

FIELD-MARSHAL  
LORD NAPIER OF MAGDALA  
G.C.B., G.C.S.I.

*A Memoir*

BY HIS SON

LIEUT.-COLONEL HON. H. D. NAPIER  
C.M.G.



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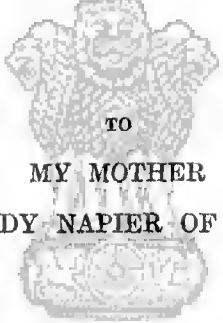
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TO  
MY MOTHER  
MARY, LADY NAPIER OF MAGDALA

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## PREFACE

Some time before my father's death, Miss A. Yule had been occupied in arranging his papers with a view to assisting the work of some future historian.

She was the daughter of his friend and brother-in-arms Colonel Sir Henry Yule, who, besides being a distinguished officer of Royal Engineers, was also a well-known writer on geographical and other subjects, and Miss Yule to some extent inherited her father's talent.

Lord Napier, in his dislike of publicity, would never have written an autobiography. He had kept no diary, but with his usual kindness afforded his enthusiastic secretary free access to his papers and assisted her by conversations. Miss Yule doubtless also acquired much personal information through the medium of her own father, a companion of his youth, who died a few days only before Lord Napier—indeed, it was when attending his friend's funeral that he contracted the influenza that proved fatal.

Under these circumstances, my eldest brother was unwilling to disturb Miss Yule in the possession of the papers, and in prosecuting her wish to write the history of Lord Napier's life herself. But time passed and Miss Yule died, leaving a mass of correspondence, and a very detailed but unfinished manuscript, which has furnished the material, of necessity much abridged, for Chapters I to IV, and Chapter VIII, the China Campaign.

Nothing further was done in the matter, and in course of time the duty devolved on me to endeavour, however imperfectly, to complete her work and preserve some further record of a great career, of a much beloved, and deeply respected character, which the statue in Queen's Gate commemorates.

To a son, the memory of such a father remains ever fresh, and no one is found to compare with him.

Other men have had greater opportunities. Some may have been as intelligent, many as brave, a few as straight, as strict in their morals and conscientious in the execution of every action of their lives, as unselfish and chivalrous, as good a father, as perfect a husband, but no one else I have ever met has appeared to me to combine all these qualities to such a degree.

It is therefore with a sense of deep unworthiness that I venture to submit this biography for publication.

The lapse of time and the great events of the last war which have overshadowed all previous records of military achievements, have necessitated the curtailment as much as possible of the details of actual fighting.

I am much indebted to Mr. Edward Arnold for his assistance in preparing the simple maps required to give the general view of military operations, and for useful suggestions regarding the editing of this book.

For kind permission to use a map of Central India and to make quotations from works and letters my thanks are due to The India Office, *The Times*, the Countess Roberts, Lord Lawrence, Field-Marshal Sir William Birdwood, Colonel Sir Augustus Fitz-George and Mr. D. M. Stanley.

*August, 1927.*

H. D. NAPIER.

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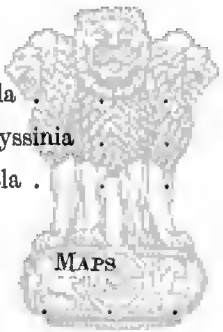
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CHAPTER I  
CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH  
1810-1828

Robert Cornelis Napier was born at Colombo in Ceylon on December 6, 1810, and the circumstance is recorded in his father's journal of that date as follows: "This morning at about ten minutes before five o'clock my dearest Catherine was safely delivered of a very fine boy. May the blessings of heaven be upon his head!"

Charles Frederick Napier, whose journal has just been quoted, was the son of William Napier (born 1741) who claimed descent from the Napiers of Merchiston, and was himself a Scottish gentleman of independent means and much personal distinction, whose cultivated mind, dignified presence and polished manners impressed all with whom he came in contact. He early gratified a taste for travel and art by a long sojourn in Italy, and was married in London at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, in 1766 to a good and pretty countrywoman, Jean Steuart, a near relative of the Kennedys of Culzean and the Lord Eglinton of that day, who was herself born at Culzean in the ancient house on the Cove where the present Castle of the Marquis of Ailsa now stands.

Her character may be best described in the words of her son Charles, who wrote: "For good sense, tenderness, generosity of sentiment and noble forti-

tude, I have never known her equal. Her latter days were passed in care and sorrow, but her virtues deserved a better fate."

Mr. Napier, who had a family of three sons and several daughters, is said to have lost a large sum of money by the rascality of an attorney who escaped to America with the plunder, and the family was thereby reduced to comparative poverty.

Of three sons, two were christened Charles Frederick, and, to add to the confusion, both entered the Navy. The younger Charles continued to serve for many years, taking part in some of the naval actions against the French, but attained to no higher rank than that of Lieutenant, while the elder Charles made a fresh start by land, and in 1794, after a successful examination at Woolwich, obtained a Commission in the Royal Artillery, thanks to the influence of a friend and relative, Mr. Burgess, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of whom he ever after spoke with grateful regard.

Lieutenant Napier, R.A., whose well-stored notebooks still exist to testify to his youthful application and ability, spent the early years of his military service in Home garrisons, first at Woolwich and subsequently at Dover. During the panic of 1801 he was one of the officers employed in equipping Lord Nelson's flotilla, previous to the attack on Boulogne. In 1803 he was transferred to a company of Artillery stationed at Colombo, and here he became acquainted with Catherine Carrington, the clever, pretty and engaging sister of Sir Edmund Carrington, Chief Justice of Ceylon.

The grave young officer, to the envy of many of his superiors in rank, had the good fortune to win the lady's affections—she was then twenty-three years of

age—and on December 22, 1803, they were married by licence in the Fort of Colombo.

Amongst Mrs. Napier's warmest friends was the Governor, the Hon. Frederick North, who gave the Napiers the use of his cottage at Point de Galle where Napier was then stationed, and which proved to them a very happy home until his transfer to Trincomalee, and thence in 1807 back to Colombo. At this time Napier, who was somewhat older than his wife, and very much older in character, is depicted as possessed of a tender and affectionate, but grave and reserved nature. He was ever ready to befriend and help his brother officers, but he had few familiar associates. His devotion to his profession, high standard of duty, and deep feeling for religion, together with a certain fastidiousness of manner and language, were not qualities likely to facilitate freedom of social intercourse. But his superiors well knew his value and his men were devoted to him. Long after Napier's death, one of his old gunners wrote of him as follows: "When Captain C. F. Napier assumed the command at Trincomalee, the climate had made great havoc in the mental and bodily constitution of the men; aided by their low habits and vices they were fast falling into drunkenness, discontent and all manner of military and moral irregularities. The Captain, who was a smart active man of strict, sober and moral principles, did all in his power to correct this falling off by encouraging morality and virtue, and suppressing vice. He was scrupulous and faithful in the discharge of his duty, and ever watchful for the good of the Service as a Commanding Officer. When driven to the disagreeable necessity of resorting to corporal punishment, which was always the last alternative with him, he hesitated

not to order it, but always stood with his head downwards in silent melancholy, and he has been seen even to shed tears on the occasion. . . . At his arrival, the Artillery, over whom alone he had any command, were in the custom of parading every Sunday morning for sea-bathing ; this parade he changed to the Saturdays and adopted a Church parade on Sunday mornings. After it he marched the men into Barracks where they all sat down while he stood up and read prayers in the most serious and edifying manner. This was never omitted when his health would permit ; he did all in his power for the good of his men, but he had a strange medley to deal with.”<sup>1</sup>

At the time of his youngest son's birth, the family already consisted of an elder brother, Charles, and two sisters, Angela and Emily. Captain Napier was much engaged in laboratory work, experimenting on the strength of powders, etc., when, at the beginning of 1811, H.M.S. *Fox* arrived at Colombo with despatches, and on the following day orders were issued for the preparation of a battery and train to join an expedition destined for the conquest of the Island of Java, then, as now, in possession of the Dutch. To his dismay, Napier found himself, as Second-in-Command, detailed to remain behind, but in consequence of his vigorous remonstrances and an urgent appeal to the Governor, Lieut.-General the Hon. Sir Thomas Maitland, an exception was made in his favour. After two months of incessant work preparing for the expedition, during which time, as his wife afterwards complained, “he was too busy ever to look at his poor unchristened babe,” Captain Napier embarked in

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography of Alexander Alexander*, Vol. I, p. 170. (Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1830.)

command of his detachment for Madras, whence the expedition sailed on the 20th April.

The fleet, consisting of eighty-one sail of all descriptions, halted for some weeks at Malacca, where Napier noted the kind and hospitable treatment he received from Lord Minto, the Governor-General of Bengal, who had accompanied the expedition planned by his own courageous foresight.

Batavia Bay was reached on the 4th August. Four days later the city of Batavia surrendered at discretion. General Janssens, the Franco-Dutch Governor, had concentrated his forces at the cantonment of Wiltevreden, itself unfortified, but covered by Fort Cornelis, a military post of great strength, on which all the art of French engineering had been bestowed.

On August 10 the British advanced, and, after a very sharp action, defeated the enemy, and took possession of Wiltevreden. But Fort Cornelis proved too strong to be attempted without heavier ordnance, and the next fortnight was spent in landing the siege train and constructing batteries. On August 18 Napier was appointed to command the whole of the Artillery, the senior officer being invalided, and by August 25 the place was ready for assault. This was carried out during the night, and by 8 a.m. on the 26th the entire position was in the hands of the British, the enemy losing 2,000 killed and wounded and 5,000 prisoners, while the British loss was only 750.

On Napier's return to Colombo, he received a public expression of cordial appreciation both by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir S. Auchmuty, and by the Ceylon authorities; but the joyful reunion, so long and cagerly awaited by both himself and his wife, was soon

clouded over by the state of his health, which had been undermined by his exertions and an injury received during action from the recoil of a gun. Mrs. Napier herself became for a short time dangerously ill. But by the middle of December they had sufficiently recovered to permit of the long-deferred christening to take place, and their youngest boy, now more than a year old, received the names of Robert Cornelis, the latter in honour of the capture of the fortress, which his father had so successfully bombarded.

Unfortunately, the improvement in Napier's health proved but temporary; he was forced to apply to be invalided, and on February 26 his diary records: "Embarked in the evening with my beloved Catherine and my dearest children." Under this entry is written: "The last line ever written by my poor Napier." His health rapidly declined, and he died at sea on March 21, 1812.

To his children he left as sole inheritance a spotless name and the example of a life of severe self-denial and constant devotion to duty for duty's sake, without thought of recognition or reward.

To none of his children was this precious inheritance so real and active a power for good as to the boy whom he scarcely knew. The sentiment of devotion to his father's memory was carefully fostered by the mother, whom her son adored, and throughout his long career Robert Napier cherished with tender pride the memory of his father's example, and no fame or honours that came to himself afforded him the same gratification which he felt in a few words of the old Java Despatches.

Mrs. Napier, left with scanty means and a family of two sons and two daughters, at first took up her

abode in Buckinghamshire, near her own relations at Missenden Abbey, but soon after removed to Woolwich for the education of her eldest son, who was preparing to enter the Royal Academy. Robert, the subject of these memoirs, was sent to the care of Mrs. Napier's close friend, Lady Huntingdon, in London, where he was soon placed at a school of high repute, Mr. Pollard's, in Cadogan Place. A year later he went to join his brother at a tutor's at Woolwich. At this time he was only nine years old. Long after he said: "I don't think I learnt anything at that school, unless perhaps a little Latin. . . . The tutor was a clever man, but it was a very bad school, and the oddest mixture of all classes. There were Tollemaches and Manners on the one hand, jumbled up with the son of the Quarter-master-Sergeant of the Academy and others of that class." In the long warm summer days the boys often played truant towards evening. Woolwich was a place of many delights at that time, including even fishing, for the Thames there was then a beautiful clear stream boasting salmon. But the great attraction to the Napier brothers was the Artillery practice—especially the mortar practice. "Posted far in advance of the firing, with the keen sight of those days, we could see the course of a shell, or even round shot, as it flew from the gun, and we used to rush after it. Sometimes in our impatience we arrived before the shot! We used to rush to knock the fuses out of the shells which had missed exploding. (Those were the days of beechwood fuses.) We were allowed to carry them off—as a sort of fireworks."

Napier's education was continued in this desultory fashion for about two years, until his uncle, Mr. George Carrington, took him in hand, secured for him the

promise of a cadetship in the East India Company's service, and sent him to school at Hall Place in the vale of Bexley by way of preparation for the college at Addiscombe.

Napier spent nearly four years at Hall Place, and although he did not learn much from his teachers, there is no doubt that the experience did much to strengthen and develop his character. The school claimed to be considered a military institution. There were about 100 boys divided into companies or squads, with under-officers and corporals selected from among the elder boys. At intervals an officer and a sergeant came over from Woolwich to inspect and drill them. Each company had its colours, and the boys—the privates—all carried pikes.

Very soon after Napier's arrival at Hall Place, D——, a noted bully, several years older and very much bigger than himself, set on to worry him. Little Napier at once challenged him to a fight. They set to then and there, but after two or three rounds one of the big boys interfered, saying it was out of order for a great fellow like D—— to fight so small a boy. Had the fight gone on, it is scarcely possible that Napier could have continued to hold his own; but, as it was, he came off well, and D—— never meddled with him again.

No details are now available of Napier's progress at Hall Place. It is however known that the only lesson-book which really captivated his attention, and that from the first, was Cæsar. Probably it was about the same time that he first became acquainted with Xenophon; incidental remarks in after-days showed how carefully he had read the *Anabasis*. The taste for the *Commentaries* remained with him through life; a few

months before his death he was eagerly following up Cæsar's traces in Auvergne.

He was on excellent terms with his school-fellows, but made no intimacies, and "used to wander off alone a good deal in play hours." He read much in a desultory way, and to some purpose, to judge from the command of language which a letter of this date shows.

Before joining at Addiscombe, Napier went for three months' study to stay in London with Mr. Stuart, his temporary guardian and legal adviser of his family. His mother had by this time transferred her residence to Belgium for the sake of economy and the education of her eldest daughter, and was living in an old Château near Ghent. The boy's first holidays after a term at Addiscombe were spent with his mother, and his visits abroad did much, not only to give him a good knowledge of French, but also to widen his experience of life. To him everything was new, and therefore charming, while the conditions of life in the old Château contrasted favourably with their former cramped abode at Woolwich.

At this time, his elder brother Charles, tired of waiting for a vacancy in the Artillery, had obtained, through the influence of Colonel James Fullarton, his father's first cousin, a commission in the Rifle Brigade, and had gone to Belfast to join his cousin's battalion which was shortly leaving for Halifax. Young Robert, aged fourteen, on his return to Addiscombe wrote the following letter to his mother in July, 1825 :

I should have written to you before, but I was determined to ascertain whether the Brigade was gone or not. At Greenwood and Cox's Office they told me positively that the Brigade was not gone, but was only waiting for the transports, which

would arrive at Belfast in a few days. I think your letters are sure of catching him in Ireland. I read his letter to Hastings,<sup>1</sup> which he, viz. H., will take over to you. The Scratchleys<sup>2</sup> say that it is the finest climate in the world, and you should think yourself lucky that it was not the West Indies instead of America. . . . Now for myself. I arrived at Ostend in time for the table d'hôte and slept at the Hotel Imperial—the Engleterre<sup>3</sup> being full. I embarked at seven in the morning and had a very ruff<sup>4</sup> passage indeed. I was very sick and being a little better was going to sleep in my berth when the waves, which were very high, burst the skylight and gave me such a ducking as soon awoke me, but I turned into another berth and was soon set to rights. It was too dark<sup>5</sup>—so I was forced to proceed to town where I arrived at one o'clock in the morning and was forced to sleep in the Ship Tavern. I am now quite well—hope you are all the same. Give my love to my sisters, Bell,<sup>6</sup> Eddy, Dolly. And remembrances to Mitchells—Duvernets.

Believe me, dear Mother,

Your most affectionate of sons,

ROBERT NAPIER.

P.S.—Charles belongs to the battalion which is to go but is not yet gone. The regiment will return in two or three years. That's Poz.

Napier's Addiscombe contemporaries in after-life described him as a gay, frank, engaging boy, full of spirit and ever ready for a frolic; with a high sense of honour and good abilities, but giving little promise, in their eyes, of future distinction. Napier himself said of this time: "I worked hard, not from ambition

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hastings was then at the Charter House, where his holidays began in August.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Scratchley was an old Ceylon friend and adviser.

<sup>3</sup> and <sup>4</sup> The only slips in spelling; the handwriting is that of a grown-up person, and excellent.

<sup>5</sup> Too late to do anything at Dover; he may have been instructed to call on some friends Mrs. Napier had there.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Arabella Hastings and her younger brothers.

or love of study, but because I saw that my first duty was to relieve my mother of my maintenance."

Amongst Napier's contemporaries at Addiscombe, a few of whom became intimate friends for life, were William Baker, "the most perfect friend that any man ever had." Other friends and colleagues of after-days included Henry Durand and Robert Montgomery, Eldred Pottinger, the heroic defender of Herat, and that gallant soldier, Vincent Eyre.

Napier remained some two years at Addiscombe; it was his personal desire to leave it on the first opportunity, and enter the Royal Artillery, his father's arm, but he was persuaded by his uncle, Mr. Carrington, to stay on another term, to which his age entitled him, and pass the examination for the Engineers. This he accomplished at the end of December, 1826, but before proceeding to Chatham to complete his studies as an officer of Engineers, he took a lodging at Woolwich, instead of spending his holidays with his mother in Belgium and studied mathematics with a tutor, Monsieur Barard. Thus he obviated the necessity of a further return to Addiscombe in order to complete the course, which would otherwise have been requisite in spite of his having passed for Engineers.

This period of study proved of great benefit to him, and he entered Chatham fairly equipped with knowledge, and animated by a quietly resolute spirit that was in itself a guarantee of success. In after-life he always spoke of the year spent at Chatham as one of the happiest of his recollection. He had not wished to be an engineer, but the spirit of the place and the work went far to reconcile him to the service he had chosen, and into which he now threw himself heart and soul.

In a letter written many years later he said: "I always feel a deep obligation to our old Chatham School, to Pasley and our senior officers who inculcated such a high standard of the duty of an Engineer, whether official or Private." Colonel Pasley, the Director and Founder of the R.E. Establishment, was not usually popular with the ensigns. But Napier appreciated his high ideal of efficiency. The spirit in which he taught and Napier learnt is well reflected in the following story which Lord Napier liked to tell against himself. Having been given as a subject the siege of Paris, the projections and calculations for the construction of batteries, trenches, fascines, gabions, etc., occupied him closely for a considerable time. When this work had been prepared, as he believed, thoroughly, it was submitted to the Director, who, however, returned it to him for correction. Napier again worked out all his details, but without detecting any error. He then carried his work back to Pasley, whom he now asked to explain where the mistake lay. Pasley replied: "Your projections are excellent, but you have forgotten a needle and thread. For, all having been successfully accomplished, and your mines prepared, the omission of a needle and thread to secure the hose with the powder to ignite the great mine under the enemy's works, might have had a most serious result." Napier never forgot the lesson, and in after-years, as his devoted friend and Staff Officer, Sir Martin Dillon, related, when examining a project of reform or the like, he would say: "It is all a question of the needle and thread."

At Chatham, at the Royal Engineers' Mess, Napier came in contact with several officers who had served with distinction in the great days of the Peninsular

War, and he often spoke in after-life of the stimulus that he derived from the contact, even the mere presence, of such men at the outset of his career. In a speech which he delivered at Cairo in 1883 at a dinner given in his honour by the officers of Royal Engineers, Napier dwelt on this aspect of Chatham, and one of the officers then present remarked afterwards: "We never heard a speech before that gave us so much to think about."

In writing to a brother officer in 1871, Napier said: "I do not think any position really higher than that of an engineer who, unexcited by the actual strife of battle, amid the unknown dangers of the dark night, or in the face of contending combatants by day, exercises a calm judgment and walks in the presence of death with a calm and steady courage under the consciousness that on his skill and judgment depend the fate of thousands, or the issue of a campaign."

On the completion of his course at Chatham, Napier made his preparations for immediate service in India, and then, about midsummer, 1828, went over to Flanders to take leave of his mother.

CHAPTER II  
EARLY YEARS IN INDIA  
1828-1845

Aligarh—Doab Canal—Calcutta—Darjeeling—Marriage—  
Umballa.

Lieutenant Napier reached Calcutta in November, 1828, and it was no figure of speech when he referred in after-days to having landed in India without a connection in the country or a friend except his fellow-cadets. He had indeed been duly provided with introductions, but a chance occurrence having stirred his sensitive pride, he decided not to use them and tore up all his letters. In later years Lord Napier referred to this impulsive act as a "bad example," but personally he never for a moment regretted his boyish resolve to "trust only to his name and sword."

His first destination, after a few weeks' stay at Calcutta, was the Head-quarters of the Bengal Sappers at Aligarh, 800 miles up country. The Ganges was then the highway, and the journey by boat as far as Cawnpore occupied some three months. A Government flotilla, formed of some thirty pinnaces, was towed up the river, each boat containing three officers. In this way the romantic city of Benares was visited by Napier, and a letter to the Maharajah of Benares some sixty years later testifies to the indelible impression created on his mind by the grandeur and beauty of its site and buildings.

At Aligarh, Napier's first task was to make a survey of that celebrated fortress on behalf of his Commanding Officer, Captain de Bude, who was occupied in strengthening the defences, and who promptly lost the young officer's painstaking effort before he had time to make use of it. According to Napier, de Bude was a man of fine character, much originality and great ability, who, but for his early death, might have risen to high distinction. Lodged at first in the same house with de Bude and eight other young Engineer officers, Napier soon tired of the interruptions incidental to such a life, and obtained permission to take up his abode in an empty bungalow close by, where he was freer, while continuing his work as an engineer, to devote his spare time to the study of Hindustani under a moonshi. Here also he took the opportunity of conversing with old Native Officers and others, witnesses of the stormy period when Lord Lake closed with his French and Mahratta adversaries in the decisive struggle at Aligarh, and these early impressions accounted for the very vivid conception which Lord Napier had of the old Mahratta warfare, of which he would speak with almost the familiarity of an eye-witness.

Some months later, in June, 1829, Napier was appointed to the command of a company of the 1st Bengal Sappers stationed at Delhi, he being the only one of his contemporaries who had learnt anything of the language.

Here also, partly owing to scanty means, he occupied an empty and derelict bungalow, which, however, had a fine view across the Jumna, and possessed the advantage of being near the men of his company. His professional duties gave him ample occupation,

and his leisure time was largely taken up in reading Shakespeare and other classical authors, so that time never hung heavily on his hands. Moreover, the company was in so unsatisfactory a condition, that upon him fell the task of necessary reforms. The old Subadhar (Native Officer) "had to abandon his embroidered slippers, and go to the works properly dressed." Days were set apart for regular drill and target practice which had long been forgotten. The return to strict discipline raised some opposition which was put down by prompt punishment, and very soon an excellent understanding grew up between the company and their commander. Napier had to keep all the muster rolls and accounts himself, and considered the experience so valuable that many years later, when commanding the Central India Field Force, he expressed a wish that he might be the Commander-in-Chief for a brief period to be able to issue an order that no officer should be eligible for promotion to Captain who had not written up the troop or company records with his own hand for six months.

The extent of ancient Delhi and the magnificence of its monuments impressed the 19-year-old boy very deeply, and he was eager to learn all he could gather from books and from current tradition of their origin. Nor was it difficult to gratify such tastes. The Delhi College was a centre of Oriental learning, and the small English society included several men of exceptional knowledge and cultivation. Elphinstone's history was still unwritten, but many valuable accounts of special periods were attainable, and these Napier eagerly sought and read. Great events of Indian history were brought very near in those days by the survivors of many stirring periods. Akbar, the aged son of Shah

Alum II, still maintained his titular sovereignty with some magnificence, and in his celebrated stables Napier saw the elephant ridden by Nadir Shah in his triumphant progress at the great invasion and massacre of 1740. The ruthless Afghan Chief Nawab Gholam Kadir, who struck out Shah Alum's eyes in 1788, was living unmolested at no great distance from Delhi, and Mademoiselle Perron, the daughter of the daring French adventurer, who was the guiding spirit of the great Mahratta storm of 1803, was a ward at the Residency. The interest quickened at Delhi never faded, and near the end of his long life Napier said that the poetry and romance—the truth stranger than fiction—of Indian History could be equalled by nothing except some passages in the Old Testament.

The insight into Native character and the sympathy with which he treated Natives stood him in good stead throughout his career, and some fifty years later Lord Napier stated that he had made it the rule of his life, as much from public duty as from personal sympathy, to strive that every Native of whatever class he met should leave him with a friendly impression.

A severe attack of fever and pleurisy overtook Napier as the result of exposure in a shooting expedition, and laid him up for about three months. At the close of the period, about April, 1830, he was able to take sick leave to the Hills and visited Mussoorie. When on the march thither, he visited Lieutenant Cautley of the Artillery, whom he had met previously, on the Doab Canal, and travelled with him for some days. Mussoorie was at this time a sequestered spot, abounding in wild life of all kinds. Among the forest trees the oak and rhododendron were the largest, the latter being at this season in full blossom. The natural

beauty of the region enchanted Napier, who always looked back on this his first sojourn in the Himalayas with especial pleasure. Presumably as the result of his meeting with Cautley, he made application and was selected for employment on the Canal Department, then a coveted branch of the service, and after returning to his post at Delhi for the ensuing winter, joined his new appointment early in March, 1831, as assistant to Lieutenant Proby Cautley on the Doab Canal, now styled the Eastern Jumna Canal.

Here took place his first meeting with Henry Lawrence, to whom he was afterwards bound by ties of close friendship and affection. Very soon after his arrival at Cautley's head-quarters, a very odd-looking visitor made his appearance there. His attire was astonishing, even for the jungle—"I think I never saw so disreputable a looking figure anywhere"—and his first greeting to Napier was: "So you are the fellow who did me out of the canals!" Apparently Napier, who had been the prior applicant, had been represented to Cautley, quite untruly, by some unknown person, as not caring for the appointment, and Cautley had therefore replied to his brother officer, Lieutenant Henry Lawrence, that he would be most glad to have him. This was pending Napier's refusal, to whom he then wrote. The acquaintance thus unfavourably begun soon became friendly, and when Lawrence decided to aim at the Revenue Department, it was Napier who initiated him into the use of the simple surveying instruments required.

The Doab Canal dates from Moghul times. The author is said to have been a Persian noble of great engineering skill who served under Shah Jehan about 1657. It taps the Jumna just below its issue from the

hills, and, following a nearly direct course, discharges into the same river below Delhi. The project was a grand one, but was never completed by the ancients, which is not surprising, seeing that it taxed to the utmost the greater knowledge and resources of their English successors. The first of these was a Captain Smith, appointed in 1823. A follower of the North-Italian school, the records of which formed the only great body of teaching then available, it is probable that his desire to apply their principles to a country widely differing from Northern Italy, may have been the cause of the partial failure which attended his work. Cautley was appointed his assistant in 1825, and succeeded him four years later. The canal had hitherto been constructed at a uniform depth of 4 feet from the surface level of the country, irrespective of the natural fall which in parts was excessive. Nor was much attention paid to the varying consistency of the bed. The result was that when the water was admitted in January, 1830, the rapids which formed on the steeper slopes threatened the destruction of nearly all the bridges north of Saharunpore, while the deposits of sand and silt along the lower levels necessitated the continual raising of the embankment to maintain the canal in its bed. Cautley, while providing temporary palliatives, proceeded to reduce the entire bed of the canal to a uniform inclination of 17 to 24 inches per mile, sufficient to keep the stream clear without provoking erosive action.

Matters were still in a most critical stage when Napier became Cautley's assistant. For some time their task was a daily hand-to-hand fight against both time and nature, demanding unsparing work, ceaseless vigilance, and, on Cautley's part, constant promptness

of invention and fertility of resource. Four months after joining, Napier was left in charge of the canal during the absence on leave of his Chief, and had to meet alone the emergency of a flood of unusual magnitude which burst the great Mas Kurra dam. The measures which Napier extemporized to lessen the damage by means of large crates of 10-foot battens loaded with burnt bricks, became thereafter a standard remedy in similar difficulties. On Cautley's return from leave, Napier was sent by him to build a small canal and mill without the aid of an overseer, that he might learn the details of the construction of embankments and masonry, accounts, rates of pay, etc. Napier, to whom the work was entirely new, sent back anxious inquiries as to the proper proportions to be used in making cement, but the only reply he received was: "That is just what you are there to find out!" However, in spite of the lack of experience and the absence of skilled workmen, the canal and mills were built, and the result was so satisfactory that when Colonel Cautley, some twenty years later, published his account of the canals, he reported of the Shanli mills: "The buildings are perfect, they were constructed under the immediate eye of Lieutenant Robert Napier, of the Engineers, in 1831-32, and are, in my opinion, among the best of the canal works."

Napier remained five years on the Doab Canal; the work was most arduous, and the prolonged solitude so complete, as at times to tax even Napier's faculty of self-companionship. In recording Cautley's services some fifty years later, Napier wrote of this period: "No country gave us any example that at all assisted us; the work was entirely the result of Cautley's unswerving devotion to the study of the subject.

Except a month or six weeks in autumn, we had no holidays, not even Sunday." Napier could have learned his profession in no better school. Cautley, "full of intellect and kindness," as Napier described him in after-days, was, perhaps, in all his career the only man who exercised a strong personal influence over Napier, who often spoke of him as "My Master."

The following extracts from letters written to his mother during this period are of interest :

I have been, since I last wrote to you, out in my camp carrying on my works quietly and in solitude, which was only broken once when an old friend came to see me and took me down to Delhi for a change. I had been growing rather tired of myself and camp, and had some strange wishes. I believe I almost wished to be married. Not from any fair lady being in the case, for I have not seen one fairer than my boot for months, but from a feeling of vacancy in my heart (I think I see Ange and Emmy<sup>1</sup> looking very impudent as you read this), which wanted filling up ; but a few days of Delhi society and scandal, and being teased to call children pretty against my conscience, sent me back to my camp quite contented again. I pulled on my red nightcap, and smoked a double allowance of cigars, and vowed never to be such a fool again. . . .

With what contempt I look upon English ideas of travelling and distance. My dominions extend for 150 miles, and I may sometimes traverse it three times in a month, not like a cockney with a spare shirt and pocket-handkerchief, but with all my bag and baggage, sheep, goats, fowls, camels, bullocks and horses. . . .

I live a very regular methodical life now—either a march in the morning, or a ride to visit my works. I return in time to dress for breakfast by nine o'clock and enjoy a book for an hour, after which I commence my business and remain employed till four, when I take a light dinner, and walk or ride to some canal work. The evening is the most solitary time.

<sup>1</sup> Sisters of Napier.

I do not feel alone in the day, but in the quiet hour of evening when everything is still, I could wish sometimes to meet a familiar face. True, I have some Native acquaintances, but a pillow dressed up would be just as entertaining. An old fat Zemindar (land-owner) comes occasionally to pay me a visit, and ask questions about the Feringhees or Europeans. He wishes very much to know why I do not marry. I tell him I wait till I can get to my own country where wives are very cheap—I can buy three there for the price of one here. I do not think any other answer would satisfy him. . . .

I could not help thinking of Bruges and the society there when I saw B——. Of all the people whom we met daily, how few I shall ever see again. The Hastings! <sup>1</sup> They were brothers and sisters to us, and whatever has passed, by Hastings' conduct, has passed away as all offences and injuries should. I remember only the person whom I loved as a brother—and Edward, <sup>2</sup> and Godolphin, <sup>3</sup> the lovely child that we all doted on. What has become of him? I think of these things until I feel ready to overflow, though my eye has become somewhat harder than it used to be. . . .

You would pity me if you could hear the rain pouring down in one continued shower on my unhappy tent—however it keeps out. It is very unpleasant—all my servants are getting fever, but I keep well, although my general health has suffered, and requires to be renovated by a visit to Europe. The mind has as much effect as anything else, and I have the "mal du pays" and long to see you all.

Now, my kindest Mother, may God bless you,

Ever Your Affectionate son,

R. C. NAPIER.

Napier's short intervals of leisure were always turned to good account. He kept up his drawing (he had a

<sup>1</sup> Francis, Lord Hastings, b. 1808, succeeded his father in 1828 as 12th Earl of Huntingdon—died 1875. He proposed to Miss Emilia Napier and resented her refusal.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Captain the Hon. Edward P. H. R. Hastings, born 1818, fell at the relief of Arrah (Oct. 19, 1857), in which he bore a very distinguished part.

<sup>3</sup> Born 1820. Entered the Church and died 1865.

clever knack of hitting off portraits at this time) and read extensively—French literature as well as English—he also acquired a little Persian, and improved his acquaintance with Hindustani. Then the jungle was full of game, and the morning round was often combined with a little shooting. His delight in swimming was another healthy outlet to which he was much addicted.

In this manner he contrived to keep fit until April or May, 1835, when he had to undertake some very hard surveying work in the hottest time of year, and fell seriously ill. As soon as he recovered to some extent, he went on sick leave to the Hills, but having failed to restore his health, he decided to take three years' furlough to Europe, and started from Calcutta early in 1836. The voyage in those days lasted six months, a period which he found none too long: "I enjoyed the voyage immensely, and had no wish for it to end. I had a good library with me, and with this and a little sketching, and the music on deck, I had plenty of amusement. How I delighted in the storms—those grand storms of the Southern Seas!" At the outset of the voyage, the Purser fell ill and died, and Napier volunteered to carry on the work, as the Captain was very short-handed. This gave him a curious insight into many details of ship life, which he doubtless turned to good account in later days, when superintending the embarkation of troops, etc. Soon afterwards the ship's surgeon fell into a brain fever, and it was Napier who sat up with him at nights through many hours of delirium and sponged his shaven head with vinegar and water. At length they reached the Cape, where the Captain settled the surgeon in comfortable lodgings, and Napier was the good

Samaritan that left him a little money for his comfort. Another little incident of the voyage is perhaps worth recording. While at anchor at the Cape in Simons Bay, and enjoying the hospitality of Cape Town, Napier was appealed to by an officer of the sister service, the Royal Artillery, to second him in a duel with the first officer of another ship lying at anchor in the Bay, both having fallen in love with the same lady on board.

It was a beautiful day, and I was just starting on an excursion—it was a horrid bore, but of course I had to go. We called at his antagonist's hotel, but he was not there. So we drove down to Simons Bay. I sent on board a message saying that Mr. — had asked me to act for him, and requesting the officer to come on shore. At first he seemed unwilling to come, and as I could not waste my time there, I sent a second message to say that if he did not come, I should have to go to him on board. That brought him. Then I looked very grim, and asked them both a great many questions. Finally, putting on a most judicial air, I told them that I thought they had both, on their own showing, behaved exceedingly ill, and that the only course open to them was for them both to apologise to each other. So I made them apologise and shake hands, and then we drove back to Cape Town.

On arrival home, Napier rejoined his mother in Belgium, and associated a good deal with the officers of the newly formed Belgian army, and for a time enjoyed the change and comparative novelty of the life there, especially the long rides with his Belgian friends. Early the following year he crossed over to England, paid a visit to his brother of the Rifle Brigade, then quartered at Dover Castle. Napier was twenty-five years of age, and his brother, who had last seen him as a boy of fourteen, reported that Robert was

much changed, "in many things for the better, but there are some few faults he has, that can only be cured by the society of ladies, and alas, I fear he was never formed to lead a domestic life. All his thoughts seem centred in Indian Independence." Mrs. Napier wrote on the same sheet: "Robert went with us to a party and a dance. I had the honour of dancing twice with the Indian Chief; an honour too that I wished to disencumber him of, seeing there were so many pretty young single ladies at hand, but no, he declined. And at length danced with a lady of the spinster age, who resolutely stuck to him all night."

Visits to relations in London and Buckinghamshire followed, and by the summer Napier was back in Belgium, studying the Belgian canal system, and also the scene of the recent siege of Antwerp. In Napier's copy of the history of the siege, written by an English officer who was present, the author notes that the Dutch squadron, ably commanded, gallantly manned, and mounting nearly 200 pieces, was compelled to retire from the Scheldt by a small improvised land battery. Against this Napier wrote in the margin: "When the Dutch fleet commanded by (Ruyter) ascended the Medway, it was checked by a small battery at Upnor."

During the subsequent winter, Bruges, where his mother was then living, became his head-quarters. His studies at this time included mediæval architecture, geology and Italian. Lessons in the latter he obtained from Signor Terelli, a political refugee of some literary distinction. He sketched diligently, read much French literature, and interested himself in the Flemish people and their history. All this time, his eyes, which had suffered during his illness from the Indian glare, con-

tinued to give him much pain, and he often sought distraction in games of chess with a worthy old Dutch pastor. But the life must have been irksome to a man of his profession, active habits and experience, and in May, 1838, he went on a walking tour to the Ardennes. A portrait of him carrying a knapsack and wearing a blue Flemish blouse was painted by Vanacker, a Flemish artist of repute, at his mother's request. After a somewhat lengthy stay at Chaud'fontaine in the heart of the Ardennes, where he derived much benefit from the hot baths, he went up the Rhine by water, and saw something of the new Prussian defences at Coblenz, and at Mayence was present at a great review of the Austrian and Prussian troops which then jointly garrisoned that place. The Prussian army at this time gave little promise of its subsequent efficiency, and his recollections of 1838 suggested some interesting reflections to Lord Napier at the German Manœuvres of 1876.

From Mayence he turned homewards. The time for his return to India was now drawing near. During his stay in Belgium he had met a young lady staying with his sister Emily, by name Anne Pearse, whose parents were about to return to India, taking their young daughter with them. Napier, after an acquaintance of some eighteen months, now realized the place that she had taken in his heart, and had expressed his hopes to Mrs. Pearse, and his wish that they might make the journey to Madras by the same vessel. Apparently his suit was not much favoured by the parents, as Mrs. Pearse and her party preceded him to India, while Napier spent some weeks in looking over various establishments in England and Wales, including iron works and a copper mine. Finally at

Plymouth, before embarking, he carefully examined the Harbour Works. Thus Napier never lost an opportunity of improving his technical knowledge, and the experience gained at Plymouth was turned to good account in later years, when concerned with the harbour of Bombay and its defences.

Napier appears to have reached Madras towards the end of January, 1839. Miss Pearce's father had not the personal knowledge of Lieutenant Napier possessed by his wife, and also may naturally have been unwilling to lose immediately the daughter whom he had just recovered. Moreover, Napier's prospects were somewhat uncertain. After a month or two of painful suspense at Madras, Napier appears to have obtained a somewhat grudging consent to an engagement, on the condition that a suitable appointment should precede marriage. On March 8 he sailed for Calcutta, where he became the guest of his old friend de Bude. He was offered and accepted the post of Acting Executive Engineer of the Burrissal Division of Eastern Bengal.

This appointment made him responsible for all Civil buildings and stores throughout a Division which included the Hill State of Tipperah, both banks of the Ganges and the Megna, the latter being a river 15 miles in width, together with the islands of Battia and Sunda. Nobody in Calcutta appeared to know where the office of this Division was situated, but at last he discovered that it lay some twenty days' journey thence. A letter written by him about May of this year described the situation :

The station has a pretty appearance from the river which almost surrounds it. The rains lay a great part of the country under water, but this soon runs off, and the tide wash keeps

everything clean. . . . The rains are unusually early and heavy, so that for several days I could not go out, and sat at my door looking wistfully at the stable and the sky, whilst the frogs, taking advantage of the puddles, advanced their scoundrel throats close up, and scemed crying and groaning at me in chorus.

It was a weary time no doubt, and Napier beguiled the time in writing projects of the future to his fiancé.

I have such plans of happiness, Annic. First our morning rides. . . . I do not mean you to be excluded from my hours of study—on the contrary, I hope to be assisted in them by you when you have not more agreeable avocations. And the moment I am free from business, our reading and occupations will be shared. In the evening our drive. . . . And afterwards we will practise your songs and we will read agreeable books to each other. Every place affords local amusements, e.g. botany, if not made a labour, drawing (Chittagong is a most picturesque place), and collections of Natural History.

He quotes Sir William Jones' account of Chittagong (near the mouth of the Ganges), adding: "We must read his life." In another letter he quotes from the same source the beautiful lines:<sup>1</sup>

On Parent knees, a naked new-born child,  
Weeping thou sat'st, while all around thee smiled.  
So live, that sinking in thy last long sleep,  
Calm thou may'st smile while all around thee weep.

Napier, however, was not destined to bring his bride to Chittagong. In the middle of June, when on a tour of inspection of his scattered Division, he suddenly received orders to return to Calcutta, and proceed to Darjeeling in the Himalayas north of Calcutta. About five weeks later he reached his new

<sup>1</sup> These lines, translated by Sir W. Jones from the Persian, were written by Lord Napier in the album of the Crown Princess (later Empress Frederick of Germany) in 1876.

post, where he arrived in the midst of the rains "with a pair of pitarahs (light baskets slung from a yoke) as my sole possession." He had performed the last 30 miles on foot, and in August he wrote his first impressions as follows :

"The climate and my journey have quite restored me from the effects of the fever I had. . . . Besides, I had determined not to be ill, as a good deal of work was expected of me. . . . From the first station in the Hills, called Punkabari, the road was through a superb forest of oak and rhododendron. . . . The view from this place is very fine—its elevation is 6,000 feet, and you see over the plains to an immense distance." At the end of this march, he had to put up in a shed, where he dined off rice and read an old number of *Blackwood* by the light of a wick dipped in oil, and thence walked into Darjeeling. "The people there expected me to arrive quite exhausted, and were prepared to be compassionate. So when they asked me if I had not had a very uncomfortable night, I replied, 'Oh no. I had all the luxuries of the season and *Blackwood's Magazine*.' When they heard that, they wrote down to Calcutta, 'This is the fellow to suit us. Let us keep him.' "

Napier's immediate duties were to lay out the new settlement, and to establish easy communication with the plains 7,000 feet below. When he first began his work, the forest was so dense that all he could do was to slowly grope his way from point to point and ridge to ridge with the theodolite. Having no trained assistants, he enrolled, at his own charge, a small body of Hill men, whom he taught in a measure to supply their places. "They formed my bodyguard, and with their help I got on very well. They were such nice

simple people ; except the headman, who knew a little Hindustani, none of them had ever been in contact with Europeans before. With them to carry my things, I was able to plunge into the jungle when I pleased and for as long as I pleased." Living most of the time on tea, rice and sardines, varied by an occasional pheasant from the jungles, sleeping in a rough hut thrown up by his Hill men—sometimes without even that—Napier served an apprenticeship that stood him in good stead thereafter.

