides, the tactics of the fugitives were such as to neutralize any pursuit or the action of any intercepting force: hundreds took refuge in the villages, buried their arms, or hid them securely away, and came out to greet our troops in the guise of harmless peasants. If these had been slaughtered in cold blood the cavalry would have returned with the report that not 300 or 400, but 1,300 or 1.400 of the enemy had been killed. I do not make this statement on my own unsupported authority, but on the direct testimony of cavalry officers engaged in the pursuit. Thus the 9th Lancers gave chase to a large number of men evidently in full flight. On coming up with them, the Lancers found these fugitives without arms, and though there could be no reasonable doubt that they had hidden their weapons some little time before, Lieutenant Colonel Bushman ordered his men to spare their lives. The Lancers rode among them, and if any man had been detected with a knife or pistol he would probably have paid the forfeit of his life. In other instances small bands were hunted into villages, and when the cavalry rode up men appeared holding little children in their arms, and prayed for mercy. What was to be done to an enemy resorting. to such manœuvres? Our cavalry could not take prisoners as they had to continue the pursuit: and these units of the Mazra army were shown that mercy which they refused to our men retreating from Maiwand!

Again, any intercepting force thrown into the Argandab Valley could not hope to co-operate with the force attacking from Can-

dahar; they would have been a detached corps of observation, merely watching for Afghans fleeing into their arms. First of all they must have been sent completely away from our main body either at Shar-i-Safa or Robat in order to cross the hills by the only available *kotal* near Dala (between 30 and 40 miles above the Baba Wali Kotal); for the Murcha Kotal was held in force by Ayub. They could not approach to within 20 miles of Mazra, for a further advance would have been to court an attack by overwhelming numbers, while General Roberts was marching from Robat to Candahar. The safety of 2,000 men would have been endangered, while the only object they could have gained would have been the interception of a few hundred of Cabulis, who would probably have taken to the precipitous hills and escaped in the night. The Argandab Valley narrows greatly, 30 or 40 miles above Mazra, and cavalry would have been worse than useless with the intercepting (?) column. It cannot be urged with too much emphasis, that Ayub Khan's line of retreat, *if his army were defeated*, was in the Khakrez direction, for his men, in their slack disclipine, would make for their own villages and not rush off at a tangent towards Khelat-i-Ghilzai. All Afghan "armies," so-called, and Ayub's was perhaps more worthy of respect than any we have yet met, have a power of dispersion which is unrivalled. Organized pursuit against them is almost impossible: unless every mountain path and torrent bed within 50 miles could be searched at once.

General Roberts has had more experience in Afghan warfare than any other of our commanders; and his tactics were based on sounder principles than those advocated by critics unversed altogether even in the details of past actions. To say Pir Paimal could have been carried with fewer troops than those engaged is to beg the whole question. The action of Ahmed Khel proved that when fanaticism is at red-heat, 5,000 or 6,000 men may charge right into our ranks. Would it have been wise to have dispensed with General Macgregor's brigade (some 2,000 strong) as a reserve in case of such another charge down from the Baba Wali Kotal upon General Macpherson's right flank? And yet General Macgregor had about the number of men which would have been absorbed if the much-talked of "intercepting column"

had been waiting, 30 or 40 miles up the Argandab Valley, ignorant of what was happening at Candahar. It may be urged that there were 4,000 men of the Candahar garrison at General Roberts's disposal; but it would have been unwise to ask much of a garrison still suffering from the shock of the terrible disaster at Maiwand, and only half-realizing that they were no longer besieged within the walls of Candahar. That I am not exaggerating the depression prevailing in the Bombay Division, will be clear from the fact that General Primrose, on the evening of the 31st August, personally stopped a string of mules which were leaving the citadel with bread and barley for the Bengal troops. Our reconnaissance was returning, and there was certainly heavy rifle-fire beyond Karez hill, while the enemy's guns on Baba Wali Kotal were also adding to the din. Our troops were holding Picquet Hill, and our camp was within 2,500 yards of the Eedgah Gate, out of which an officer in the Commissariat Department was conducting the little convoy. Between that convoy and "danger" were some 10,000 picked men, nearly all British, Sikhs, and Ghoorkas; but the "risk" of allowing the bread and grain to be carried a mile and a half was pronounced "too great" by General Primrose himself. The Commissariat officer, knowing food was needed in camp, managed to gain permission to take on the mules laden with bread, and he saw nothing to disturb him on the road. The ground between the north-western bastion and the nearest wall of cantonments (1,200 yards away) is as bare as the Sahara, and it was not likely the enemy's cavalry picquet below the Baba Wali Kotal would have charged out a couple of miles to capture the mules, even if they had seen them. The story is told not to detract from General Primrose's judgment and ability, but to illustrate the unhealthy feeling and want of tone in the garrison, in spite of the efforts of brave and resolute men to wipe out the recollection of Maiwand and Deh-i-Khwaja from the minds of their fellows.