On September 15, writing to his fiancée, Napier said : " I wished to send you some sketches, but have not had a moment's time to make them. I received my charge here in a worse confusion than the last one, and have been working without the assistance of any writer or accountant. I have sent to Calcutta for a good one, when I hope to have more time. I have already done what has not been done in the whole of the preceding year—sent in a report and a plan of the place." And this in the rainy season when his friends predicted that he would not even be able to get there.

" The rain is constant, as in all the Hills, but the climate extremely fine and healthy. When the clouds disperse for an hour or two, the view of an extensive valley, bounded by endless waves of mountains crowned by the snowy Himala, is very grand."

On September 25 he wrote again : " All this exquisite climate is thrown away upon me without you to share it. . . . I have been busily occupied on the survey—every step has to be cut through the forest."

Some three months later he was fretting to get leave, but doubted whether it would be granted :

Everything that depended on myself has been done. All who ought to have assisted me have failed. The magistrates who were pledged to secure me people have not done so. I have been obliged to advance money on my own personal risk like a prodigal to an amount which quite frightens me, but it is my only chance of getting anything forward. I am now encamped at the foot of the Hills, giving my personal superintendence to the road here, which is climbing the hill along the face of a precipice. Every step has to be cut out of the rock by means of gun-powder, so that it goes on slowly. Beneath me are the plains spread out like a map. . . .

The chief dangers to life were from wind and cold. Storms were of extraordinary severity. When a blizzard overtook the coolies, they had to drop their loads and hasten to the nearest shelter. Failure to do this resulted in death, and this occasionally occurred when the coolies would not leave their loads, or the postmen their letter-bags. One charm of this wild life was perhaps its uncertainty. In Napier's words: "When you pitched your tent at night, you never knew but a tree would come down and make an end of you on the spot." *नक्षत्रमत्र नश्यते*

At length, nearly a year later, Napier succeeded in getting leave. The journey to Calcutta, however, involved such hardships that, on arrival there, he fell ill of jungle fever, and for six weeks hovered between life and death. At the end of that time he was carried on board ship, bound for Madras. The vessel was becalmed, and the voyage lasted thirty days. It was the best possible thing for Napier. The doctor declared that nothing but the object before him could have saved his life.

At Madras Napier's long patience at last found its reward. On September 3, 1840, he was married, and thenceforward seems to have found in his wife the

fulfilment of all his hopes. Her letters remain to attest the perfect unselfishness, the steadfastness of her pure, guileless, and loving nature. But such records can convey little of that special personal charm which, even more than her grace and beauty, won all hearts—won and kept them, for Mrs. Napier never lost a friend.

After a brief holiday spent in the neighbourhood of Madras, Napier returned with his wife to Darjeeling. A letter dated November, 1840, affords a pleasant glimpse of Mrs. Napier :

The constant bustle of travelling night after night with few intervals of rest is very trying, but Annie is such an excellent and intelligent traveller that she found a thousand objects of interest to dissipate her fatigue and break the weariness of palanquin travelling. The mountain air, the scenery, luxuriant vegetation and beautiful flowers were so exciting and attractive that all my efforts to keep her in her sedan chair were fruitless, so we strolled up the hill together, gathering large bouquets of flowers and ferns, laughing and talking more like two truants escaped from school, than an old subaltern and his wife. She is an excellent mountaineer, knows not fear, and has already made friends and assiduous slaves of the Lepehas. . . . I feel daily more sensible of her value.

During Napier's absence a house had been built for him at Darjeeling, and his kind friend, Dr. Campbell, had done everything to make it comfortable. In January, 1841, Napier wrote: "Our little garden is struggling to emancipate itself from the shade of the forest. Between the great labour of clearance and our reluctance to cut down trees which were flourishing in the days of Akbar or Humayun, it makes little progress. It seems to me so poor an exchange to give a tree of hundreds of years, perhaps, for cabbages and potatoes."

His first child was born on the 14th October, 1841, and named Catherine after Napier's mother. Meanwhile Napier had been appointed Executive Engineer of the Sirhind Division, but the Calcutta Committee, interested in the establishment of Darjeeling, thought so highly of his work that they took the unusual step of protesting against his transfer, and that so earnestly, that the Government consented to defer his removal until the autumn of 1842.

In January of that year Mrs. Napier wrote :

I have indeed every reason to be thankful to God for the great blessings He has bestowed on me, and to be proud of my beloved husband. He is beloved by the Natives . . . he never turns away from their complaints. . . . I must give you a sketch of what he has to do. In the first place he has three roads all going on at the same time, and the survey of the Dalagunge road to make out—a work of time and anxiously looked for by the Military Board and Lord Auckland. Then comes his own office, letters, etc., and lastly, all Dr. Campbell's <sup>1</sup> business—political, magisterial, dāk-master,<sup>2</sup> and a dozen other things. Yesterday he had five cases to try. Ho certainly is not an idle servant of the Company.

The time for leaving Darjeeling and its romantic forest life was now at hand. His Chief, in reporting to the Government, said : “ It has so frequently been my duty to report on the value of the services done by Captain Napier while he was employed here, that I have nothing now to add farther than that the completion of his roads especially, and of his other works generally, is very much to the credit of the zealous and able character he has held.”

“ I have sent for a large safe pinnace to travel in,

<sup>1</sup> The Superintendent, Dr. Campbell, was then absent on a political mission.

<sup>2</sup> Postmaster.

and Annie will have no trouble, I hope," wrote Napier on June 25, 1842, when proceeding to take up his new appointment. It is strange in these days to think of travelling by boat to get from Darjeeling to Umballa, but such was indeed the case, and the voyage up the River Ganges was not without incident. One night, when moored to the ghaut at Dinapur a severe storm arose, broke several ropes and threatened to dash the pinnacle to pieces against the banks. With great difficulty Napier succeeded in getting his wife and child ashore in their night clothes, and all three, bare-footed, followed by their servants and the crew, struggled on in the dark with just enough room for their feet between the edge of the river bank and a high wall, until they were able to take shelter in an officer's house near the river.

The pinnacle managed to survive, although many other boats were lost during that night.

On arrival at Allahabad some six weeks later, Napier received orders from the Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, to join his Division without loss of time, which entailed his proceeding to Kurnaul by express, as his services were urgently required for the construction of barracks. The duties which awaited him included the choice of the site for a new cantonment, as it had been decided to abandon Kurnaul on account of the mortality among the troops there, and the urgency was due to the return of troops from service in Afghanistan.

These duties were not only most arduous in themselves, but Napier had had no experience of such work. Consequently, during his rapid ten days' journey up country, he took the opportunity of visiting every cantonment and barrack that lay on his route,

and consulting every engineer and medical officer whom he met. The only useful counsel he received was from an officer who said: "Choose the best land. Remember that the best land is also the healthiest."

A brief examination of the country satisfied Napier that the most suitable ground for a cantonment was a tract lying between the rivers Ghuggar and Sursuti, about 4 miles south of the town of Umballa. This ascertained, he immediately proceeded to mark out the new cantonment; for which he secured no less than 25 square miles of ground. Convinced that one cause of disease at Kurnaul had been the want of adequate ventilation, Napier conceived the bold and novel idea of laying out the lines in échelon, so as to secure the maximum of air to all the buildings. The result proved so satisfactory that the Government subsequently adopted this system in other cantonments. In the words of a specially competent observer:<sup>1</sup> "The wide roads and spacious gardens and the lofty barracks of Umballa constituted the beginning of a new epoch in the structure of Indian Cantonments . . . the shady avenues of that station were all planted by Napier . . . while the Napier barrack for the British soldier was cited in those days as a patent example of the innate extravagance of the Engineer. It is now (1890) recognised to be in reality of a most economical kind."

Napier was fortunate in having a Chief, Major Abbott, R. E., who gave him a free hand and permitted him to carry through so bold and original a conception on such a scale. Napier's progress in construction was

<sup>1</sup> General Sir George Chesney, R.E., K.C.B., in the Pioneer, January, 1890. Sir G. Chesney was Military Member of Council in India.

extremely rapid, and within five months Major Abbott was able to report <sup>1</sup> "that Captain Napier has been indefatigable in his exertions and successful beyond hope under the difficulties which have met him. His arrangements evince deep thought and consideration of the subject in all its bearings. . . . The regiment will soon be under cover in six barracks. I believe they are so at this time of writing."

During this period, Mrs. Napier with her small family was at first comfortably housed at Kurnaul in the bungalow of Captain Baker, her husband's dearest and oldest friend, but soon transferred her abode to Umballa, where they lived in tents until such time as the site for Head-quarters could be decided on, and a house built for them. In a letter, dated April 13, 1843, she writes: "Robert is very thin and sunburnt. . . . He gets up at day-light, and works till 10 at night, only resting at meals, but I hope when he gets the European barracks (which are beautiful buildings) finished, he will have less worry."

However, the incessant grind of work became ever more arduous and exacting, the uncertainties of the political situation adding to the difficulties of his task. Ever since the death of Runjeet Singh (1839) there had been chaos in the Punjab, and by the summer of 1843 the Lahore Government was visibly staggering to its fall. It must be remembered that our Government had to reckon not only with the independent Sikh State of the Five Rivers, but also with the minor Sikh States under British protection on the hither side of the Sutlej. Unimportant in themselves, they complicated the situation by forming a sort of bridge-head or *point d'appui* for their fellow-country-

<sup>1</sup> Inspection Report, dated May 26, 1843.

men on the far side of the river, in case of a Sikh invasion.

And, as in subsequent years, the British Government hesitated to take any precautions which might tend to hasten the catastrophe, their orders fluctuating with the changing aspects of the situation, as this appeared more or less imminently critical.

There is little to record of this period. Napier was far too busy to write letters, save occasional hurried affectionate notes to his mother, and though many pleasant details of his happy home life are preserved in his wife's correspondence with her parents, these are seldom of public interest.

Meanwhile, Umballa had become the Head-quarters of the Division, and an important military and political centre.

The Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, came north, and went over Napier's works with him, expressing warm approval and cordial appreciation of all he had accomplished, as indeed did all under whom he served. But this sort of success, great as it was, could not satisfy Napier as a soldier. Persons who knew him at this time have spoken of the grief and disappointment it was to him to have served so long without seeing a shot fired in anger. In 1843 local disturbances at Khythul had led to a British force of some 4,000 to 5,000 men being hastily collected, and a night march on the fort of that name being executed, under the direction of Napier and Yule,<sup>1</sup> attached as Engineers with the duty of marking out the route, etc. But the enemy had not waited for the attack, the fort was found abandoned, and there had been no fighting. Napier feared that he might

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Colonel Sir Henry Yule, K.C.S.I.

rise to a comparatively high grade before having had the military experience to fit him for his duties. In 1844 he was occupied in laying out the Hill stations of Subathou and Kassaoli, on the route to Simla, whither it had now become the custom to migrate for the summer months. But Hill climate was pronounced unsuitable for his wife, and they remained at Umballa. The family had now, 1845, increased by the birth of twin sons, and Napier had but recently recovered from another attack of ophthalmia.

In a letter of September, 1845, Napier wrote: "In case of ill-health to either of us, England being impossible, we shall have to think of the Cape or Australia. I propose New Zealand, but since Annie has heard of several enterprising Europeans being cooked and eaten, she has lost her appetite for the place." Napier long had a hankering after New Zealand, as will be seen later. Constantly overworked, and long disappointed of the opportunity of military service, burdened with a growing family and limited means (from the day he drew his first pay as a boy of sixteen to that of his mother's death, he contributed to her support), the prospect was far from cheerful.

In a letter of November, 1845, Mrs. Napier mentioned some interesting visitors to Umballa, Prince Waldemar of Prussia and his suite: "I had the honour of dancing with Prince Waldemar. . . . I found him a most agreeable and intelligent partner, very anxious for information, and delighted because I could tell him something of Darjiling, its inhabitants, its natural productions, botany, etc., so that what with a large portion of English and a small one of French, and now and then a word of German, we got on remarkably well."

Prince Waldemar (travelling as Count Ravensburg) had made an unsuccessful attempt to enter Tibet, as related in *The Career of Major George Broadfoot*, and in September, 1845, was at Simla, and inquired of Major Broadfoot whether he should remain or go on, his object being to see a Punjab War, etc. Major Broadfoot replied that he would be frank with him; if the British Government could avoid it, there would be no war. "He evidently thought I was very diplomatic, which is generally thought by clever continental people when they are frankly dealt with." Thus history repeats itself! On how many occasions have British diplomatists made this discovery!!

At this time neither the Governor-General nor the Commander-in-Chief seem to have anticipated serious action on the part of the Sikhs, and Mrs. Napier wrote in the same letter: "There will not be any service on the other bank of the Sutlej this year, at which I greatly rejoice, for you may imagine with what dread I look forward to such an event."

This forecast, however, did not prove correct, as the ensuing chapter will show.

CHAPTER III  
THE SUTLEJ CAMPAIGN  
1845-1846

Sir Henry Hardinge, a distinguished soldier, was at this time Governor-General. Having been appointed in place of Lord Ellenborough, of whose forward policy the Directors of the East India Company had not approved, he was at first anxious to support the Sikh Government and avoid a war. Consequently, it was not until the Sikh army had crossed the Sutlej and invested the British garrison at Ferozepore, that troops were hastily summoned from Umballa and Ludhiana. Then Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, met and defeated the enemy, first at Moodkee and afterwards at Ferozeshah. A temporary retreat across the river by the Sikh army was followed by their further advance on Ludhiana, which was stopped by Sir Harry Smith in the victory of Aliwal on the 28th January, and finally defeated by Sir Hugh Gough in the battle of Sobraon on the 10th February, 1846, when the enemy was finally driven across the river with great slaughter.

During these operations the Governor-General is said to have placed himself under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, and to have shared with him the honour of the victories. Napier, however, has left a record which clearly points to a dual control with the consequent evils resulting therefrom. Being also

of interest as his first experience of actual warfare, it is given in full detail.

On the 12th December the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, with the Head-quarter Staff, left for the front. Before they started, Napier obtained the promise of the D.A.G., Major Patrick Grant,<sup>1</sup> that he should be summoned in the event of war. Two days passed without event, and Napier gave up all hope. "Robert, disgusted at being left behind" (wrote his wife), and with some natural bitterness, declared his intention of "burning all his red coats" rather than remain a soldier only in name. A few hours after he had said this, late that very night, came Napier's summons to Head-quarters. The rest of the night was spent in preparations, not only for war, but for the carrying on of his civil duties during his absence, and at daybreak the following morning, December 25, twenty years to a day from the date of his first commission, he started for the front on his gallant little Arab, Motee (Pearl), which carried him the distance between Umballa and Moodkee, 150 miles, in three days.

As Napier approached the front, he was painfully impressed by the weary and footsore condition of the troops and the apparently inextricable confusion of troops, elephants, camels and baggage. It was about half-past three in the afternoon of December 18 when he reached Head-quarters and found the Governor-General, his Staff and Major Broadfoot assembled under a tree. Broadfoot said to one of the former, that his latest intelligence of the enemy informed him that they were aware that the discipline of the Feringhees was too powerful for them in the open field, but that,

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Field-Marshal Sir Patrick Grant.

man to man, they were as brave and skilful as ourselves, and that they intended a night attack.

Met Colonel Haughton who kindly invited me to General Gilbert's quarters. I found there General Gilbert, Captain Anson, A.A.G. Major Codrington, A.Q.M. I had scarcely taken the bridle from my horse, when Major Codrington said that the Sikh army were advancing to the attack; a cloud of dust announced their approach, boldly executed at the moment when our troops were harassed from the extraordinary length of their march, and in apparent confusion.

The troops on the right were nearly in the position which they had to take up, and were quickly formed in good order. Those on the left had to wheel up into line, as their camp had been pitched at right angles with the right, facing outwards; and before they were in position, the Horse Artillery had galloped to the front and opened fire on the enemy, who advanced with infantry and guns, throwing forward on their right a cloud of matchlock sowars, who enveloped the left flank and kept up a severe fire on our troops as they came up and deployed into line.

As General Gilbert moved out from the camp, I offered my services to him, as I belonged to his division of Umballa, but the A.A.G. said that this was not the time when Engineers were wanted, a very true remark, but not satisfactory to me. Remembering that I had been ordered to Headquarters, I at once proceeded to Major Grant, D.A.G., and reported myself to him. He immediately informed the Commander in Chief, and said that His Excellency would be happy to avail himself of my services. Shortly after this the C. in C. said that they had not taken up ground enough on the left: "Someone desire them to take more ground." And no one presenting himself at the moment, I advanced and the C. in C. gave me the order, pointing out to me the direction in which to go. I immediately set out, but the left wing had not reached its destined ground, and in riding towards it, I passed Captain Horsford's battery and shortly found myself in the midst of a number of the enemy's horse, who opened fire on me, and my gallant little horse, which had borne me so well,

was killed. I had barely time to return to Captain Horsford's battery before a dozen of the enemy's sowars had reached my horse and plundered the holsters of their contents. I then tried to find my way on foot to the left, to deliver my orders. I shortly afterwards met my servant Shehab Khan, whom I had left behind on the road from Bussean, but who had followed me and had found me out. From him I got his tired mare, and ordered him to the rear out of fire. I then proceeded to the left, where I found the troops brought up in some confusion. Major Codrington was shot through the body, and I brought four men and sent him to the rear. I then joined Major Grant, D.A.G., who was trying to restore order, and assisted him as well as I could. We were with the 31st Regiment which, crowded up into a small space, had no room to deploy.

We were much in advance and had one Sikh battery on our right and one in the front. The horses of the battery on the right were so like our own, that I could hardly believe it was one of the enemy's; but Major Grant recognised the Sikh saddles, and one volley from the men of the 31st laid both gunners and horses on the ground. At this time I saw Grant drop his arm; he told me he was wounded, and his horse appeared also hurt. I offered him mine, but he was unable to stand. The order was given: "Prepare to receive cavalry!" and the regiments were formed into square. I went and brought some men and saw Grant carried to the rear from his perilous position where he would have been trodden down. I then went in search of the C. in C. but could not find him, and seeing all attempts at doing so in the dusk and confusion to be useless, I watched the progress of the battle; and joining the 50th Regiment I was present at the taking of a gun on the right of the regiment by a young officer whose name I do not remember. The enemy had retired and the action shortly afterwards ceased.

The troops remained on the ground for a couple of hours, and then returned to their camp. In going into the camp, I met Captain Garvoch who shared with me his tent and a modicum of soup, and young Tritton who was on outpost duty, lent me his bed, on which I lay down in my clothes and got a few hours' sleep, and so passed the day of my first battle.

On the morning of the 19th I found my way with difficulty to General Gilbert's tent, and had hardly time to take some breakfast, when the alarm was given that the Sikh army was again advancing to the attack. The troops were ordered out; I had no horse. The poor mare could hardly move from the combined effects of cold, fatigue and hunger. I had lent her on the previous evening to carry a wounded man of the 80th from the field, and had only recovered her at a late hour in the night, and after a long search, so that she had had little rest. Captain Rawson kindly lent me a pony which was in somewhat better case than my own mare, and I was enabled to join the C. in C. Then ensued a scene which I hope never again to witness. Orders were given by the C. in C.; counter orders by the Governor-General. Troops were told to go to their lines to cook, then to stand fast, then to cook, until the Sipahis, wearied, said they preferred to remain where they were. Fortunately the cloud of dust which announced the enemy approach gradually drew off, and it was reported that they were pressed for water and had retired. About 3 o'clock the men returned to the camp, and I was kindly invited by Colonel Garden to his tents, where I got some food and a piece of canvas to lie on, and pulling my cloak over my head, I got a good night's rest.

The 20th passed quietly. . . . On the morning of the 21st we left Moodkee before daylight. The Q.M.G. had made his arrangements for the march, but alterations having been made in them at the last moment, some confusion ensued; however, all got right again. We passed the field of the last battle, dead and wounded still lying there. . . . About 10 a.m. we approached the village of Feroze-shahur, where the Sikh army had encamped and commenced entrenchments. It was said their number was 60,000. Instead of a direct attack, the force diverged to the left, leaving the enemy about a mile and a half to the right. When we had arrived opposite the enemy's position, the Comdr. in Chief wished to commence the attack, but Major Broadfoot said this force was a mere detachment; "If you beat this, you will have the main army to beat near Ferozepoor." In this it afterwards appeared he was mistaken. Major Broadfoot urged a march towards

Ferozepoor and a junction with Littler's force. The Comdr. in Chief strongly opposed delaying the attack, and said it would be a great disgrace to abandon our wounded, who were left with a Hindu guard at Moodkee. The Govr. General was called up and his arguments prevailed. The march was resumed, and we shortly received intelligence that Littler had moved out to meet us. In half an hour he galloped up to our line and was received with a cheer. Ferozepoor was relieved!

A long time was spent by the Comdr. in Chief in arranging his forces, far too long—it was near 4 o'clock (on Dec. 21st) when the advance commenced and the artillery opened fire. They were barely within range of the enemy, and the Comdr. in Chief desired me to bring up the heavy guns. I galloped off and conveyed the order to Brigadier Dennis and returned. The Comdr. in Chief then ordered the Horse Artillery and Field Batteries to advance nearer, which they did, and opened a severe fire, which was sharply answered by the enemy, whose round shot began to fly about quickly. The Comdr. in Chief rode about from point to point to watch the advance of the line, and in following him my horse was killed by a cannon shot. In my holster was a telescope which Colonel Birch had lent me. I took it out and got an officer of the 45th Native Infantry, Lt. Crossman, to put it into his for me. I joined his regiment on foot and advanced towards the batteries. The adjutant Lt. Hamilton, offered me a company, but that was not a situation in which I could well act, and I advanced on the right of the regiment towards the intrenchments.

As we approached the batteries, a party of the Staff rode past, and Saunders Abbott called out to me that there was a loose horse. I turned and caught him and joined the Comdr. in Chief's party. We advanced into the intrenchment; the troops carried everything and were steadily going on, when a sharp fire of musketry issued from the front. Some one called out: "They are our own men," and the regiment, H.M. 29th, ceased firing. At the same moment, Sullivan of the Dragoons, dismounted, came up and said that his regiment had charged into the intrenchments, and was nearly destroyed and principally by our own fire. This was

a fatal error. They fell by the enemy, and should not have been sent into a camp, where they were of course quickly in disorder, and of every horse that was shot, the rider had no chance of escape. The Govr. General and Broadfoot rode forward, as they supposed, to stop the fire of our regiment in front (as if they would have fired outwards, or to the rear, had they been our own!). The mistake was quickly discovered. Broadfoot was killed. The Govr. General returned and our 29th advanced and drove out the party of Sikhs. I passed Broadfoot's body just after he had been killed. Saunders Abbott was then with me, and stooped to search his pockets for papers, but found none. Abbott himself was previously wounded, and I received a sharp blow near the spine, which I thought was a shot through me from the faintness and pain I felt. My glove was covered with blood. However I soon recovered and went on.

By this time it was quite dark, the troops had got into confusion and were ordered to retire. Of this order I was not aware, and finding the stream of men hastening in some disorder to the rear, I made repeated attempts to stop them and restore order, but in vain. Some said: "If we had our officers we would stop." I said: "I am an officer, I will form you," and I got something like a line formed, but some men called out: "He's going to lead us into some b——y battery," and my line began to stream away from each flank, and then by degrees moved on to the rear in a flock. They followed instinctively some guns which were retiring, and I then thought if I could only stop the guns, the men might be restored to some kind of order. I passed Ellis with his battery, and entreated him to stop; he said, "Go to Geddes, he is in front and commands." I then went to him and found that he was returning to the ground which we had occupied in the morning. There was no help. Had the enemy known the condition of the troops and attacked them, they would have been slaughtered like sheep. We just then reached the rest of Gilbert's division in great confusion. The men were ordered to lie down to avoid the shot which came over us every minute. Poor Abbott was again near me, and feeling very faint from his wounds. I was in great pain and we

laid ourselves down on the ground faint with hunger, thirst and fatigue.

We remained in this way for a considerable time, when we heard a rattle of musketry and a cheer. Some companies of the 80th had been sent by the Governor-General to retake the guns which were playing upon us, which they gallantly did. Still some heavy guns continued to thunder through the field from time to time, until our troops became still and there was no guide for the gunners of the enemy. Every time a fire was lighted, or a bugle sounded, a shot came over us. At length all became still. Abbott and myself were so fortunate as to get from the 29th Regt. a ration of rum ; it tasted like water, but it supported us very much, and enabled me to think of trying to restore order to the troops.

Several officers came up to me, particularly Captain Stepney of the 29th, and said : " If we could only get some orders we could do anything. You are a staff officer, pray try and get us some orders." I found Colonel Barr,<sup>1</sup> one of the Comdr. in Chief's staff (a Queen's officer) arranging the men, and spoke to him. He was forming a line, and had so arranged that one corps was in front of another. Had there been an alarm, the confusion would have been terrible. I pointed this out, and also that a single line was open to cavalry attack in flanks. As he did not know me, and I was in a strange dress, he replied rather sharply, " I do not know where you come from, Sir." " Very well," I said, and turned to go ; but overcoming my feelings of annoyance, I returned and said : " I wish to make myself useful, as it seems there is a great want of officers to do so." He thanked me, and explained that he found the utmost difficulty in getting even a line formed ; if I would assist him in that, he would afterwards make a better disposition. This I did. I found regimental officers all ready to take orders, and I pointed out the positions to be taken up. After it was over, I laid down again weary,

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. Rait's *Memoir of Viscount Gough* there is mention of this officer and of the strange untoward part he played in the actions of Ferozeshah and Sobraon. His personal bravery is stated to have been beyond dispute. He was suffering from the effect of a sun-stroke.

and towards morning, I must have slept. When I awoke my horse was gone! I had let go the bridle.

During the early part of the night, Colonel B. (of the Military Board) asked me if I could lead the troops to Ferozepoor. I replied "No; and if I could, they could never march there now, and what should we do then!" His face looked very livid when he replied: "Terms! Entrenched Camp." It was a desperate idea. Fine terms we should have got! Thank God, that better ideas returned. I again found poor Abbott. We talked of the state of affairs, and agreed that it would be a thousand times better to fight to the last than think of a retreat. If the last was tried, India would have to be reconquered. Abbott had behaved very gallantly, and notwithstanding his wounds,<sup>1</sup> he thought less of himself than of me.

On the morning of the 22nd, I awoke after a very short sleep and I rose stiff from cold and the effects of my wound, and faint from hunger and thirst. I was joined by Saunders Abbott, and tried to borrow a pony from the officers of the 29th regt. on which Abbott and myself might ride by turns. Captain Stepney of the 29th, who was the owner of the pony that I had caught, and who had, strangely enough found it during the time that I slept, generously offered it to me, but as he was then in command of his regiment, I saw that he could not do his duty without it, and (I) would not take it. I therefore went in search of another, but could not find one. In the meantime Abbott met the Govr. General who ordered him and myself to go to Ferozepoor with Tait's horse. From this and what we had heard, we were fully impressed with the belief that the army was about to march to Ferozepoor, and went to Tait, who however, had received no orders to go to Ferozepoor, and had no spare horses. We therefore determined to attach ourselves to a regiment of infantry and to share its fortunes. We joined the small remnant of the Queen's 31st, and offered our services to Colonel Spence, who could scarcely articulate from exhaustion. The line was formed and we lay down under a severe cannonade from the intrenchment which

<sup>1</sup> They were very severe and continued at intervals to trouble him to the end of his long and honoured life, which closed in 1892.

the enemy had re-occupied, until the order for the advance was given.

At length the order was given, and we advanced steadily, the cannonade increasing as we approached the batteries; we came within charging distance, and with one cheer and one rush, we were beyond the guns which were ours. Many of the Sikhs stood and were slain. One man I saw completely run through the body with the bayonet of a European, but, in falling, the wounded Sikh gave his adversary a severe wound in the knee. A number of Sikhs were seen running off, and were soon lost in the dust and mist. The European soldiers then straggled through the camp, some plundering, others shooting the wounded, few of whom were spared.<sup>1</sup> I was in time to save one wretch who was lying wounded in a tent, and persuaded the man, whose bayonet was prepared for the deadly thrust, to give him instead a drink of water. But I could do no more, and I fear he fell a victim to some others who followed.

After passing through the Sikh camp, which I did not do until I had spiked every gun which I found, the infantry were just forming, when there was a call that the Sikhs were coming down again in force. I had lost the 31st regt. and was near the 29th. I had bought from a soldier two oranges; one of these I divided with Abbott, and the other I gave Colonel Taylor, who was wounded.

I wished to get near the Comdr. in Chief, but was not able to do so, for I walked with great pain, and suddenly a fierce cannonade opened upon us. I joined the nearest regiment, and the advanced company, consisting of about 50 men, were placed under a small ridge covered with bushes, with orders to remain there to the last; if charged by cavalry, the rear rank to face about, and to defend themselves to extremity. The bayonets and caps of the soldiers were ill concealed by the scanty shelter, and a gun was directed on us by the enemy, which played incessantly for more than an hour. The man was killed who was next but one to me on one side, and on the other side a man very near me had his arm carried off

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that the Sikhs had shown barbaric cruelty towards our wounded in the two previous engagements.

at the shoulder. Every shot came with an accuracy that astonished me. The men were with difficulty restrained from charging and taking the gun, but, unsupported as they were, they would have been cut off to a man. At length it became evident that our infantry were retiring before the storm of shot, and the small body with whom I was left, quite unsupported, were shortly afterwards withdrawn to the main body. The men were fainting from thirst, and beginning to waver ; it seemed that we were on the eve of a great misfortune. The village which had been occupied by the enemy was before us, and the men began to rush towards the wells, when the cannonade began to slacken and finally ceased. This was caused by a demonstration made by our cavalry<sup>1</sup> who were ordered to charge. Neither the horses nor the men were able to do so, but the mere demonstration caused the enemy to fear some attempt to cut him off from the river and he retreated and bivouacked about a mile from us. Our army was too exhausted to pursue. The artillery had no ammunition to reply to the cannonade under which we had suffered so much. Officers and men were fainting from thirst, and eagerly crowded at the wells near the village.

The Governor-General came near where I was, and I suggested that we should immediately secure the guns which the enemy had left. "It is most desirable," he said, "that we should do so, but the army is so disorganised that nothing can be done at present." I tried in other quarters, but the thing was impossible. At about nine in the evening, I got some food from the Comdr. in Chief and slept in his tent (a large tent taken from the enemy), and we found the next day that we had slept upon bags of powder, quite unconscious that a spark would have destroyed us all. The whole of the party (some 17 officers) including the Comdr. in Chief, unconsciously used these dangerous pillows. His Excellency disliked smoking, to which we probably owed our preservation.

Early in the morning I asked Col. Garden what was to be done, and he said he believed the army was to march on

<sup>1</sup> It was subsequently known that the movement of the cavalry to Ferozepore, though arising from error, had led the enemy to fear a flank attack, and to retire.—NAPIER.

Ferozepore. This seemed to me to be ruin. We could not carry the guns with us. The enemy was near enough to return, and we should have lost the victory, our trophies, and the enemy might have placed himself between us and our sick and wounded at Moodkee, and our supplies and baggage.

I consulted several of the staff, and then went to the Comdr. in Chief and submitted my opinion, that if we moved, we lost the fruits of our victory; that we could hold our present position, and find food in the enemy's camp, prepare and make use of his artillery, and that our communication was open with our rear at Moodkee, and as good with Ferozepore as if we were actually there. He replied that he certainly agreed with me, that he should do all in his power to remain, but that if overruled by political considerations, he could not help it.

We did remain, and I set to work immediately with as many Europeans as I could collect, to bring in and prepare all the captured guns which were not spiked first. Poor Taylor<sup>1</sup> commanded the whole front of the camp opposed to the side where the enemy was. He assisted me with working parties, and we soon got a very respectable battery arranged so as to command the approaches to our position. A number of hackeries (bullock carts) offered the means of a capital barricade to fill up the gaps between our reduced regiments, but they were not required. Although our cavalry and artillery had, by the error of judgment of the A.A.G. Captain L., been taken in to Ferozepore, the infantry were encouraged by the measures we had taken to prepare the enemy's guns; and the enemy, on the other hand, not knowing our real weakness, and doubtless being immediately informed of our bold front, retreated to Sultan Khan Walla, and thence to the bank of the Sutlej.

Towards the evening of the 23rd, the cavalry and the artillery returned from Ferozepore. I found to my surprise that they were placed in front of our line at the North-West angle, and if attacked during the night by the enemy, they might have been driven in upon the infantry, and much confusion would have ensued. I warned the Commanding

<sup>1</sup> Colonel C. C. Taylor, C.B., had been known to Napier from childhood. He was severely wounded at Ferozeshah, and again, mortally, at Sobraon.

Officers near there, and slept in the Mess tent of the 29th, in order that I might be near to give assistance if necessary, in case of any confusion arising. I fear I somewhat offended the Comdr. in Chief, for, when I told him of my intention, he said, "Faith, I think I will sleep with the troops too, for if there is an alarm during the night, I'll never be able to get to the front amidst such confusion."

I said: "If I may venture to make a suggestion, I would recommend the 29th regiment. You will find Colonel Taylor an excellent clear-headed soldier." The Chief replied: "I want the hearts of the army, not their heads, Captain Napier." I am not politician enough to make any reply.

The night of the 23rd passed quietly, and on the 24th, the army marched to Sultan Khan Walla, from whence the Sikhs had retreated. In their haste, they left quantities of ammunition. Here I recovered my tents and servants, and got a change of clothes for the first time since I left Umballa. I also got my wound dressed. On the 25th, I went to pay my respects to the Comdr. in Chief, who received me most kindly, and desired me always to remain near him, besides saying many flattering things which were soon forgotten.

On the 26th Major Grant sent for me to ask my opinion about some mortars, which I strongly recommended as an addition to our artillery, and was immediately requested to proceed to Ferozcpore, and to exert myself to bring them out in time for the attack of the enemy proposed for the 29th. This I did, and returned on the 27th.

News was received of the retreat across the river of the Sikh army. On the 31st of December, Colonel Smith, the Chief Engineer, arrived, and assumed charge of the Engineer department. I was appointed Brigade-Major by the Comdr. in Chief. Little occurred that is worth relating until the battle of Sobraon.

Unfortunately there is no personal record by Napier of this battle. The appointment of Brigade-Major was a special compliment to Napier, as there were two officers of his corps senior to him then present with the army. However, when the despatches of the

battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah appeared, his wound and services had been accidentally omitted. When the omission was repaired, Napier was thanked as Chief Engineer, a temporary designation only. In the Sobraon despatch his services were recognized by name. It is possible that Colonel Edward Smith of the Engineers was not a very cordial Chief, for Mrs. Napier wrote sympathetically that Napier would find his position much more satisfactory when his old friend and first Chief, Colonel Irvine, should arrive. The latter officer did arrive just before the battle of Sobraon, but, to use the words of Sir Hugh Gough's despatch, "he (Irvine) declined to assume it (the command), in order that all the credit of that work which he (Smith) had begun, might attach to Brigadier Smith. For himself, Brigadier Irvine sought only the opportunity of sharing our perils in the field, and he accompanied me throughout the day."

At the close of the campaign, Napier returned to his peace duties at Umballa. He had acquitted himself with great distinction under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. "Sir Hugh Gough said he had seen no harder fighting even in the Peninsular War," wrote Mrs. Napier.

So considerable had been Napier's services, and so cordially appreciated in the highest quarters, that his friends were dissatisfied at his receiving only honourable mention in Despatches, and a brevet Majority. Such, however, was not Napier's view. True, there had been a brief period between Ferozeshah and Sobraon when he felt disposed to consider his services undervalued. "But," as he related in after-life, "from the time I stood in the entrenchment at Sobraon after the battle, and saw the hundreds of bodies of gallant soldiers,

piled one above the other, men whose services could have no earthly reward, I felt ashamed of my passing discontent, and then and there resolved that come what might, I would make it a principle always to consider that I had had more rather than less than my due. From that resolve I think I have never since wavered." And yet, when one considers carefully the foregoing narrative, it is clear that his services must have been of very great value. Taking into account the extreme modesty of the man, one can be certain that he did not exaggerate his exploits. So we find this Captain of Engineers, aged thirty-five, having ridden 150 miles on one horse in less than three days in his eagerness to be in time, arrives at the scene of his first engagement, with no special appointment, and at once goes into battle, without even having time to feed his horse. Rebuffed by his Brigadier-General, he succeeds, thanks to his friend, in attaching himself to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, and at once makes himself useful in conveying the C.-in-C.'s orders. When his horse is shot and he is unable to follow the C.-in-C., he saves the life of his friend Major Patrick Grant, attaches himself, wherever the fight is hottest, to whatever corps happened to be in his neighbourhood, and rejoins the staff of the C.-in-C. whenever the opportunity occurs. Another horse is shot under him and he himself is wounded. Notwithstanding this, on the following day, after sharing in the attack and capture of the entrenched camp at Ferozeshah, he is careful to spike every enemy gun he can find. Then, at the critical time of doubt and exhaustion on the sixth day of fighting, when victory and defeat was trembling in the balance, when a retreat on Ferozepore was contemplated, and the

British cavalry and artillery had actually gone there, Napier, after consulting several officers of the Staff, and in his capacity of Chief Engineer Officer, went to the Commander-in-Chief, and submitted his opinion that to move to Ferozepore would be disastrous, whereas, by remaining on the spot, and making use of the enemy's captured guns, the position was tenable. The Commander-in-Chief replies that, although agreeing with Napier, he might be overruled by political considerations. Napier had already experienced the bad effects of the conflicting authority of the Governor-General and of that of the Commander-in-Chief, and in this instance it threatened to be disastrous. It may therefore well have been owing to Napier's intervention that the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief prevailed. However that may have been, the fact remains that Napier's suggestion was adopted—a battery was formed of the enemy's guns, our men were encouraged, the enemy held aloof, and the situation was saved.

CHAPTER IV  
ENGINEERING SUCCESSES  
1846-1856

Civil Engineering Works—Reduction of the Fortress of Kangra—  
Siege of Mooltan—Black Mountain Expedition—Afridi Ex-  
pedition—Chief Engineer to the Punjab Government.

With the close of the Sutlej campaign, Napier returned to Umballa, and the Governor-General, after concluding the Treaty of Lahore, from which resulted the virtual annexation of the Punjab, recrossed the Sutlej, and, on his way to Simla, inspected the new cantonments which Napier was laying out at Subathoo and Dugshai.

In a letter to his wife Napier wrote on March 24, from Subathoo :

I went this morning with the Governor-General to the suspension bridge on his way to Simla. He was so gracious and affable in all public matters, that I could not possibly intrude any private ones of my own. I believe I shall have the general direction of the new station. He has asked me to give him my ideas on the plans for forming it, and everything is to be on a liberal scale. The name of the place to be Kooshiula from the river near it, Dugshai being not euphonious (!) . . . I feel daily less inclined to go to Lahore except as Chief Engineer.

Evidently the new conditions of the Punjab had opened up prospects in Napier's mind of engineering works to be accomplished there on a great scale, but

his position at Umballa was too satisfactory to be lightly abandoned.

Meantime, early in May, 1846, he was again recalled to the field to serve as Chief Engineer of the force now preparing under Brigadier Wheeler for the reduction of the mountain fortress of Kangra, a place popularly reported to be impregnable. The artillery equipment provided for the expedition Napier found inadequate, and from his first halt he sent two strongly worded applications for the addition of a battery of 18-pounders—one to Major Henry Lawrence, who had been appointed the Governor-General's Agent in the Punjab on the death of Major Broadfoot, and the other to Brigadier Wheeler. To the latter he said: "There are few places where ingenuity and plenty of labour will not enable you to carry 18-pounders, and nothing else can be depended on against a wall of any strength." This opinion was vehemently opposed by that capable officer, Lieutenant James Abbott of the Artillery (afterwards Lieut.-General Sir James), who declared it would be utterly impossible to convey such heavy guns to that mountain fastness. However, Napier's persistency gained the day, and three 18-pounders were provided. Napier promised that the road should be practicable for the siege train (thirty-three guns and mortars) in seven days, and though only by the extraordinary exertions of all the officers and troops employed, he kept his word to the day. Brigadier Wheeler, notwithstanding his Afghan experiences in a very mountainous country, wrote that it was "unequalled in difficulty by anything I have ever seen." The route lay over rugged hills and mountain torrents, which had to be crossed and recrossed many times in a single march. At the last

moment Napier was superseded by his Chief, Brigadier Smith ; the fortress capitulated on the arrival of the troops, and Napier, describing the incident to his friend Major Lugard, wrote at the time as follows :

Your note went to Umballa, and followed me to Kangra, where it seems you were ignorant that I had been ordered to conduct the proceedings in the place of Br. Smith who was reported too ill to move whilst he expected (only) a hot march, but who recovered wonderfully as soon as he heard that there was a prospect of resistance and consequent rewards for successful enterprise. I quoted Irvine's generous conduct to him in vain—he went about in a dhoolie (sedan chair carried by coolies) determined to get all he could through the labours of others. I underwent a degree of fatigue, which I should have expected to lay me (low), accompanied as it was with sunning above and wet legs below. In a few days I travelled over the course of the mountain torrent more than 100 miles, crossing it sometimes saddle deep. By getting assistance from all quarters in the Political Department, and bringing it to bear at the proper points, I had the satisfaction of opening the road so as to enable the force to make the journey in the time I had promised Wheeler, viz., seven days. When I think of what it was, I almost wonder at my own temerity, but I know by experience that few things are impossible if attacked with a determination to succeed. My labour was not useless, for nothing but the arrival of the 18-pounders had the effect of bringing the garrison to reason. I was glad that the loss of life, if even of a single man, was spared by the surrender, and doubly so, when I saw the number of women and children who were shut up in the fort. . . . The fort was very strongly situated—the masonry very solid and well-built ; the outer courses iron clamped ; the gates numerous and well covered, and the ascents to the breaches which we proposed making, by no means easy. One we must have worked out with sappers after subduing the defences.

These operations are the ones in which success is the triumph of our profession. They give full opportunity for individual daring, and are certain in results, if properly conducted.

The smallness of the garrison would have crippled their defence, and I believe a few days' firing from our mortars would have brought them to terms. It was at the same time quite necessary to have the means of making a breach. My examination of the defences assured me I was right in standing by the 18-pounders, and will be a useful landmark for me on all future occasions.

If men see that you cannot get at them, they may endure a destructive bombardment, but if, in addition, they see the road being opened for the cold steel, it has a wonderful effect on the nerves.

The country is very beautiful, varying at every step, almost indescribable in consequence. You travel up the bed of a rude torrent beneath beetling cliffs—cross one or two bare ridges and stony rivers, frequently ascending and descending flights of stone steps, and then you suddenly emerge on a fertile tableland, glistening with clear streams and rivulets, and luxuriant with the most beautiful vegetation—next, villages, rustic mills, and all the signs of peace and plenty. I must not try your patience too long, but you must add to the scene the view of the snowy range, to give soul to the whole.

Although the relative positions of Brigadier Smith and Major Napier became "rather awkward," Napier's sense of duty and powers of self-control brought him well through what might easily have become an *impasse*. Brigadier Smith subsequently reported that "Major Napier combined his usual talent with unremitting labour in promoting the operations generally," and the latter must have been very well reported on by Brigadier Wheeler, as, he received the thanks of Government for his share in this operation.

Napier was detained at Kangra for some weeks, first, in making a survey of the country, and afterwards by fever, brought on by his recent exposure and fatigue in making the road. On his return to Umballa, heavy

arrears of work awaited him, and fresh anxieties as to the health of his mother at home, and his wife and children at Umballa occupied his mind, and at the end of the summer he removed with his family to the Hill station of Kussowlie, their first sojourn in the Hills since leaving Darjeeling four years previously.

By December, 1846, affairs in the Punjab had led to more direct control by the British, and Henry Lawrence was appointed Resident to control and guide the Council of Regency of eight Sirdars. Lawrence lost no time in sending for his old friend Napier to his assistance, as Engineer to the Durbar, and during the ensuing lull between the two Sikh wars Napier formed the outline of the extensive scheme of Public Works in the Punjab (never yet completely realized) which he gradually developed during the next ten years.

These labours were at times interrupted by calls to military duties in the field, which may now be enumerated and briefly described.

First came the siege of Mooltan in 1848. Mooltan, the capital of the district at the bifurcation of the Sutlej and the Indus, had been one of the latest conquests of the Sikhs under Runjeet Singh, and at the time under review was governed by his son Moolraj. Owing to heavy demands of payment by the Sikh Government, backed by British officers, Moolraj revolted, murdered the British officers Vans Agnew and Anderson at Mooltan, and headed a rebellion, which rapidly grew into a national movement against the British occupation.

Moolraj was driven back by a small force collected by Lieutenant Edwardes, an officer of the Revenue, and confined to Mooltan. A Sikh force, sent to his support, went over to the insurgents, and it became

necessary to collect a British Division with a regular siege train at Ferozepore, and advance to the siege of Mooltan where the force arrived under the command of Major-General Whish at the beginning of September. Major Napier was appointed Chief Engineer, and at a Council of War, held on the 6th September, laid two proposals before the General which are recorded by Siddons as follows: "First, To take the town of Mooltan by a *coup de main* at any cost in one day, by the whole force moving down in line, getting within battering distance of the walls, making a breach or breaches in any promising places, and storming as soon as practicable; after which the attack on the fort to be carried on from the line of houses bordering the esplanade on the town side. Second. To march the force round to the Northward and attack the N.E. angle of the fort by regular approaches." Major Napier strongly urged the adoption of the former plan, but his view was opposed by all the senior officers, whose opinion was decidedly against a *coup de main*, and General Whish therefore rejected the idea at once.

The second plan was also rejected, chiefly on account of the difficulty of keeping connection with Edwardes' force, but also because of an alleged scarcity of water on the ground north of Mooltan, which did not prove to be the case.

Both Major Napier's plans having been rejected, General Whish adopted that of Lieutenant Lake, the Engineer of Edwardes' force, which plan proved impracticable owing to the extent of ground and the lack of troops available, in the effort to keep connection between the two forces. In the meantime Napier devoted all his energies in striving to make Lieutenant

Lake's scheme successful. In an encounter which ensued, it is recorded how "Napier, to encourage the gunners (of Van Cortland's Horse Artillery), laid and helped to work them (the guns) himself" on the night of the 9th September, remaining with the disorganized division until its withdrawal. On the 12th, after desperate fighting on both sides, a portion of the suburbs was carried, and a distance gained to the front of some 800 or 900 yards. Unfortunately Major Napier was severely wounded by the graze of a cannon ball which disabled him for some weeks. Very little was done after the 12th, and on the 14th, after the defection of Rajah Sher Singh, who went over to the enemy with 10,000 men, a council was held in Major Napier's tent, at which it was unanimously decided to suspend the siege until reinforcements arrived. At the end of October the enemy resumed the offensive, and by the beginning of November had established a battery which raked Edwardes' camp. Napier, who had resumed active service as soon as he could ride, urged that the enemy should be dislodged at once at the point of the bayonet, but in this also he was overruled, and it was settled that a strong brigade under Brigadier Markham should make a circuit and attack the enemy in flank, while Edwardes made an attack to the front of his own camp." The result was the successful action of Soorujkund on the 7th November. Brigadier Markham wrote: "To Major Napier, Chief Engineer, who accompanied me throughout the day, I am indebted more than I can express." Edwardes said: "A mere manœuvre of fine soldiery turned a large army out of a strong entrenchment, and routed them with the loss of five guns before they even understood the attack." And Siddons recorded: "This

was a brilliant and timely combat, and had the good effect of keeping the enemy quiet till the Bombay Division arrived, and enabled General Whish to resume the siege. This event took place the 21st December."

The increase of the army necessarily brought the Chief Engineer of the Punjab Army into the field, namely Colonel Cheape. On this Edwardes remarked: "Major Napier, therefore, lost the honour of directing the second siege, but in zeal and gallantry in its prosecution, he continued . . . second to none." The plan now followed by Colonel Cheape was that proposed by Napier nearly four months before. Colonel Cheape took the suburbs in one day, and arrived near the town wall, which in the meantime had been strengthened by a strong interior rampart of earth, so that it took several days before a practicable breach could be made for the assault. The addition of the Bombay Division now made it possible to combine with the attack from the town Major Napier's second plan of attack on the N.E. angle of the citadel.

On December 7 operations were resumed, and pushed on steadily till January 22. That night all preparations were made for the storm on the morrow, and at daybreak the troops were in position for that purpose. But at 7 a.m. orders were received to cease firing, and before 9 o'clock the place had surrendered.

On the conclusion of the siege, General Whish's Division marched to join Lord Gough, and arrived in time to contribute to the victory of Gujerat on February 21, 1849. In this decisive battle, Major Napier was Commanding Engineer of the Right Wing, and shared in Sir Walter Gilbert's subsequent pursuit of the enemy to Peshawar. For his services he was again mentioned

in despatches, and on June 7 received the Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Next came the Black Mountain expedition under Colonel Mackeson. Napier joined the expedition as a volunteer in December, 1852, and commanded the right column, which he successfully led over a crest of the mountain at an elevation of about 9,000 feet. In reporting the operations Colonel Mackeson wrote: "My obligations to Colonel Napier are greater than I can express for the steady and skilful manner in which he brought his column through many difficulties of ground, and determined opposition by the enemy."

In November, 1853, Colonel Napier took part in the expedition under Colonel S. B. Boileau against the Jowaki Afridis of the Bori Valley, on which occasion the Chief Commissioner, Mr. John Lawrence, reported by his Secretary, to the Governor-General, that "the success of the Expedition was mainly due to the exertions and ability of Lieut.-Colonel Napier, the Civil Engineer for the Punjab, and Major Edwardes."

On the annexation of the Punjab after Lord Gough's decisive victory at Gujerat and subsequent pursuit in March, 1849, Colonel Napier was appointed Civil Engineer to the Board of Administration, and continued his plans for developing the country. Between 1846 and 1856 there were executed under his supervision the Grand Trunk road from Lahore to Peshawar, as well as many thousand miles of good subsidiary roads. The Punjab report, summing up the work done in the first three years, says: "1,349 miles of road have been cleared and constructed, 853 miles are under construction, 2,487 miles have been traced and 5,272 surveyed, all exclusive of minor cross and branch roads."

However, there were other works, besides roads, which the Punjab owes to Napier. The great Bari Doab Canal, about 250 miles long, by which life was revived through much desolate country, was well advanced, the restoration of the ancient Husli Canal was completed, and numerous minor canals either cut or restored. During this period the principal towns were provided with public buildings, and the great salt mines of Pinddader Khan were penetrated by good galleries, and made vastly more productive. New cantonments were laid out, frontier defences strengthened and intermediate posts erected. The great rivers were provided with boat bridges on an improved system, and smaller rivers and canals were permanently bridged. At the same time Colonel Napier represented to Government the necessity for a permanent bridge over the Indus.

With regard to these achievements, Lord Dalhousie wrote in 1854: "Such results could not have been obtained without the presence of abilities and exertions such as call for the grateful recognition of the Government." Then, alluding to the Engineering Staff, he says: "To all of these officers Colonel Napier, the Chief Engineer, has done full justice. But, to Colonel Napier himself, the Govr.-General in Council is anxious to render the honour that is due. For several years the Govr.-General has been in close relations of business with Colonel Napier, and has seen and marked the deep devotion with which he has laboured in the discharge of the many and various duties of his important office. The report before Government shows his success in one branch only, of the great department with whose conduct he is charged; but it has been equally conspicuous in all. Whatever may be the

credit due to those whose efforts have been directed to the physical improvement of the Punjab, a principal share of that credit is justly due to Lieut.-Colonel Napier, whose professional abilities, unwearied industry and judicious guidance have contributed so largely to the material result which has happily been attained."

In the autumn of 1856 Colonel Napier went home on leave. In December, 1849, he had had the great and overwhelming misfortune to lose his dearly beloved wife.

Before the birth of her first child, Mrs. Napier, at Darjeeling, had sent her husband some touching lines of poetry containing a foreboding of her approaching end, in the form of an ode to Death, a few lines of which may here be quoted :

Monster, I'd welcome thy grim form,  
And leave this world of shower and storm,  
And care and grief and misery,  
If that blest one in whom my life,  
My soul is bound,  
With me would come to that better land,  
Where bliss is ever found.

But I would not take him from the world,  
Where honour waits his call,  
I could not take him till unfurled,  
The banner of his praise shall roll.

Her husband wrote :

It was little apparent to anyone what anguish I felt at leaving you. Nothing but a sense of duty would make me do it. . . . I have just found a sheet of poetry, beautiful lines. How could you write such melancholy ones, my angel ? The thought of losing you suffocates me. May the Great God avert such a calamity ! I shall pray for you, on my knees, Annie, will I pray for you. How shall I pass the night and

the morrow until I am by your side again! I send your Bible, darling. It is an omen of good. I found it on the table: "Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever!" It is a cheering text, my darling. Fate has it in store for you to be the happy mother of children, the joy of your husband.

Mrs. Napier's terrible presentiment was destined to be fulfilled more than eight years later, on the birth of her third son,<sup>1</sup> leaving to the care of his mother in Europe five children, three boys and two girls, to survive her. And in his terrible grief, Napier had concentrated all his powers on his work, as the best sedative and consolation left to him.

<sup>1</sup> Now, 1927, Colonel Lord Napier of Magdala, late 10th Royal Hussars.

CHAPTER V  
THE INDIAN MUTINY  
1857

First Relief and Defence of Lucknow

When Colonel Napier proceeded home on leave in 1856, he was the bearer of a letter from Sir Henry Lawrence to Colonel Sykes, a Director of the East India Company.

*March 29th, 1856.*

MY DEAR COLONEL,

Allow me to introduce to you my friend Colonel Napier, Chief Engineer of the Punjab, the man to whom we are indebted for all our public works in that quarter. He is also a distinguished soldier; was for months the Chief Engineer during the siege of Mooltan, was virtually the Chief during the siege of KANGRA and has since in the HAZARA and in the KOHAT PASS gone out of his way to do excellent service at the head of bodies of our irregular troops. There are few feats of Indian warfare that surpass MACKENSON'S and NAPIER'S defeat of the HASSANZAIS on the top of the Black Mountain North of HAZARA in Dec. 1852. It is 10,000 or 11,000 feet high. Snow was all around, and yet our new levies, with two of Maharajah's Golab Singh's regiments, carried the mountain, bivouacked there three days, and proved to the murderers of our Salt Officers (Messrs. Carne and Tapp) that they were not safe in their fastnesses. Whether in war or peace, there are few of your officers who have served you more faithfully. His health is now very bad, mainly induced by exposure and incessant labour. For more than 5 years we were much together and I have visited his canals, his roads, his barracks

and his bridges, that throughout the Punjab and the Cis-Sutlej Territory are witnesses of his genius and his energy. I hope you will therefore pardon my warmth in introducing him to you. It is my first introduction of any public officer to a Director, but I feel he is a man you will appreciate and desire to know.

I am also induced to do so because he has not been sufficiently appreciated in India. He has had the work of half a dozen men thrown upon his shoulders for years, and has then been blamed for only succeeding in doing the work of five out of the said half-dozen.

Lord Dalhousie had the highest opinion of him, and I believe has so still. Colonel Baker is his very intimate friend, and my brother admires his character, and though he has in some matters given him annoyance, scarcely estimates him officially or privately less than I do. Indeed I don't know the man who has an ill word to say of him, and of all the public officers with whom I have been connected, I know no one so deservedly beloved by all his own subordinates.

Believe me, my dear Colonel,

Yours very sincerely,

(sd.) HENRY M. LAWRENCE.

This letter is volunteered by me.

It is not known whether this letter of introduction was ever made use of by Colonel Napier, but he valued it so highly in after-years that he remarked to a friend that he would like it buried with him, and it was accordingly placed in his tomb.

Arrived in Europe, Napier busied himself during this period of recruitment, in seeing everything he could of interest to himself, both as a soldier and an engineer. Thus, a letter from Messrs. Chamberlain's brick and tile factory, dated December 1856, offers to show Colonel Napier their machines in operation, as they had heard that he wished to send some out to India. Then a letter written to his mother from Namur on the 10th May, 1857, describing his journey,

mentions the harbour at Dover. "I slept at Dover, and in the morning saw the beautiful harbour works in progress—a gigantic business which will be finished in a hundred years. The stones of the breakwater are laid in sixty feet of water by means of diving bells. I had a long talk with the engineer and he promised to show me more on my return."

Napier had gone to Belgium in order to examine a railway on the then unexampled gradient of 1 in 40. Doubtless the Belgian fortresses also engaged his earnest attention.

Before very long, however, he was on his way back to India, as shown by the following letter written to his mother on board ship on the 11th June, 1857, before the "first mutterings of the storm" of the Indian Mutiny had reached him:

I think I shall like Calcutta very much, and that the climate will agree with me. I shall have new subjects to interest me, in which I shall not evoke so much feeling as I did in the Punjab, and I hope to pass my time more pleasantly than I did during my last year in India. . . . I wrote a long letter to Lord Dalhousie from Malta explaining why I had not written to him, and wishing him good-bye. I daresay I shall receive an answer in due course. I feel a great deal of cheerfulness in the prospect of not returning to the Punjab, in working in a new field, and I am determined that my value shall be admitted there as well as in the Punjab. I shall commence with full self-possession, with a determination to have no self-imposed burthens by overflowing zeal, but to demand everything necessary to success. I hope in a year I may send you a letter sealed "Excelsior" with your own beautiful seal. . . . I must say good-bye, dearest Mother. I look on this as the last part of my day's burthen, and I look to pass the evening tranquilly with you.

Such, however, was not Napier's destiny. Before leaving his ship the news of the great Indian Mutiny

had reached him, and his arrival at Calcutta must have nearly coincided with that of Sir James Outram, recalled from Persia in order to assume an important command, in which Napier was to bear his full share.

Outram reached Calcutta at the end of July, and was at once appointed to command the two Divisions of the Bengal army occupying the country from Calcutta to Cawnpore, to which was added the task of Chief Commissioner of Oude, now vacant by the death of Sir Henry Lawrence.

General Havelock, after two victories, had fallen back on July 29 to within 6 miles of Cawnpore to await reinforcements. By August 6th Sir James Outram had started to steam up the river to Dinapore, accompanied by Colonel Napier in the nominal capacity of Military Secretary in Chief of the Adjutant General's Department, but practically as Chief Engineer and Chief of the Staff.

The following letter from Sir Colin Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde, is of interest :

CALCUTTA, 18th August, 1857.

MY DEAR NAPIER,

The letter of our friend Grant to you of yesterday's date will have informed you of my being here. It will have surprised you, the intelligence, and indeed, I am not without that feeling myself, for the possibility of my return to this country I had never contemplated. However I was sent for by Lord Panmure on the afternoon of the 11th ult. and informed by His Lordship of intelligence having been received by telegraph from Trieste of the death of General Anson, of the mutiny of Bengal army with an invitation to accept the command. It was regarded as one of difficulty and under these circumstances could not be declined. My private means had made me independent of my military income and I had been looking forward to freedom from active employment until the call was sounded above to summon me to the land

of mysteries. I mention these private matters that you may not suppose that either pelf or patronage led to my return to India. I have not a single connection, near or remote, in the armies of India or in the service of the Honourable Company.

I am delighted to find you where you are at present, and most thankful for my own good fortune, and that of the Service in having the benefit of your assistance and that of Sir James Outram exactly where the abilities and sound judgment of both will be of the greatest value.

The following extract from a letter, date not known, but probably written in September 1857, from Napier to his mother, gives a clear outline of the general situation.

(I do not) think this war can much alter my plans if I survive it. I find my health very greatly improved since I have returned, and I think a little active employment will do me much good. Under any circumstances, my dear Mother, you must trust in God's providence and be satisfied that I am doing my duty, and that I enjoy the full confidence of all authorities Civil and Military. I only hope I may justify it.

There is nothing in our very contemptible enemy which common sense ought not to overcome if we have anything like sufficient means. Our position is this. Our whole native army with very few exceptions has mutinied, and they have two centres of rebellion—Delhi and Lucknow. There they all concentrate. Corps and brigades scattered over the country have mutinied, committed ravages, and then have gone towards the two centres, leaving the country again quiet, and our civil administration resumes its place.

At Delhi we have an army, with a few faithful natives, which is not able to take the fortified city. It will only hold the mutineers in check until we can send up reinforcements.

At Lucknow our army has beaten the mutineers in repeated engagements and is, I believe, going to retire after relieving the besieged garrison there. It will hold our position of Cawnpore on the great line of communications with Delhi. As soon as our reinforcements arrive, we shall move up an

army clearing the country as we pass and restoring order. The mutineers in two great bodies will await our arrival at Lucknow and Delhi, and be annihilated, or they will break up as we approach, and have to be followed in detachments and destroyed.

By the 16th August we find Colonel Napier in his capacity of Staff officer issuing instructions regarding the active defence of the entrenched positions of Bhagulpore and Boglipur from on board the *Kalodyne* steaming up the river to Dinapore in company with Sir James Outram. Detailed directions were also issued by him to the Officer Commanding the Detachment of the 5th Fusiliers at Monghyr, stress being laid on the necessity of instantly suppressing any disturbance within a moderate distance, and only permitting his detachment to be driven in to the fort when pressed by overwhelming numbers of well-armed men. To Brigadier Inglis commanding at Cawnpore he sends a request that he should telegraph to Allahabad for ten 8-inch mortars with platforms, 500 rounds of ammunition per mortar, and 30,000 lb. of gunpowder, to be sent as an addition to the siege train destined for Lucknow.

There are not many records among Napier's papers of his share in the first fighting in front of Lucknow, but he was engaged in the actions of Mangalwar, Alumbagh and Charbagh, the entry into Lucknow taking place on the 25th September.

It is well known how Sir James Outram nobly and disinterestedly waived his military rank in order not to supersede General Havelock until the capture of Lucknow had taken place, accompanying him in his Civil capacity of Chief Commissioner of Oude, and fighting as a volunteer with the Irregular Cavalry.

Thus we find reports from Colonel Napier addressed to General Havelock as follows :

LUCKNOW RESIDENCY,  
30th Sept., 1857.

The numerous duties that have devolved upon me since our arrival here prevented me from reporting to you the gallant conduct of H.M.'s 90th, under Colonel Campbell in charging a body of the enemy and two guns, in a narrow road, and under a very heavy fire of grape.

Captain Olpherts' artillery and Captain Becher 40th N.I., were conspicuous in advance. I regret to say the latter was wounded severely. Captain Olpherts with his usual rapidity brought up horses and carried off both guns.

And again,

10th October, 1857.

I feel that my letter to you reporting the capture of two guns and defeat of a body of the enemy by H.M. 90th, which I led by your orders very inadequately represents the importance of that operation which prevented your column from suffering heavy loss by the flank fire which this party of the enemy were in a position to open.

The narrow lane was flanked by numerous openings which it was necessary to clear as the regiment advanced under a very severe fire of grape which raked the whole length of the line, causing many casualties.

Nothing could check the rapid advance of the 90th, led by its gallant commanders, Colonel Campbell and Lt. Colonel Purnell, who were well in advance of their men. Captain Becher and Captain Olpherts were also very conspicuous in the advance. Captain Becher here received the wound of which he has since died.

The promptitude with which Captain Olpherts brought up his spare horses and carried off the guns, actually bringing them into the intrenchment, under all the difficulties of that advance, is worthy of admiration.

I trust you will pardon my adverting a second time to the subject, but I feel that my original brief report does not do justice to the achievement and to the officers and men engaged.

The above letters are characteristic of Napier. The disregard of self shown in the first despatch by the absence of any mention of his having taken part in the operation, and then, in spite of the evident pressure of work, the feeling that he had not done justice to these under his command forcing him to write a second despatch, mentioning that it had been carried out under his leadership, and going into fuller detail of the achievements of his detachment.

On the 26th September Sir James Outram issued a General Order, on resuming command of the Force, and referred to the advance of the previous day on which General Havelock's force had penetrated from the Alum Bagh to the Residency, leaving behind the rearguard with many wounded at the Moti Mahal.

Accordingly we find the next account of fighting done by Napier subsequent to the 25th addressed to Sir James Outram as follows :

LUCKNOW, 16th October, 1857.

On the 25th ult. Colonel Campbell reported to you that he, with a small party of the 90th, not exceeding 100 men and almost all the wounded, the heavy guns, and a large number of ammunition waggons, was in the walled passage in front of the Motee Munzil Palace, which position he should be obliged to hold for the night, as he was invested by the enemy and could not advance without reinforcements.

On the morning of the 26th a detachment of 250 men under command of Major Simmons 5th Fusileers, and part of the Ferozepur Regiment under Captain Brasyer were sent by your orders to reinforce Colonel Campbell under the guidance of Capt. Moorsom. They had judiciously occupied a house and garden between Colonel Campbell's position and the Palace, but as they were unable to move from their position, I received your orders to proceed to their assistance with a further reinforcement of 100 men of H.M.'s 78th Highlanders under Colonel

Sisted, and two guns of Captain Olpherts' battery and Captain Hardinge's sowars.

Captain Olpherts strongly objected to his guns being taken, and, on considering the reasons that he offered, I took it upon myself to dispense with them, merely taking spare bullocks. Captain Olpherts accompanied me as a volunteer. As I had reason to believe that I could open a communication through the Palace which would bring me near the position of the guns, I took Mr. Kavanagh, an intelligent civilian acquainted with the locality, and examined the Palace as far as was practicable, and obtained sufficient knowledge of it to form my plan of operations.

I then led the party by one of the side outlets of the Palace along the river bank to Major Simmons' position under a smart fire from the enemy, by which, however, we received little damage. Under cover of the night all the sick and wounded were quietly and safely transported along the river bank to the intrenchment by a path impracticable for guns. Captain Hardinge made several journeys until every sick and wounded man was removed, he also took away the camels laden with Enfield ammunition. One of our 24-pounders which had been used on the previous day against the enemy, but the working of which had ceased, owing to the musketry fire which was poured upon it, was left in an exposed position. It was extricated in a very daring and dexterous manner by Captain Olpherts, aided by Captain Crump (killed) and Private Duffy of the Madras Fusiliers.

At 3.0 a.m. the whole force proceeded undiscovered through the enemy's posts until the leading division had reached the Palace, the heavy guns and waggons were safely parked in the garden which I had reconnoitred on the preceding day. The enemy were aroused too late to prevent the operation, but made an attack on the rearguard which was ineffective.

I remained with Colonel Purnell to secure the position thus gained with trifling loss. A large body of sepoy was discovered in a walled garden by men of H.M. 90th, 5th Fusiliers and 32nd, who gallantly charged in, led by Colonel Purnell 90th, and Captain McCabe 32nd, and almost annihilated them, securing the garden itself as the rear of our position. Measures

were immediately taken to open a road through the Palace for the guns, and by the 1st inst., every gun and waggon was safely lodged in the intrenchment. . . .

The story thus modestly told by Napier in his official reports has fortunately been far more graphically described by Napier himself in a letter to his brother-in-law, "Georgie," a subaltern officer who was wounded in the fighting then taking place at Delhi, who, he says, should be promised a brevet majority. After congratulations on the services rendered by his relative, he wrote on the 9th May, 1858, about his own experiences as follows :

I have been Chief of the Staff to Sir James Outram since he proceeded to Lucknow. We had terrible weather for our approach—rain in torrents in September, and no shelter—but scanty food. We fought the enemy at Mungal Wor soon after crossing the Ganges. The enemy pounded us with guns of position and then fled.

We had 100 valuable cavalry—Outram headed them and I with him. We followed the enemy up for seven or eight miles cutting into their line of retreat and taking two guns. They were so wet and miserable that we were cutting them down before they knew an enemy was near them. One Native officer of Cavalry was jogging on in front of us, and if Outram could have got his horse near enough, he would have knocked him off his horse with his stick. One stupid fellow would stay in front of me, and made me break my sword on his head.

Our next action was at the site of our present camp, and we took more guns. Our third action was at the entrance of the Suburbs where we had a strong position to take and suffered considerably but drove the enemy off and took more guns. Thence we marched by a flank movement round the river side of the suburbs and city until we reached the Palace and entrance to the city : there our advance was delayed by the heavy guns and rear-guard and we had a heavy and increasing fire opened on us. There was a way by which we could have got close to the residency, had we been thoroughly

acquainted with it, but not being so, it was determined to force the way through the city : by this our loss was incurred. Neil and many brave men fell from the fire of loop-holes and when we summed up our losses on the next day, they amounted to 550.

Still our heavy guns were outside, with many wounded men, and only about 100 men of the 90th Queens. They were completely invested and closely besieged in a narrow lane. A 24-pounder, an 8-inch howitzer and 30 ammunition waggons. The next day about 400 men were sent to bring them away, and were unable to do so. I then volunteered to go and took 100 men and some spare bullocks, and examined the part of the intermediate city. I found that there were two carriage roads—one through the enemy's buildings over the ground most exposed and where we suffered so much on the day of our entry—and through the city. The other branched-off from the same road at the city gates, and led into the large line of palaces which we subsequently occupied.

A third way not practicable for guns was by the water side between the Goomtee and the palaces, which crossed a deep nullah and was only practicable for camels ; this also was under fire from across the river.

The task was a difficult one, the destruction of the guns was sanctioned ; I determined to try and save them—and to risk the bold measure of taking the guns during the night, along the dangerous road, and through the enemy's positions, and to thrust them into one of the palace quadrangles whence we could cut a passage through the buildings to the intrenchment.

It was a great risk, and we determined to take it, and fight our way step by step if necessary.

I left a party to keep our communication open by holding a post in the vast Palace ; and as soon as it was dark, sent all the wounded by the river route, and all the camels and ammunition (Enfield) and then replaced all the wounded bullocks by sound ones that I had brought down. There were thirty guns and waggons in all, and they were completely jammed up in the lane. I kept the rear-guards firing to the last moment to deceive the enemy, and in the quiet, comparative, of the

night, with my force divided into advance and rear-guard of about 200 and 150 and flankers of 100 each, we emerged from our prison. We had to thread a jungly garden and get on the broad open road over a bridge where, in the day time, no one could have lived under the enemy's fire. All was still except the exchanging shots of our rear-guard with the enemy in position—and the jangling of the guns and waggons: all at once the 24-pounder stuck, and there was a check, and visions of the approaching daylight finding us all drawn out on that line of danger and death flashed upon me. I rushed to the rear to see what could be done to get the gun on—it was almost impossible. A prickly hedge of jungle pressed hard against the gun-wheels. To ride was quite impossible—I left my horse and got through the waggons, and just as I reached the gun, it began slowly to move again. That *was* a relief. I could only get out of the jungle on one of the waggons, and then I mounted.

No sooner had I done so than the heaps on which I trod began to cry out "Sahib zakhma, zakhma" (Sahib, wounded, wounded); it made my flesh creep. I tried to be as soft as I could until we cleared the jungle, when I got down, crept through the waggons to the front and led the way into the palaces between the enemy's posts from which, if they had been prepared, we should have suffered terribly. Every moment I expected we should have seen the sides of our way lighted up, but no—not a shot was fired till we reached the city gate. There they flanked us from loop-holes but we had not far to go, the leading gun and carriages reached the avenue into the Palace, and were turned into the quadrangle that I had reconnoitred on the day previous. . . . It was too late for the enemy to bristle up and fire into the column, the unwieldy train was streaming on, and soon safely parked, but the enemy, knowing their ground, mounted the walls of an outer square commanding this one, prepared to pour a volley into us. No sooner had our men discovered them than they forced a way into the square, it was a garden, and destroyed the whole body—some hundreds. I pointed out the entrance of the Palace to our exhausted troops, and said: "There are your barracks, go and rest yourselves."

They had been all wound up for a bloody morning fight, and could not believe they had got in so easily. It took us four days to work a passage for the guns through the Palaces, and get the guns into the Lucknow garrison. We held those Palaces for near nine weeks, and have told our story in the despatches. On coming out to meet Sir Colin Campbell I was shot through the thigh, but am now well and at my duty again. We took all the enemy's batteries round the besieged garrison and kept them at a distance till Sir Colin Campbell came and relieved us.

Except from our outposts in the Palaces, where we were closely in contact with the city and fighting continually at fist-shaking distance, we lost 500 killed and wounded during the nine weeks—I was carried out in a doolie and the first sound I heard on the turf was the rapid bounding of a horse which told of delightful freedom on the open plain. . . . I forgot to tell you that I had charge of a party and we took two guns on our way in on the 28th Sept.—desperate fighting in a lane—guns taken by H.M. 90th. Havelock's despatches disgusting, mentioning no one. He was done up and much exhausted body and mind.

The picture of Outram riding with a stick at the head of the irregular cavalry, accompanied by Napier who unwillingly was forced to break his sword on an enemy's head, is characteristic of these two chivalrous men. Napier's official reports of this period continually refer to the daring and dexterous behaviour of Captain Olpherts who was known by his men as "Hell Fire Jack," and of whom it is reported that Napier once said, in reply to an unjust aspersion, that he would "sooner have Olpherts drunk than most men sober," in a difficult operation in the field.

That the defence of Lucknow in these days was a very active one is shown by an official return of sorties made by the Lucknow garrison. They took place on the 25th, 26th, and 27th; two on the 29th Sep-

tember, one on the 2nd October and one on the 1st and 2nd October, Colonel Napier was in command of the latter; 568 men were engaged, three guns were captured and there were thirteen casualties.

Sir James Outram's original plan had been to march back to Cawnpore as soon as the relief had been effected, but it soon became necessary to make a careful survey of the situation, and the following Memorandum in Colonel Napier's handwriting well explains the situation, and may have assisted the General to make his decision :

Our present prospects have to be now considered. It was the urgent desire of the Government that the garrison should be relieved, and the women and children amounting to upwards of 400 souls withdrawn, and that the force should proceed to aid in the reduction of Delhi.

The army of the enemy has been beaten in the field without difficulty. The resistance in the suburbs was more obstinate, and, at a great sacrifice, the troops forced their way to the garrison of Lucknow. The sick and wounded had been left with the baggage in a strong enclosure called Alum Bagh, five miles from the Baillie guard. In considering the heavy loss under which we forced our way through the enemy, there could be no possible hope of carrying off the wounded and women and children amounting to not less than a thousand through 5 miles of disputed suburbs.

There remain two alternatives. Firstly, to reinforce the Lucknow garrison with 300 men, and, leaving everything behind, to retire immediately with the remains of the infantry upon the Alum Bagh, and retreat to Cawnpore. Secondly, to stand fast, using every means to economise our provisions, directing the Alum Bagh detachment to strengthen its position, which is a good one, and believing that its provisions could hold out until we could communicate with it.

I could not hope that the first course would be less than disastrous. The rearguard, on its way in, was detained by the heavy guns about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the Baillie guard, where it was invested by a circle of musketry and guns, showing that

the enemy had closed upon our route and that every step would have to be re-fought.

I therefore adopt the second course, waiting in the hope of making an impression on the city by active attacks on the insurgents, and of holding out by economising provisions until sufficient reinforcements arrive to relieve us.

On the 7th October, according to the biography of Sir James Outram, the latter said: "Our force is now besieged by the enemy who have increased in numbers and audacity, which leads me to think the Delhi mutineers must now be here. Our position is more untenable than that of the previous garrison, because we are obliged to occupy the neighbouring palaces outside the intrenchment, to accommodate the Europeans, whose positions the enemy are able to mine from cover of the neighbouring buildings. . . ."

The following despatch by Colonel Napier gives a vivid description of the nature of this fighting:

*To Captain Hudson,*

*D.A.A.G. Oude Field Force,*

LUCKNOW,

२० नवंबर १८५७  
20th November, 1857.

The Chief Engineer of the Oude Field Force being wounded, at the time of our arrival at Lucknow, and further prevented until the 8th ult. from personally attending to his duties, by an accidental lameness produced by his arduous exertions in constructing the bridge at Cawnpore for the passage of the Force across the Ganges, there devolved upon me many duties not pertaining to my office, which it is proper that I should report through you, as I believe no officer except myself is acquainted with all that has taken place, and the course of those duties gave me an opportunity of noticing the valuable services of officers which could not otherwise be brought to Major-General Havelock's knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Havelock had been placed in command of the troops in occupation of the ground beyond the precincts of the Residency.

On the morning of the 27th ult. the escort with the heavy train occupied the range of palaces called the Chatter Menzil and the Furra Baksh.

Major-General Havelock is aware that these palaces afford the only shelter that our troops could have occupied, and that as mere shelter they give excellent shelter accommodation. As a military position they have very great disadvantages. The Northern face is well protected by the river Goomtee, but the East and South-East faces are surrounded by buildings and in contact with the city.

Captain Crommelin's plan which he will submit with his report of the Engineer operations, illustrates the preceding remarks.

The position was too extensive for our force, nearly all of which was occupied in guarding it, but it was susceptible of no reduction, so that, most desirable as it was that we should have occupied some of the exterior buildings as flanking defences, we were unable to do so, but were obliged to confine ourselves to the palaces and gardens, and to erect precautionary defences against any means of annoyance the enemy could devise.

Lt.-Colonel Purnell of H.M. 90th Regiment being in command of the rearguard on the 27th, I requested him to assume command of the palace garden and outbuildings adjacent to it. On the 28th (Oct.) the palace buildings extending in the direction of the Khass Hazar were explored by Captain Moorsom who with a party of 50 men of the 90th and 5th Fusileers gallantly drove the enemy out at the point of the bayonet, killing a considerable number with the loss of one man of the 90th. Captain Moorsom then placed a picquet in a house commanding the Cheena and Khass bazars. On the 3rd inst. the enemy sprang a mine under the garden wall which merely shook it without bringing it down. On the 5th they exploded a second mine which effected a considerable breach, and appeared in some force with the intention of making an assault, but on the head of the column shewing itself on the breach, a well-directed fire from H.M.'s 90th caused it to retreat precipitately and with considerable loss. The enemy also burned down one of the gateways of the garden, making a

second practicable breach, at which they occasionally appeared to fire a shot or two. Lt.-Colonel Purnell had retrenched both these breaches which it became evident that the enemy had no real intention of assaulting, but they exposed the garden to a severe musketry fire from commanding buildings on the right called the Hiron Khama. It therefore became necessary to open trenches of communication which were commanded by Lt.-Colonel Purnell and his officers. On the 6th the enemy blew up the picquet overlooking the Cheena and Khass bazars, causing us the loss of 3 men, and in the confusion that ensued penetrated in considerable numbers into the palace where many of them were destroyed. They were said to have lost 450 men, the remainder were driven back but continued to occupy a part of the palace buildings which had been in our possession. Of these the nearest to us is a mosque commanded by our buildings but giving several easy means of access to our position.

On the 8th the enemy attacked our nearest picquets from the mosque, but were repulsed with loss. In order to prevent a repetition of this annoyance, I examined carefully in company with Lt.-Col. Purnell and Capt. Moorsom the buildings connecting us with those of the enemy, and we succeeded in penetrating to a vault under their position where, screened by the obscurity, we could see the enemy closely surrounding the entrance and hear them in considerable numbers overhead. A charge of two barrels of powder was lodged in the vault, and was fired by Lt. Russell of Engineers. The effect was complete, many of the enemy were blown up and the position greatly injured, whilst we obtained a command over the streets leading to the Khass and Cheena bazars better and more secure from molestation than our previous one. This post was immediately and securely barricaded by Capt. Crommelin who this day resumed his duties of Chief Engineer and the value of his services was immediately apparent though our position was improved by this explosion, the possession of the mosque was absolutely necessary to our security. I accordingly determined to re-capture it, and on expressing my wishes to Lt.-Colonel Purnell, that officer himself accompanied me with a small party of the 90th and Madras

Fusileers.<sup>1</sup> The enemy, 50 or 60 in number, were surprised and rapidly driven out with very trifling loss on our side, and the position immediately barricaded and secured by Captain Crommelin. It has ever since formed a good connection between the picquets of the advanced guard and the quarters of Brasyer's Sikhs. All attempts of the enemy to molest it have been ineffective.

It falls within Captain Crommelin's province to report in detail the various operations by which our difficult position, in close contact with the city occupied by a numerous and persevering enemy, has been defended and protected.

I beg to bring to the notice of General Havelock the excellent services performed by Lt.-Colonel Purnell who has commanded in the advance guard and its outposts since their occupation. Much of the trench work by which it was rendered unassailable, has been executed by his men and under his superintendence directed by the Engineer Department. On all occasions he has given the cordial and able co-operation of a most brave and accomplished officer.

(Sd.) R. NAPIER, Colonel.

Military Secretary and Chief of the A.G.'s Depart.

Sir James Outram's official report of the 26th November, 1857, says in one notable paragraph :

<sup>1</sup> Shortly before his death Lord Napier wrote in reply to a request from an old officer of the 90th for a donation towards building a place of worship, after apologising for not looking up his rank in the Army List :

"DEAR SIR, . . . it is enough that you served in the gallant 90th, which I accompanied in the capture of the guns on the right flank of the advancing column under Colonel Campbell; of the 90th that so well defended their garden that was honeycombed by the enemy's bullets, and who, with a small party of 12 men under Colonel Purnell, assisted me, one dark night, to drive the enemy's picquet concealed in the mosque near the quarter of Brazier's Sikhs. I can never forget the gallant 90th, and therefore send you a small contribution, very small, because there are so many living temples here that want building up more than the Presbyterian Church which in its free Christianity can convert the Moon or the Desert into a fitting temple."

I am aware of no parallel to our series of mines in modern warfare—21 shafts aggregating 200 ft. in depth and 3,291 ft. of gallery have been executed. The enemy advanced 20 mines against the palaces and outposts. Of these they exploded three which caused us loss of life, and two which did no injury, seven have been blown in, and out of seven others the enemy have been driven, and their galleries taken possession of by our miners, results of which the Engineer Department may well be proud.

The reports and plans forwarded by Sir Henry Havelock, K.C.B., and now submitted to His Excellency, will explain how a line of gardens, courts and dwelling-houses without fortified enceinte, without flanking defences, and closely connected with the buildings of a city, has been maintained for 8 weeks in a certain degree of security, and notwithstanding the close and constant musketry fire from loop-holed walls and windows, often within 30 yards, and from every lofty building within rifle range, and notwithstanding a frequent though desultory fire of round shot and grape from guns posted at various distances from 70 to 500 yards! This result has been obtained by the skill and courage of the Engineer and Quarter-Master's Departments, zealously aided by the brave officers and soldiers, who have displayed the same cool determination and cheerful alacrity in the toils of the trench and amidst the concealed dangers of the mine, that they had previously exhibited when forcing their way into Lucknow at the point of the bayonet and amidst a most murderous fire. But skilful and courageous as have been the engineering operations, and glorious the behaviour of the troops, their success has been in no small degree promoted by the incessant and self-denying devotion of Colonel Napier, who has never been many hours absent by day or night from any one of the points of operation, whose valuable advice has ever been readily tendered and gratefully accepted by the executive officers; whose earnestness and kindly cordiality have stimulated and encouraged all ranks and grades amidst their harassing difficulties and dangerous labours.

Thus, to recapitulate, we see that Sir James Outram

after the temporary relief of Lucknow on the 26th September, 1857, had not only been unable to remove the garrison with all its impedimenta, in order to assist at the reduction of Delhi, but found himself engaged in the still more harassing task of defending a larger area than was occupied before and against an enemy who had increased in numbers and audacity.

## CHAPTER VI

### SECOND RELIEF AND CAPTURE OF LUCKNOW 1857-1858

On the 18th October, 1857, Brigadier-General Wilson, Commanding at Cawnpore, had, by a sharp action, cleared the road of rebels and despatched a convoy of 580 men with fifty camels and two guns to the Alum Bagh, which was holding out as an independent post between Cawnpore and Lucknow, cut off from communication with the latter except by signal or by secret messenger.