I have tried to write without undue dogmatism: but I may have been betrayed into laying too great a stress upon "probabilities," viz., that the enemy's line of retreat would be towards Khakrez and not up the narrow Argandab Valley, and that Ayub's irregulars might have furnished a band of desperate men led by ghazis to

make a counter-attack from Baba Wali Kotal. I have carefully avoided any reference to the entrenched camp of Ayub at Mazra, which our spies assured us existed, and which General Macgregor's Brigade, fresh and untouched by fire, were intended to storm if Generals Macpherson and Baker had been checked in their progress. I think these probabilities were justified fully so far as the retreat is concerned, while the knowledge that we had all our forces concentrated behind Karez and Picquet Hills may have prevented the masses of men about the Baba Wali Kotal (in the earlier part of the day) from making a counter-attack. If there is one part which criticism may fairly seize upon, and which our own Brigadiers would be the first to acknowledge, it is the want of cavalry with General Ross when the 72nd and 2nd Sikhs on the one hand, and the 92nd and 2nd Ghoorkas on the other, rolled back the enemy at the turning-point of the Pir Paimal spur. The basin leading towards Mazra and the open ground due west towards the Argandab was covered with men in full flight, and 500 sabres could have swept into them with terrific effect. It is, I believe, an axiom that no division shall now go into action without one regiment of cavalry attached to it, but all through the war we have brigaded all our cavalry, and on several occasions the want of 500 troops to follow up *rapidly* an infantry attack has been severely felt. Witness in particular the first action of Charasia, when the Afghans fled towards Indikee; and the storming of the ridge leading up to the Takht-i-Shah Peak when the open ground beyond Beni Hissar was black with fugitives. General Hugh Gough and his splendid cavalry brigade of 1,600 sabres and lances did all that men could do to gain the Kokaran Ford, and cut up such bodies of men as they could overtake; but if one regiment had been spared from that brigade to have followed up our infantry advance there would have been rare work for the troops about Pir Paimal. The answer, of course, to this is that the network of orchards and walled enclosures, with intersecting channels, seemed to shut out cavalry from participating in that part of the action; there was no one as usual to tell us of the grand open ground when the ridge was turned.

APPENDIX.

The following information is derived from trustworthy sources, and may be of some interest :—

Table of Heights above mean Sea-level.

	Feet.
Cabul Plain	5,840
Luttabund Kotal	7,400
Kata Sung	5,000
Jugdulluck Kotal	5,200
Gundamak	4,500
Futtehabad	3,095
Jellalabad	1,950

Table of Marches from Jumrood to Cabul.

The corrected road distances are :—

	Miles.
Jumrood to Ali Musjid	8·30
Ali Musjid to Lundi Kotal	10·50
Lundi Kotal to Dakka	12·00
Dakka to Basaule	11·10
Basaule to Barikab	9·98
Barikab to Jellalabad	17.76
Jellalabad to Rosabad	12·88
Rosabad to Sufed Sang	16·12
Sufed Sang to Peswan Kotal	12·75
Peswan Kotal to Jugdulluck Fort	10·50
Jugdulluck Fort to Sei Baba	10·00
Sei Baba to Luttabund	9·50
Luttabund to Butkhak	9·50
Butkhak to Bala Hissar	9·20
Total	160·09

TRANSPORT FOR THE INDIAN ARMY.

The transport arrangements have always been the great stumbling-block when war has been declared in India, and in the hope that something will be done to form a permanent establishment, I republish the following letter, written in Sherpur on June 15th, 1880 :—

15th June.

Lieutenant-Colonel Low, of the 13th Bengal Lancers, Chief Director of Transport with the Cabul Force, has suggested a plan for establishing a permanent transport service, the details of which I will try to explain. He advocates a system—the expense of which should be moderate in time of peace, and not extravagant in time of war—which should admit of rapid expansion when war breaks out, and, most important of all, which should allow of the animals being employed for ordinary purposes of commerce in peace time, yet always be ready to fall into their places when the State requires them. Colonel Low takes an army of 36,000 of all arms with fifteen days' food as the unit to be treated, this being about the strength of a force which is likely to be mobilized in case of war breaking out, and he believes that under his system transport for such an army could be raised, at any time, in a fortnight.