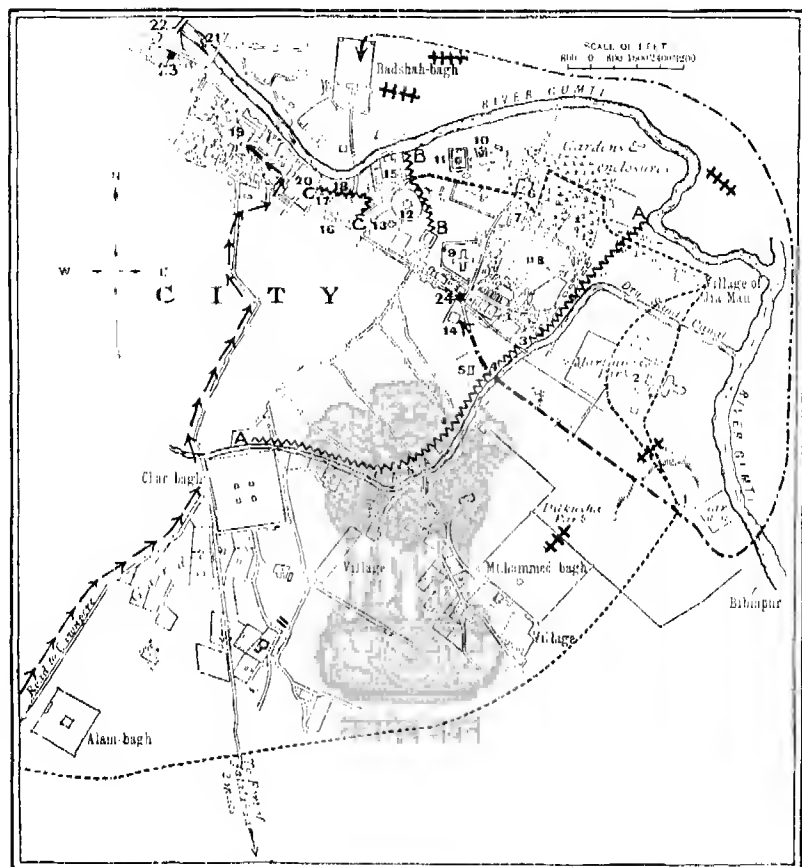
It now became the task of the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Colin Campbell, hastening from Calcutta to the seat of war, to relieve Sir James Outram. A column of troops from Delhi which was now completely in our power, was directed to advance on Cawnpore under command of Sir Hope Grant. The Commander-in-Chief himself left Cawnpore for Lucknow on the 9th November. No time was to be lost, as provisions in Lucknow were getting low. At the same time the mutineers from Central India were assuming a threatening attitude, and Sir James Outram, aware of this, was informing the Commander-in-Chief of his ability to hold out some weeks longer in order to give him time to inflict some chastisement in that quarter. A very heroic civilian, Mr. Kavanagh, who had already placed his local

knowledge at the disposal of Colonel Napier during the defence, now volunteered to convey despatches and plans to Sir Colin Campbell. Disguised as a native, he succeeded in passing through the enemy's lines and delivering his important news. In the words of Malleon: "The plan upon which Sir Colin Campbell, well instructed by Sir James Outram, and possessing the advantage of the presence by his side of Mr. Kavanagh, had determined, was to move on the Alum Bagh; to store within that enclosure all the tents, and, having drawn to himself the detachments still in rear, to make with a wide sweep a flank march to the right on the Dilkusha Park and the Martinière; starting afresh from these points to force the canal close to its junction with the Gumtee; then, covered by that river, to advance up its right bank on the Sikander Bagh. This point once secured, a portion of the force would make a dash southwards on the barracks north of Hazrat Ganj, and having seized them would erect there batteries to play on the outworks of the Kaiser Bagh. The main body, meanwhile, forcing the Shah Najif and the Moti Mahal, would open out a way for a junction with Outram. To support this operation, Outram would co-operate by a heavy fire on the intermediate positions held by the enemy from all the guns in the Residency; having forced these, he would move out with all his sick and wounded, women and children and treasure between the Gumtee and the Kaiser Bagh, and effect a junction with the Commander-in-Chief. It was in all essential points the plan which had been submitted by Outram to Sir Colin, and the authorship of which has been publicly attributed, I believe with justice, to Colonel Napier."

It is unnecessary to enter into detail with regard to Sir Colin Campbell's march. Suffice it to say that in general accordance with the above plan, the Commander-in-Chief encamped behind the Alum Bagh and destroyed the fort of Jelalabad on the 13th November. He then advanced by way of Dilkusha and La Martinière which he occupied after heavy fighting on the 15th. Then followed the brilliant capture of the Sikandar (Secundra) Bagh and the storming of the Shah Najaf on the 16th. On the same day, Sir James Outram, apprised by signal of the movement on Sikandar Bagh, stormed and took the buildings between the Chattar Manzil and the Mess House, and opened his batteries on the latter and on the Kaiser Bagh. On the following day the Mess House was stormed by the Commander-in-Chief's force, and a juncture was effected between the leaders of the troops of the garrison and the relieving force in the Moti Mahal, where the rebels made their last stand. But in order to reach the most advanced position held by Sir Colin Campbell's troops, namely the Moti Mahal, about half a mile of open ground intervened. According to Colonel Malleson, to quote his own words, "the risk did not prevent the two gallant Generals Outram and Havelock with their staffs from crossing this space to meet the Commander-in-Chief. It was here that Colonel Napier, young Havelock and Sitwell, Aide-de-camps, and Russell of the Engineers were wounded."

Under the protection of Sir Colin Campbell's force, Sir James Outram was able to withdraw from the Residency, and take up a position at Alum Bagh outside the City of Lucknow from whence he could keep the mutineers in check until such time as Sir Colin

## RELIEFS AND CAPTURE OF LUCKNOW.



→ → → 1st Relief, Sept. 1857

----- 2nd Relief, Nov. 1857

----- Capture of Lucknow, March 1858

+++ British Batteries, March 1858

*Enemy's Defences of March 1858*

A ~~~~~ 1st. Line of Defence Works

B ~~~~~ 2nd. do do do do.

C ~~~~~ 3rd. do do do do.

1. Dilkha-lah.
2. Martiniere.
3. Bridge across Canal.
4. Dilkha House.
5. Mape Bank; House.
6. Sikandar-bagh.
7. Sarai.
8. Karahola Minaret.

9. The Bari, Es.
10. Koolam Rasul Mosque.
11. Shah Najaf.
12. The Mess-house.
13. Tara Kath Observatory.
14. Hospital.
15. Mori Mahal.
16. Kishor-bagh, King's Palace.

17. Haram Khamb.
18. Engine-house.
19. The Residency.
20. Charitar Manzil Palace.
21. The Iron Bridge.
22. The Stone Bridge.
23. Imambara.
24. Hazrat Gumb.

Campbell could return in force, and completely recapture the place.

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief, placing the women and children of the Lucknow garrison in a place of safety, hurried away to the defence of Cawnpore which was being hard pressed by the Central India rebels under Tantia Topi. With a force of 5,000 men, Sir Colin Campbell inflicted a severe defeat on the enemy, consisting of 14,000 regular and some thousands of irregular troops, who dispersed in two directions.

He then moved on Fatehgarh which he occupied after heavy fighting on the 4th January, 1858. Meanwhile Sir James Outram had established himself securely in the Alum Bagh position.

In this connection it is interesting to recall a letter written by Lord Napier to Lieut.-Colonel F. R. Innes, and subsequently published by *The Times* :

SIR,

At page 512 of the History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, you attribute to me an act the credit of which was due to Lt. George Hutchinson of the late Bengal Engineers. That able officer, in company with the late Col. Berkley, H.M.'s 32nd Regiment laid out the defences of the Alum Bagh Camp, remarkable for its bold plan, which was so well devised that, with an apparently dangerous extent, it was defensible at every point by the small but ever ready force under Sir James Outram. A long interval between the camp and the outpost of Jelalabad which it was obligatory to hold, was defended by a post of support called Moir's picquet or the two-gun picquet. At that time this picquet was covered by a wide expanse of jheel, or lake, resulting from the rainy season. Foreseeing the probable drying up of the water, Lieut. Hutchinson, by a clever inspiration, marched all the transport elephants through and through the lake, and when the water disappeared, the dried clay bed, pierced into a honey-combed

surface of circular holes, a foot in diameter and two or more feet deep, became a better protection against either cavalry or infantry than the water had been. In addition to this admirable forethought, we were indebted to Lt. Hutchinson for many acts of skill and daring during the defence of Lucknow and the Alum Bagh. Though he succeeded to be the Chief Engineer of the Alum Bagh force, being only a subaltern, he could obtain no brevet or C.B. During the time of the occurrence above described, I was recovering from a severe wound either in the Cawnpore Hospital or as the guest of Lord Clyde, and I am anxious to disclaim the credit of a clever bit of engineering which belongs to my old subaltern and dear friend, General George Hutchinson of the late Bengal Engineers.

Yours obediently,  
NAPIER OF MAGDALA.

Two private letters addressed to his mother at this period are also not without interest :

CAWNPORE, *Dec. 17th, 1857.*

I am now nearly recovered from my wound, which is all but healed and leaves me only a little lame, just for the time. I rode 12 miles to-day, so I need say no more regarding it. I believe it has healed with immense rapidity, and as it was only a flesh wound, it will give me no further inconvenience.

I am still at Cawnpore, and shall be all the better of the rest I am getting here. The Commander-in-Chief, my old friend, is very kind, and has insisted on my coming to stay with him till he moves from here, indeed he wishes to take me with him, but there is no vacant place that I could fill without interfering with others, and as it would not be any particular advantage to me, I continue in my place as Chief of the Staff to General Outram, whom I shall rejoin shortly unless called to Calcutta. . . .

The Gazettes relating the history of our campaign by some accident, went down incompletely and have not yet been published. I fear you will not see them this mail, but when you do, they will satisfy you that I was not behind any Napier in my duty. I suppose I shall get a C.B. I look with much

more interest on a few years of quiet with my children and you in some pleasant country place. . . .

We have still much to do, though the great forces in the field have been broken, there will be gatherings in many parts of the country wherever our troops are absent. It is difficult to see where we are to look for a native army, for we must have one of some kind.

The next letter is dated 27th December, 1857 :

You will have learnt from my last that I was nearly well. My wound has now quite healed and I am in excellent health. All fighting has ceased about me, and nothing serious may be expected until the siege of Lucknow is commenced. . . .

I have no doubt you will receive the despatches by this mail, and you will find my name honorably mentioned which will gratify you. General Havelock recommended me to be made C.B., and as Outram's subsequent despatch mentions me favourably, I suppose I am at least sure of that. But I only think of these things as far as my friends do. . . .

During this period of convalescence, Colonel Napier was not idle. Profiting by his position at Cawnpore, he occupied himself with the defences of that place as shown by a lengthy Memorandum on the subject. Before January 12, however, he had rejoined Outram at Alum Bagh in time to take part in the action of that day, on which a force of 30,000 rebels vainly endeavoured to drive the British from their fortified positions. He was also busy with plans for the coming attack on Lucknow by the Commander-in-Chief as may be seen by the following letters from Sir Colin Campbell :

CAMP FUTTYGHUR,

*Jan. 10th, 1858.*

I have been arrested in my upward movement, and directed to turn my head towards Lucknow. Your Memo. upon the

means you thought necessary for that undertaking was forwarded by me to Calcutta. . . .

. . . Captain Taylor leaves this Camp to-morrow for Cawnpore to assist you in your work of preparation for this undertaking. I will endeavour to send you a list of the officers of Engineers both Royal and Bengal within reach, and the telegraph will bring you from Calcutta any officers of the Royal Engineers who may be there at this moment. . . .

Consult with Sir James on the subject of the proposed attack on Lucknow. Our numbers will not admit of our surrounding the place entirely. I leave regiments at Futtyghur, Mynpoorie, Agra and Meerunque-Serai. I am asked to give a regiment to Etawa, and a reinforcement to Alleghur. When I have complied with these orders, my force will have become inconsiderable. I expect to hear from the Governor-General to-morrow or next day, when I shall be able to speak with more certainty than at present of what I shall be able to do.

At this time the post of Quartermaster-General fell vacant, and the Commander-in-Chief offered it to Napier in the following terms :

CAMP FUTTYGHUR, *Jan.* 12th, 1858.

. . . Would it be agreeable to you to accept the appointment? But not to interfere with your position as Commanding Engineer during the siege, or during our service in the Field, if you should prefer to continue in the post of Commanding Engineer after the siege shall have terminated. In short, my dear friend, the post of Q.M.G. is about to become vacant for a time at any rate. Would you like to fill it? or would it suit you?

Pray keep this to yourself.

Napier's answer is :

*17th January, 1858.*

ALUM BAGH.

I feel most grateful to you for your having paid me the very high compliment of offering me the post of Quarter-Master-General, and far more for the most kind way in which it is offered.

If I were to accept the appointment I should have to relinquish that of Chief Engineer to the Punjab or Bengal. The latter I believe will be my ultimate destination, for I will never again serve under any Government of which —— is a member ; and I should throw myself for an indefinite period out of the line in which I am experienced for one which will be rather a pecuniary loss than otherwise. And in which I might not give satisfaction.

I trust therefore you will not think me either ungrateful for your good opinion of which I am very proud, nor for your friendship which I have for years prized so highly—if I do not accept the post so kindly offered me.

At the same time if I can be of service to you, I shall be most happy as I trust you feel assured. Sir James wishes me to remain here at present, but I will communicate with Taylor, and if he requires it, or if you wish it, pray have a line sent to me and I will come over immediately.

I am collecting information of the approaches to Lucknow on the sides we have not tried, and hope that we shall be pretty well prepared. Sir James has been writing to you to-day. I have not seen any detailed proposals if he has made any, but I think we both incline to the same side of attack.

I am much obliged to you for the memoranda. The siege train is stronger in shot guns and weaker in verticles than I judged advisable but the difference is not material, and I am quite prepared to accept it as it stands. I wished to have written more at length, but the enemy have kept us on the trot yesterday, and on the look-out to-day, so that I am almost late for the escort, but will write more at length to-morrow.

Sir Colin Campbell replied as follows :

CAMP FUTTYGHUR, *January 20th, 1858.*

I have this day had the pleasure to receive your Note of the 17th inst. When Colonel Beecher made known his intention to return to England, both Mansfield and myself thought of you at the same moment as the fittest man in the army for the place about to be vacated, and in our anxiety for the interests of the Service, yours were not thought of by either of us as they should have been, and my note was despatched

in haste. A little reflection told us that your position as Chief Engineer in Bengal involved duties of far higher importance and responsibility than those generally attaching to the situation of Quarter-Master-General, and that you would decline the charge.

If you think it would be desirable to have more mortars for our undertaking, pray make application, or rather indent upon Allahabad for the Mortars or whatever else you may think likely to facilitate the reduction of the place. Be governed entirely by your own judgement in what you think necessary for our object, and apply for it at once from Allahabad. We shall have an abundance of artillery then. I wish our proportion of infantry was greater than it is.

The siege train from Agra is to leave on the 22nd. If rain should not interfere to detain it on the march, it should reach Cawnpore about the 8th or 9th proximo. Taylor is at Cawnpore and will have all your wishes attended to.

To his mother, Napier wrote as follows :

CAMP NEAR LUCKNOW,

28th Jan.

I am still with Sir James Outram's Force. Our camp is exceedingly strong and secure, and the enemy dare not come near it. We are ordered to remain in front of Lucknow until the Commander-in-Chief can come and complete the final reduction of the city.

I had a very great honour offered me by the Comd.-in-Chief who offered me the Quarter-Master-Generalship of the Army. I am not quite sure I did right in refusing it, but the allowances are not better than my own, and I thought I should have a great deal of expense during the next two years while the country is getting settled, which my health might not bear, so, great as the honour was, I declined it.

Sir Colin Campbell was kind enough to say that he thought me the fittest man in the Army for the appointment, and seemed disappointed that I declined. This is "entre nous" pray remember, and not to be mentioned. . . . You will see that the Commander-in-Chief mentions me in company with General Havelock, and the Governor-General notices

me particularly. All this will, I know, gratify you, dear Mother. . . .

It need hardly be mentioned that Napier's consideration of the financial side of the question was entirely out of regard for his mother to whom he was constantly sending large remittances for the support of herself, his children and even nephews and nieces.

It would appear from the following Memorandum written by Napier on the 30th January, and from the Commander-in-Chief's letter of the 29th January (which Napier must have received subsequently, as the post took three days between Futtyghur and Alum Bagh), that Sir James Outram was inclined to favour the direct advance on Lucknow, coupled with a turning movement to the west of the City, and was becoming impatient of delay.

Having attentively considered a project for attacking the enemy's position in front of the British Camp at Alum Bagh, and in advance of, and also in rear of the canal, I respectfully submit my opinion that as matters stand at present, the attack may more advantageously take place when the Commander-in-Chief's Force is prepared to advance again against the city than now, for the following reasons :

1. We may succeed in capturing the enemy's guns with comparatively small loss, but we shall hardly withdraw from their position, particularly from that on the opposite side of the canal, without suffering ; and should our loss be considerable, or our success incomplete, we should take some of the dash out of our men before the real advance began.

2. There is a certain disadvantage in having to retire from a position in front even of a beaten enemy, to which we must add that of having probably to recapture part of the position when we advance against the Kaiser Bagh.

3. If the enemy prepares to make a strong defence in his advanced position when the Commander-in-Chief advances,

retains his guns there, and brings a larger force than he has at present, our attack will also have the advantage of a simultaneous one on our real line of attack which will turn the enemy's position, and we may retain such parts of the position which we gain as may suit us, which we cannot do if we attack now.

(Sd.) R. NAPIER.

30. 1. 58. Camp Alum Bagh.

*Letter from Sir Colin Campbell to Colonel Napier.*

CAMP FUTTYGHUR, *Jan. 29th, 1858.*

*Private.*

. . . Sir James Outram sent me a Memo. from his Engineer officer Lt. Hutchinson in which he suggests the Moosa Bagh on the Westward of the City as the best line of approach and attack. Not having heard from you, I replied to his letter containing these suggestions the same day. I enclose an extract of my letter to the General. I think you will concur with me in the opinion that every effort should be employed to render unnecessary, if possible, the committing the troops in street fighting.

I hope to get away from this in a few days, and to reach Cawnpore before the arrival of the siege train. It was to be at Bewar to-day and I think may be looked for at Cawnpore by the 5th or 6th prox. . . .

We shall have plenty of heavy artillery and a sufficient number of men. I have ordered another Reserve Company of Royal Artillery from Calcutta which had recently reached that place from England. They will be at Allahabad about the 2nd or 3rd prox., and will be immediately pushed on to Cawnpore.

I look forward with no ordinary interest and pleasure to seeing you soon. . . .

I tell you very privately that I do not get any reports from your camp. We have a report here that a strong Work has been thrown up about a kos (2 miles) to the West of the City, and another that the stone bridge over the Goomtee has been

destroyed. Will you kindly let me (know) whatever changes take place in the Defences of the enemy.

Napier's answer to Sir Colin is as follows :

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 29th yesterday. I had never seen nor heard of Hutchinson's Memorandum and on my questioning him about it, he said that it was descriptive merely, and not intended to advocate that line in preference to any other. What we want is space where we can use and make our artillery felt.

I will send you to-morrow an outline of my plan of attack : I do not like to send it to-day as it is only the letter dâk. We have got some valuable information regarding the ground this evening which is being worked out on paper.

May we hope to have any aid from Frank's column with 5,000 of Jung Bahadoor's Goorkhas, or are they all wanted to guard the North-West frontier ? or unable to make their way through Oude ? If afraid to trust themselves across the Goomtee, they might march up our side, and then be put across and employed to occupy the Badshah Bagh. As far as I understand from your letter to Sir James some days back, there was not much chance of their coming.

Sir James had spoken casually about his ideas of attack, but I never saw his letter until some days after he had sent it to you, when I asked to see it. The East side is undoubtedly that most manageable, and of which we know most. It is therefore our best line.

It is reported that you are at Cawnpore, but your letters to Taylor and myself do not say so. I am preparing to ride in to meet you unless I hear anything from you to the contrary.

I have answered Inglis about the intrenchment at Cawnpore.

I have omitted to tell you that the enemy are reported not to have done anything to the Stone Bridge, and have knocked down the whole of our Residency position, intrenchments and all (which I doubt) and the gardens where you entered our palaces.

I hear nothing of the new works on the West side. The outworks in front of our camp have been for some days suspended, their guns much more silent. To-day an attack was

threatened which kept us on the alert, but it came to nothing—a Sirdar riding along was knocked over by a charge of shrapnel which put them out.

The Return reached me safely; it is more than I expected from Taylor's account. I am very glad to hear of any additional artillery, the 68-pounder will be very effective.

*2nd Feby., 1858.*

The following letter from Napier to Sir Colin is conclusive evidence, if more were needed, that the plan of the final attack on Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell was devised by Colonel Napier.

I am afraid you will be disappointed at not receiving the project but our people have been bringing a considerable amount of intelligence to fill up our plans which have tempted me to enter into details. I may however briefly state that notwithstanding the enemy has made a good many defences and has thrown a ditch and rampart round the North side of the Kaiser Bagh and has endeavoured to cut away all the passages across the canal, I do not apprehend any great difficulty.

I would propose to encamp the force sufficiently far behind the Dilkoosha to be out of fire; to establish a bridge over the Goomtee to pass over artillery and cavalry to cut off the enemy's supplies, and to deter them from bringing out guns on the North side of the river to annoy us.

To cross the canal in the first instance at Bank's house under cover of our artillery—and to place guns in position to bear on the mass of buildings which flank the European Infantry barracks—the Hospital—the Begum's house and the Huzrat Gunge—the places which rendered the European barracks so barely tenable—and to take that mass of buildings with the barracks.

This position takes in flank all the defences of the North side of the Kaiser Bagh—and from them we may gradually penetrate to the Kaiser Bagh with the aid of the sapper and gunpowder, at the same time that we will occupy your old ground between the Kaiser Bagh and the Goomtee to have positions for our artillery of all kinds to play on the Kaiser Bagh and its surrounding buildings.

We shall, during this time, be steadily penetrating through the buildings on the left of the European barracks, making irresistible progress until we reach the Kaiser Bagh. Until we reach that place we shall have as little street fighting as possible, and I hardly expect they will await our assault. But if they should do so, and defend the remainder of the city, we must advance under cover of our mortars until we occupy the bridges, which will certainly clear us of the remainder, or they will starve.

Jelalabad will be our depôt, and when we have got the enemy's guns driven off, we may bring our Posts up to the Dilkoosha.

I should have chosen your old passage across the canal, but the enemy have cut a new one across the neck of a loop, and have put guns behind it; so that as far as the intelligence guides us, Bank's will be easier.

It would make us very much easier if the Azim Ghur column were on the North side of the river, as we could not, I fear, afford to detach any of our infantry after allowing for our Guards and Communications.

I had intended to ride over to Cawnpore this evening, but am not quite ready. Probably I shall find that the post to-morrow will bring me some news of you, and if I find that I shall be in time, I will ride in to meet you.

I send two depositions of intelligence regarding the enemy's defences. It is reported that they are leaving in considerable numbers and dispirited, but I do not put much faith in these reports.

I hope all the available coolies and Muzbi Sappers are coming down that you mentioned in your former letter. They will save the soldiers' labour.

On the 7th March, 1858, before Lucknow, there were seven Infantry Brigades of three regiments each, making twenty-one regiments in all, of which five were Native and sixteen British. The total effective strength of the Infantry, exclusive of officers, was at that time 16,525.

The fighting that ensued between the 4th and 17th

of March has been well and frequently described, and need not be outlined here. Brigadier Napier's report on the Engineer Operations of the Siege<sup>1</sup> shows that it was he who selected the line of attack, directed the bridging of the Goomtee River in two places, and it would seem, from his detailed description, that he himself chose the sites for the principal besieging batteries. He is careful, as ever, to do full justice to the officers and men under his command, and includes among them two officers of the Royal Navy—a Naval Brigade was attached to the Artillery—and the Brigadiers commanding the Siege Artillery, and two other officers of Royal and Bengal Artillery, whom he commends to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief. The final paragraph of his report runs as follows :

I cannot conclude this report without remarking that in nine days' operations the enemy have been completely driven from a series of strongly defended positions extending over 7 miles of city and suburbs ; and though they had prepared for the most desperate resistance, their opposition was crushed by the irresistible power of artillery directed against them from quarters for which they were not prepared.

Doubtless Napier's intimate knowledge of the terrain necessitated his taking command of the besieging artillery, and contributed very greatly to the success of the operation.

No sooner was the siege completed and the City of Lucknow in our hands, than Brigadier Napier was deeply engaged in a scheme for its occupation and defence. The first record on the subject is contained in a letter addressed to General Mansfield, Chief of the Staff, as follows :

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix A.

CAMP HEADQUARTERS, 19th *March*, 1858.

It appears to be highly desirable that no terms should be granted to the citizens of Lucknow on their re-occupation of the City, which will interfere with the measures that are necessary for complete military control of it.

To effect such control, very extensive clearances of buildings, and the opening of wide streets, particularly from North to South from the two bridges to the open country, and from East to West, will be absolutely necessary.

All the large premises of rebel nobles which are liable to confiscation, and which will, by their removal, improve the city by affording open spaces, should be reserved for that end.

In fact it should be clearly provided that the citizens shall have no claim on Government hereafter for compensation for such demolitions and clearances as may be necessary to place the city under complete military control, and police administration.

I therefore respectfully recommend that any re-occupation of the city by its inhabitants may be entirely subordinate to the measures above advocated.

Brigadier Napier next proceeded to draw up a "Memorandum on the Military Occupation of Lucknow," dated 26th March, 1858, the City having fallen on the 21st. The letter forwarding the Memorandum to the Chief Commissioner is sufficiently interesting to reproduce :

I have the honor to transmit for the information of the Chief Commissioner the Memo. which I have submitted to H.E. the C. in C. on the arrangements recommended for the Military Occupation of Lucknow, and I trust they will meet with the approval and support of the Chief Commissioner.

He is aware that they are based on long experience in the military occupation of newly subdued countries, and I can safely say that I have recommended nothing which does not appear to me absolutely necessary. He will remember the perseverance with which I advocated strict observance of the measures dictated by military principles in the Punjab, and

will have observed how far they have proved valuable to the Government in the recent period of trial. I can recall few instances in which military precautions have not, sooner or later been found valuable, and a neglect of them productive of serious evil.

The clearance in the City will of course produce much dissatisfaction. The citizens have witnessed the loss we have sustained in forcing even the more open part of their city, and have seen us carefully avoid entangling ourselves in their "citadel," the densely crowded mass of houses forming the west of it; they will reluctantly see it opened to the free march of our troops. It is probable that they may find advocates among those who have not personally witnessed the evils which the measures I have recommended are calculated to remove, or who, at a safe distance from the scene, think only of the hardships inflicted on the citizens, now professing to be loyal subjects, but it must be remembered that there were no loyal subjects when our little garrison was beleaguered in the Residency; no information, no message of sympathy was sent to them, although, as General Inglis and others were able to send messages out, it is impossible to believe that an earnest friend from without could have been unable to send a message inside.

As many of our measures as may have the air of punishment and severity will be a salutary lesson to the influential inhabitants of other towns, whilst in reality they will confer future benefits on Lucknow which could only be practicable in a Revolution, and for which the opportunity, if now lost, will not again be available.

Sir James Outram on the 2nd April wrote to Napier :

I cannot leave Lucknow without once more thanking you for all your kindnesses to myself and the many services you have rendered me. Indelibly engraved on my heart are those traits of the brave soldier, the able and scientific officer, the upright man, and the warm friend which every day of our long and intimate intercourse furnished. And I shall look back on our co-association in the service of our country, not only with pleasure and affectionate gratitude, but with pride.

God bless you, my dear Napier, and believe that I am and ever will remain,

Your grateful, admiring and affectionate friend.

Such were the terms on which Napier parted from his Chief—worthily known to posterity as the “ Bayard of India, sans peur et sans reproche.”

It is interesting to learn from further correspondence of Napier to the Commander-in-Chief some two months later, that the Government sanctioned the proposals for the military occupation of Lucknow consisting of fortified posts, esplanades, the clearance of the North suburb, the three broad military roads and a gun road round the suburbs. The works were subsequently carried out by Colonel Crommelin.

On the 10th of November, 1858, Napier writes as follows :

MY DEAR SIR COLIN,

Though I much wished to do so, I did not feel sure that I might congratulate the Commander-in-Chief on being made Lord Clyde, but I may write to my old friend Sir Colin on this anniversary of our relief from Lucknow. I think this may reach you about the 17th, the day on which your work was accomplished. I trust I shall never during my life cease to feel the deepest gratitude to God first, and next to you, for the deliverance of the whole party. It is possible that those who thought only for themselves, might not feel so deeply, but as I felt myself responsible in my share, next to Sir James Outram, and saw with pain, day by day, one brave man after another struck down, and succeeded at his post by still another, as cheerfully as if no one had been scathed before them, the sense of relief was greater than I can describe, when I heard the elastic bound of horses' footsteps at Dilkoosha, and felt sure that it was a sound of freedom.

In dragging together the detachments of our force, I had a lesson that taught me what your task was in collecting yours for the expedition of our relief ; and still more when I saw

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the state of Cawnpore I could appreciate what firmness was requisite to carry the burthen on your shoulders then. I hope our country will never forget what it owes to you. I shall certainly not, as long as I live.

I must not occupy your time longer, as you have plenty of claims on it ; but I could not let this season pass without writing to you, and wishing you many more returns of the anniversary, and a long long lease of England's favour and gratitude.

May the best success attend your present operations, and pray believe me, my dear Lord Clyde,

Yours very sincerely.

CHAPTER VII  
CENTRAL INDIA CAMPAIGN  
1858-1859

Napier was now a marked man, and hardly had he completed the plans for improving the defensive capabilities of Lucknow, when the following instructions were issued by the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, at Allahabad on the 5th June, 1858 :

Colonel Napier will proceed with the utmost expedition to assume the command of the Troops marching upon Gwalior. He will have the rank of Brigadier-General. These troops are advancing in two bodies from Culpee and will, it is hoped, be joined by a Brigade detached from General Roberts, late Rajputana Field Force, from the side of Sipree.

Colonel Napier will learn the latest details of their movements as he passes through Culpee. The object which he has before him is to recover Gwalior from the mutinous troops of Sindia, who by the last accounts are in possession of the City and Fort.

He will bear in mind that the interests of the British Government and of the Maharajah are in every respect identical.

It is most important that a blow should be struck speedily and before the mutineers are able to establish themselves in the Fort in strength and to collect supplies which may enable them to make a protracted resistance. . . .

Brigadier Napier will find the Governor-General's Agent Sir R. Hamilton, and the Political Agent of Gwalior, Major Macpherson, attached to the Force which is moving forward. . . .

The Divisional Staff of Sir Hugh Rose has received orders from the Commander-in-Chief to remain with the Force.

Previous to this date, and after a series of brilliant actions in Central India, Sir Hugh Rose had invested the fortified city of Jhansi on the 22nd March, 1858. While the siege was in progress, Tantia Topi with 22,000 men and twenty-eight guns endeavoured to raise the siege by attacking Sir Hugh Rose, only to be severely defeated by the latter on the 1st April. By the 3rd April the city was captured by storm, and Tantia Topi fled, followed by the Ranee of Jhansi to Culpee.

Sir Hugh Rose was then occupied for three weeks in re-establishing order, and replenishing his supplies for a fresh campaign.

On May 15 he advanced on Culpee, a fort built on a nearly precipitous rock on the southern bank of the Jumna. By the 23rd, just as the British were about to assault it, it was discovered that the enemy had fled. A pursuit at once ensued; all the guns, ammunition and stores were captured, and great numbers of the enemy were killed.

Sir Hugh Rose was now seriously incapacitated by illness and resigned his command in order to take sick leave, which resulted in Napier's appointment to the command, as above stated. But no sooner did Sir Hugh hear of the capture of Gwalior by the mutineers led by the Ranee of Jhansi and Tantia Topi, who defeated Sindia at Morar, and occupied the fortress of Gwalior on the 1st June, than, without reference to the Commander-in-Chief, he resumed his command and marched on Gwalior.

Napier joined him shortly before the Force reached Morar, and at once assumed command of the 2nd Brigade, and took part in the action of Morar, for which he was specially mentioned.

The greater part of the 2nd Brigade then having



just arrived, Sir Hugh, leaving Napier at Morar, advanced the same day against the city of Gwalior, and by the close of the day, the 10th June, he had regained the whole of Gwalior excepting the powerful rocky fortress, which was taken by surprise during the early hours of the following morning.

Sir Hugh Rose at once ordered General Napier to take up the pursuit, and the following is the official report of the affair :

CAMP, JOWRA ALIPORE,

23rd June, 1858.

*From Brigadier-General Napier, C.B., Comg. 2nd Brigade C.I.F.F., to the Assistant Adjutant-General, C.I.F.F.*

I have to report that I received at 5½ a.m. on the 20th June orders to pursue the enemy with the detail shewn in the margin,

Corps.	Officers of all Ranks.	N.C.O.'s Rank and File.	which marched within an hour and a half after the receipt of the order.
1st Troop H.A.	4	95	The Fort which had
14th L. Dragoons	2	60	been reported in our
3rd L. Cavalry	7	97	possession opened fire
Hyderabad Cavalry	2	243	upon us as we came
Meade's Horse	3	177	within range, and ob-
Total, All Ranks	18	672	liged us to make a

detour to reach the Residency.

We arrived late in the evening at Lanowlee, having marched about 25 miles. The enemy were reported to have 12,000 men and 22 guns, and to have marched from Lanowlee to Jowra Alipore in the forenoon.

We were too tired to go beyond Lanowlee, the heat of the sun having been terrific, so we rested till 4.0 a.m. of the 22nd, and then advanced on Jowra Alipore where we found the enemy strongly posted with their right resting on Alipore, guns and infantry in the centre, and cavalry on both flanks.

A rising ground hid our approach, and enabled me to reconnoitre their position in security from a distance of 1,200 yards. They opened several guns on the reconnoitring party, disclosing the position of their artillery which I had not previously

been able to discover. The ground was open to the enemy's left, and a careful reconnoissance with the telescope left me assured that there was nothing to check the advance of my artillery. Our column of march was the most convenient formation for attack; Abbott's Hyderabad Cavalry in advance. Lightfoot's troop of Horse Artillery supported by Captain Prettyman's troop of 14th Dragoons and two troops 3rd Light Cavalry under Lieut. Dick, with a detachment of Meade's Horse under Lt. Burlton in reserve.

When the troops came into view of the enemy after turning the shoulder of the rising ground, the whole were advanced at the gallop, and as soon as the artillery had reached the flank of the enemy's position, the line was formed to the left, and the guns opened on the enemy at a distance of 700 yards, and after a few rounds put them to flight. The whole of my cavalry charged, and drove the enemy before them for about six miles, dispersing them in every direction; and whenever there was a body of the enemy collected in front, Lightfoot's guns were always at hand to play upon them and disperse them. No rout could have been more complete.

25 guns were taken from the enemy on the plain, and they themselves dispersed over the country throwing away their arms.

As our men and horses were completely exhausted, I was obliged to abandon the pursuit, and return to camp.

It is with great pleasure that I bring to your notice the excellent conduct of the troops of all arms under my command. Nothing could excel their cheerful endurance of the fatigue and the intense heat of the march. Their good discipline has been only equalled by the courage with which they charged such a superior force of the enemy. Many occasions arose when it was necessary for detached parties to act against the enemy's infantry, and they were invariably met with the promptest gallantry. . . .

Thereafter follow rough notes of particular instances of officers' and men's gallantry, and recommendations for rewards, too numerous to reproduce.

Besides the guns, a considerable quantity of ammuni-

tion, an elephant, tents, carts and baggage fell into the hands of the British.

Before the Mutiny Napier's experience in Indian warfare had been great and varied. Since then he had passed with conspicuous success through the trying period of Lucknow. Napier was an engineer, and it was only to be expected that he would excel in that kind of warfare. But in the present instance, although freshly joined from a war of, as far as he was concerned, chiefly sapping and mining combined with artillery work, that he should display in an eminent degree the qualities of a born cavalry leader must have been a surprise to many people. Although the force was but a small one—he could doubtless have taken more troops had he wished, and could also have encumbered himself with infantry—no cavalry officer could have better disposed of it. The fact of waiting a whole day to recruit the tired horses at a sufficient distance from the enemy to preclude his taking the alarm, and then surprising the enemy when his own forces were fresh enough to operate with full effect, shows that success was the result of careful calculation. That the surprise was so complete was perhaps a piece of good fortune, but it was based on sound reasoning and a knowledge of his enemy, and was carried out with great dash and courage. The following letter addressed to his mother is of interest :

GWALIOR, 9th July, 1858.

Just as I was on the point of going to Calcutta, I received an order to command a Force going to recover the Kingdom of Gwalior, which had been revolutionised by the rebels, and the King driven a fugitive from his throne. The General who commanded had been sick and was going away. However his health rallied and he retained the command, but the Governor-General still wished me to go, as I was to succeed him

eventually. So I started off at very short notice, and joined his army, and was fortunate enough to be successful.

You will see accounts in the papers I dare say. I had only 500 cavalry and six guns, and I defeated the rebel army and captured 25 guns; so I have a temporary celebrity, and now am Brigadier-General Commanding the Central India Field Force.

I am sure your pride will be gratified at this, but I look only to getting the country restored to peace, and being able to get home again. If they make me a Major-General, which is probable, it will, if I am spared to the end, enable me to return sooner than I should otherwise be able to do. Now, my dearest Mother, you must not be anxious. Generals are hardly ever killed, and our campaigning is over for the present. I am nursing my tired troops in quarters and getting them under shelter. . . . All my brother Engineers are delighted at my success, and my only fear is that I may not realise the extravagant expectations which they have formed of me.

About this time Napier received his promotion to K.C.B., which brought him a congratulatory letter from General Sir Patrick Grant, saying: "I cannot tell you the pride I had in hearing from all quarters that, amongst the whole of the Generals employed, there was no one to be compared to Napier of the Bengal Engineers. I well knew it would be so, and that opportunity was all you wanted to place yourself at the top of the tree."

Letters from Sir William Mansfield, Chief of the Staff, Army Head-quarters (afterwards Lord Sandhurst), show that Sir Colin Campbell gave Napier a free hand in his command, and any requisitions which he made at Head-quarters were promptly carried out. Napier's demands included camels, irregular cavalry and small mortars.

Central India consists of an elevated plateau, between 1,500 and 2,000 feet above sea-level, broken up with many small rivers, tributaries of the Chambal, and

rocky glens covered in many parts with dense jungle, the home of the tiger, the leopard and the bear.

It is inhabited by indigenous tribes in the denser jungles, and is dotted with the feudal forts of semi-independent Rajput Chiefs who owe a more or less nominal allegiance to one or other of the great Rajahs of the country such as Gwalior and Indore. The intricate nature of the country enabled these Hindu Rajputs to maintain their independence against the great Mahomedan invasions of India. It was therefore a matter of prime importance for the British Government to stamp out the smouldering sparks of the Mutiny in these parts. The main road from Bombay northwards, passing through Indore and Gwalior, intersects the country, the densest jungles being to the west of the high road between the latitude of Goona and Sipri. There are no other metalled roads, or indeed anything but village tracks. Consequently mortars carried on mules were necessary to reduce the forts, and walled villages, and camels were requisitioned to transport infantry rapidly from place to place. This campaign was probably the first in which British infantry were so employed.

To resume the story of Tantia Topi. After his flight from the field of Jaora Alipur on the 22nd June, he attempted to march on Jaipur and Rajputana, but was repulsed by Brigadier Showers and General Roberts. The rainy season had now commenced, and neither troops nor rebels could do much, but by August actions were fought near Neemuch and Udaipur, Tantia gradually moving round in a circle from North to West and South of Central India, where he attempted to reach Indore. Driven off from that direction by General Michel commanding the troops in Malwa,

Tantia then made for the Sironje district where he again approached the region of the Central India Field Force. Meanwhile, Napier, having wisely profited by the rainy season to secure a measure of rest and comfort to his overworked soldiers, had put them into quarters at Gwalior, Jhansi, Goona and Sipri, the latter place being occupied by Brigadier Smith. But he was not to rest for long. A letter from him to General Mansfield, dated 30th July, mentions that two Rajput Chiefs, Ajit Singh and Man Singh, rebels against our ally Scindia, were becoming active. They had seized the fort of Powri, North-west of Sipri, with 12,000 men. Smith with 1,100 men advanced to attack, but Powri, being a strong fortress and Smith's artillery insufficient, the latter applied to Napier for assistance. Napier, feeling that it was essential to crush such an insurrection without delay, came to his assistance with five guns and four mortars escorted by 600 cavalry, and reached Powri on the 19th August. After a 24-hour bombardment by high angle fire, Napier commenced with his breaching batteries, and Powri was evacuated on the night of the 23rd. The fortress was razed to the ground, the guns were burst, and Napier returned to Sipri, leaving the pursuit to Brigadier Smith's force. A party under Robertson overtook the rebels near Goona, and defeated them with a loss of some 500 men, but both Ajit Singh and Man Singh escaped.

Tantia Topi, who had reached Sironje in a state of exhaustion, was now surrounded on all sides by British troops. Brigadier Smith, relieved from the care of Powri, had moved to a position West of Sironje; Colonel Liddell, based on Jhansi, hemmed him in from the North and North-east, while General Michel held the South.

After storming the fort of Isaogarh which gave

them fresh supplies and some guns, the rebels under Tantia marched on Chanderi. Failing to capture this place, they managed to deceive their pursuers and, in spite of a heavy defeat by General Michel, 50 miles south of Lallitpur, succeeded in crossing the Vindhya range into Nagpur in the Central Provinces, and the heart of the Mahratta country.

This seriously alarmed the Governors, both of Bombay and Madras, and further troops were put in motion. Foiled at Nagpur, Tantia tried to enter Baroda. But Brigadier Parke, acting under General Michel, overhauled them after an amazing march of 241 miles in nine days, defeated them, and drove them into the Bhanswarra jungles, whence they gradually moved eastwards, until they again reached Gwalior territory, West of the Indore-Gwalior road, and joined up with Man Singh.

Meanwhile a new rebel had arrived on the scene. Firoz Shah, a refugee from Oudh, fired by the glowing accounts of Tantia Topi's achievements, resolved to join him. Napier, having received information of his movements, had sent out patrols to watch the approaches to Gwalior territory, and on the 12th December, heard of Firoz Shah's presence near the junction of the Sind and Chambal rivers with the Jumna. Presuming that he would move up the Sind valley towards the Sironje jungles, Napier marched from Gwalior the same day with a small mobile force, including men of the 71st Highlanders on camels, a squadron of 14th Light Dragoons, some Mahratta Horse and a detachment of the 25th Native Infantry as well as two field guns. After a close chase of some 140 miles in very thick jungle, doing an average of 23 miles a day, they eventually ambushed the rebels at Ranod. To anyone

familiar with the very difficult nature of the country in Central India, with its absence of roads, its black cotton soil full of holes, with light scrub in open places and winding village pathways; its dense tiger jungles and rocky cliffs and glens, it is amazing that the British were able to keep track of the rebels at all. There was no heliograph signalling, no field telegraph apart from the permanent lines, and the only means of communication at a distance from the permanent telegraph lines, was by relays of horsemen, men on fast-riding camels, and possibly native runners in places where they could be relied upon. Therefore combinations with other forces in the field must have been very difficult.

On this occasion it was the extreme mobility, and unremitting pursuit that was successful. The 25th Native Infantry were left behind before the last day, on which the force started at 4 a.m., and a stalwart Highlander, describing his experience of riding a camel, was heard to say: "The trot's varra weel, but an awful canter!"

Napier, writing to his mother, thus describes the incident:

I have had a long and exciting pursuit after a party, and was fortunate enough to out-general them yesterday, and defeated them with great loss. We have been for five days running neck and neck with each other. The moment my bugles were heard they started off, and at last thought they had baffled me in the mountain paths, and turned off to plunder a rich and defenceless town. To their intense disgust, instead of having the feeble villagers to meet their formidable long array of horsemen, my little party burst like an apparition from behind a grove, and dashed into them—few stopped to look behind them. We took six elephants and killed several leaders, but the principal one, I fear escaped. I do not think there is now one left within 20 miles, and we shall eat our Christmas dinner in peace.

Firoz Shah himself did escape, as Napier surmised, and made for Chanderi, but, hearing of the approach of Colonel Liddell from Lallitpur, he suddenly turned westwards to the Arone jungles, where he was again surprised by a column from Goona under the celebrated tiger hunter, Captain Rice, whose familiarity with the jungles stood him in good stead, as he came upon the enemy who was totally unaware, at eleven o'clock at night. No resistance was made, but Firoz Shah again escaped, and his followers dispersed in the jungles, leaving many horses, camels, arms and clothing behind them. From this point Firoz Shah found his way to Rajgarh in quest of Tantia Topi, and eventually joined both him and Man Singh who was still at large.

Napier transferred his Head-quarters from Gwalior to Sironje about the end of February, 1859, in accordance with directions received from Indore to include the country from the Betwa River to the borders of Bhopal within his borders. In reporting the military situation to the Chief of the Staff, he explains that: "The number of small States, unfriendly to the Gwalior rule, which surround Goona and Sironje, together with the continuous tract of jungles and ravines, render it difficult effectually to restore tranquillity. The territories of Kotah, Jalra Paton and Gwalior interlace about Nahargarh and Shahabad, and there is a line of hills and jungles between those places difficult to traverse." This was Rajah Man Singh's country where he held several villages and kept 700 or 800 men, dispersed when pressed, but ready to join him on occasion for plunder, or to assist any foreign rebels that came into that district. Napier had had occasion to visit Nahargarh, and had already marked down the Parone jungles as a probable refuge for Tantia

Topi, and resolved to root out this nest of rebels. With the consent of the Gwalior Durbar to construct roads from Parone to Goona and Sipri, he first proceeded to level the fort of Parone to the ground, thus destroying Man Singh's principal place of refuge. He then carried roads, mere clearances of jungle, to permit of the free passage of troops, without losing their way, first towards Goona and then towards Sipri via Sirsi and Mow to Augur. After that, he ordered the construction of another road back towards Parone, turning the fort of Shahabad belonging to Jalra Paton and exposing places in the jungle where the rebels constantly found shelter.

During the construction of these roads, Napier with his own column of troops, had at first cut off supplies to the rebels from Nahargarh and with great difficulty obtained workmen, supplied them with food, and stood ready for emergencies.

On the 27th March, Napier, having returned to Sironje, reported progress as above to the Chief of the Staff, enclosing correspondence with Captain Meade, whom he had left in that neighbourhood, showing how he himself directed every move of Captain Meade towards the hunting down of Man Singh. Napier closed his report with the following paragraph: "I thought it better to make the road my ostensible object, because a pursuit of the rebels through the jungles might be endless, and would make them of too much importance. Though of themselves insignificant, whenever any other object was in hand, they assembled in sufficient numbers to require attention, lest they should interfere with the trunk road. As many as 3,000 with three guns were reported by Major Macpherson in December last. The numbers are, of course, always

exaggerated. Several good gun-carriages were found at Parone, but the guns had probably been buried."

On the 2nd April Captain Meade reported to Sir Robert Napier that Rajah Man Singh had given himself up at Mahoodra, near the very village that Napier had directed him towards a fortnight before.

A letter from Napier to the Chief of the Staff reports the Rajah's surrender, and brings to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief and the Government "the sound judgement displayed by Captain Meade in the management of this most important and very valuable service." Napier added that he considered the surrender of Man Singh a point of very great importance to the peace of the country from his hereditary interest, although not himself a man of any military talent or courage.

That Napier was correct in this estimate was shown by the capture of Tantia Topi, betrayed by his friend and comrade, Man Singh, a few days later, in the Parone jungles not far from the same village of Mahoodra.

In the words of Malleon: "With the surrender of Man Singh the rebellion collapsed in Central India." In discussing Tantia Topi and his achievements, the historian calls attention to the strategy which gave the pursued no rest, which cut them off from the great towns and forced them to seek the jungles as their hiding-place. It is said that the whole distance covered by these rebels exceeded 3,000 miles.

A reference to Sir Robert Napier's letters to Lord Clyde of the 4th and 5th April show, however, that although the back of the rebellion was broken, there still remained the necessity of clearing up the remnants of rebel bands. But by the 20th April, many of the

troops were withdrawn, and Sir Robert Napier on that day issued a farewell order as follows :

*Division Orders by Brigadier-General Sir Robert Napier, K.C.B.,  
Commanding Gwalior Division.*

CAMP SIRONJE,  
20th April, 1859.

To Major Lightfoot's 1st Troop of Bombay Horse Artillery. To Captain Fuller's and Captain Brown's Field Batteries, Nos. 4 and 18 ! To the 14th Light Dragoons ! To the 86th Regiment ! To the 3rd Bombay European Regiment ! and the 25th Bombay Native Infantry !

I cannot part with the troops now leaving the Gwalior Division, after having been associated with them during a year's eventful service, without a few words to convey to them my admiration and regard, for their excellent and soldier-like conduct during the period they passed under my command.

It would not become me to advert to the more prominent actions of the late campaign, to which the praise of the highest authority has already been awarded, but the services to which I will refer, and which the troops whom I now address, were called upon to render, when they had scarce had breathing time after their wonderful exertions at Jhansi, Calpee and Gwalior, though not of so showy and conspicuous a nature as the great battles of the campaign, yet frequently called even for more individual exercise of valour, and endurance of hardship, and exposure at the most inclement season of the year.

I need but advert to the state of the Gwalior Division when it came into our hands : the Jhansi District was overrun by many thousands of rebels, so that the British Cantonments were the only parts of which we had undisputed possession. In the South of Gwalior a dangerous insurrection was eagerly watched by 7,000 of Sindia's disbanded troops.

The return of the fugitive rebels under the Rao Sahib and Tantia Topi threatened to overturn every recommencement of order ; and at a later period the Oude rebels under Firoz Shah, evading many columns, swept through the country.

To the excellent arrangements of Colonel Liddell and his

gallant regiment the 3rd Bombay Europeans!—to Major Lightfoot and his noble troop of Horse Artillery!—to the Squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons under Major Thompson and to the force under Major McMahan! is greatly due that the rebels have been defeated and scattered, and that Jhansi is restored to its present state of tranquillity.

By the judicious promptitude of Colonel Liddell's movements, the State of Tehree was saved from devastation in October last. Each of these officers, and the columns they led, have highly distinguished themselves.

To Colonel Louth and the 86th Regiment, to Captain Brown, Bombay Artillery and their Batteries and to Colonel Robertson of the 25th Native Infantry, I am indebted for their services in every part of the District; in the ravines of the Chumbel! at the siege of Powrie! in the pursuit and destruction by Colonel Robertson of its fugitive garrison at Beejapore! and in the surprise of Firoz Shah in the jungles of Arone by Captain Rice!

To Colonel Scudamore it is due that the State of Dutteah and the Central Districts of Gwalior were protected from the rebels under the Rao Sahib, who were baffled by the movements of his small but undaunted column.

The brilliant 14th Dragoons and their charges at Jowra Alipur and Ranod will not easily be forgotten.

Although I cannot hope that there is nothing left to be done, yet tranquillity has in a great measure been restored.

The Rao Sahib and Firoz Shah with the remnants of their followers are scattered fugitives in the jungle; Tantia Topi has paid the penalty of his crimes; Rajah Singh has surrendered.

This incomplete notice but faintly records the valuable services which have been rendered to the State by the Gwalior Division during the past year, nor is it necessary now to advert to the share in those services borne by the excellent soldiers still in the Division.

It will always be a source of pleasure and pride to me to remember that I have commanded such troops, and to their Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and soldiers, I bid a cordial and sincere farewell.

In a letter to his mother, dated Gwalior, May 31, 1859, Sir Robert Napier says :

The war is over, Oude is conquered, the rebels driven out and Lord Clyde (my old friend Sir Colin Campbell) is going home. Lord Canning will also go home as soon as he can get a clear interval of peace.

We have had a few rebels scouring about. I wrote to you of my having cut up a party under Firoz Shah. The remnant got out of my district as fast as they could and are now many hundreds of miles away. . . .

I am sure you will be wonderfully proud to learn that the Duke of Wellington sent me the Great Duke's despatches as a complimentary present, and wrote my name in the book with his own hand. I considered it a great compliment, but we poor "Company" Officers must hide our diminished heads now. We are reduced to Militia.

Napier continued in command at Gwalior during the remainder of the year, and it was not until December, 1859, that a letter is found from him to Lord Clyde foreshadowing the coming China Expedition.

#### GWALIOR.

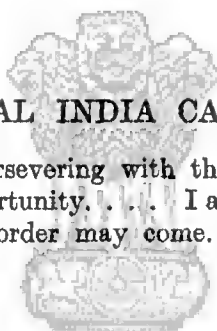
Very many thanks for kindly keeping your promise to write. I should have acknowledged your letter immediately, but have been all day deep in the inspection of the 17th Lancers. The books show that the men are wonderfully well-behaved. I wish I were Commander-in-Chief for a few hours to enact that no officer should be permanent in command of a troop, until he has written the whole of his Troop books for six months in his own hand. The idea is regarded as barbarous.

The English news convey something of disappointment from the objection one feels to let the national pride have such a check without some "amende" which will put us again on good terms with ourselves, but the best side of the argument is with the Chinese according to the English papers. Anything that will save us from a French interference in Chinese matters will be worth a sacrifice. The telegram, just in, says :

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‘The French are persevering with this expedition, so they will not lose the opportunity. . . . I am quite ready to move to China when the order may come. Should we take our chargers ? . . .’



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CHAPTER VIII  
THE CHINA WAR  
1860

It was with no very cheerful anticipations that Sir Robert Napier prepared to take up his new appointment. On January 4, 1860, he wrote to his friend Baker as follows :

You will have learned by this time that a division has been offered me, but in an indistinct and unsatisfactory manner as regards position and allowances. I have accepted on the understanding that I shall be on the footing of a full Division. . . . I expect to be kept as a local general for show, but all real opportunities will be kept for the British (i.e. Queen's) Officers. . . . I do not like the expedition, it is too much in the dark as to plan of campaign, resources, etc., but I suppose it will clear up.

On January 12 he quitted Gwalior for Calcutta, which he reached on the 23rd. The news from home made him still less hopeful. On February 1 he wrote :<sup>1</sup> " My brother has written me very alarming accounts of my mother's health, which have made me quite ill, and led me to expect the worst. Should any misfortune happen, I trust to you, my dear friend, to do what you can for me until I can act.<sup>2</sup> . . . The shock of my brother's letter has affected me so much that I almost

<sup>1</sup> To Colonel W. E. Baker.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. as to the care of his children in the event of Mrs. Napier's death.

fear I may not be able to undertake the China command."

Owing to some neglect or accident no further home news reached Napier for many weeks, and the strain of such prolonged anxiety, at a time, moreover, when he specially needed a mind at ease, may be imagined. He did not allow his work to suffer, but it was performed at great effort and disadvantage to himself. In reference to congratulations on his appointment, he wrote on February 9:<sup>1</sup> "How much better for me it would have been had I remained quietly at Calcutta as Chief Engineer and been contented, but I believe I felt then (1857) that all who could act in the field ought to do so for the sake of our country and the Government services. I can't tell you how less than valueless the military rewards seem to me—the pleasure of my friends and the corps is the only satisfaction that I have."

Soon after his arrival in Calcutta, Napier had been selected by Lord Clyde for the arduous service of superintending the entire equipment and embarkation of all troops proceeding from Bengal to China.

In reference to this and other matters, he wrote on February 15:

The home expectations as to time will be disappointed. Orders here were issued so late that the Cavalry cannot possibly be in time to sail before the 1st April and we have not steamers for all the mounted branch. . . . It would appear that all matters here have waited on orders from home, so that the troops are hurried down at the last moment. Originally it was intended that the Native Corps should be all volunteers—that plan was at length given up and the regiments were allowed to volunteer bodily, which they have done. They

<sup>1</sup> To Colonel W. E. Baker.

ought at the first to have been ordered, and they would have taken it as the new order of things—not a regiment would have objected. The clothing department is very backward, and consequently the clothing is badly made up, and some materials are very inferior. . . . We have plenty of new pattern muskets but no ammunition ; so the native troops take the old muskets—four varieties in one regiment. Nevertheless, I have no doubt the men will do very well. Young Brownlow—one of my subs. in the Hussunzye Campaign—is in command of one corps, the 8th (Punjab N.I.). The Native Cavalry have only just started from Lucknow and Cawnpoor. But we are doing everything in our power here to equip the troops as rapidly as possible, and send them off as soon and as well appointed as we can. Had I had a *carte blanche* and three months' clear notice I would have done it very differently. However this is all valuable experience gained.

If we had a native division complete in the field, I should have no fear of the result, and have no doubt I could take the Sikhs into the Chinese Forts not a step behind the Frenchmen—but as there will be nearly an equal number of English and French, the Native troops will run the risk of being left as *chokidars*<sup>1</sup> unless they are brigaded equally with the English corps.

I anticipate much pleasure and profit from serving with the French Army, though I wish it were not here. If my mind were not filled with such cares from home, I should so enjoy this campaign, but the pause of a moment to think fills me with painful anxiety. I think I am twice as grey since this last six weeks.

Napier's appointment (which was in addition to and entirely distinct from the duties of his own command), involved provision for every detail of equipment, food, clothing, ventilation and sanitation. The construction and security of the powder magazines, besides the drawing up of regulations for the voyage : all this for each of some sixty ships. In the case of the cavalry,

<sup>1</sup> Watchmen.

it included in addition to their equipment, the special preparation of the hired transports for a voyage of 5,000 miles during the hottest months, their sanitation and the opening up of their decks for ventilation (in spite of the resistance of the Superintendent of Marine and the anger of some of the masters of the steamers). In the matter of sanitation and ventilation, Napier had much opposition to encounter; official opinion was still very backward on these subjects, and there was as yet no general standard or consensus of opinion to appeal to. Even the cubic allowance per man of air was a matter of the widest dispute. Another element of difficulty was the necessity of meeting the caste and tribal prejudices of the Native troops in the supply of food and water, and not only of these.

The success of all these arrangements, in which Napier was assisted by an excellent personal staff, was only made possible by the absolute authority ensured to him by Sir James Outram (President in Council) and his colleague, Sir H. B. E. Frere, who swept aside all departmental obstruction. "Sir James Outram, fresh from the exigencies of war, knew well how injurious could be the application of regulations adapted for peace measures, to the wants of a military force under newly developed conditions. . . . Instead of having to fight for every thing under the harrow of regulations never intended for such occasions, all official red tape obstructions were brushed aside. Liberal outfits for European and Native troops, with foresight for all contingencies, were at once sanctioned: all just pay arrangements settled with liberal facility."<sup>1</sup>

Under these circumstances, Napier was "enabled to

<sup>1</sup> Memo. on services of Sir Bartle Frere written by Lord Napier in 1889.

deliver the Bengal portion of the troops in China in excellent condition and fit for immediate service after a three-month voyage.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the hearty co-operation of Outram and Frere, Napier had to overcome much opposition. Writing at the time he said: “I am working hard against many Calcutta cliques and obstacles to expedite the China troops, and give them the best accommodation that circumstances admit. I find the Marine department obstinately opposed to interference or any improvement of ventilation of transports. By organising the work here, I have got it into good training, and had I begun when I wanted in November, I could have done it better and cheaper. I think I have in some degree added to the men’s efficiency and comfort.”<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we may quote a few words from a friend’s contemporary letter: Napier “has done a world<sup>3</sup> of good in teaching people the art of ventilation, and has taught the Calcutta people the way to do many impossible things. A—— gives him up as a man totally deficient in respect for vested interests and venerable malpractices.”

By March 25 Napier had completed his work, and on that day he embarked for China in the *Lancefield* steamer. On the eve of his departure, Lord Clyde, who was up country with the Governor-General, wrote to him: “I cannot let you go without a word of remembrance. Also I must thank you for all your exertions in embarking the troops, which operation appears to have been most admirably well done.”

<sup>1</sup> Memo. on services of Sir Bartle Frere written by Lord Napier in 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Colonel W. E. Baker, March 3, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant W. H. Greathed to Colonel Yule, March 26, 1860.

After touching at Penang and Singapore, the *Lancefield* reached Hong-Kong on April 12. Here Napier found that Sir Hope Grant had left a week before for Shanghai to confer with the French Commander, General Cousin de Montauban. From Hong-Kong, Napier wrote to Colonel W. E. Baker, on April 14 :

We have just heard that the Chinese have rejected decidedly the ultimatum, so nothing remains but an appeal to force. The agreement with the French, limiting their forces and ours to a similar number, is another embarrassment added to the former ones—for, with the number of places to be held and defended, Canton, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Chusan, the force will be much diminished and may require a considerable addition before we can march to Peking, if that becomes a necessity. For of course we must have our base of operations and communications with it thoroughly secured. It would not do to march to Peking with our force *en l'air*. And if we go there and the Tartar dynasty should fly, nothing could relieve us of our dilemma, except the establishment of the Ming dynasty—a serious responsibility. However, a decided success against the Forts and possession of Tientsing may bring the Imperial court to reason.

Everything is new and most interesting, and if I were only with a mind at ease as regards home, I should enjoy it very much. . . . The scenery to an Indian eye is a very pretty mixture of sweeping outlines of hills, a bright glittering sea, and white sea-birds, like sails in the distance, whilst grotesque-looking junks, with mat sails, and whole shoals of small craft furnish floating villages for a large part of the Chinese population.

In consequence of the rejection of the Anglo-French ultimatum, Sir Hope Grant proceeded to take possession of the island of Chusan. While awaiting the return of the Commander-in-Chief, Napier paid a short visit to Canton, when he wrote to Sir James Outram on April 18 thus :

General Michel arrived at Hong Kong the same day that I did and is now the senior officer. . . . I saw Admiral Hope. . . . He seemed to be a very pleasant person—remarkably handsome amongst the “Hopes” even, with a most amiable expression of countenance. . . . From what little I can gather there does not seem to be much unity of administration. I do not mean dis-union, but no fixed organisation. That may be because I am not behind the scenes; certainly those who design are wise in keeping their plans quiet. . . .

The first ship of the sixty<sup>1</sup> has come in—the Indomitable. . . . Orders are being sent to Japan to purchase ponies—some 3 or 4,000 are expected, which with the cattle we already have will try our resources in forage to the utmost. . . .

You have read many accounts of Canton I have no doubt—none that I have read have given an adequate idea of the intense degree of active industrious life amongst this cheerful, busy and grotesque people.

What do you think the Chinese in their *Lingua franca* call the English Bishop?—No. 1 Heaven Pigeon: Pigeon being the general name for business of all kinds.

After returning to Hong-Kong, Napier was, on April 24, appointed to the command of the camp at Kowloon on the opposite mainland, and here on the 30th April, a review was held by Sir Hope Grant and two days later trial made of the Armstrong guns—then a complete novelty.

Napier remained at Kowloon until May 11, when he proceeded to the lovely island of Potoo, to report on its suitability as a sanitarium and military station in place of Chusan. As to this question he had already written:<sup>2</sup> “We want neither, but should have some station nearer the scene of operations, up near Pechili; and that is what we shall eventually come to. If

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the sixty from Bengal.

<sup>2</sup> To Colonel W. E. Baker, May 9, 1860.

there comes any time of difficulty I may be of use, but I hope that is not likely. . . . I shall get through some months in an interesting Country—much amused—some thousand rupees poorer than when I started, and not materially affected in any other way.”

The examination of Potoo completed, Napier made his report to Mr. Bruce at Shanghai, and then (Mr. Bruce having decided against any change being made), returned to Chusan to make arrangements for the comfort and safety of the British garrison there. From Chusan, he wrote to Outram on June 11 :

I have written to tell you about China—our force is gradually being collected and moving towards Pechili. I expect we shall not be all collected till the end of the month and perhaps not present ourselves before the Taku Forts until July is well advanced. I have now met our French Allies, and am inclined very much to concur in the Crimean accounts of them. They seem to be looking about with a restless craving eye for any place where they can settle down and raise a little revenue. I regret the alliance very much though we must do all we can to make the best of it.

On the same day, June 11, Napier and his staff sailed in H.M.S. *Imperieuse* (as guests of Admiral Jones) for Tahlien Bay, the British point of rendezvous, which was reached on the 17th. While awaiting further orders, Napier on June 22, wrote his impressions of the situation to Sir James Outram as follows :

. . . I looked of course anxiously for the arrival of our Calcutta troops to see what was the result of our transport arrangements. The very unexpected nature of the climate we have met with during, I am informed, a very unusual season, puts out ordinary calculations. Since passing Singapore we have had no heat, and the effect of “*packing*” on troops has not had much opportunity of being developed. Yet I am convinced that the points arrived at by experience in

Calcutta are fully borne out by the present result, and will be still more so.

The space for European troops should not be less than 15 feet per man.

A double deck ship should not be used for transport without far better ventilating arrangements than any now in use.

Native troops should not have less than 12 or 13 feet per man, instead of 9 feet, the miserable standard by the Indian Quarter-Master-General's department. . . . The 19 Punjab Infantry in the *Bosphorus* at nine feet per man, are, even now attacked with scurvy.

The re-shipment from Hong Kong appears to me to have been, on the part of the navy, without any due consideration of the subject. The ultimate effects of thrusting a crowd of men into a man-of-war, probably to be exposed on deck for days, never seems to occur to a naval officer. As long as he can turn out his freight alive, what ultimately happens to them never seems to be counted. Nor is the expense of large hospital ships,—transit of invalids returning home and reinforcements coming out, ever set to balance the first expense of hiring a few more transports, and having an ample supply of fresh provisions. . . .

We have now assembled here, in Talién Whan Bay, nearly all the British force; a portion of the cavalry, and a very small portion of infantry alone remaining due, but the commissariat is all behind and I believe will break down. There ought to have been a commissariat officer here months ago, with plenty of assistants and interpreters, to establish a depôt of forage and supplies. We have no fresh provisions, no forage; the heavy artillery and engineer park are also behind. Of what they may consist I do not know, but I learnt that no siege material has come—a shipload of fascines would not have been amiss. In all these arrangements it appears to me that the Home Service is much behind our Indian practice. The French are collected at Che-fu. . . . I do not think they are better appointed than we are, in point of carriage and supplies, but I have no doubt they will supply themselves much sooner, and they have a better place of rendezvous, as the country there produces many more supplies than this.

Here it is barren—sparse population, no cattle, sheep or vegetables,—water even, procured with difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

I visited one of the French transports—by surprise : There were 1,100 men on board. Everything was clean and orderly. The 'tween decks lofty. The ship, solely intended for troop accommodation, brought its men from France round the Cape without sickness or, I believe, a single death. This ship, the *Entreprenant*, appeared to great advantage compared to our transport ships. Another which I visited, the *Calvados* was, on the contrary, very dirty indeed. . . .

I found the French generals very well disposed. Montauban was rather testy at some supposed neglect, but very soon came round and was pleasant and sociable, and the two junior generals, Jamin and Colineau, were both agreeable. The diplomats, the subordinates, are I think rather a doubtful set, clever and unscrupulous. Some of them at Chusan have ferreted out every possible way of screwing out some money, and wish us to join. This we have declined, and it was left to the C. in C.'s and ministers of both nations to decide whether the practice is to continue.

The following extract from another letter of the same date further shows Napier's view of the situation :<sup>2</sup>

We wait the arrival of General Grant to move on. I daresay we shall get on as well as former expeditions—not better—the mixture of home management and Indian is against us. I do not expect the flagrant errors of the Crimea, but much less efficiency than there might have been. The commissariat ought to have been at work up here four months ago, collecting supplies at one of the islands or at some dépôt anywhere near the rendezvous, viz. near the gulf of Pechili. A few hundred coolies and a few starved mangy ponies are all the carriage as yet ready. Many of our troops are crowded,

<sup>1</sup> "The harbour at Talién Whan accommodates our whole fleet in safety, which would not be the case at the French side."  
NAPIER.

<sup>2</sup> To Colonel W. E. Baker, June 22, 1860.

whilst ships, with admirable transport accommodation are filled with naval stores. It is impossible to persuade an admiral that any room is too cramped for a soldier, or that he wants anything on shore but his "pack." And as much of the transport accommodation rests with the navy, we have crowded troop-ships and accommodation wasted for want of a few store ships.

After giving other instances, the letter continues :

These things will no doubt cost us a large percentage of our men, as they have always done heretofore, but no doubt we shall do our work in the end. It was fortunate for the Calcutta Government that I made such a stir for their transport improvement. . . . I did only what I could in spite of all sorts of departmental and marine vested obstructions, not at all what I would have done had I had my way from the beginning. After all, very few of the regiments that I fitted out have come to my division. . . . here we are at the 22nd June, and I fear we shall not fly our flag over the Taku Forts under a month from this date at the earliest. If they are well fortified towards the land, it may take us longer. When we get them we may obtain the resources of the country, at present we get nothing. . . .

In the meantime, Sir Hope Grant had been in conference with General de Montauban, who, on June 17, explained his intentions to his colleague thus :

He proposed to land at a spot 25 miles south of the large fort which had done so much damage to our fleets the previous year, and then to march up along the coast through a wretched semi-barren country, taking with him his light guns only. For provisions and water, he would rely upon his ships. This scheme appeared to me very hazardous. The difficulties of landing would be great : heavy winds might very probably arise and prevent communication with his ships for days and, above all, it was most unlikely that the large fort, which was armed with about sixty very heavy guns, could be compelled to yield to the fire of light field pieces only. Before attending the conference, I had consulted with Admiral Hope,

and we both came to the conclusion that our most judicious course would be to proceed up the river Pehtang, eight miles north of the Peiho, capture the town of Pehtang and there establish a base for future operations . . . by landing near the town of Pehtang, we could attack in rear the Taku Forts, which would thus probably fall after a short resistance.

General Montauban remained wedded to his opinions, and proposed that we should each of us carry out our own scheme independently, as far as possible. To this I readily agreed. I had an amply sufficient force for my purpose, and we should thus avoid many causes for disagreement. My satisfaction was marred by the French General's statement that he could not be ready to begin operations until the 15th July. . . . We were prepared to open operations on 1st July, but the French very naturally insisted on a simultaneous start; and as I had received strict injunctions from home to act in unison with our allies, I had no alternative but to wait patiently.<sup>1</sup>

On June 26 Sir Hope reached Tahlien Bay, and General de Montauban on the same day established his head-quarters at Chefoo on the opposite (the south) shore of the entrance to the Gulf of Pechili. It having become apparent that no advance could take place for some time, the British troops were now landed and encamped on the breezy slopes above Tahlien Bay.<sup>2</sup>

On July 12 Sir Hope wrote to Sir R. Napier as follows :

You are aware that I took a run over to Chefoo to get General Montauban to fix a day for starting. I did not, however, succeed, but on the 20th he told me he would be prepared to settle the time.<sup>3</sup> Yesterday he and Admiral Charner came over here to pay their respects to Lord Elgin and a visit

<sup>1</sup> *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, by Gen. Sir Hope Grant. pp. 34-36.

<sup>2</sup> The camps of the 1st and 2nd Divisions were separated by an interval of about 17 miles.

<sup>3</sup> In clearer language, Montauban would be prepared on the 20th to settle the time.

to me. I took them over to Hand Bay and paraded the Artillery and Cavalry for their inspection. Nothing could be better than their turnout. The men are all magnificent fellows and the horses were in beautiful condition, and you might have seen your face in their coats. General Montauban said it was a sight to see in Hyde Park or at Paris.

This testimony to the complete success of Napier's arrangements for the 5,000-mile voyage of the cavalry must have been very gratifying to him.

In the same letter, Sir Hope added: "The French, from what I could make out from Montauban yesterday, will be ready at the latest by the 25th inst."

It was on July 26 that the allied fleets and transports at last weighed anchor. "So soon as the fleet had cleared the bay and the transports . . . had got fairly under weigh, the Admiral signalled from the flag-ship, the *Chesapeake*, 'Form single lines and put on as much sail as you can.' . . . During the afternoon clouds of smoke on our port bow showed the French fleet from Chusan sailing for the same destination. It was a glorious sight with a fine day and fair breeze, the whole combined fleets, with every stitch of canvas set, and numbering some 330 vessels."<sup>1</sup>

The fleet anchored before Peh tang on the 28th, but the inaccessibility of the coast joined to the roughness of the weather and other reasons, delayed operations.

On August 1, the First Division commenced disembarkation. Next day, the allies occupied, without opposition, the town and forts of Peh tang, which had been abandoned by the Chinese. While this business was in progress Napier was unemployed, but on the 4th he received the welcome order to land, and did so at once. The head-quarters assigned to the 2nd

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Lieut. (afterwards Gen. Sir Peter) Lumsden.

Division was a joss house, "which in the grey of the evening looked very sumptuous and to be filled with boxes, which might prove to be coffins or treasure cases. As the night went on, I saw my chief restless and walking about; enquiry elicited the cause, viz. that Sir R. N. could not rest as he was certain his couch was a resting-place of some old Chinaman, we gradually realised . . . that we sojourned amongst occupied coffins . . . however, we had so much to do and so little time for sleep that we existed there until our departure on the 12th."<sup>1</sup>

Next day, August 5, the disembarkation of the 2nd Division commenced. All landing of troops, horses, guns and stores devolved on the navy, who worked splendidly "without regard to any arbitrary distinction between day and night." During much of the time rain fell in torrents, "and as the interior of Pehtang is below high-water mark, the streets were knee-deep in mud, composed, in addition to the usual impurities pertaining to that substance, of flour, Tartar hats, field rakes, coals, shutters, oil cake, chaff, china cups, matting, beer bottles, tin cans and kittens. . . . The cavalry and artillery horses were picketed in the streets, where alone space was available; and how they and we and everybody escaped death from typhus, fever or plague, Heaven only knows. The Sanitary Officer was outraged by the result."<sup>2</sup>

The town of Pehtang is surrounded by an extensive mud flat, covered by the sea at high tide. About 8 miles south-west of Pehtang, and connected with it by a narrow raised causeway is the village of Sinho, then held in force by the enemy. Sir Robert Napier, having

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Sir Peter Lumsden.

<sup>2</sup> Greathed, *The China War of 1860*.

satisfied himself that troops could move against Sinho by a circuitous track over the mud flat to the right of the causeway, submitted to Sir H. Grant a project of attack, which was accepted, and of which the principal feature was ultimately carried out by his own division.

“ In the first instance Sir H. Grant, in communication with General Montauban projected an advance . . . direct along the causeway, commanding which on the shore side, were Chinese batteries which swept it. Sir R. Napier, on being asked, pointed out that such an attack might lead to disaster, and urged Sir H. Grant to allow him with the 2nd Division to cross the arm of the sea which divided Pehatang from the mainland which was fordable (though difficult) for all arms at low water. Reconnaissance had proved this . . . and so eventually it was arranged, and the 2nd Division, instead of forming the rearguard . . . preceded the advance of the column.”<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Sir James Outram (apparently written on August 9) Napier says :

Yesterday it was decided that the advance should take place to-morrow—1st Division<sup>2</sup> to lead, this being their second advance—we in reserve and to hold the dépôts here ; one of my Armstrong batteries to go with them. This was very unfair as I had even been sent for to give a sketch of the operations—which was to be carried out. Everyone I think

<sup>1</sup> Lumsden's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Napier, guided by information from Native sources, reconnoitred the approaches to Sinho on August 7 ; he saw enough to fully satisfy him that his scheme of turning the enemy's left was perfectly practicable, but the extent of water probably still concealed some details. It was thus reserved for Colonel Wolseley in a fuller reconnaissance in force on August 9 to ascertain (the waters, having according to the French official account, sunk furthest on that day), the actual track for debouching on Sinho. On the 10th Sir Robert again reconnoitred with the Commander-in-Chief.

felt ashamed of it. To-day a reconnoitring party found a new road for debouching and it caused the alterations that my division takes the lead with its own batteries and, if the report of the reconnaissance is true, I shall have a great opportunity. I do think nearly all the staff seemed relieved at this—and Grant himself too. We are of course delighted at fair play.

In accordance with Napier's project it was decided that the 2nd Division and British Cavalry should follow the northern approach, while the 1st Division and the French, thus secured from surprise, should proceed by the raised causeway already named. Two days of hard work were devoted to making the tracks practicable by fascines and drainage.

The 2nd Division marched on August 12, at 4 a.m., but so difficult was progress through the expanse of mud, that it took the troops six hours to traverse 4 miles.<sup>1</sup> No one who did not see it could fully realize the difficulty of advancing through that "deep tenacious mud,"<sup>2</sup> in which "gun wheels frequently were embedded axle-deep."<sup>3</sup> Sir Robert Napier subsequently reported :

I advanced by brigades in line of contiguous columns at quarter distance, my front covered by an advanced guard of 200 men, 3rd Buffs and Milward's Battery, under Lieut.-Colonel Sargent; the cavalry was formed on my right.

The advance was liable to attack from the North as well as the front. The enemy appeared in great force in front of Sinho and in an entrenchment barring the causeway. Observing this in the approach of the causeway column (1st Division and French), Sir Robert Napier advanced directly towards the enemy,

<sup>1</sup> Greathed, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Napier's report of August 24, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

taking their positions in flank and threatening their line of retreat. On arriving within 1500 yards, Milward's Armstrong guns opened on the enemy. They were the first shots fired by that weapon in war and the range and accuracy of their fire excited the admiration of the force. The Tartar horsemen were surprised by the fire but not shaken. After some hesitation they streamed out in a long line through a passage across a marsh which separated us, and forming with great regularity and quickness enveloped my force in a great circle of skirmishers, the northern portion formed by the Cavalry known to be in that direction, who hitherto had kept out of sight, seemed to rise in position from the plain.<sup>1</sup>

“Napier's Infantry were speedily deployed, his Cavalry let loose and artillery kept going; and though the heavy ground was rendered more difficult for our cavalry by ditches broad and deep, whose passages were known to the enemy alone, yet within a quarter of an hour of their advance the Tartar force was everywhere in retreat. The allied left then advanced along the causeway, and . . . occupied Sinho which the enemy deserted on the success of our right.”<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Napier then advanced and joined the allies.

Sinho lies about half a mile from the North bank of the Peiho River; a raised causeway traversing salt marshes connects it with Tongkoo, a large town surrounded by a formidable rampart, mounting fifty guns and protected by a double wet ditch. Tongkoo lies about half-way between Sinho and the nearest of the Northern Takoo forts (distant about 6 miles), to which it bars the approach.

Next day, August 13, while waiting for the ammunition to come up from Pehtang, a broad belt of dry ground was found bordering the river,<sup>3</sup> by which the fort

<sup>1</sup> Napier's report.

<sup>2</sup> Greathed, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> By Major W. H. Greathed, R.E., extra A.D.C. to Sir R. Napier.

could be approached. Bridging material was obtained by pulling down houses, etc., and all arrangements completed for the attack.

On August 14 the allies captured the place, which was then occupied by Sir R. Napier's division, which had been held in reserve.

It had been intended to attack the North and South Takoo forts simultaneously with a force operating on each side of the Peiho, and a bridge of boats was commenced at Sinho with this object. The French were very tenacious of the South attack, but Sir Robert Napier, from the first perceived that success would be better secured by confining the first attack to the North forts. While expressing his strong preference for this course, he did not object to entertain the alternative of the double attack, always provided sufficient troops should be forthcoming to make it safe, but in the meantime he made all preparations for the Northern attack.

Thus, on August 15, Sir R. Napier wrote to Sir H. Grant :

The effect of the bridge will be very good, as it would endanger the safety of the enemy on their side of the river and shake them very much. The point, however, to consider is, if we have force enough to hold our communications and the bridge, and still advance on this side . . . it will be a longer and a safer business to go steadily through the fort from this side but the other plan might hasten matters very much.

Tongkoo, as we have seen, was occupied on August 14; the next four days were devoted to bridging canals, constructing raised causeways, and "making roads to the front for heavy artillery, in preparation for advancing on the Northern forts of Taku."

By dint of most elaborate reconnaissance, conducted in person, General Napier had discovered that open ground near the North Fort could be reached by artillery on the completion of a line of causeways<sup>1</sup> which he had commenced over the inundated ground near Tongku, and by establishing crossing places at certain points on five or six canals. He urged an immediate attack on the North forts only, and having obtained permission to throw out a picquet towards them on the 19th made so good a use of it, that in one night the passage of the canals was completed and the Commander in chief was conducted next morning (20th) within eight hundred yards of the nearest fort. Seeing all obstacles to the approach of the forts overcome Sir Hope Grant frankly consented to General Napier's scheme, and entrusted its execution to his division. The French Commander was very adverse to the plan proposed. He formally protested against it, but General Grant maintained his determination.<sup>2</sup>

The two following letters show clearly the situation on the 19th August, the day that the picquet was sanctioned.

MY DEAR NAPIER,

General Montauban has come down to me and makes great objections to the attack on the North Fort . . . amongst other things he says he will not be able to finish the bridge over the Peiho as his Engineers will be employed at the North side. It will be folly to change our plan I think. But I should like to hear what you think of it.

Yours sincerely,

J. HOPE GRANT.

19th Aug.

Sir Robert Napier at once replied :

TUNG-KOO, Aug. 19, 1860.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I would not think of altering attack on the North forts now it has gone so far. We do not want the French assistance

<sup>1</sup> Napier's *dispatch* of August 26, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Greathed, *loc. cit.*

here at all. Let them take their Engineers to the bridge, but let me go on at these forts ; I believe I can get them for you very quickly. I have been over the ground to-day again, and have everything ready to make the bridges, for your advance on Tuesday (viz. the 21st). Pray do not let them stop us, but say that we do not require the force here, they may all cross the bridge.

During the day and night of the 20th the batteries were completed, the remaining canals on the front bridged and the Artillery placed in position before daylight. The French Commander's adverse opinion remained unmodified, and on August 20 he lodged a strongly worded protest against the attack on the Northern forts which he stated would be "completely useless." At the same time he intimated that if the Northern attack were persisted in, he would send a French Force to co-operate, while himself declined all responsibility for the result.<sup>1</sup> At dusk on the 20th an A.D.C. of General Colineau announced to Napier the arrival of the French at Tongkoo. Sir Robert "immediately took him to the position which" he "intended the French Force to occupy,"<sup>2</sup> and also along the whole front, that he might be thoroughly acquainted with the General arrangements." At midnight the French were guided to their position<sup>3</sup> by Major Greathed, A.D.C., by a line of advance perfectly clear and unobstructive.

Next day, August 21, Sir R. Napier's advance com-

<sup>1</sup> The force promised by Montauban was 1,000 Infantry and two field batteries, but as far as can be learned only one battery and about 400 men were actually sent. (See Sir Hope Grant's *Journal* and his editor's notes, pp. 86 and 96.)

<sup>2</sup> Napier had assigned to the French the post of honour on the right but covered by his own artillery.

<sup>3</sup> Napier's *dispatch* on August 26, 1860.

menced at 4 a.m., the French joining punctually as settled, two hours later. By 6 a.m. all the British batteries were in play, and a few French guns soon bore on the Southern forts and batteries. The enemy replied vigorously, but their fire gradually diminished before that of the allies (thirty-one British and six French guns and mortars). It had already diminished when a shell from a British battery struck the magazine, causing a grand explosion; a shell from a gunboat made a similar explosion in the further North fort.

The guns of the fort attacked being nearly silenced, Sir R. Napier ordered an advance of all the field artillery to within 450 yards, so that

the fire of our batteries was concentrated on the left of the gateway<sup>1</sup> with a view to breaching. The skirmishers of the allied forts were advanced to about 300 yards from the enemies' works. . . . The solid rampart adjoining the gateway resisted the efforts of the lighter artillery and a heavy gun was being brought up when an advance of the skirmishers was directed, which brought them to the edge of the ditch; as their movement partially masked the fire of the artillery, field guns were advanced within a hundred yards of the works. . . . The French on the right succeeded in crossing the ditches by ladder bridges and effected a lodgement at the unflanked angle of the work abutting on the river.

The cumbrous English pontoon bridge proved useless, owing to half the carriers being disabled by the heavy fire. Sir Robert Napier therefore

directed ladders to be brought forward and passed across the ditches . . . and parties of our Infantry effecting the passage of the ditches, some by means of the ladders and others by swimming, made their way to the gate. The enemy made a noble and vigorous resistance; no entry had yet been made.

<sup>1</sup> "The gate was known to be built up."—*Dispatch*, August 26, 1860.

Napier therefore brought up two howitzers and subsequently two 9-pounders to within eighty yards of the rampart,

which, firing over the heads of the men on the berm, cut away the parapet at the points where the defence was most obstinate. After a lengthened struggle the French entered the embrasure at their angle by escalade, and the British climbed into the partial breach near the gate at the same moment. . . . The troops of both nations now poured into the place, but, foot by foot the brave garrison disputed the ground. . . . The loss of the enemy, when they were ultimately driven out of the works, was very severe. . . . It was half-past eight o'clock when this fort, now proved to be the key of the whole position, was in our hands. The guns of the cavalry were turned against the opposite Southern forts, on which fire was still maintained from the heavy batteries on our right attack.

Two fresh regiments were brought up, and the artillery adjusted to enfilade the further fort. A further advance was immediately ordered on the further fort when, on the artillery again coming into action, the enemy's fire suddenly ceased everywhere and white flags were displayed on all the forts still in their hands. The British loss was 201 killed and wounded; the Tartar loss was estimated at 2,000 men. "All the wounded enemy" were "carefully attended to." Napier on this occasion had his field-glass shot out of his hands, his sword-hilt broken by a shell fragment, three bullet holes in his coat and one in his boot, but he escaped unhurt. The brief subsequent operations conducted by Sir Hope Grant in person completed the victory, and "before evening the entire position on the Peiho, covering an area of six square miles and containing upwards of six hundred guns"<sup>1</sup> was sur-

<sup>1</sup> Greathed, *loc. cit.*

rendered to the Allies. On August 22 Admiral Hope pushed a squadron of gunboats up the Peiho to Tientsin (distant 35 miles). Lord Elgin and Sir H. Grant proceeded there on the 24th and the troops gradually followed. Sir Robert Napier was detained some days by the arrangement necessary for the safety of Taku, but by September 5 he and his Division also reached Tientsin.