Taking the mule as the only transport animal in the "first line," he calculates that 70,000 mules (of which number 1,028 would be spare animals) would be required for the 36,000 men, the estimate being as follows:—

	Mules.
7,000 British Infantry	15,435
1,500 ,, Cavalry	6,036
2,800 Artillery and Engineers	11,267
4,000 Native Cavalry	9,900
21,000 ,, Infantry	26,334
Total	68,972
Spare animals	1,028
Grand total	70,000

This calculation is made on the Cabul scale of baggage, and each animal would have to carry two maunds only; allowance is made for forage and grain also being carried. The 70,000 mules required would be located in the three Presidencies, in the following proportion: Bengal, 35,000; Bombay and Madras, 17,500 each. Regarding Northern India, it is calculated that the N.-W. Provinces would furnish 9,750, Oudh 750 and Rohilkund 2,000. The Punjab would be responsible for 27,500. The system of maintenance would be the division of all the country into a certain number of districts; as, for instance, the N.-W. Provinces into thirteen, and the Punjab into twenty, each of which would have a fixed number of mules ready for the State when occasion might arise. Colonel Low's explanation of the organization he would create is so clear, that I will give his own words. He says:—"The districts would all have been numbered off in the transport books, and I will suppose I am visiting the Rawalpindi or No. 20 district. The first village I enter, might have, perhaps, fifteen mules, nine of which were over three and under fourteen years old. To the owners of these animals I would say: 'Government will give you, through me, one rupee per month for each of these animals. Government does not want them now and may never want them at all. Keep them, therefore, and use them as you have been accustomed to. All that Government asks is that you will agree to give the use of the mules in time of war. You must bring them with their saddles, &c., arranging among yourselves that at least one man shall accompany every three mules. On Government calling for the mules, you will receive war rates of pay from that day till the animals are discharged, when they will revert to peace rates of one rupee per month. This present agreement is to last twelve months, after which notice of three months on either side may end the bargain: the one proviso

b-ing that when Government has called for the service of the mules, the notice cannot be given until the mules are discharged. Meanwhile the mules must be branded with the district mark 'R 20;' and here is Rs. 36, the rst quarter's payment in advance.'" Colonel Low states that from his personal knowledge, and from opinions expressed by native gentlemen, he is convinced the people would eagerly accept such a system, as it is one which they could easily understand, and is quite in keeping with their customs and traditions.

Then comes the all-important question of cost. Regarding the permanent establishment, Colonel Low suggests that a Director, who would have control all over India, should be appointed with staff pay of Rs. 1,000 per month. His subordinates in Bengal would be two superintendents (Rs. 500 each), and four assistants (Rs. 150 to 200); in Bombay and Madras just half this establishment. There would also be a number of native officers, and non-commissioned officers, and five sowars would be told off to each district. The staff in Bengal would cost Rs. 9,210 per month (in peace time), in Bombaya and Madras Rs. 4,030 each, or a total of Rs. 17,270 for establishment. The premium to owners of Re. 1 per animal would be Rs. 70,000, making a grand total of Rs. 87,270. When war broke out, the staff would be available for instant service at their normal pay, while the owner of each animal would receive his Rs. 12 per month, in all Rs. 8,40,000, or a total expenditure on service of Rs. 8,57,270. To put the matter in simpler form, Colonel Low remarks:—"If we suppose a period of four years in which there was war for four months, the cost would be:—

	Rs.
44 months' peace, at Rs. 87,270 per mensem . . .	37,29,880
4 months' war, at Rs. 8,57,270 per mensem . . .	33,29,080
Total	70,58,960

This is, in round numbers, £700,000;" and Colonel Low significantly adds:—"This can no doubt be compared with transport expenses in the last campaign"—an allusion, perhaps, to the enormous compensation we had to pay to camel-owners for animals lost or killed. The second line of transport in a campaign, Colonel Low considers, should be wheeled carriages, a certain number of carts being always kept ready at stations near the bases of supply, such as Multan, Rawalpindi, &c. With this scheme, and no doubt several others before them, it will be strange if the Government does not once for all make up its mind to an expenditure in peace time upon transport service: it may seem, for the time being, money wasted, but any one seeing the accounts of the present war cannot help being convinced that a permanent transport would have saved the country many lakhs of rupees.

THE END.

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