At this time there was a general expectation of speedy peace, and Sir H. Grant even began to contemplate the early return home of the greater part of the army. Napier having expressed some natural annoyance at the number of detachments taken from the 2nd Division, Sir Hope apologized to him for the depletion of his Division on the ground that "You (Napier) had the best command on the first day and you took all the Takoo forts and, in fact, finished the war."<sup>1</sup>

The war, however, was not "finished," and the advance on Peking was resumed on September 8. Although the negotiations with the Chinese had collapsed, there was then no rupture, and the local authorities undertook to furnish transport animals.

Sir Hope Grant left on September 9, but, at his second halt, all the Chinese cattle were quietly removed. In consequence of this breakdown, Napier's division, which was to have followed, had, instead, to devote its carriage to the 1st Division and to remain at Tientsin. "In this emergency the Commissariat would have had the greatest difficulty in feeding the troops in the front but for the measures taken by Sir Robert Napier, who remained in command at Tientsin."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sir R. Napier, d. August 30, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Greathed, *loc. cit.* Sir R. Napier succeeded Sir J. Michell on September 12.

As soon as news of Sir Hope Grant's dilemma arrived, he ordered up all available carriages (including even the Sappers' bullocks) from Taku. On September 12 he wrote: "Carriage by land is a failure . . . we must look to the water." Until then any suggestion of water transport above Tientsin had been rejected as impracticable. But Napier had observed the Chinese system of convoys of market boats which are laden in the small side canals (by which most of the villages in this region are connected with the Peiho), and formed into flotillas in the river. Under Napier's orders, by aid of the Navy,<sup>1</sup> the canals throughout the district were cleared of all suitable boats, and the tidal grain boats of the Peiho stopped. All boats thus seized were paid their hire. So well were these orders executed by the Navy, whose cordial assistance Napier always warmly acknowledged, that by next day he was able to inform the Commander-in-Chief that he believed 100 boats had been collected.

Another urgent matter claimed Napier's attention. A Memo. by Brigadier-General Stavcley on the state of the General Hospital led Sir R. Napier to visit it "when everything was found to be in a discreditable state, and was immediately brought to the notice of the Principal Medical Officer . . . who felt much hurt at his Department being interfered with, but a Purveyor's Department hitherto unknown to exist, was brought to the front and matters put to rights."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Captain McCleverty, R.N., dated September 12. This officer, who died a few years later, had been one of Napier's school-fellows at Hall Place.

<sup>2</sup> From Journal of Lieut. (now General Sir Peter) Lumsden, under date September 16.

At this time an immediate conclusion of the war was generally expected: this was not, however, the expectation of Sir Robert Napier, nor of Colonel (afterwards F.-M. Viscount) Wolseley. The Chinese Commissioners had written to Lord Elgin accepting his terms, and the place (Tung-Chow, 8 miles from Peking) had actually been fixed for the ratification of the treaty. Accordingly, on September 17, a small party was despatched from Head-quarters to select a lodging for Lord Elgin and camping ground for his escort. They were well received at Tung-Chow, but fresh difficulties were started. However, after five or six hours' discussion the Chinese Commissioners gave way, and the British remained that night as their guests.

Next morning the tone of the Chinese changed and the hostile movements of the Tartar army, followed by the murder of a French officer, brought on the victorious action of Chan-Kya-wan, in which seventy-five guns and large quantities of small arms were captured by the Allies. At this time the crop of millet and maize was so high that a mounted man could only see to a distance of 20 yards. Meanwhile, in the other parts of the field officers, civilians and escorts had been nearly all severally treacherously captured and removed to Peking, where most of them were imprisoned in the summer palace. Here Bowlby, De Norman, Anderson and ten of his men were done to death under circumstances of such fiendish atrocity as Mandarin cruelty can alone practise. Our people bore their sufferings bravely and even cheerfully, and it is affecting to read of the efforts made by Anderson's native troopers—themselves tightly bound hand and foot, to reach their Commander and gnaw away his

bonds. Brabazon <sup>1</sup> and a French Abbé were a degree less unfortunate, as they were (as far as could be ascertained) simply beheaded on September 21, the very day on which the Allies fought the decisive action on Pali-Chow.

In contrast to these official barbarities, it is pleasant to remember the kindness shown to Parkes and Loch by the Chinese criminals with whom they were in prison.

When Mr. Loch brought news to Head-quarters of Parkes' detention, Captain Brabazon, R.A., asked leave to return with Loch (under flag of truce) to Parkes' assistance. He was an accomplished artist and described by Sir Peter Lumsden as an excellent and energetic Artillery Officer.

After the fight of the 18th Sir Hope Grant had sent an express to summon General Napier, with as much of the 2nd Division as could be spared. Details had to be furnished by this division to hold Tientsin and the Peiho fort and secure communications with the base. Napier recommended that this depletion should be diminished by entrusting the Peiho Forts and Tientsin to the Navy, Admiral Hope having expressed his willingness to carry out this arrangement. . . . "The order found them ready to move, and General Napier reached Head-quarters on the 24th, having marched seventy miles in sixty hours, with a supply of ammunition that was much required, escorted by a company of Brownlow's light-footed Punjabees." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Times* correspondent: was attached to the British Legation at Peking.

<sup>2</sup> Greathed, *loc. cit.*

Sir Peter Lumsden has recorded in his journal that, after Mess on the 22nd, Sir R. Napier had received an urgent express from Colonel MacKenzie, the D.Q.M.G., asking him to do his utmost to be at Headquarters in time for a Council of War to be held early on the 24th. "For if you are not here, you may find the whole of us back with you. Owing to the prisoners in the hands of the enemy, of which the French also had several, the Political and Military Authorities find themselves in a difficulty. It is easy to accept the theory that operations must proceed as if no such prisoners existed, and to leave them to their fate, but such action is practically impossible."

Napier rode into the allied camp two hours after daybreak on September 24, and the result of the Council of War, held that day, was to order all the troops to push forward to join Headquarters and every arrangement to be made to advance on Peking as soon as the siege train may come up.

The siege train began to arrive on the 27th and all preparations were actively pushed forward for the advance.

On October 5 the advance of the whole force took place,<sup>1</sup> "in line of the contiguous quarter distance columns—the Cavalry Brigade on right of line: the French in column along the highroad to our left. . . . The project was for the cavalry to make a detour of some miles to our right, and to come into the highroad to Tartary in rear of the enemy's supposed position. The French to our left to attack the enemy supposed to be towards their left front, whilst we attempted

<sup>1</sup> The British Force was ready to advance on the previous day, but was obliged to wait for the French whose ammunition had not then come up.

to turn the enemy's position, by moving down parallel to the northern face of the intrenchment." <sup>1</sup>

The main British Force carried out their part of these movements, but the Cavalry "as night closed in, got entangled in narrow roads and suburbs, eventually found themselves in bivouac about three miles from the Summer Palace," on the right of the advance.

Meantime the French, owing to some unexplained cause, "instead of moving as agreed upon to their left flank immediately after our advance, changed direction to their right, and passing along our rear moved direct on the Emperor's Palace of Yuen-Ming-Yuen <sup>2</sup>—a few miles distant, of which they immediately took possession, and bivouacked in its enclosure."

These facts only became known to the British Commander next morning (October 7). Sir Hope Grant and Sir Robert Napier with some of the Head-quarter staff then rode out to the Summer Palace, where they found the French Head-quarters. "It has no doubt been arranged between us that we should ultimately march to the Summer Palace, but I expected that in the first instance the French would follow us."

"At the entrance to the Palace, General Montauban met Sir Hope Grant and particularly requested him to confine his retinue to his personal staff as the place was full of valuables, which should be carefully divided between the two armies. Whilst waiting here we saw French Officers passing freely in and out of the Palace laden with loot. . . ." <sup>4</sup> Before leaving the Summer

<sup>1</sup> Lumsden's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Commonly known as a Summer Palace and situated "six miles to the North of Peking and four miles away to our right."—GREATHEAD.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Hope Grant, in *Incidents of the China War of 1860*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Lumsden's Journal.

Palace Sir Hope Grant appointed three Officers to take charge of the British share of the prize captured in the palace, "But in the absence of any British troops, the arrangements broke through, and our prize agents, finding the principal valuables appropriated by the French, abandoned their functions. Thereupon, on the 8th, indiscriminate plunder was allowed; but as of the British a few officers only had access to the Palace, and none of the men, our officers were (on October 9th) desired to give up all they had brought away, and the property they had collected was ultimately sold by auction for the benefit of the troops actually present in the field before Peking. . . . All our Generals surrendered their shares to the troops."<sup>1</sup>

The Prize Committee presented a golden ewer as souvenir to Sir Hope Grant, whereupon the men of the 2nd Division said "Our General shall have a present too!" and insisted on Napier's acceptance of a beautiful bowl and cup of carved jade, with an inscription recording the circumstances of the gift.<sup>2</sup>

On the 8th October Messrs. Parkes and Loch with M. d'Escaifrae de Lantour, a Sikh orderly and four French privates, all prisoners detained on the 18th were at last sent into the Allies' camp. "The delivery of these prisoners was the direct result of an intimation sent to the Chinese on the 7th October, that unless all prisoners still in their hands were delivered up immediately, a gate of the city placed in our possession without opposition and competent persons deputed to conclude a peace, Peking would be taken by assault. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greathed.

<sup>2</sup> Now in the possession of his son Colonel Lord Napier of Magdala. The inscription is cut stencil-wise on a thin plate of silver.

<sup>3</sup> Greathed.

Compliance with the terms of the Allies being still evaded, the erection of batteries was commenced on the 10th, and a further communication of the terms on which Peking would be spared was sent to Prince Kung on the same day.

Careful reconnaissances were carried out under Sir R. Napier's orders and all preparations made for the assault. On one occasion, wishing to ascertain the depth of the moat, Napier rode into the water. The Chinese soldiers crowding the wall levelled their muskets at him, to which he replied by calling out the one Chinese phrase he possessed: "*Poo-Fa*" (*Don't be afraid!*). And the enemy were either too much amused or too astonished to fire! Captain C. G. Gordon was with him on this occasion, I think no one else.

Saturday, the 13th October, at noon was the period fixed on for compliance with the Allies' demands, and before that time the remaining surviving prisoners were sent in, as well as the coffins of those who had succumbed (with the exception of Captain Brabazon and the Abbé, whose bodies were not recovered). And at the last moment the An-ting Gate was surrendered and taken possession of by the 2nd Division, whose ensign was flown from the top of the massive four-storied keep.

No further progress having been made with the negotiations, and the French Commander positively refusing to let his troops remain before Peking beyond November 1, it became necessary to hasten matters to a conclusion.

Upon the 17th October, a bitterly cold day, the British victims of Chinese barbarity were laid to rest in the Russian Cemetery and on the same day Lord

Elgin, after consultation with Napier, addressed a strongly worded letter to the Prince of Kung, in which he was apprised that when Sir Hope Grant had stated the conditions on which Peking would be spared, he wrote in the belief that our countrymen were in safety, as had been repeatedly stated by His Highness. Instead of which it was now ascertained that half the number captured had been tortured to death. Under the altered circumstances a necessary preliminary to peace would be the immediate payment of an indemnity (£100,000), for distribution to those who had suffered and to the families of those who had been murdered. Further, the Prince was informed "that the Summer Palace, which had been partially plundered before the fate of the prisoners was known, would be entirely destroyed that its ruin might present a lasting mark of the abhorrence of the British Government at the violation of the law of nations which had been committed. He was also told in case of a refusal to comply with the demands now made, the Imperial Palace would be captured, plundered and burnt."<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the 1st Division under Sir John Michel with the Cavalry Brigade proceeded on the 18th October to Yuan-Ming-Yuan to effect the destruction of the forty houses constituting that beautiful residence, all preparations were pushed on for the effectual resumption of hostilities in case of need.

The 2nd Division had been constantly at work, and as the batteries, etc., were completed, Sir H. Grant proposed to relieve the 2nd Division by the 1st, previous to the assault, but to this Sir R. Napier altogether objected, and said that as his division had done the work they should be assigned the place of honour,

<sup>1</sup> Greathed.

especially as on every other occasion the 1st Division had always been pushed to the front, and were then actually away. This was at last accepted, and divisional orders of 19th October<sup>1</sup> defined the task instructed to the 2nd Division for the morrow. "The attack was deferred 24 hours to afford the Chinese time to make up their mind to surrender the city into our hands without a struggle."<sup>2</sup>

The delay had the desired effect, the Prince of Kung made his submission, the indemnity was paid and all arrangements completed for the signature of the Treaty on the 23rd and 24th October, within the city.

It was arranged that the Treaty should be ratified in the Chinese Hall of Assembly, some three and a half miles off, in the very depth of the Tartar City. Rumours prevailed that some dire act of treachery was intended against the Ambassador during the ceremony and that a large Tartar force was brought close up to the city on the side furthest removed from us, to aid in carrying this out. A reconnaissance shewed that there was actually a large force of Tartars on the South side of the city and much uneasiness prevailed on our side and that of the French. The French were to have gone in to sign on the 23rd, we on the 24th. On the 23rd, the French pronounced themselves *not ready*. Lord Elgin "expressed" a desire to trust himself without any precautions. . . . I was consulted and scouted the idea of a blind reliance on the Chinese faith, and advocated most strongly every precaution. . . . The General held my view and I took in my whole division—after all, only a weak brigade—and made such a disposition of them that no assemblage of Chinese troops in the City could take place. Lord Elgin expressed his obligations to me very warmly on his return.<sup>3</sup>

Napier has related a curious little incident relative

<sup>1</sup> Lumsden's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Napier to Baker, Letter dated October 26, 1860.

to his preliminary survey of Peking. When he first rode into the city, he called to a "sort of lazzarone" by the wayside to show the way to the Palace. By way of reply this beggar silently took up a loose tile, covered it with dust from the road, and in that dust rapidly sketched with his finger a plan of the route which he handed to the General.

In a letter written to Admiral Hope on October 20 Napier summed up some of his impressions of the campaign, the country and our Allies. The following extracts have some interest :

. . . By this time to-day we should have been in the Imperial Palace in the city had not the submissive letter come in in time to arrest our movements. It is in some respects to be regretted that we have not taken possession of the said palace but we must accept what is for the best. The Reparation for the murder of our unfortunate prisoners is slight enough. £100,000 and the punishment—the burning of a very beautiful summer residence consisting of about 40 houses placed in scenery very beautiful of its kind. . . . Had we not been hampered by our French Alliance we should have done much better. We remain here, it is said, until the 1st November, and then move back. . . . I do not expect that we shall reach Tientsin until the 19th November.<sup>1</sup> This would have been a far better winter quarter, and under other circumstances I should have advocated our remaining here strongly. As it is, it is perhaps as well (we do not), for we required many prompt measures which the alliance and other impediments rendered difficult. The climate is really delightful though subject to sudden storms of bitter wind. The face of the country is very charming—a wilderness of little picturesque tombs and groves are brightened up by patches of ripe grain in the sheaf ; a fine range of hills with the lesser Chinese Wall crowning their heights is seen in a Northern distance.

<sup>1</sup> A force was to be left at Tientsin to enforce the execution of the Treaty.

In a letter to his friend Baker, written on October 26, he says :

I most sincerely hope that this is the last Gallic alliance that we shall have—it has been a most unfortunate one, and has hampered us in every way. . . . I have found Montauban very civil and Divisional Generals very friendly. Colineau, the leader of the assault of the Malakoff, has always been my co-adjutor. . . . Their staff is in many respects better than ours, their system better ; their soldiers as material infinitely inferior. (Napier had a strong regard for General Colineau, who did not live to return to France.)

. . . The more I see of the two armies, the more I admire the French administration and our superb material, which would, if made the most of, walk over the armies of any other people whom I have seen and trample them in the dust, though we have much to learn before our soldiers will be prepared to do all that they are capable of. All China shows decay, but they must have had some great men amongst them, and though I dislike them personally I must admit many admirable points about them. As Engineers on a grand scale they are entitled to my respect and I should much like to see all their works. In the Gate at Pekin we found a brass breach-loading cannon—the breach is screwed on ; they were very near the right thing. . . . The city wall is like the other defences we have seen, a barbarian design nobly executed . . . with a rampart sixty feet broad and thirty feet high. . . . We could have galloped a division of Horse Artillery guns all round the ramparts and almost without check.

On October 22 (which strikes one as premature) the heavy guns and ammunition were sent back to Tungchow *en route* to Tientsin ; the French Army marched on November 1 and the British soon followed. Lord Elgin, Mr. Bruce (the Envoy), and General Sir Hope Grant proceeded to Tientsin by water. Napier marched with his Division, quitting Pekin on November 7 and reaching Tientsin on the 12th. Six days later he and

his Staff embarked at Taku in the *Berenice*, a ship of H.M.'s Indian Navy; so bitterly cold was the day that the sea spray as it dashed on the decks froze as it fell.

Napier was greatly distressed by the absence of all provision for the shivering coolies who had been brought from warmer parts of China in a habitual summer clothing, and were now returning homewards in the *Berenice*. The ship sailed from the Peiho on the 19th, and after a rough passage reached Hong-Kong on the evening of the 27th. From this port he, on December 3, wrote his adieux to China in a letter to Mr. Wade as follows:

We are now on board the *Berenice* and sail in ten minutes for Madras and bid adieux to the flowery land. *Le rôle de la vie ne se joue pas deux fois.* We are not likely to see it again, but I shall remember with much kindness you and some others whose acquaintance I was so fortunate as to make there.

As a result of this campaign Napier received a medal and two clasps; was thanked in Parliament and promoted Major-General on the 15th February, 1861, for Distinguished Service in the Field.

CHAPTER IX  
MEMBER OF INDIAN COUNCIL  
1861-1862

Napier arrived at Madras from China on the 22nd December, 1860, and after a brief interval, returned to Calcutta from whence, just a year previously, he had superintended the equipment and embarkation of the troops for China. At that time General Sir Hope Grant, the Commander of the China Expeditionary Force, had been the guest of Major-General Edward Scott, R.A., the Chief Ordnance Officer of Bengal, and Napier, in the course of his duty to his Chief, had been in close attendance, and had consequently enjoyed many opportunities of sharing that hospitality. Now, on his return, the same offer of hospitality was extended to Napier in spite of the protest of General Scott's eldest daughter Mary, that Sir Robert Napier was now "too great a swell" to be invited. Mary was a lively and charming girl of eighteen, who, on the occasion of Sir Hope Grant's visit, had recently arrived from school, and from visiting her relatives in Ireland.

To her surprise, Napier, whom she regarded in the light of an heroic figure, and extremely unlikely to avail himself of her father's invitation, accepted, in spite of "bearing his blushing honours thick upon him," fresh from his last campaign. Not only did the unexpected happen, but it soon became apparent

where the chief attraction lay to account for such strange condescension. On April 2nd they were married, and so this branch of the ancient family of Napier became related to the Scotts, descendants of the Scottish King, John Balliol, who, after his expulsion from Scotland, was given by the King of England extensive lands in Kent, where he became known among the local gentry as the Scot. His descendants inherited the land and adopted the name of Scott, and it was to this family, a cadet of which crossed over to Ireland, that Lady Napier belonged.

Very shortly after his return from China, Napier was offered and accepted the post of Military Member of Council in succession to Sir James Outram. His position at Calcutta was now one of considerable importance, which involved the upkeep of a large establishment and entertaining on a generous scale. Lady Napier filled her new rôle with much grace and tact, although the presence of two grown-up step-daughters of about her own age cannot but have added to the difficulties of the situation. But this was no ordinary household, and the sweetness of disposition and charm of manner which prevailed on all sides soon won for Lady Napier the devoted affection of family and friends.

The letter from Sir Charles Wood,<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State for India, offering Napier the appointment, informed him that great changes were to be made in the Indian Army. The local European Force was to be discontinued, and the Native Army, in consequence of the Mutiny, was to be reduced and re-organized. These measures, which had been for some time delayed, though distinct in themselves, were

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Halifax.

now to be taken together under the nomenclature of "Amalgamation."

It involved, *inter alia*, the reduction of Colonels' allowances, the establishment of the Staff Corps and the adoption of the "Irregular" system of officering the Native Army. Colonel Baker at the India Office in London had evolved a plan to carry out the determination of the Government, although he himself disapproved of it.

Sir Charles Wood declared that, in a matter involving so many individual interests, the Government relied very much on Napier, that "in the details, the Government of India and yourself will have much discretion to exercise, and the success of the measure, I feel, very much depends on the execution."

Napier set to work at once to carry out these instructions. Lord Canning, who had been Governor-General since 1856, and now, since the abolition of the East India Company, Viceroy of India, was an old acquaintance, and had on many occasions expressed his warm approval of Napier's work. That was so much to the good. The European local forces were abolished by decree of the Viceroy in April, 1861. This converted the three older European regiments in each Presidency into regiments of the Line numbered 101st to 109th Regiments of Foot; the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Artillery were formed respectively into seven, four, and three brigades, eventually to become Royal Artillery, while the Engineer Corps of Bengal, Madras and Bombay were formed respectively into three, two and two battalions, eventually to become Royal Engineers. Also all officers of the cavalry and infantry of Indian troops were placed on two general lists of cavalry and infantry for each

Presidency. At the instance of Sir Robert Napier, an Amalgamation Commission had been formed to work out the details of the scheme, and now submitted their report, which closed with the remarks that the re-organization of the Indian Army under Orders from Home "will throw out of necessary employment about 1,000 officers; that owing to the absorption of supernumeraries which is to take place, and to the establishment of a Staff Corps on an entirely new principle of promotion, the retirement of each officer not in the Staff Corps will cause a considerable saving to the State . . ." and finally the Commission rejoiced in having been able, while basing their proposals solely on the advantage which it offered to the Government, to have submitted a scheme calculated to compensate to a great degree their brother officers for the destruction of their professional prospects.

However, notwithstanding the fact that the Viceroy was in constant demi-official correspondence with Napier, and approved of the formation of the Commission, all was not plain sailing. Sir Charles Wood was vehemently opposed to the existence of a Commission which he considered unnecessary, to say the least of it, if only that it seemed to him derogatory to the character of the Government for efficiency in itself. Napier replied to Sir Charles Wood's strictures on the 1st May, 1861, in moderate terms, that a cursory or superficial perusal of the despatches would leave anyone under the impression that there remained nothing but to issue orders, but that, while admiring the ability with which they were drawn up in so complete a manner as they were, and grateful for many points showing a kind consideration of Indian officers, it was impossible that

any set of instructions could have been framed in such detail in England for execution in India without some deficiencies, among which he especially notified the "want of a definite and unmistakable expression" of Sir Charles Wood's intentions regarding the regular and irregular systems for the Madras and Bombay armies. Napier continued :

Under these circumstances it appeared to me that a Commission consisting of able officers,<sup>1</sup> well acquainted with, and possessing the confidence of the Army as well as of the Government, was the very best preliminary way of dealing with the question. The Commission at once gave complete satisfaction to the Army, and the best defence of our measures is the very great success which has attended them. The amalgamation, which was looked upon with so much anxiety and suspicion at first, has been received with an "éclat" of success. Nearly the whole of the soldiers have volunteered, and a very large body of officers.

Sir Charles Wood, in reply, gladly admitted the success of Napier's measures, and stated that if they were owing to the Commission, he must give up his objection, but he had been disposed to attribute the good part to the Government, Council, etc., and only a very small portion to the Commission.

The important point about these two systems was that during the Mutiny regiments had been formed and had done excellent service with very few British officers per regiment, and these were irregulars. "They were giants in those days," and British officers who had gone through that experience and had realized what they, with good Native officers had been able

<sup>1</sup> These included Major Chesney, afterwards Sir George and Military Member of Council, Captain Eyre, afterwards Sir Vincent, a distinguished artillery officer, and Captain Malleison, the brilliant author of *The History of the Indian Mutiny* and other works.

to perform, did not consider it necessary to have more than six British officers per regiment, whereas the regular system provided for many more, nominally twenty-five for an infantry regiment.

It was therefore especially aggravating to find that the Government had still not made up its mind. In June of the same year, Napier, writing to Baker at the India Office privately, says :

Lord Canning seems to be thoroughly cowed by the attack on the Commission and its instructions, and ready to repudiate them if he could do so. My opinion of him has fallen immensely. (And again later :) The vexation to me is that there is a vacillation of purpose which destroys one's confidence. After all this, Lord Canning has not made up his mind whether the army should be regular or irregular.

By October, 1861, the retiring scheme had been passed, and Napier writes to express his satisfaction, describing it as an inestimable boon to the Services, and one which will greatly relieve both them and the Government, whose reputation would have been seriously damaged had the old officers been left to encumber the Services.

But the question of the two systems had still not been decided, and the irregular system was opposed by the Governors, both of Bombay and Madras. The controversy was finally put an end to by a Minute from the Honble. Sir R. Napier, K.C.B., dated 20th November, 1862, in the following terms :

At the period of the amalgamation, the conversion of the Regular Native Army to a system assimilating to the Irregular Army was taken into consideration by this Government, and the Amalgamation Commission submitted a scheme for the salaries of the officers already determined by the Home Government, to consist of six in number. There were strong

opinions entertained by many persons that it would be better not to make so radical a change just at the period of the reductions in the Native Army, and the amalgamation of the services, and the weight of these opinions prevented the measure from being then carried out.

The general question has been submitted to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief for his opinion.

His Excellency has not offered any opinion on the question of allowances; but after consulting various officers concludes by proposing an establishment of officers which is a near approach to the regular organization, since there would be a Commandant, an Adjutant, and a European Officer to each company.

But as there could be no Native Officers, only Privates and Non-Commissioned Officers, the system would be a still nearer approach to the regiments of the Line than the old regular Native Army.

His Excellency would provide for meritorious Native Soldiers by giving them commissions in certain special regiments.

It may be briefly remarked that this experiment would be quite in the opposite direction to that which has been determined on by the Home Government.

The special Regiments would require to be very numerous to give anything approaching to the same amount of encouragement to the deserving Native Soldiers, as will be given by the irregular system, and there would be repeated two classes of the Native Army, a Regular and an Irregular class: but according to the theory which considers European leading indispensable, these special regiments would not be considered of much value, except as a provision for the meritorious soldiers who would be promoted to Commissions from the Line.

Without following this proposal further, it may be said that the number of six officers, already fixed on by the Home Government, has nowhere been shown to be insufficient for general service.

Some officers have recorded opinions in favour of a larger number of Europeans than six, for Native Regiments, but the deduction to be drawn from the reports of officers who com-

manded regiments in China, is that, except on board ship or in action, they were much embarrassed by the number of European Officers.

In the records of actions of the British Indian Army, there is nothing to show that the regular cavalry with its numerous officers fought better than the irregulars; the evidence goes the other way!

The service in China was most exceptional; the Native regiments were serving in a foreign country of which the language and people were quite unknown to them, and with allies equally foreign to them; and any misunderstanding with whom would have been liable to lead to serious consequences. Under these circumstances it was more necessary to have European officers in command of detachments and outposts than would be necessary in any ordinary service.

For extraordinary service, additional officers could always be drawn from other regiments, which will possess six, but have hitherto done extremely well with three, in ordinary service, and even in difficult warfare.

The question of the number of officers has been fully considered and decided by Her Majesty's Government, and the decision may be accepted as definitive.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the meantime the regiments of the Bengal and Bombay armies that are deficient of the full complement of six officers might be filled up to that number at once, the Doing-Duty officers receiving the present authorized allowance.

The Madras Government might be asked its views as to the period when the regiments of that Presidency can be placed on the new footing.

It may be advisable to discontinue the word irregular in relation to the new regiments, as it will be scarcely applicable.

Thus we see that Sir Robert Napier as Military Member of Council managed to make his views prevail in the face of opposition from the Secretary of State for India, the Commander-in-Chief in India and subsequently also from the Viceroy. The general instructions from home had been to replace the Regular

System by the Irregular gradually, extending the conversion over a term of years. The recommendation of the Amalgamation Commission was to carry it out at once, by means of a generous scheme for the voluntary retirement of a large number of officers who would become superfluous, as the essence of the conversion was the reduction of the complement of British officers serving with both Native Infantry and Cavalry regular regiments, from a number varying actually between fourteen and four, although nominally twenty-five for a Native infantry regiment, to six officers all told.

Sir Hugh Rose's recommendation of October, 1861, supported by reports from various officers had been, to appoint all the officers of a Native regiment, British; relegate the Native officers to a few special regiments officered exclusively by Natives, and all the rank and file to be Natives: "Native Regiments with British Officers, and Native Non-Commissioned Officers and Men; and a few Native Regiments officered exclusively by Native Officers."

Although there is something attractive in the simplicity of Sir Hugh Rose's plan, it must be acknowledged that Lieut.-Colonel H. Norman, afterwards General Sir Henry Norman, in his original Memorandum from the Horse Guards of the 24th January, 1861, which formed the basis of the Home Government's plan, and in his subsequent one of the 31st July, 1862, displayed a complete mastery of his subject, and a great capacity for organization and finance, while Sir Robert Napier was unrivalled in practical experience of Indian warfare, and knowledge of the Native. The measures carried out at that time were therefore undoubtedly the best under the circumstances, and the fact that

they remained unaltered for fifty years is the best proof of their value.

In view of the controversy which arose many years later between Lords Curzon and Kitchener, on the subject of the existence of the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council, and which resulted in the abolition of that post, not the least interesting point of the above correspondence is the relationship at that time of the Military Member of Council to the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. As has been mentioned, in this particular instance, Napier had his own way in opposition to the views both of the Commander-in-Chief in India, and of the Secretary of State for India, with the very half-hearted consent of the Viceroy. But later on, it will be seen that when he was himself offered the post of Commander-in-Chief, he declined to accept it unless it carried with it, as had not been the case hitherto, a seat on the Viceroy's Council, and he in his turn as Commander-in-Chief much resented any interference by the Military Member of Council.

Napier's duties were, however, by no means confined to military questions. The following extracts from letters written by him to his friend Sir William Baker, a member of the Indian Council in London, will best show the multifarious nature of his work, and its great importance to the State :

*3rd Jany. (1862 ?).*

In your letter of the 26th Nov. you say "there are rumours of your having startled the civil member of Government by taking an unexpected line on some question of civil administration connected with mixed juries of natives and Europeans!" I remember no case connected with that subject. . . . I think the case to which you must refer is that of making natives

Justices of the Peace, and it requires explanation. You will remember the outcry in India against what was called the black act, and that that measure was abandoned. It would have put Europeans in the power of the mofussil Courts, and the most jealously guarded privilege of the Europeans in India is that they must be tried by a Jury of their Countrymen and the Supreme Court for all Capital offences. Any attempt to alter that privilege raises a storm of popular fury amongst the European non-official community of India.

It is the desire of Frere, and I conclude Lord Canning's desire, to make Native Justices of the Peace, which will give them power to commit Europeans and send them for trial to the Supreme Courts. For instance, one of the proposed Justices of the Peace at Peshawar might commit an European and send him to Calcutta in June.

When the question came before me, I gave my opinion in a Minute which I requested might be sent Home with any despatch to the Secretary of State that recommended the establishment of an Order rendering Natives eligible to be made Justices of the Peace. It appears to have put a stop to the progress of the question here, for no despatch has been written from the Council, though what private communication may have been made to the Secretary of State, I cannot say. I gave my opinion in the Constitutional way, have confined it entirely to the Minute in question, and was actuated by a sincere conviction that the measure besides being dangerous in time of war, would raise a storm of unpopularity against the Government that would damage it seriously. . . . I really do not know what else I could have done. I am curious to know who are the civil members who have made civil administration the business of their lives. There are here Frere—he has been an administrator and a most honoured and successful one, but as regards special knowledge, I do not think he knows more of Indian history than I do, and his knowledge of natives does not go above Sindh. I think I have had a closer connection with natives of all classes in a more varied sphere than he has—there is the Secretary Grey who was an idle griffin at Darjeeling when I had had 10 years' close intercourse with natives. His experience is

not of anything out of Calcutta, and is confined to the Secretariat. I. P. G. has made civil administration the business of his life, but he has made a bad business of it at last—a good Punjab Deputy Commissioner would quiet Bengal in a month. In such general questions as the one I have explained to you, I cannot think that I am less capable of forming an opinion than they are, and I feel sure you will see that I took the proper way to express it. I assure you I believe the measure would be far the most unpopular act of Lord C.'s Government, and would far outweigh any good one—even the Sale of Lands Act in the opinion of the European Community. . . .

In the above letter Napier quotes two other instances in which, though he did not agree with Lord Canning and the Council, he refrained from expressing his conviction that Government “would really be acting on a wrong principle, because I saw that the Governor-General was entirely bent on the measure, and that there must be some yielding to let the machine go on.”

In his next letter to Baker, six days later, he says: “I trust the account I gave you of the J.P. question satisfied you that I did not thoughtlessly oppose the other members of Government.”

*Feb. 19th (1862 ?).*

Do not be alarmed about the Eastern frontier; there has been bad management, as there has been in all Bengal, but nothing to be alarmed at. Mr. G—— and his party are making the utmost, in order to charge against the Supreme Government the reduction of troops, of petty frontier disturbances, which the police, which they ought to have raised, would have prevented. The Copyahs are rather more serious than the Assamese but are, after all, contemptible. There must be something wrong in their treatment, but we have not been yet informed of it. Col. Richardson with small detachments has taken some stockades with the loss of two

sipahis wounded! Two extra regiments have been sent Eastwards, but I am convinced a thorough alteration in the frontier management is wanted.

Lord C. does not, I think, admit this. It is easy to put down petty risings with the bayonet, but all our Eastern frontier is not a bit advanced since we came to the country 100 years ago. The Bhutanese threatenings at any rate are not owing to reduction of troops, for Darjeeling has more troops than ever it had in former years, but owing to the injudicious and ill-explained confiscation of a small revenue of 2,000 rupees which they drew from within our frontier. . . .

About this time, there was a change of Viceroys and Napier writes to Baker:

*May 9th, 1862.*

In the Budget reductions it was proposed to reduce the strength of European Cavalry Regiments instead of the injurious plan of reducing one of the newly raised corps; and it was also proposed to reduce one of the 19 Bengal Native Cavalry Regiments which we had recently published to be the present complement. I opposed this strongly. Lord Canning never would hear of it, though Mr. Laing, urged by Balfour, constantly tried it. As soon as Lord Elgin came, Mr. Laing again brought this forward, and I was outvoted in Council. I quoted Lord Canning's strong words against it, but Frere deserted me, and it was carried against me.

I think I am getting on pretty well with Lord Elgin. . . . I do not think Lord Canning gave me a very good character, or forgave the Justice of the Peace Minute which has never seen the light since, but we parted cordially. As soon as he went, I got Showers put in Political as well as Military charge of the E. Frontier, which Lord Canning would never have consented to. He puts me in mind of James 1st in his fear of blood-letting, but it will be necessary to punish these Assam hill marauders properly, first, and then follow up with measures of conciliation. The whole Eastern Frontier is a disgrace to us. . . .

CHAPTER X  
PRESIDENT IN COUNCIL  
1863-1865

At the beginning of 1863, Napier was appointed to be President in Council as is apparent from Sir W. Baker's letter of 26th February, 1863, in which he congratulates Napier "on the assumption of the high office of President in Council. It is a place of great responsibility which I am happy to see so worthily filled, and I only wish that the increased weight of office were counterpoised by an augmented 'tali' of rupees." There had been rumours in India of the approaching resignation of Sir Hugh Rose from the post of Commander-in-Chief, and the possible appointment of Napier in his place, which had distressed the latter, owing to the differences of opinion which he had voiced between the Government of India and the Commander-in-Chief, and he had evidently referred to it in a previous letter to his friend. Now Baker writes :

I cannot understand how the rumour of your succession to Sir Hugh Rose assumed such a substantive form. For my own part, I must say that I am not aware of any foundation for it in high quarters here, and in fact I had heard nothing of it until it came back from India. It was known here that all the authorities, including the Horse Guards, agreed with the Government of India in the serious controversies that had arisen between them and the Commander-in-Chief, and some people may have thought it probable that Sir Hugh Rose

might take offence and resign, (which he probably would, if the position had not been so good) but, so far as I am aware, this contingency was not so seriously contemplated as to render it necessary to think of a successor.

Baker opines that in any case the promotion would fall to a Queen's officer, and regrets the rumour, which, though personally complimentary to Napier, might be liable to misconstruction: "I trust and believe, however, that your character stands so high as to be above such unworthy suspicions."

By the month of May, Napier found the duties of President had become a little more irksome than they were at first, owing to the activities of the new Financial Member, Sir Charles Trevelyan.

Anxious to make a name for himself, his endeavours were directed to showing a surplus and reducing taxation. In the absence of Lord Elgin, the new Viceroy, from Council, Napier held the Legislative Council, and some of Trevelyan's proposals were passed, although Napier did not personally approve of them, and resisted a cutting down of Public Works. Napier writes :

Of course as each case comes to light, it is turned over in Council and brought to order, but he (Trevelyan) is very slow in understanding the limit of his authority. In the Public Works I have had to make him cancel and reverse some resolutions made in my name, without reference having been made to me previously. These things cause additional trouble, but on the whole we have got on very well personally. . . . It is a great pity that so much good as Trevelyan's well-directed efforts might achieve, should be in danger of being lost through his way of doing it. or trying to do it.

With regard to affairs on the Eastern Frontier, referred to in the last chapter, the advent of General

Showers met with success. There was no real fighting, the losses in carrying stockades were insignificant, and the work should have been done by police, but the Bengal Government had allowed the country to be ill governed, and though they had plenty of military police, they attributed the disturbances to the reduction of troops, which only amounted to 1,100 men. Napier remarks that Bengal civilians are totally unfitted to manage wild tribes, and that the whole Eastern Provinces required one or two good politicals :<sup>1</sup> " Even one Commissioner with full powers and money to spend in roads and steamers, would soon make a difference. The Hill districts should be completely occupied, and brought into relations with the Government, and roads and schools introduced among them. The sale of tea lands would soon pay for them."

Dealings with the Commander-in-Chief also gave Napier a good deal of trouble. Though he praised Sir Hugh Rose's prompt suppression of insubordination of the newly attested Artillerymen, he remarked that the Commander-in-Chief was very impatient at the control of the Government, and tried in every way to extend his powers, so that it required great care " to prevent his getting what he could not be allowed, powers creative of expense, and to still keep the correspondence courteous and considerate."

The current business of the military department was very heavy, and Napier was not able to go to rest with a table cleared of work. He was much interested in the health and sanitation arrangements for the army, but for the sake of economy, had to refuse several useful proposals. Then he finds that money can always be given for civil expenditure,

<sup>1</sup> These were usually British officers in civil employ.

for a church or a museum. But Lord Elgin thinks military expenditure the most useless of all, and that view meets the popular cry both in India and at Home. He resolves to wait until the following year when it will be time for him to press for attention to military needs. Meanwhile, it is mooted from several quarters that Napier may be offered the post of Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab. The actual incumbent, his friend Sir Robert Montgomery, hopes this may be so. Napier does not know how he would like it until he is asked, but does not think there is any chance of that occurring: "Lord Elgin would gain nothing by giving it to me. I have always looked on Edwardes as the legitimate Lieut.-Governor. I asked Grey not to mention the idea, as I dislike being discussed. 'The Friend of India' has long pronounced Durand the proper man."

Again Napier is out of humour with the position of President in Council, "which has not power equal to its duties. Lord Elgin, too, did not support the policy that he wished to have carried out with a firm and consistent tone. There was so much what I might call intrigue in Trevelyan's conduct in order to gain his point (I suppose it is only political management), that I was disgusted at his obtaining his object of reducing taxes, and having an opportunity to publish his own theories as the voice of the Government."

The question in point was the abandonment of the Government manufacture of salt, and after a long and acrimonious correspondence it was finally closed by a Minute by Major-General the Honble, Sir R. Napier, K.C.B., dated 10th February, 1864, which ended thus:

The authority of the Supreme Government, which has been entrusted by the Governor-General to the keeping of the President in Council, was infringed by the Lt.-Governor's action in abolishing a source of Imperial revenue, and it became the duty of the Council to vindicate it. Instead of supporting the Council, our Honble. Colleague, Sir Charles Trevelyan, incited the Lt.-Governor to impugn our proceedings.

The whole matter was really a question of discipline in the Council Sir Charles Trevelyan was taken to task for assuming to do, and taking the whole credit of doing that which ought to have been the act of the Government collectively, and which Government was prepared to do.

In the midst of all these labours, Napier found time to visit the Andaman Islands where is a penal settlement, situated some 800 miles to the south of Calcutta. In October, 1863, accompanied by the Deputy Quartermaster-General, he subjected the settlement to a very minute inspection. This was in consequence of a fracas which had occurred between one of the aborigines and a European, leading to the death of the latter, and a general embroilment, which had so much alarmed the Commandant, as to induce him to ask for reinforcements, and even to arm some of his convicts against an attack by the aborigines. Napier opined that the convicts would prove much more dangerous to the Commandant than all the aborigines, and approved of the efforts made by a Missionary to promote intercourse with the latter.

In his report Napier remarked for the guidance of the Superintendent of Port Blair, the Capital of the Islands, that he had been greatly struck by the dirty and miserable appearance of the convicts, and the lack of efficient shelter for them. It was also highly

detrimental to the morale of the troops that they should be placed on the same level as the convicts in the matter of hospital and barrack accommodation. He warmly praised the Missionary, Mr. Corbyn, for his treatment of the aborigines which had engendered in them a friendly feeling instead of their notorious cruelty, recommended a Government grant in aid of a Home for the Andamans, presumably started by Mr. Corbyn, and expressed a hope that "in time these island wreckers would forbear (to harm), if not aid, the crews of ship-wrecked vessels."

In this way, Port Blair and all its inhabitants benefited from Napier's visit, which was due, as a letter to Lord Elgin shows, to his having temporarily taken over the duties of the Members of the Home and Foreign Departments in addition to his own, during their absence from Calcutta.

Towards the close of 1863, Lord Elgin was taken seriously ill just as affairs on the North-West Frontier were in great disorder. Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab, who had initiated the Umbeyla campaign was now very apprehensive of a general rising of the tribes. Napier, in a letter to Sir Charles Wood thus describes the situation at the beginning of December, 1863 :

The information which I sent you by last mail will have prepared you for the sad event of the death of Lord Elgin. His Lordship never appears to have rallied after his second attack, but remained conscious at the last. I have kept Sir W. Denison constantly informed of Lord Elgin's condition, and a steamer has been waiting at Madras for him for a few days.

In addition to the general loss which the country sustains, the special affairs of the frontier were in a critical position just as Lord Elgin ceased to be able to give orders. General

Chamberlain's expedition had come to a dead-lock on the Umbeyla Pass owing to a much greater amount of opposition than was anticipated, and as all the reserves of the Upper Punjab were with Chamberlain, no reinforcements were available for him, to enable him to act more vigorously. In consequence he has remained on the top of the Pass, sustaining repeated attacks from the Hill tribes who have adopted the quarrel of the Hindustanis, and though repelling them with loss, yet not without a serious loss of men and officers himself.

The first and most important point appeared to me to move up such troops in support as would prevent any extension of the movement amongst our subjects, and enable me to give Chamberlain the aid which he seemed certain to require. As soon as I became aware that no orders were being issued by the Governor-General, I directed attention to this point. The original intention of the expedition cannot be carried out. We are not prepared for, nor are we desirous of invading Swat, Bonair or Bajaur, the countries of the tribes opposed to us; and we are reduced to the alternatives, to stand fast and fight all comers till they are tired, or to take the first good opportunity to withdraw to the plains. I have requested the Commander-in-Chief to favour us with his opinion as to the best course to follow, intimating the desire of the Government to withdraw the force from the hill as soon as it can be done with safety. . . .

During this difficult period, it is clear that Napier controlled affairs with great judgment. He telegraphed to Sir R. Montgomery to calm his fears of a tribal rising, of which there were no signs and no danger, now that reinforcements had been sent to the Upper Punjab. At the same time with the approaching arrival of a temporary Viceroy, with the pronouncement of the Lieut.-Governor that the whole frontier was about to be convulsed, and with Chamberlain in difficulties, the plan of holding a Legislative Council at Lahore as Lord Elgin had intended, seemed no longer advisable. The troops which had assembled

there, no longer for exercise, but for defence and war, were not a suitable backing for the pacific character of a Legislative assembly. Accordingly, when the Foreign Secretary took it upon himself to telegraph to Sir Charles Wood and Sir W. Denison about the Council going to Lahore, "without remembering that there was still a Government in Calcutta, although Lord Elgin could no longer attend to business," Napier at once ordered the Council to assemble at Calcutta, although to him personally the change was a disappointment. Thus Napier was prompt in asserting his authority as President in Council at a most important crisis.

In writing to Baker at this time, Napier opines that the hasty appointment of Sir John Lawrence as Viceroy and the order for him to go immediately to Lahore was due in some degree "to the exaggerated accounts of the danger of general disturbance which went Home, and were pressed upon us with all the authority of Montgomery and Norman," although everything was then quiet, and the troops returning to quarters. He continues :

Had Lord Elgin had his Council to consult, and consulted it, this stupid business of Umbeyla would never have happened ; the Sittana people would have been settled last year by one brigade. However Lawrence is not likely to be misled as a new praefect would be, but he has some opinions about the frontier that I think would prove very disastrous if carried out now. . . .

I feel much more sorry for Lord Elgin than I should have thought, and the feeling is enhanced from meeting Lady Elgin, and learning from her and the private Secretary Mr. Thurlow, the entire confidence Lord Elgin had in my management of affairs here. During the last few days of his life, he sent me a message about the care of Lady Elgin, and was

very anxious to get my answer. As soon as he received it, and the assurance that I should consider it a sacred duty to do all that he could desire for Lady Elgin, he smiled, and all anxiety for her ceased. I have endeavoured to fulfil in every way in my power that promise, and as the last point, hearing that Lady Elgin would be very poorly provided for, the Members of his Council drew up a confidential memorandum suggesting to the Secretary of State that a provision for her could with propriety be charged to the revenues of India. We did not venture to suggest any amount, but merely conveyed our opinion as to some provision. That was perhaps an unusual step, but Sir C. Wood may have scruples, on account of the relationship, to initiate it, and this would give the ground for doing so; but I shall cheerfully take the responsibility, if we have done anything wrong, for the sake of the poor widow, whose bereavement is very great. . . .

God bless you, ever my dear friend.

Napier continued at his post in the Council during 1864, and nothing of importance is recorded except that in regard to the distribution of troops, there was a slight divergence of view between the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief and the Council.

The Governor-General for sanitary reasons looked to sending large portions of regiments to the Hills during the summer months. On the other hand the Commander-in-Chief viewed with dismay the breaking up of companies and the disturbance of the regularity of regimental economy, and would have preferred to send whole units to the Hills, even if Delhi, Gwalior and Lahore were abandoned. The Council was obliged to look also to holding the country. Napier therefore advocated the establishment of *Depôts* in the Hills, to be connected by railways to the trunk lines, and thus initiated the present system.

Napier also vigorously opposed all reductions of European troops and did not agree with Sir John

Lawrence's opinion that one province formed the reserve of another. Napier remarked :

The authorities of each Province reduce their statements of military wants to the minimum for keeping order in their own territories to save themselves from military charges. Each looks to support in emergency from some other place ; but as all go much in the same direction, in a time of emergency, with one or two things on our hands at once, it will not be easy for provinces to support their neighbours, if we diminish our forces as the financiers would do. Trevelyan actually asserted that the Native army did not want the support of artillery and that the portion allotted to them ought to be struck out ! Mr. Laing gravely proposed to have the Madras Army without any cavalry at all ! The opium transactions by a fractional increase or diminution of prices, by the stroke of a pen, play with sums which at once cover or swallow up our army reductions. . . . Frere's public works swallow up 10 laks at a breath. All this is very well, but our solid military power is the only basis from which our administrators can proceed.

Further correspondence shows that Napier continued his unequal struggle against the Finance Department and the Viceroy during 1864, that in the case of reductions in the Madras artillery, he pointed out that Sir W. Denison, the Governor of Madras, had declared they would then have two guns per thousand men. "That is the proportion of seventy years ago," says Napier. "Four guns per 1,000 men in the field and three for the whole force is not a bit too much now. In action we have constantly had more. With small forces six guns per 1,000 men is constantly the proportion." And again: "It is proposed to abolish all our local manufactories and Supply Establishments, and to get everything from Home—a measure that may, in case of a naval war,

leave us in the greatest embarrassment for a paltry saving, whilst most extravagant salaries are given to the Finance department, young lads coming in on 400 rupees a month. I can only oppose a steady resistance, which, if it does not prevent some things, may help to stave off others, and make them more difficult."

Napier's very sound views on the value of artillery were constantly shown in his own actions, and must have been in advance of his time. The Great War of fifty years later also showed in a lurid light, not only the value of artillery, but also that of local Supply Establishments.

In October Napier writes :

Sir John (Lawrence) goes down (from Simla) to-morrow. I go via Mussoorie on the 12th, and pay a visit to Roorkee to see what Crofton is doing for the Ganges Canal. I am entirely opposed to a second canal, and am in favour of completing and improving the original work ; and by having local knowledge, I may be of use when the question comes on. I propose also thoroughly to investigate the Stud Department at Ghazipoor. My report on Port Blair last year, has, I believe, done a great deal of good.

The above few lines afford a glimpse of Napier's energy and versatility in his devotion to duty. Besides being an expert on canals, he was a very excellent judge of a horse, while his report on Port Blair as the result of his visit to the Andaman islands, already referred to, has shown his qualities as a Governor and administrator.

The following letter, written on the 23rd of December to Colonel Baker foreshadows his appointment to the Bombay Command :

. . . You last told me that the Duke of Cambridge objected to me on the ground of my being an Engineer. My letter to

you on the subject will have relieved you of any fear of my having been disappointed. I was very careful to observe your caution, and communicated the matter to no one, but from other sources, it was known to several people in Calcutta, from whom I heard it. It was, of course, impossible to say I had not heard of it, but I have been as reserved as possible. Before I got your letter, I heard of the Duke of Cambridge's reason, which amused me when I also heard that he wished Hope Grant to be Commander-in-Chief here—poor Grant, whom I so often helped out of the mud in China. My feeling is to prefer remaining the short year now left to me here, distasteful as it is to work with Lawrence, rather than open a new career : but to prefer the change to Bombay if Mansfield is to be Minister of War, as of course I could not remain in Council under such circumstances.

If the appointment should be offered me with the option of a short leave in England, I should accept it for the sake of the kind spirits of those who offered it, or caused it to be offered, and for the sake of the Service, both our branch and the Indian Service generally. But if the contents of my last letter should have led you not to press Sir Charles Wood on the subject, or should the Duke have proved inexorable, I shall be quite content to stay here, trying to realize my small fortune of 50,000 rupees, and endeavouring to get on smoothly with Lawrence, which is very difficult without perfect submission or flattery, particularly the last, for which he has an amazing appetite. . . .

It cannot be denied that the bitter note in this letter was characteristic of the feeling which Napier entertained for Sir John Lawrence throughout his life—a feeling apparently not shared by Sir John in anything like the same degree. It dated from early days in the Punjab when the affairs of that Province were administered by the Lawrence brothers, Henry and John, two men of widely different temperaments and divergent views, between whom there was constant friction for some years until both men simultane-

ously tendered their resignation. Henry was moved elsewhere and John remained to rule the Province. During this period Napier's sympathies were wholeheartedly with Henry. Indeed, Henry was one of Napier's dearest friends and remained so till death. At the same time John, in his zeal for economy, which was no less inspired by a sense of duty than was Napier's lavishness, appeared to Napier to be making constant attempts to hinder him in the execution of the important engineering works on which he was engaged, and on which the development of the Province depended.

It was perhaps natural that bitterness should be felt rather by the subordinate than the superior, but, although they shared many qualities in their love of work, their hatred of ostentation, devotion to duty and independent character, there were also too many points of divergence to admit of their being friends. The following letter to Baker is given here, not in a spirit of partizanship, but in order to complete the picture of Napier's character, show his point of view, and perhaps betray the existence of prejudice in one who was usually free from most human weaknesses :

*January 9th (1865).*

I wrote you a short letter by the Bombay mail, and add a line to say that I wrote to the Duke of Cambridge and Sir Charles Wood accepting the appointment, I hope in such terms as shewed a due appreciation of the honor conferred upon me. You know exactly what my views were, had I been uninfluenced by other considerations, but I place much confidence in your wish that I should accept it, as I am sure you can judge on many points better than I can. Besides the trouble taken by Sir C. Wood and other members of the Council to get the appointment from the Horse Guards, and for the sake of the Corps, I differ on so many points with

Lawrence that I am glad on that account to get away, for people cannot go on differing on points of justice and right very long without personal feeling coming into play. I would rather not be in the way of any collision with him. I find him like the Legitimist "he has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing,"<sup>1</sup> just the same obstinacy in little things—refusing little army expenses and expensive in directions not, I think, so legitimate, in the Exeter Hall line. Open to influence of anyone that will flatter and fawn upon him—any of his old barnacles—disregarding sometimes his Council and resting opinions on Memos, written at his request by his personal staff, his doctor or some adherent, so that I think it well to avoid this last year with him, and part on friendly terms. The goodwill I feel for Lady Lawrence makes me glad that this may be. So I have now accepted frankly the Bombay appointment, and shall in all respects act up to that acceptance in word and deed.

Napier had been strongly advised by his friend Baker to go home and see the Duke himself. He did so, but not until his appointment had already been confirmed by the Duke who gave way to the strong recommendations made in Napier's favour. Besides the prejudice against an Engineer, there was also the feeling at the Horse Guards that an Indian officer would not "maintain the discipline of Queen's troops at the same standard as an officer bred up in their own severer school," as Sir C. Wood informed Napier when acquainting him with his appointment. "I have told the Duke that I felt certain you would not fail in this respect, having, indeed been twice in command of English troops. . . ."

On his arrival home, half an hour's interview with the Duke sufficed to remove his prejudices, and to win for Napier a lifelong friend.

<sup>1</sup> A phrase attributed to Talleyrand about the Legitimists, a party in France who supported the claims of the elder branch of the Bourbon family.

CHAPTER XI  
BOMBAY COMMAND  
1865-1867

Sir Robert Napier went to England in March, 1865, and remained on leave several months during which period he again visited the continent, and did not fail to examine anything that might be of use to him in his career as an engineer. Thus among his papers are found some notes on the Mont Cenis tunnel which was under construction between 1861 and 1870. His rough sketch shows the state of the works, and the difference of level between the French and Italian ends of the tunnel. There is also a description of the air-compressing machinery which worked the boring as well as the supply of air to the workmen, and was considered by him as a model of simplicity and efficiency.

On his return to India to take up the command of the Bombay army, Sir Hope Grant, now Quartermaster-General at the Horse Guards, writes to congratulate him and says: "Of course you will have heard of poor Lord Palmerston's death, and Lord Russell having succeeded to the Premiership. People say and feel the day of the latter has gone by, but the Queen was right in appointing him, as the Cabinet would have fallen to pieces under the management of Gladstone who is very unpopular with many."

The next letter of interest is from Sir John Law-

rence, now Viceroy of India, dated December 11, 1865, in which he is glad to learn that Napier has arrived safely in Bombay, and thanks him for having been to see his boys at home.

Napier did not waste time in taking up the reins of office as the following letters to the Commander-in-Chief and to the Secretary of State for India show, written a few weeks after his arrival:

*To H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge :*

I beg leave to avail myself of the kind permission given to me to address Your Royal Highness on two or three subjects which I trust will not appear intrusive.

*Army Reductions!* There is now no correspondence before the Bombay Government on this subject, all references from the Government of India having been answered in October last. But I have carefully read the correspondence on record, and I can only repeat the opinion which I have already placed on record, that I consider any further reductions of the Army at present highly inexpedient, even under the pecuniary pressure which is urged as the ground for demanding it. I find that this was the deliberate and forcibly expressed opinion of the Government of Bombay and the Commander-in-Chief of this Army in 1864,<sup>1</sup> expressed as follows: "It appears that there never was a time when the strength of the Army, compared to the extent of territory which it holds, was so small as at present." Sir William Mansfield states in a letter to the Secretary to Government No. 337 dated 27th Feb. 1864: "The numerical strength of the artillery on the rolls of the Bombay Army is very slightly in excess of what it was in 1856 (before the Mutiny).

"It would appear to be necessary with regard to the extraordinary limit of reduction to which the Native Forces have been brought down, and with respect to the vast area held by the Anglo-Indian armies, that a considerable reserve of artillery should be maintained on Imperial account to meet

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Mansfield.

any possible contingency that might arise, either in our Foreign relations, or our domestic affairs. In an Indian Army it is not prudent to calculate the number of Field guns at less than four per thousand men, In addition to this there must be a reserve of artillery for a siege train." He would leave it to the Higher Authorities to decide on the prudence of denuding India of a reserve in that particular arm which compensates in the Field for smaller numerical forces—it being well known that all our battles are fought against superior numbers. I must say that I entirely agree with the Governor and Sir William Mansfield in 1864, and I trust that the extensive artillery reductions recently proposed will not be seriously contemplated. . . .

*Barrack accommodation!* The recent orders under the advice of the Sanitary Commission prescribe 90 superficial feet per man for each soldier in barracks, and this has thrown a considerable number of men out of barracks and into tents. There is little prospect of their having barrack accommodation before the rains. The men would therefore be in tents during the hot weather, which would be a great trial and would probably injure them as much as the barrack crowding. I have therefore obtained the consent of the Governor to march up all the men who would otherwise have to pass the hot weather in tents from Poona to Mahableswar, where they may enjoy a temperate climate until their barracks are ready. . . . I am sure Your Royal Highness will approve of this measure. . . .

I have been fully occupied since my arrival in disposing of business at Head Quarters, but hope, in the course of the next three months, to make an inspection of all the stations South of Mhow.

To Sir Charles Wood, Napier writes in much the same strain :

I have read all the correspondence on army reductions that took place in 1864 and 1865. The subject is so ably argued by Sir Bartle Frere in his Minute of 1864, and Sir William Mansfield's Minute of the same date, and his letter No. 337 of which I send you a copy for easy reference, that

I can add but little. I must say I prefer greatly Sir William of 1864 to Sir William of 1865.<sup>1</sup>

The following letter to Sir Bartle Frere ushers in a question that has greatly perturbed the rulers of India during the last fifty years, and is probably destined to continue to do so in the future, viz. the approach of Russia towards the Indian Frontier :

*Mahableshtar, June 2nd, 1866.*

The news of the capture of Samarkand was only what we ought to have expected. It is certain Russia never relaxed in her intentions ; and, having got rid of her domestic troubles, having crushed the Circassians and Poles, and being shut out of Turkey, she has turned her attention to Central Asia, for which she has been for years quietly preparing her base of operations. I do not know any way in which we could have prevented it, or that we ought to have prevented it,—perhaps by increasing our influences in Persia, and our communication with Bokhara, we might have checked the Russians in flank, but all our experiences of Central Asia were most unpromising. Whether we might have done more in Tartary with advantage, I cannot say. We have heard of the Russian approach for seven or eight years, nay more ; and perhaps we might have made alliances there. Of course, we cannot look on the approach of our neighbours, with all the misfortunes of the Crimea to avenge, with indifference. The course will be to discipline and push upon us the people whom they may subdue, and to disturb us by intrigues and we can do nothing but strengthen ourselves here. Now that Shere Ali is defeated, Afghanistan may have some kind of head with whom we may ally ourselves, but all that has happened in that country in connection with us has not favoured any friendly feelings. The best thing we can do is to push on railways, put our arsenals in order, and “keep our powder dry.”

In a letter to the Duke of Cambridge, dated Mahab-

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Mansfield had since become Commander-in-Chief in India and had apparently changed his views.

leshwar, June 7, 1866, Napier describes a field day with British infantry in the Hills, spent in the company of Sir Bartle Frere, the Governor of Bombay, who dined with him at the Mess in the evening, and kindly consented to his stationing one regiment there. The Governor likewise, he states,

has given orders for obtaining the whole range of hills for military purposes, and for commencing permanent barracks immediately.

I have found the Governor most anxious to do everything he can for the army, and nothing that I have asked for has yet been refused. Much which I called for during my tour of inspection has been done, and the rest is ordered. It is necessary, of course, to watch and continue solicitation when things flag, but I suppose that is the case everywhere. I beg to enclose a memorandum detailing some of the measures which have been carried out, or recommended for the army, which I think will please Your Royal Highness. In all these matters I have had great assistance from my Military Secretary, Colonel Dillon.

Your Royal Highness will have seen the account of the capture of Samarcand by the Russians, the same distance from Kabul as Herat, and half that distance from Balkh which are now Afghan positions, so that there would be nothing wonderful in our having a Russian Column in Kabul next summer, to side with one of the combatant brothers who are fighting for the throne of Kabul. I hope the situation will be duly considered by the parties who wish to reduce our European Army.

There is nothing to be alarmed at if we play our own part properly, and we may be turned out of India without aid of the Russians if we fail to exercise the discretion which every man would in his private affairs.

Will Your Royal Highness forgive me for mentioning the name of an officer now in England who can give good information regarding the Indian Army and the Afghans? He was in Kabul during the Mutiny, and on a Mission to the Ameer, and thus lost the opportunity of further distinction. He is

one of our very best officers, and has seen a great deal of field service. I allude to Major Peter Lumsden, now Deputy Quarter-Master-General, on sick leave.

In the preceding chapter, Napier was anxious not to leave his post as Military Member of Council until certain questions of barrack accommodation had been settled, and now, on coming to the Bombay Command, it has been seen that the same question arose. Indeed, Napier, throughout his career was constantly occupied in caring for the well-being of the troops under him in the most practical manner.

At the same time he did not neglect disciplinary, tactical or strategical questions concerning the Bombay Army. In August, 1866, the Duke of Cambridge made inquiries as to Napier's opinions, now that he had had some months' experience, as to the new or irregular system as applied to the Bombay Army. Colonel Johnson, writing on the Duke's behalf, says :

It is not, of course, within H.R. Highness' province to interfere in any manner, or even to offer remark on a matter so entirely under the Indian Government, but he does, nevertheless hold very strong opinions on the policy or otherwise of the Irregular system. Every officer, nearly, there are of course, some exceptions, who, on coming from India, talks with H.R.H., is opposed to it, and all anticipate very bad results from its introduction. . . . H.R.H. is aware that you were an advocate for the system in Bengal, but would be glad to know what you really think of its operation in Bombay and India generally.

Napier replied, and the next letter from Colonel Johnson is dated 16th November, 1866, to the following effect :

H.R.H. is much pleased with your report, and desires me to express his thanks to you, and to say that he considers

it a most satisfactory account of the state of the Bombay Army, excepting only in one particular ; and that is in respect to the Native Officers, who, you remark, in some instances know their drill, and drill book better than the European Officers. H.R.H. would be sorry to think that this is at all generally the case, for however desirable it may be to have efficient Native Officers, it is still more so that they should believe and have reason for believing that their European Officers are their superiors in every respect. . . . H.R.H. is greatly pleased with the report you have sent of the Soldiers' Industrial Exhibition, which seems to have been a complete success. It must be very gratifying to you, to Sir B. Frere, Sir Charles Staveley and others, who have taken so much pains to promote this movement, to find you are so well supported by those in whose interests and for whose benefit you are working. . . .

As regards the strategical aspect of the Bombay Army, the Province of Sind on the North-West Frontier belonged to the Bombay Presidency, and Napier lost no time in visiting this portion of his Command, which contains the approaches to Kandahar. The following letter to him from the Viceroy is of interest :

नमस्ते नयते

BARRACKPORE,

Dec. 25th, 1866.

I have telegraphed in reply to your letter of the 16th that I had no objection to your going to Quetta, if all is quiet in that direction. It may no doubt be useful that you should see and report on the Bolan Pass and Quetta. I am glad, however, to find that you are averse to any forward movement beyond our frontier. This scheme which Col. Green has brought up, is very much the same as that which Genl. Jacob concocted some ten years ago. I was then against it, and am still more so now, if that were possible. I quite agree with you that internal arrangements, and a contented and efficient army is what we should strive at. I look on all movement on our part beyond the frontier, as sure to lead to complications of serious kinds, to a waste of

money which we cannot spare, and to further distrust of our designs. . . .

Many thanks for your kind congratulations on the success of the Durbar. It was a comfort when it was over, for cholera was flying about.

Napier's visit to Sind and voyage up the Indus duly took place, but something occurred to prevent his going up the Bolan Pass, as another letter from Sir John Lawrence dated 25th February, 1867, expresses his regret that Napier "was not able to run up to Quetta and see it and the Bolan Pass."

Sir Bartle Frere was at that time Governor of Bombay, and was an advocate for a forward policy on the frontier, to which Sir John Lawrence was always strenuously opposed. Although judging from the previous letter, Napier was then against a forward movement, he was in later years strongly in favour of the retention of Kandahar after Sir Frederic Roberts' campaign in Afghanistan, and did not, of course, share Sir John Lawrence's aversion to any military preparations on the North-West Frontier. Sir Bartle Frere wrote to Lord Cranborne in November, 1866: "If we had really good military communications throughout India, and an outpost at Quetta, we might safely leave events to develop themselves. . . ." And again to Lord Cranborne in February, 1867: "Sir Robert Napier has returned from Sind greatly pleased with all he saw, and satisfied, I think, as to the soundness of our frontier system. He went with a camp of two thousand men over all the scenes of his great namesake's <sup>1</sup> mountain campaign, some sixty miles beyond our frontier, and was everywhere welcomed as a friend. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Napier.

The next letter of interest is from Sir Hope Grant at the Horse Guards, dated 10th May, 1867 :

On receipt of your letter, I at once told H.R.H. of your wish to have an annual relief of regiments at Aden. He at once saw the propriety of it, and a letter has been written to that effect to the War Office. The other matter belongs to the India Office, but he has also sanctioned a letter being written to that Office, stating that he thinks it desirable that 12 per cent. exclusive of sergeants should be sent with regiments to India, so I trust your recommendations will be carried out. We propose to relieve the regiments at Aden from this country.

I hope you like your command at Bombay. I am happy to see you visit all the stations and keep Commanding officers alive. I am sure it is most wise to go round as many as possible each year. . . .

We have lately had exciting times of it here. Fenianism has been rampant, and these large meetings in the parks had a very serious appearance. The Ministry have got into trouble regarding an order they issued and could not carry out, and Mr. Walpole, Secretary to the Home Office, has been obliged to resign. . . .

Another letter from Sir Hope Grant, dated 23rd July, refers to the visit of the Sultan and the magnificent entertainment given by the India Office, to which 3,000 guests were invited :

His Majesty appeared very affable, and certainly did justice to the good entertainment in the shape of eating and drinking. He apparently pitched into all the good liquors with much feeling. . . . You have of course seen the Reform Bill which has just passed in the House of Commons. People seem to be terrified at it, but I don't expect it will do any harm. . . .

Amongst the papers of the year 1867 are two showing differences of opinion with Sir Seymour Fitzgerald, the new Governor of Bombay, and also with Sir Bartle

Frere, the former Governor of Bombay, for whom Napier had, however, a great regard. One concerns the claim of the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army to nominate officers for the command of Divisions, as was the rule in the Presidencies of Bengal and Madras. It was urged by Napier that "there may be many circumstances relating to discipline, which would not usually come before the Government, that exercise an influence in the selection of an officer for a Command so important to discipline as that of a Division of the Army," and also that "there are no political conditions in connection with the Division Commands in this Presidency which would necessitate a different procedure from that which obtains in the Presidencies of Bengal and Madras." This demand was met by the Bombay Government with a blank refusal. The Secretary to the Government "was desired to say that the practice of other Presidencies is not disputed . . . and as the practice of this Presidency has been uniform for a very long period, H.E. in Council does not see what possible question there can be as to the existing rule in this Presidency, and H.E. in Council desires me to add that he does not recommend any change of it." Thus the path of the reformer was not always an easy one. On the back of this despatch is a Minute in Sir R. Napier's handwriting respectfully soliciting that his reference may be submitted for the consideration of the Secretary of State for India.

The direct result of this official application is not known, but private correspondence shows that Napier's views prevailed, and it may consequently have been withdrawn. But what Civil Governor would now maintain the right to nominate Divisional Commanders

in his Presidency or District, independently of the Commander-in-Chief ?

The other paper is the draft of a Memorandum in which the Commander-in-Chief Bombay " regrets very much to learn that H.E. the Governor disapproves of the site selected by the Sanitary Commission for the new infantry barracks at Kirkee, because it is very difficult to find a suitable place, and a change may delay the commencement of the buildings that have been so long and urgently required. His Excellency Sir Bartle Frere thought the situation too windy, but the members of the Sanitary Commission are all officers of great experience of the climate, and distinguished in their several departments. They no doubt considered all the circumstances on the spot, and that the quantity of wind which might prove inconvenient to the dwelling of a private family, would only be a wholesome purifier and beneficial to the Military Buildings of a regiment which are of necessity to a certain extent overlapped, and brought near to each other. . . ."

Kirkee has since become an important military station.

Previous to this, Napier had already again attacked Sir Bartle Frere on the question of barrack accommodation, as the following interesting letter shows :

*March 3rd, 1867.*

I wrote a Minute yesterday on the question of the Barracks, which I hope you will not take amiss. I wrote it in the interests of this Government with which I am now bound up.

I really dread another season with the condemned barracks of the Poona Depôt—our past history tells us of cholera at Poona, Ahmednagar, Kurrachi, and if any repetition of such a calamity should occur, the blame would be thrown on this

Government. It might be said your sanitary mentor, Dr. Leith, has solemnly warned you against certain barracks. The rules recently made by the Government of India were before you— Why has nothing been done for permanent remedy ?

It would be in vain to say our Engineers' zeal and energy are broken by the burden of many repeated plans and estimates, and we did not think we could get the money,—defences in such cases are seldom heard amidst the clamour . . . and when matters have gone wrong, everyone tries to pass the blame on to someone else.

As regards the necessity of amendment, it only requires one to visit some of the barracks in the hot weather . . . or to look at the bare mud plains of Kurrachi, and think what there is to make a soldier's life tolerable, under all the bonds of discipline and Military duty. Then, if we put off getting sanction for a permanent design, we are driven to give temporary substitutes, which cost nearly as much as the permanent objects.

I write these lines that my Minute may not be misunderstood. I want to see this Government in possession of sanctioned plans and estimates which it can carry out without further interference from the Supreme Govt.

As regards the discipline of the army in the Bombay command, there was room for some anxiety, and it is interesting to note in the following letter to the Duke of Cambridge that Napier was in favour of corporal punishment for certain offences :

MAHABLESHWAR,

May ? 1867.

I have to report to Your Royal Highness that everything is proceeding satisfactorily under my command. The only point that I have to notice is the prevalence of certain crimes of insubordination attended with violence towards superior officers. On several occurrences of this kind taking place, I immediately caused a return to be drawn out shewing in full the circumstances of each case—the age and general character

of the soldier—the sentence awarded, and that actually inflicted in each case for the last four years. This enables me to review the statistics of this crime, and the effect of the punishment awarded. Such a review is valuable for preserving consistency in punishment. In almost every case it is evident that the main desire of the men has been to escape from the country. The assaults on Commissioned officers, with one exception, show no intention of inflicting injury, but merely to commit such an assault as will lead to penal servitude. A tobacco pipe, or a quid of tobacco are thrown at the investigating officer. In the last instance a very young soldier, while undergoing imprisonment and hand-cuffed, lifted a piece of brick and threw it towards his Commanding Officer. He knew he could not hit him, and, when told he had rendered himself liable to penal servitude, he was heard to say! “That is all I wanted.”

In this case I had him tried by a District Court Martial which awarded him 50 lashes and two years' imprisonment in India, in addition to his unexpired sentence, which was to him a much heavier punishment than penal servitude by (which he could) get an immediate release from duty, a journey to the sea coast, then a sea voyage which is no very severe punishment, and afterwards an unknown future in which they believe there are facilities for diminishing the severities of imprisonment.

Owing, I conclude, to the very disgraceful state of the prisons in India, in which the prisoner's health is so often destroyed, the imprisonment in India is limited to two years. I am under the belief that if we had proper prisons in India, a sentence of flogging and 3 or 4 years' imprisonment would be much more dreaded than any number of years of penal servitude. In the absolute want of a decent prison in this Presidency, I could not desire to see a longer sentence than two years awarded. I have pressed upon the Government the necessity of building a proper prison, and had Sir Bartle Frere remained, we should have had one now commenced, but under a change of Governors, I fear the discussions which have delayed it for so many years will have to be gone over again.

I beg to enclose for Your Royal Highness' information an abstract of the return of crimes of insubordination, showing that they were more numerous in the years 1863, 64, 65, than in 1866. It is remarkable that in 1863 there was no case of assault of Commissioned Officers, but nine of Non-Commissioned Officers; in 1864 there was but one Non-Commissioned Officer and six Commissioned Officers struck; in 1865 three Non-Commissioned and eleven Commissioned Officers; in 1866 four Commissioned Officers, and in 1867 up to the present time two Commissioned Officers. I believe that the punishment of 50 lashes and two years' imprisonment in India are certainly more dreaded than the shorter sentences of penal servitude, and that it is owing to this that the assaults are transferred from the Non-Comd. to the Commissioned Officers. I have directed the attention of Inspecting General Officers to the regiments in which these crimes have prevailed, to ascertain as far as possible if there is anything in the internal economy which may have a tendency to produce them. As Your Royal Highness is well aware, it has happened in India that similar crimes have grown to such an extent as not to be checked until the extreme punishment of death has been awarded. I trust that careful attention and the ordinary measures will be found sufficient. The occurrence of several cases together drew my attention particularly to the subject, but it is satisfactory to find that the crime has been less frequent under my command than formerly. For the bad soldier who wantonly raises his hand to strike or insult his superior officer, I am satisfied that the lash is the best punishment. . . .

As the question of corporal punishment is now under discussion, I have ventured to trouble Your Royal Highness with so much on the subject. Generally the behaviour of the soldiers is very good. There is very little crime amongst the mass. . . .

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ABYSSINIAN CAMPAIGN

1867-1868

*History of the Country—Preparations for the Expedition—  
Advance to Antalo and Dalanta Plateau.*

The events which led up to the Expedition may be briefly described as follows :

A successful soldier, having assumed the name of Theodore, and claiming to be a descendant of King Solomon, and to be the promised Messiah, according to an old Abyssinian legend, succeeded in defeating all rivals excepting the Chief of Tigre, and in 1851 assumed the title of "Emperor Theodorus by the Grace of God." He encouraged European traders and manufacturers who flocked to his principal city of Gondar. In 1862 Captain Cameron was appointed British Consul. He advised King Theodore to make a treaty with Great Britain with a view to promoting commerce, and the latter wrote a letter to the Queen of England proposing to send an embassy. This letter was duly received by the Foreign Office and—pigeon-holed.

Such is the story told by the great war correspondent Stanley who accompanied the Expedition, and published an account of it, and it may readily be believed. But unfortunately this popular panacea for inconvenient and unimportant correspondence led to disaster.

Some time afterwards Cameron was despatched by the Foreign Office on a mission to the Soudan in connection with cotton cultivation. This mission was misinterpreted by Theodore, who interrogated Cameron on his return to Abyssinia, and, finding that he had brought no reply to his letter, assumed that the British Government was intriguing with his enemy the Turk, and threw him into prison. This occurred in 1863. With the passage of time, matters went from bad to worse, and finally all Europeans in the country, including missionaries, were made prisoners.

Meanwhile Theodore, by the aid of European workmen, had established powder factories and gun foundries; the possession of heavy guns, including 12- and 15-inch mortars, made him a terror to his enemies and increased his self-esteem and overbearing temper. By degrees the condition of the prisoners became known to the Press, and, according to Stanley, owing to the pressure of public opinion, the Foreign Office was obliged to send a diplomatic mission to effect their release in January, 1866. The mission failed, and the envoys were added to the list of prisoners.

When it became clear at the beginning of 1867 that the British Government might have to resort to force, the possibility of an Expedition must have been mooted to the Government of Bombay, as it is recorded in the official history of the Expedition (Holland and Hozier) that General Napier had directed the Quartermaster-General of the Bombay army, Colonel Phayre, early in that year, to procure all the information he could find about the country. After sifting a mass of books and documents containing reports of travellers,

etc., Colonel Phayre compiled an account by which it seemed that the neighbourhood of Massowah would provide the best landing-place, and that the direct route across the mountains by Antalo and Lake Ashangi would be the most suitable. And so it eventually proved.

The history of the Expedition has been given in great detail by Major Holland and Captain Hozier. It is proposed to give here a brief sketch of the campaign, together with an insight into the difficulties which Napier encountered and overcame as revealed by his personal correspondence not previously published, both in the preparation and execution of the Expedition.

On the 12th July, 1867, Mr. (afterwards Sir Seymour) FitzGerald, Governor of Bombay, received a telegram from Sir Stafford Northcote, Secretary of State for India, making certain inquiries regarding the despatch of an expedition and at once consulted with his Commander-in-Chief. Napier replied, without knowing that he would be called upon to command, in two memoranda dated 23rd July and 8th August, advising the speedy despatch of an Advanced Party of selected officers of each Department, and a regiment of Native Infantry to form a Base of Operations in the healthy tableland as near Massowah as possible. The distance to Magdala was estimated at 400 miles. It was pointed out that King Theodore had made enemies of all his neighbours, and many might join against him, but it was necessary to form an expedition strong enough to do its own work. That about 12,000 men would be required. That the Expedition would be very costly, but that, with this force in hand, in spite of all obstacles, Magdala could be reached in

from two to two and a half months. A very large quantity of carriage would be required, chiefly mules and camels. A coolie corps would be very convenient. The troops should carry tents, blankets and waterproof sheets.

On the 25th of July, 1867, Napier wrote to the Duke of Cambridge and among various items of interest on different subjects said :

There has been some communication between the Home Government and that of Bombay regarding the possibility of an expedition to Abyssinia. It is to be hoped that the captives may be released by the Diplomats at any cost of money, for the expedition would be very expensive and troublesome ; and if not a hostile shot is fired, the casualties from climate and accident will amount to ten times the number of the captives. Still if these poor people are murdered, or detained, I suppose we must do something.

I enclose for Your Royal Highness's approval a short Memorandum which I have sent to the Governor, as I believe that some proposals for a much smaller force have been made. It is quite possible that all being smooth, a very small force would do what is wanted, but it is exactly when a Force is small that things do not go smoothly. I therefore thought it best to submit my views.

I send also for Your Royal Highness's information the Qr.-Master-General's Memorandum, which is, of course, subject to correction on the acquisition of later information.

Though I never expected an expedition, I thought it proper to have my Department up in all available information. . . .

In view of the necessity for establishing numerous posts over a long line of communication, the employment was advocated of many regiments weak in numbers rather than larger units of a higher fighting capacity. Napier also insisted upon the use of wheeled artillery and wheeled transport.

On the 13th August Napier wrote to the Viceroy

of India, giving him an outline of the force which he considered necessary, namely four regiments of Native Cavalry, one squadron of British Cavalry, ten regiments of Native Infantry, (one to be a Bengal Pioneer regiment if procurable); four batteries Field and Horse Artillery; one Mountain train; a battery of six mortars 5½-inch, and if possible two of them to be 8-inch; and a coolie corps, 3,000 strong for loads and working parties.

The strength of the Force was roughly calculated thus :

Sick, 10 per cent. . . . .	1,200
For Post near the sea, and on high land and Communication . . . . .	2,000
For Post in the advance and Communication . . . . .	2,000
Column for action and support . . . . .	6,800
	<hr/>
Total	12,000

On the 15th August Napier was offered the Command of the Expedition, which he accepted in the following terms :

MY DEAR MR. FITZGERALD,

I respectfully accept the command with which I have been honoured, in case an expedition should take place.

I would submit that the Political responsibility should be included with the Military Command. I am very much obliged to you for early information. I have not sought the command in any way, and desired my friends not to do so, but I have always held myself in readiness to be called upon in case they should not have fixed upon a better man for the work. I shall consider the telegram as quite confidential as long as it may be necessary. I have already received a number of applications which I laughed at yesterday, considering the question settled.

And on the following day Napier wrote again :

I thoroughly appreciated the wisdom of the reserve that you adopted, and quite agreed as to the prudence of it. The matter makes no difference to me in any way at present. When the time comes, I shall be equally ready to take the duty put upon me, or to help anyone else in it that may be chosen. The main point is to do all in our power to compensate for the delays which the indecision at Home may cause. . . .

On the 25th August Napier wrote to the Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir William Mansfield, explaining that he had been obliged to fix upon troops whose proximity to the coast facilitated the arrangements for an expedition about which there was great uncertainty, and stating that the copy of his telegram to the Viceroy would give in full the details proposed. Napier continued :

It is possible that minor alterations may take place, but generally I wish to adhere to it. The country may admit of our opening wheel tracks quickly ; if so, it will lighten our cares very much. I intend to try it, and I have no doubt difficulties, which our ignorance of the country magnifies, will melt away when they are grappled with. But I wish to fortify myself in every way, and hope to get a good many elephants ; they at least can feed as well as their wild cousins who will be on the other side of the hedge as we go along. The undertaking is now a national demand, and both the will of the people of England and the cries of those poor captives render it necessary to employ every resource to carry it through. I sincerely trust we may be the means of obtaining their release. There seems much ground for fearing that we may be too late.

I shall keep you informed in future of the progress of affairs.

Meanwhile great preparations were going forward at home in the matter of procuring carriage for the Expedition. Sir Edward Lugard wrote from the

Quartermaster-General's Department at the War Office on the 3rd September :

On my return (from Homburg) yesterday, I found them half wild with Abyssinian fever. Officers were being despatched in every direction to purchase mules and send them to Suez to be handed over to your people. The India Office have asked us to get 7,000 if possible, saying that 20,000 will be required for the Force ! I fear that the management of this legion of mules will not be your least difficulty. . . . It would be a great advantage if you could get the cable laid in connection with what already exists down the Red Sea. We hinted that it might be done by The Great Telegraph Coy., but the India Office would not take the hint. . . .

Fortunately the British Government early in the day entrusted Napier with full powers both military and political ; otherwise the advice tendered to him by the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in India, and also, especially by the Governor of Bombay, with which he did not agree, could not but have greatly enhanced the difficulties of the situation, as the following extracts from his correspondence show :

*From the Viceroy (Sir John Lawrence)*

*August 25th, 1867.*

On receipt of your letter of the 13th, I thought it well to show it and the enclosures to Sir W. Mansfield and Sir Henry Durand ; and we had subsequently a Committee of us three and Norman on such points as appeared to strike us regarding the proposed expedition to Abyssinia. As time is of importance, I had the result embodied in a letter in the Military Department to the Bombay Government, copy of which I enclose.

I quite understand that the Home Government has left everything in your hands, and therefore everything which has been said, or may be said hereafter, must be treated as mere suggestions on our part. We all think, however, that it is very important that all the troops which are required from

this Presidency should go as a whole under their own leaders, and that none of our troops should take the place of Bombay troops to do their duty while absent. Anything like such an arrangement as the last would be very unpopular on this side.

We propose that Henry Lumsden should command the Bengal Division. If this be agreed to, the Division on your side should be commanded by an officer of the Line. Sir W. Mansfield seems to think that the best man for this post will be General Staveley who was in the Crimea and China, and was thought well of. I know nothing of him. . . . Anything we can do on this side to help you in any way, you may rest assured shall be done to the best of our ability. We in no wise desire to interfere, or control, or even to advise more than you may really wish. . . .

The carriage question seems to me to be the one of paramount importance. If, as Colonel Merewether believes, sufficient quantity can be collected on the coast in proper time, all seems then of secondary consequence, and can be supplied from India. But it is out of the question in my mind hoping to supply carriage from India.

*From the Same to the Same*

SIMLA, Sept. 31st.

I have received your last letter; and the despatch from the Bombay Government relating to the arrangements for the Abyssinian Expedn. arrived last night. I am very sorry that you would not take a Division of Native troops from us. I still think it was the right course to pursue. You would have got some of our best regiments and most experienced officers, and the arrangement would, I feel sure, have worked well. As to jealousies they seem to me more likely to arise by taking a small body of my (*sic*) Troops, than if Bombay and Bengal were equally represented. It strikes me also that the difficulty about coolies, muleteers and so forth, will be greater now than if a good force were going from this. These men, coming from this side, will be put with Bombay officers and troops, and will have to go as it were by themselves to Abyssinia. Nevertheless, I will do all in my power to help you. My great anxiety is about the coolies. I doubt

much if we shall get many to go ; and if they do go, most of them will die. Every effort ought to be made to get men on the sea-board. Such fellows as one sees at Aden are what you want. I think when once a portion of the troops land, and establish themselves on the uplands, cattle will be more readily available. The display of power with money and good treatment ought to bring the hungry camel owners to us.

I am very sorry to hear that your health is not strong, and I hope that if you cannot stand the work and exposure, you will come back before you advance into the country. It is quite on the cards that Theodorus, when he hears of the landing and advance of the troops, will give way. Then will be the time to send on your letters to him.

*From the Same to the Same*

Sept. 23rd, 1867.

I am glad to find that the Queen has, at my recommendation, given you the 1st Class of the Star of India. I am sure that you do not care for these things, still it is right that your services and merits should be recognised.

*From the Same to the Same*

SIMLA; Sept. 25th, 1867.

Since I wrote to you at Sir W. Mansfield's suggestion in favour of General Staveley, I hear that he has been appointed 2nd in Command of the Abyssinian Expedition. But since then I have heard an unfavourable opinion expressed of his force of character and general ability. Now, if this be true, considering the chances of your perhaps breaking down, and having to come away, it appears to me to be my duty to ask you in confidence, if you are satisfied that General Staveley is in all respects fitted to succeed you in case of accident as Commander of the Expedition. If you say yes, I shall feel bound to accept what you say, and shall not move further, at present, at any rate, in the matter. If your answer is unfavourable, I propose to telegraph in cipher to the Secretary of State, not quoting you as my authority, but simply saying that I have grounds for thinking that Genl. S. would not be equal to the command and urging that an abler officer be

appointed as 2nd in Command. I want you to reply to this note by telegram, either "I concur in your view," or "I am quite satisfied."

I make no apology to you for interfering in this way; the safety of the Army and the honour of England are involved in this matter.

I much fear from your last note that your health is not good. We will give you another regiment of N. Infantry. I only wish that you had taken a Division from us. Such a body in a difficulty would tell.

But I do not desire to vex you on this, or any other point. We expect to get a good many more mules in the Punjab than we first anticipated.

To these letters Napier replied as follows:

POONA, *Sept. 9th*, 1867.

. . . In reply to yours of the 31st. The main point of our expedition is carriage as you know. Of what Abyssinia can give, Merewether, who wrote confidently at a distance, can now say nothing here! That we can hire a good deal of camel carriage there, I believe; and that we could buy camels and mules, but we can't begin until established there, and though hired camels will do all that may be wanted to keep up the supplies in the low country, they will not go into Upper Abyssinia. . . . I do not think it will be necessary to send any camels from India, but if they are wanted and could be here by the 1st Dec. or even later, we should find use for them, even though the Force had gone forward. There is this advantage in sending cattle from India, that besides them, much tonnage of stores also could go in the same vessels. It is not therefore necessary to condemn entirely transporting from India. But there seems a prospect of getting a good many mules now from Egypt and the Mediterranean, and some from Persia. Merewether says he can get 5,000 good camels from Aden. I doubt it, but he may. . . .

But there is one resource that has not been touched upon. If India has no mules, she surely can furnish tattoos (ponies), and pack bullocks to carry our grain. All the Mahratta campaigns were fought with the aid of Brinjarahs (carriers of

grain on ponies and bullocks). We might buy up and transport 10,000 pack bullocks, which would do for our Commissariat supplies very well, and do to eat afterwards.

Nothing will persuade me that if we are in earnest, we cannot get carriage! So that if you get a requisition for camels, you may be sure they are wanted. Could you ascertain how many good baggage tattoos could be collected with drivers in case of necessity? They will carry their 150 lbs. of grain, and feed on the produce of the country we are going to, with very slight help. . . .

I had nothing to do with the getting of the business. I gave no opinion until I was asked, and you have seen from my Memos, the grounds on which I have based my advice step by step.

I could not advise the Government to accept the Bengal Division. It would not work well; jealousies would spoil everything. It is of the greatest consequence to have one harmonious force. I should, I am sure you know, have rejoiced to have my old friends again with me. But here are regiments on the spot, all anxious to go, and if the captives should be released, they have not far to go back.

But it has been determined to ask you for two cavalry regiments and a Pioneer corps, with the mountain battery to make a Brigade and Staff. . . .

I sent Sir William Mansfield copies of my reasons for selecting regiments. I hope he will not attempt to interfere in their employment. The regiments all know one now, and I hope they will bear roughing cheerfully. . . .

Your last sentence is exactly what I urge—make every exertion to get carriage, and the more you get now, the shorter will be the campaign.

BOMBAY, *October 3rd*, 1867.

I must thank you for your kind letter informing me of the Star of India, and your kind recommendation of me for that honour.

I assure you it is very gratifying to me that you consider my services worth remembering, and worth public recognition.

My own intense feeling is that I have done so much less than I desired, and hoped, that I am very far indeed from

self-satisfaction, and that, after all is fully counted, I must admit myself an unprofitable servant before the higher tribunal that alone can weigh us justly.

But I accept the honour which you have recommended me for, as a proof at least of my good intentions and your opinion of them. . . .

I am quite well now; desk work and want of exercise are my maladies which a move dispels. I have no fear of breaking down, and God forbid I should think of turning back, and of leaving to anyone else the care of those men who are trusting to my command. I feel every confidence in my plans. There is nothing rash in them—I make no hasty moves. If I do not succeed, there can be no disaster, and some better man will come up and complete on my foundations. We are going on well in everything but transport corps, and that will now be put right. The army are in the highest spirits, and *I have no fear of my Bombay regiments*. Mansfield never knew them, they will do very well.

P.S.—I have just replied to your telegram regarding Staveley. Of all the subordinate commanders whom I know, I should have selected him. I knew him in China as Brigadier, and have seen him for nearly two years here.

As a matter of fact Napier had written very warmly in praise of Brig.-General Staveley to the Duke of Cambridge as far back as December, 1865, and it was doubtless in some degree owing to such praise that he was nominated to this appointment.

His Royal Highness in his capacity of Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief wrote to Napier on the 17th August, 1867, in the following terms :

I leave England for Germany to-night, and have only time to write you one line to say that I have seen a copy of the Despatch which has been prepared by Sir Stafford Northcote to go by the next mail on Monday, and in which he directs the Government of Bombay to prepare at once the Abyssinian Expedition, placing you in command of the troops.

No better selection could have been made, and I rejoice

to think that the Government should have quite agreed with me in the Officer to be appointed to so important a post. Sir Charles Staveley is to be your 2nd in Command, and a more valuable officer than Sir Charles, you cannot, I think, have.

On the 9th December the Duke wrote again to Napier as follows :

I have received your letters of the 27th Sept. and 13th Oct. Nothing can be more satisfactory than all your arrangements seem to be for carrying out the Expedition. I am glad to find that you are satisfied with the support given to you by the Home authorities.

I know that Sir Stafford Northcote and the Indian Council have been most anxious to meet your wants in every way, and, as far as I can judge, they have done so with promptitude and with good effect. You may at all times rely on my most zealous support and co-operation, and all your wants shall be fully and powerfully backed by me. I can assure you that the Government at Home have the fullest confidence in your ability and discretion, and I think you will find no sort of difficulties in that quarter. Wishing you from my heart every success.

That Sir Robert Napier was deeply grateful to His Royal Highness for his most generous support, is shown by repeated letters from him to the Duke, during the Expedition, ascribing his progress as in great measure due to such support, and the following two letters to Sir Stafford Northcote, Secretary of State for India, also express his gratitude to the British Government.

*13th October, 1867.*

I have to thank you for your letter of the 10th Sept., and for the confidence reposed in me. I am very glad that you agree with me in the necessity of going on safe grounds.

What would be the fate of a small party, say of 5,000 men, perhaps reduced by sickness and fatigue, if they should find

themselves unable to effect the release of the prisoners, or to catch Theodore, or to stay where they were, for want of supplies ?

What would become of their sick and wounded on their return through 400 miles of difficult country ? . . .

*28th November.*

I have to thank you very much for your letter of the 18th October. It is most satisfactory to have a clear view of the policy which Her Majesty's Government wish to pursue, and to feel that I have your confidence and support, especially as people in England may become impatient for some action while we are really only buying and saddling our mules and bullocks. . . .

However, in spite of this support from home, Napier's difficulties, especially with Sir Seymour FitzGerald, the Governor of Bombay, must have been an additional source of anxiety, and required no little exercise of firmness coupled with patience and courtesy, to overcome them.

It has been already mentioned that, directly Napier accepted the command of the Expedition, he stipulated that he should have full political as well as military control. This was a most important matter, and was not in accordance with the prevailing custom in India, where every little expedition on its borders was accompanied by a Political Officer who, as the Viceroy's deputy, assumed a general control, the executive military action only being in the hands of the military commander. Thus, a Memo. by Sir R. Napier in reply to one from the Governor, dated 8th September, contains the following passage :

I concluded that I should receive some formal and definite information of any change in His Excellency's views or plans, and I was therefore not prepared to learn from Colonel Marriott (secretary to the Government of Bombay) when the Expedition

was nearly ready to proceed, that H.E. had decided to entrust to Colonel Merewether (the Political Officer) the responsible duty of determining finally the point of debarkation, and of converting the reconnaissance into an occupation of the coast by a party of about 150 men. Of all the various circumstances that may have led H.E. to this conclusion, I was not fully informed, but I entertained strong objections to the question being left entirely to Colonel Merewether's decision, he being, in accordance with His Excellency's opinion, in military command of the party, because, while concurring entirely with H.E. in his high estimation of that officer, it has seemed to me that Colonel Merewether has strong preconceived opinions in favour of a line of route, which from most recent reports, especially that of Mr. Muntzinger, appears to me to be one that would be dangerous to the success of the Expedition, and that his selection of a port of debarkation will be insensibly influenced by such very strong and sincere opinions.

I accept the alteration offered by H.E. of sending another officer with the Expedition, and propose that the Quarter-Master-General shall accompany it and return at the earliest possible period after a decision has been come to. . . . With His Excellency's concurrence, I propose to form a Committee, of which Lt.-Col. Merewether as Senior Officer will be President, Lt.-Colonel Phayre Q.M.G., Lt.-Colonel Wilkins R.E., and the Senior Naval and the Senior Medical Officers, Members, to decide on the point of debarkation. . . .

And again on the 13th September Napier writes :

MY DEAR MR. FITZGERALD,

To preserve perfect uniformity of action, in all Departments, I would submit to Your Excellency whether the wishes of Your Excellency's Government regarding the objects of the reconnoitring Party—in fact all orders to Colonel Merewether exclusive of his duties as Resident at Aden, should not be conveyed to me by Your Excellency's Government to be communicated to Colonel Merewether in an Order from the Commander-in-Chief. . . .

The wording of the above letter would doubtless

have appealed to the celebrated War Correspondent, Mr. Henry Stanley, who was destined a few months later to accompany the Expedition, and in his book on the campaign gives a slight sketch of the General-in-Chief as follows :

His face was remarkable for the kindness of the blue eyes, the genuine gentleness of the countenance lit up by them, and the smile that continually played around his lips. To all Sir Robert was extremely bland, affable, and kind ; sometimes there lurked in his tones something akin to a sarcastic *politesse*, and at such times he was more plausibly phrased than ever.

To resume—in another important matter Napier had occasion to disagree with his immediate superior, the Governor of Bombay. On September 15th, hearing that something in the nature of an ultimatum to King Theodore was on its way and that he was expected to make a similar demand, he writes as follows :

MY DEAR MR. FITZGERALD,

There is much reason for consideration as to what we should do regarding the communication to Abyssinia. My impression is that nothing should precede Lord Stanley's letter. Our preparations are too miniature to give a good footing for issuing threats that may not be followed up soon. We have to consider the effect on the prisoners. . . .

On the 17th the Home Government having asked when Sir R. Napier would make his peremptory demand, Napier writes again :

On referring to the Secretary of State's telegram, I find it stated that Sir R. Napier can, *if he thinks proper*, make a peremptory demand in anticipation of the delivery of the letter itself, at such time and in such a manner as he may think proper. Thus Your Excellency will perceive that it is quite permissive, and no urgency is expressed that a message should

go with the letter. I have to solicit Your Excellency's consideration of the fact that the responsibility of the message is entirely mine, and as there is now time, I wish, with Your Excellency's permission, to convey my opinion regarding the message to the Secretary of State in the terms of a telegram which I will prepare in the morning.

Mr. FitzGerald replied to the Home Government's query of the 17th to the effect that in his opinion a demand for the release of the prisoners should be made at once. The matter had, however, been left by the Secretary of State for India to Sir R. Napier, who thought that such a step would be premature. He (Napier) sent the following message to the Secretary of State :

The letter from Lord Stanley is virtually a declaration of war. Is the peremptory demand for the release of the prisoners urgent, so long before the advance, and the message disclaiming all annexation ?

To this the Secretary of State replied that the letter of Lord Stanley to King Theodore contained a peremptory demand. On receiving it Sir R. Napier was to judge what further to do. Sir Stafford Northcote thought that probably no other demand would be needed.

The gist of Lord Stanley's letter was that the Queen's previous appeal of the 16th April for the release of the prisoners having remained unanswered, Her Majesty had therefore given orders that "A military force under the command of Lt.-General Sir Robert Napier, K.C.B., should without delay enter your dominions and obtain from you by force a concession which you have hitherto withheld from friendly representations."

This letter was forwarded through the political

Resident at Aden, and reached Mr. Rassam, one of the prisoners, who destroyed it for fear of its effect upon the King's temper.

Two proclamations were subsequently issued from Lieut.-General Napier to Theodorus King of Abyssinia, the latter of which, dated 14th November, ran as follows :

I am commanded by Her Majesty the Queen of England to demand that the prisoners whom Your Majesty has wrongfully detained in captivity shall be immediately released and sent in safety to the British camp.

Should Your Majesty fail to comply with this demand, I am further commanded to enter Your Majesty's country at the head of an army to enforce it, and nothing will arrest my progress until this object shall have been accomplished.

My Sovereign has no desire to deprive you of any part of your Dominions, nor to subvert your authority, although it is obvious that such would in all probability be the result of hostilities.

Your Majesty might avert this danger by the immediate surrender of the prisoners.

But should they not be delivered safely into my hands, should they suffer a continuance of ill-treatment, or should any injury befall them, Your Majesty will be held personally responsible, and no hope of future condonation need be entertained.

(Sd.) R. NAPIER, Lt.-General,  
Commander-in-Chief, Bombay Army.

Active measures in pursuance of the avowed policy of Her Majesty's Government commenced on the 16th September with the departure from Bombay of the Reconnoitring Party under Colonel Merewether. The party arrived at Massowah on the 1st October, and at once commenced its investigations. A few days were sufficient to decide upon Zula in Annesley Bay as the most suitable landing-place, in spite of the

fact that the very gradual slope of the shore necessitated the ultimate construction of two piers, one 700 and the other 900 feet in length. Various routes were explored leading to the uplands, and finally on the 23rd November the route to Senafe by the Kumayli Pass was selected. By this time stores and transport animals had begun to arrive, including condensers for the water supply of the Base, and a Commissariat Depôt had been formed.

For the first two months they were entirely dependent on local coolie labour, and for some weeks every package had to be landed through 200 yards of shoal water. The Advanced Brigade reached Annesley Bay from Bombay on the 21st October, and disembarked on the 30th, experiencing great difficulty, as the piers were not yet made. They also suffered much from lack of water, which had to be supplied from the ships, and underwent many hardships in opening up the route to Kumayli, at the foot of the hills, in clearing and levelling the ground for a large camp, and in continuing the road up the Pass to Senafe, which they were able to occupy after a month of hard labour on the 8th December. On the same date Sir Charles Staveley, preceded by the Sind Brigade, arrived in Annesley Bay to assume the command pending the arrival a month later of the Commander-in-Chief.

Much required to be done. The faulty organization of the Transport train, against which Sir R. Napier had protested, had become evident, animals were straying, starving or dying for want of water. Warm clothing had not yet arrived from England for the European troops who could not therefore be sent to the Highlands. These defects were gradually rectified.

Condensers were set up, and the building of the piers was so far advanced that by the time the Commander-in-Chief arrived, one pier had been constructed projecting 900 feet into the sea ; a tramway was running from the pier to the camps of the Commissariat and Ordnance departments, and the total strength of the troops which had already landed was some 2,000 British and 5,500 Natives, and the number of efficient transport animals had risen to 5,018 mules and ponies, 1,839 camels, 962 pack bullocks and 256 bullock carts. During the three months nearly 11,000,000 lb. of provisions had been landed at Zula including forage, gram, wheat, barley, beans, flour, biscuits, tea, sugar, salt beef, salt pork, vegetables, etc., fodder alone amounting to some 6,000,000 lb.

Sir R. Napier landed in some state on the 7th January, and at once took over the command. One of the first points to be attended to was the improvement of the road from the Base and especially through the Suru Gorge between Kumayli and Senafe. This was the most dangerous part of the whole route, and it became essential to form a vast depôt of stores at Senafe at an elevation of some 8,000 feet. The approach to the tableland was through a very narrow deep gorge, the dry bed of which became a fierce mountain torrent in time of rain to a depth of more than 10 feet, sweeping all before it between perpendicular cliffs. This was one of the reasons that made it so advisable to finish the campaign before the commencement of the rainy season, but an alternative route was planned, and could have been carried out in case of need.

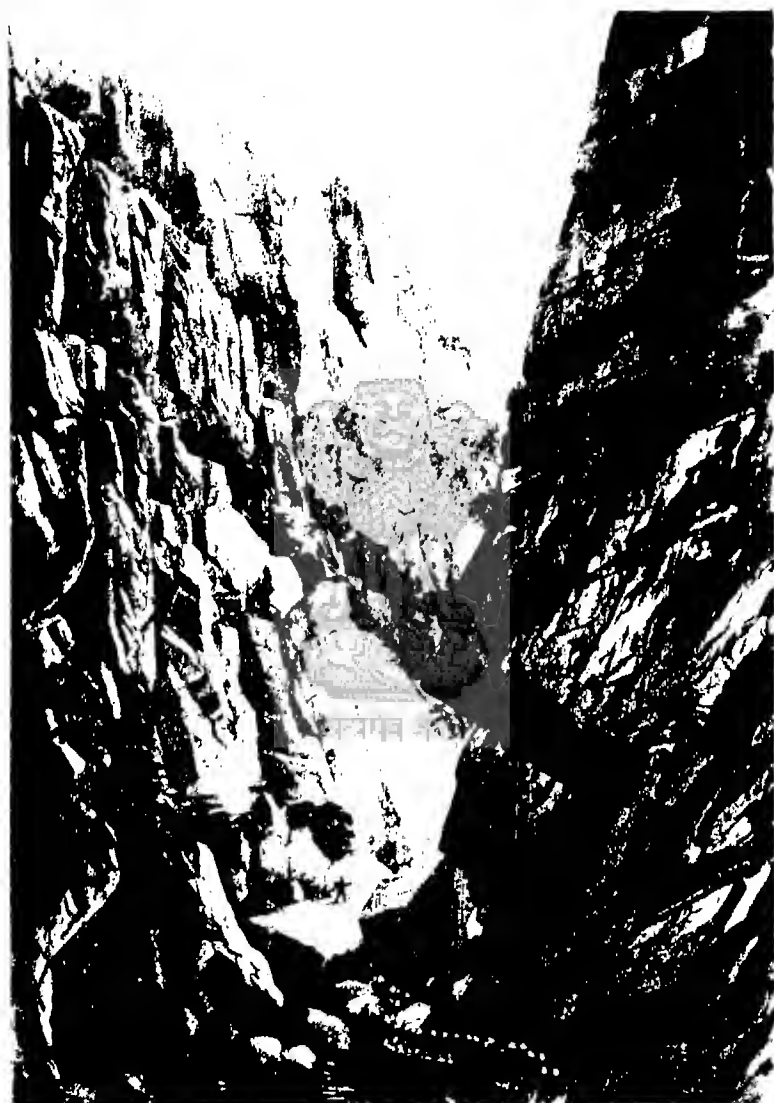
A letter to Lady Napier, written on the 6th January, says :

Hitherto the press of thoughts for the great undertaking—for it is really a great undertaking, were so absorbing that I could not sit down to anything. My health too was a source of great anxiety, as I feared I should not be able to bear the continued burthen of responsibility without power. Now everything is comparatively easy: at least I can see what I have to deal with, and order the means in my hands; the constant worry of dealing with an insincere and intriguing Government has much diminished, although it has not quite ceased.

Napier never feared responsibility when given a free hand. During January, apart from the business of organizing transport, work was concentrated on the passes; a good road was made over the plain to Kumayli, and a railway commenced in the same direction. The Suru defile was made good for wheeled traffic, and the introduction of cart transport, insisted upon by Napier from the outset, made possible the accumulation of stores which was wellnigh impossible with pack animals alone. A chain of fortified posts had to be established. The natives, though apparently friendly, were ready to become our enemies at the slightest reverse. Kassai, Prince of Tigre, hung upon the right flank and was at feud, not only with Theodore, but also with another Abyssinian Chieftain, Wagshun Gobaze, further along the route. Both had to be conciliated, and the greatest care had to be taken that the troops should give no cause of offence to villagers.

On the 28th January, Napier writes:

First I found, as I had anticipated, all Merewether's carriage very far short of what he had promised, and of such bad quality that only half of what had been given was alive. . . . Had it not been for the carriage which I had urged being collected in India, we should have been badly off. The road



was only passable for camels, and the railway barely begun,—mules dying in numbers, and people talking about the fact that a mule eat its load in the time required to get to Senafe. It has taken us nearly a month, but now I see my way. The road is, or in two days will be smooth for carts. Then the whole 33 miles will be open, and the 300 Maltese and 200 Bombay carts can take supplies, and leave to other philosophers the question whether a mule eats its load on the journey. . . . This has been my work together with supplying all other deficiencies. Orders for water arrangements, sanitary arrangements, all required to make our base equal to support our advance. I feel now that the task at this late hour is accomplished, but no one can tell how much thought and anxiety it cost me. Our difficulties are much diminished. Friendly relations with the Prince of Tigre continue. . . . To-morrow I shall be at Senafe.

Another important problem was the water supply on the line of march. One hundred Norton's tube wells for boring, and fifty Bastier's chain pumps for raising water from existing wells had been sent out from England. Portable hand pumps were also used. The tube wells did not function much deeper than twenty-nine feet, but were able to penetrate almost any soil short of solid rock or hard boulders, and proved to be very useful and portable. The chain pumps, of course, provided a much greater volume of water where it already existed, but in places such as Magdala, no device was of much avail. It was well for Napier that he had not put his trust in the previous reports of the country, for on February 15th, he wrote :

The abundant river that was mentioned, the Weah river, I measured. It was 18 inches broad and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep ! And the bed of it of such a filthy nature that the water could not be wholesome. But all the arrangements for water have been now admirably made, and in the plain between the sea and the hills, where no water was supposed to be procurable,

three wells have been sunk, yielding plentifully, and good water. At the foot of the mountains, Komeli, the wells were sunk to a hot spring, which now supplies 5,000 animals with water in two hours. . . .

The assistance afforded by the Navy at Zula was so great that Napier arranged for the formation of a Naval Brigade to accompany the Force to Magdala, and their rocket tubes, as will be seen later, proved of great assistance in the eventual capture of the fortress.

The artillery was transported by means of elephants, and nineteen out of the total of forty-four had already arrived when the advance commenced. In this campaign, guns were carried for the first time on their backs, elephants having been hitherto employed as draught animals for this purpose, on difficult ground.

After three busy weeks spent in the heat and toil of the Base, Napier arrived at Senafe on the 29th January, and at once proceeded to follow up the friendly relations which had already been opened with Prince Kassai for a free passage and the supply of provisions.

Napier's proclamation to the Abyssinians had already taken some effect, and he now despatched Major Grant as an envoy to Kassai, moving on, himself, to Adigrat, some three marches further on the way to Magdala. Major Grant, C.B., was none other than the celebrated African traveller, who had been temporarily attached to Sir R. Napier's Staff, and his visit to Adowa, the capital town of Tigre, a place of some 10,000 inhabitants and situated 40 or 50 miles to the west of the line of march, proved most successful. He was well received by the Prince, and after several interviews persuaded him to visit the Commander-in-Chief first within a

month, finally in a fortnight's time. Meanwhile, much remained to be done at Adigrat in the way of increasing supplies, re-organizing the Transport Corps into two divisions—lowland as far as Adigrat, and highland from Adigrat to Magdala. The latter, entirely military, under the Quartermaster-General, became very efficient. Drastic orders also had to be introduced limiting the scale of baggage, and later on of rations also.<sup>1</sup> A telegraph line was also erected by means of poles of which there was a deficiency, supplemented with difficulty by purchases from the natives, who in the absence of forest growth pulled rafters from their houses in their eagerness to receive payment.

Letters written at this time (February 17th, Camp Adigrat) from Napier to the Duke of Cambridge and to Sir Stafford Northcote betray the terrible anxiety caused by lack of transport and supplies. Great losses of animals, the non-fulfilment of contracts for purchasing mules and camels from Egypt, and the dilatory action of the authorities at Bombay in failing to ship bullocks in time, combined with the dearth of local supplies to delay the forward movement. Napier also had to resist the pressure of public opinion impatient of inaction.

To Lady Napier he writes from Camp Adigrat on the 15th February :

. . . I am risking much by advancing beyond what I consider prudent before supplies have been passed on, but I do so in hopes of drawing something from the country, and making arrangements with the Ruler of Fasti for supplies. Beyond

<sup>1</sup> The allowance for a British battalion was reduced from the Indian scale of 1,200 mules and 600 camp followers, to 187 mules and 96 followers, and this measure contributed much to the success of the Expedition.

Antalo I cannot advance until supplies come up, and they are even backward at Zula. . . . Still I think we may finish Magdala before the rains, if Theodore remains to defend it. The report is that he is there now, and fortifying it as fast as he can. If we can surround him there, it will be well. If he carries off his prisoners to his own country, more remote than Magdala, we shall have to remain there, and have him followed up. . . . We have reduced all baggage to the very lowest, and all Native followers. The officers of European and Native regiments have soldier servants, the only people who have luxuries are the Special Correspondents. But all are in good health and spirits, and have the noblest zeal, equal to anything but starvation. We could starve between two points if there were relief at the end, but when the end is attained, and we are then to find no resources, and to find our way back again without anything to supply us, opens a possibility on which I must not venture. . . .

There is a church here, better than we have seen, with many pictures of Scripture scenes done in better style than Indian pictures, but often rather ludicrous—the Egyptians in the Red Sea, holding matchlocks up, to keep them from being wetted. But still they are Christians, acknowledge one God and Saviour, and when they will believe we are Christians, they like us. . . .

On the 22nd February writing again to Sir Stafford Northcote, he says :

The followers of the troops are reduced to the lowest numbers possible. Nothing is retained but the sick carriage, and the greater part of that will remain at Antalo, and as we approach Magdala, the advance Force will have little more than it can carry. There will be nothing then to impede the most rapid movements ; but to rush forward at present would perhaps read well in England for a time, and leave our Force in front of Magdala too small to invest it and too weak to attack it. Nothing would be so injurious to our prestige than such a situation.

Just as Napier had completed his work at Adibaga,

30 miles beyond Adigrat, and was moving to the next camp, intelligence was brought that Prince Kassai was advancing towards Hausen to seek an interview. Hausen lay some miles off the line of route, and it was at once arranged that the meeting should take place on the banks of the Dyab river half-way between Hausen and the British line of advance. Accordingly soon after daybreak on the 25th February, a British detachment moved towards the Dyab. Tents were pitched on either side of the stream. The British Commander, mounted on an elephant and followed by his Staff, advanced to meet the Prince. The Abyssinian troops moved forward in line to the sound of rude kettledrums. The British Force likewise got under arms, and both forces converged on the river. On arriving close to the banks Sir R. Napier dismounted from the elephant, and mounted his charger, to avoid creating a panic among the horses of the Abyssinian cavalry.

The Abyssinian line opened out, and the Prince advanced, mounted on a white mule with a crimson umbrella held over his head, attended by his counsellors and guard, forded the stream, and was received by the British Commander-in-Chief in the tent prepared for the purpose in the presence of his Staff and the Prince's followers.

An elephant had been used for this occasion in order to impress the Abyssinians who, accustomed to the animal in its wild state, were in great dread of them and had no idea that they could be tamed.

The interview commenced with the usual lengthy Oriental exchange of compliments, followed by the display of presents for the Prince which included a fine Arab charger from the Commander-in-Chief's

own stable. Then the tent was cleared of all but a few officers on either side, and the Prince intimated that he wished for a guarantee against invasion of his territories by a rival Chief the Wagshun Gobaze. This Sir R. Napier would not grant, but promised, as far as possible, to secure peace between them. He thanked Kassai for the friendship already shown in their passage through his country and drew attention to the fact that all supplies had been paid for, and not a blade of grass nor a morsel of food had been robbed from any Abyssinian.

It was also pointed out that the British army could obtain all their supplies from their ships, but in that case they would have to stay longer in the country.

An inspection of the British troops then took place, the Abyssinians being especially impressed with the Armstrong guns.

It then became the turn of the Commander-in-Chief to cross the stream and inspect the Abyssinian troops who presented a very creditable appearance, and displayed a power of manœuvring that more civilized troops might envy. After the review, took place the return visit, during which the British Commander was presented with a silver gilt armlet, and a lion's mane and skin was thrown over his shoulder. These were the insignia of a great warrior. He was then girt with a sword, and mounted on a richly caparisoned grey mule. A shield and spear were handed to one of his Staff who acted as armour-bearer, and in that guise the Commander-in-Chief returned to camp, mercifully screened from the soldiery by the shades of approaching night.

On the following morning the Prince had a further private interview with the Commander-in-Chief, and

engaged to afford security to convoys, and also to deliver weekly large supplies of wheat and barley.

These were no small results obtained from a Chief whose territory extended for some 150 miles of road on the way to Magdala.

On the 2nd March Napier reached Antalo, the half-way house between Zula and Magdala, after passing over some varied country, at times going through narrow rocky gorges along a river bed, at times opening out on to rolling downs and a fertile alluvial plain, and again over limestone hills studded with acacia. Two weeks were spent at Antalo waiting for supplies. Here Stanley gives the following calculation: "A force of 10,000 men including followers, required for thirty days 4,000 mules at the rate of 150 lb. per mule. For baggage, ammunition and tents rather more than 4,000. Probably with fifteen days' forage in hand, and a treasure of 100,000 Austrian dollars, much could be accomplished in obtaining supplies from the natives." It is a curious fact that as the natives only recognized Maria Theresa dollars, 500,000 pieces had to be specially struck in the Vienna mint for the purpose of this expedition. Baggage was now again restricted to 75 lb. per officer and 25 lb. per man, and eventually a march beyond Lake Ashanghi on the 22nd March, no baggage was allowed except what the officers carried on their chargers and the men on their backs. Mule loads were reduced from 150 to 100 lb.

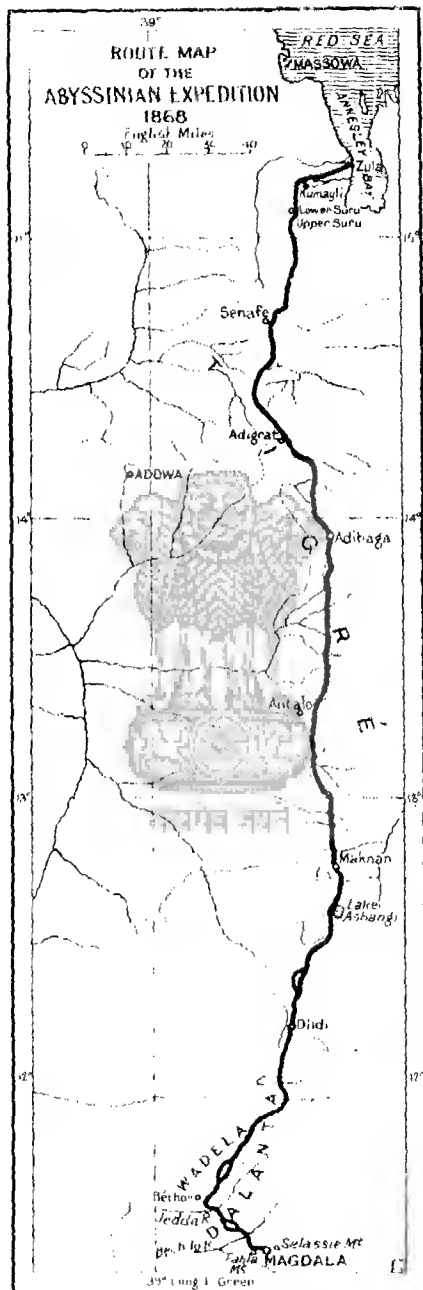
Previous to this, however, more Abyssinian chiefs had to be won over. Messengers were sent to Walda, a robber chief, and to Wagshun Gobaze. The latter, having some 40,000 men, was an important power to be conciliated. He did not himself appear, but his

brother visited the Commander-in-Chief with the result that their protection was gained, and a supply of provisions procured. Their opinion was that Theodore would fight.

At Maknan near Lake Ashanghi, game was very plentiful, including hares, antelope, etc. Some one shot a wild elephant.

The route now lay over another pass, followed by a drop of 3,000 feet to Lake Ashanghi. A soldier's remark: "If you call this a tableland, then the table is upside down and we are going up and down the legs," caused Napier much amusement. Then a very long and tiring march to Dildi gave rise to discontent among the men and especially those of the 33rd Regiment. This was reported to Sir R. Napier who harangued them on the following morning, and placed them in the rear-guard as a punishment, and from there onwards the 4th King's Own led the way.

The following day the force had to cross a pass of over 10,000 feet, and a few days later attained to a height of 11,000 feet on the Wadela plateau. This was the territory of Wagshun Gobaze. His Chief Commander, Dajaz Mashesba, accompanied by some 800 men came to the British camp for a palaver, but meeting a picquet of the Sind Horse, the alarm was given, and the infantry advanced in skirmishing order. Fortunately they were pulled up just in time to avoid an exchange of shots with their new allies, which might have had disastrous consequences. The interview with Sir R. Napier took place, and Mashesba departed happy with the gift of a horse and rifle. Supplies were quickly forthcoming, but another outpost affair resulted in an alarm, and two Abyssinians were shot when the General came again to announce



the sale of 6,000 lb. of grain. It was with some difficulty that this second affair was arranged by a money payment to the families of the deceased.

On the 4th April Napier moved across the ravine of the Jedda separating Wadela from Talanta Plateau. Great care was taken to secure the summit of the ascent from Jedda by the Advanced Guard closely followed by the 1st Brigade and the Commander-in-Chief, but no enemy was encountered, although at Bethor before crossing the ravine, the road recently constructed by Theodore on his march from Debra Tabor to Magdala was made use of by his assailants. He had been there with his heavy Ordnance on the 1st January, and the remains of his camps were constantly met with. The road was a fine piece of rude engineering and proved useful to the British. The stupendous nature of the country is well described by Stanley :

This ravine that yawned beneath our feet as we stood on the extreme edge of Wadela was thirty miles long, 3,800 feet deep, and two miles across from Wadela to Talanta. As we surmounted a gentle rolling ridge, a huge and gloomy wall of rocks looming up on the opposite side of Wadela was seen. On approaching the brow, we discovered the remains of Theodore's camp. This was the Ben Hor, so often heard of in the newspapers, where his camp stood while the road down the deep Jedda ravine was constructed.

Regarding the road he says :

We could perceive the marks of Theodore's drills in the rock throughout the whole length of this pass. It must have been tedious work to him, working as he did with imperfect tools, an enemy hovering about him in the form of Wagshun Gobaze, and another one advancing upon him in his rear in the shape of the British force. The natives say that he worked as hard as any of his men ; that he was constantly

riding about on a white mule, to observe his men while at work. Now he would encourage and praise, anon he would threaten; at times would he flog; and at another place he would order a man out to instant execution; then again he would dismount, and proceed to show what real earnest work could do. After 5 weeks' hard work, he had constructed from the height of the Wadela to the hollow of the Jedda and up to Talanta plateau, a road 8 miles long and 30 feet wide. Over this road we travelled, from terrace to terrace, down slanting gradines, and down the side of ledges, which in some places were almost perpendicular until we arrived at the bottom of the ravine. The bottom was covered with pebbles and round boulders. In deep hollows alone could be discovered any water. . . . It was very late even next day before the over-strained transport train arrived upon Talanta plateau.

A few days' rest was now essential. Rations were short, supplies had to be collected. Fortunately, the local Chief proved a staunch ally and provisions poured in abundantly.

On the 8th April the Commander-in-Chief accompanied by his Staff went forward to the southern edge of the plateau to reconnoitre the fortress of Magdala, and pronounced it a very strong place, stronger than any yet met with on the road. Engineers were set to work to make scaling ladders.

The following morning both brigades moved to the southern extremity of the plateau and camped near the road leading down to the Bashilo River.

Stanley says :

Join me, reader, on the extreme brink of Talanta plateau, and let me show you, to the best of my ability, the famous Magdala and its surroundings. Open your eyes and behold the scene!

From the edge of the plateau on which I stand, I look down directly below my feet, and see a wall of sheer rock

about 50 feet in depth, then a sloping terrace running forward 100 feet or so, abruptly terminated by another precipice of a like depth, along the base of which winds a well-made road for a hundred yards, when it turns and descends another terrace, and so on from ledge to ledge it winds through its tortuous convolutions until the eyes rest on a river the Bashilo, 4,000 feet below! Across this turbid stream the vision traces another road, whitened by travel, inclining up another ravine—the Aroje, for about 5 miles, when it is lost from the view by a jutting abutment of an aslanting hill, until we find the road, fainter than before, ascending at a sharper incline, a high hill topped by a small plateau. From this plateau arises, apparently perpendicular to us, at eight or ten miles distance, a frowning mass of rocks divided into two differently shaped mountains. The one to the right is Fahla; the other is Selasse, a low ridge connects them. Behind Selasse, I am told, is Magdala. Not a particle of it is visible. The obtruding proportions of Selasse prevent us from seeing it. Move a mile westward of where the camp is, and the massive outline of the royal fortress is distinctly seen. These triple scarped heights contain Theodore, his army and the captives. Theodore has certainly selected the most impregnable heights for his eyrie!

CHAPTER XIII  
CAPTURE OF MAGDALA  
1868

Full details of the crossing of the Bashilo, the subsequent advance up the Aroje Pass, together with the Abyssinian attack, and the final storming and destruction of the fortress of Magdala are given later in Napier's despatch of the 12th May, but the following letter to Lady Napier affords a more intimate account of the advance up the Aroje Pass, and the first engagement with the Abyssinians :

My intention was to ascend from the Bashilo to the high land by a road which I ordered to be made, and from thence to reconnoitre for a position to attack Magdala from. P. went on ahead to reconnoitre ; never heeded my orders ; took away the Sappers, and sent back a note to say : " Have secured the Aroje Pass, the head of the Pass. Send the guns and baggage by it." This was done trusting to P.'s report that he had secured the head of the Pass. — When I came up and found my order about the road not executed, and that nobody knew where P. was, or where the head of the Pass was, that he said he had secured, I got very uneasy, and pushed on just in time to see the Mountain guns and rockets emerge from the Pass close under the enemy's position.

I saw the danger of the situation, and immediately sent down the Punjab Pioneers to the head of the Pass. P. had never secured it ; there was not a man there to cover it. Hardly had the Punjabis arrived there than we saw some horsemen gallop down from the hill at speed, and rapidly about 3,000 men came down, horse and foot, tearing towards the

rocket battery and the head of the baggage. There was not a moment to lose. The enemy thought to have an easy victory over a small party and to have great spoil. They had not seen the column on the height. Fortunately, I had hurried on the regiments which I found lingering on the road for water, and Staveley took down the 4th Regiment, and I sent the Beloochis after him, and a small party of cavalry under Col. Loch.

The enemy were surprised, but showed a great deal of courage—in vain; they were rapidly driven back by the 4th, and the Beloochis, and turned towards their right—our left. At the same time large numbers that had attacked the Mountain battery, and the Punjabis were driven back, and the whole forced into a mass between the Punjabis and the 4th King's Own and Beloochis, and suffered terrible slaughter. I believe over 1,000 killed, and many fled. The enemy were utterly defeated, and driven in. Heavy rain and night obliged our troops to return, and we had a wet bivouac. In the morning I took up again the position of over night for the 1st Brigade, and the 2nd Brigade occupied the head of the Pass. Thus a fatal and presumptuous blunder of P.'s was the cause of a complete victory, which so dispirited Theodore, that he sent in Mr. Flad and Pridcaux to make terms. I said "Submit to the Queen, give up all prisoners, and you shall be honorably treated." He, at first was in a great rage, and sent back my letter, and a rambling unsigned one from himself. That evening he repented, and sent in Cameron, Blanc, Pridcaux, Rassani, Mr. Flad; and to-day all the Europeans, some 40 in number, with wives and children have come in. I hope Theodore will accept the terms to-morrow. We shall then take possession of Magdala, and return immediately. If he does not, we shall storm it on the 14th, and I trust that God, who has signally aided us, will give us the victory.

I send the prisoners to the rear to-morrow morning. It is not easy to express my gratitude to God for the complete success as regards the prisoners. Everything has turned out well—little or no sickness—and this notwithstanding that the men have had great fatigue, short rations, no rum, no sugar, no tobacco for some time. I trust God will enable me

to fulfil my hope of taking back the army in safety and honour.

The despatch from Napier, to the Secretary of State for India, runs as follows :

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE, HEADQUARTERS,  
CAMP ANTALO,

*May 12th, 1868.*

On April 3rd, when encamped on the Wadcla plateau, I received intimation from the Chiefs of Talanta that Theodore, having moved from Magdala, and encamped on the plain of Aroje, was preparing for an expedition. Letters from the captives also warned me to be on my guard. Between the British force and the plain of Talanta lay the Jedda ravine 3,400 feet deep. As the passage of this formidable obstacle, so easily defendible, could not have been effected in the face of an enemy without serious loss, I made a forced march of 18 miles, crossed the Jedda, and established myself on the plain of Talanta. The mere distance in miles gives little idea of the labour and fatigue of the march; the excessively steep descent and ascent, and the great heat, were very distressing for troops heavily weighted. Theodore, however, did not cross the Bashilo, but plundered and burned the villages between that river and Magdala, which had always been faithful to and trusted him.

From the edge of the Talanta plain I obtained a distant but clear view of the position of Magdala and its approaches. I was able, with a good telescope, to appreciate the formidable character of the whole position, and became aware that I should require all the infantry that I could possibly collect to make the attack effective, and that every cavalry soldier that I could bring forward would be necessary for the investment. Even with all the force that I could hope to gather up, I felt that I could not complete the investment by sending a column to close the Kaffurbar or southern gate of Magdala, but I deputed an officer of the Intelligence Department, Mir Akbar Ali, to Masteevat, the Queen of the Wollo Gallas, to engage her to bring every man she could muster, to close all

escape on that side. Mir Akbar Ali's report will be forwarded, and will show how effectually he accomplished his mission.

Reluctant as I was to incur any delay so near to Magdala, these considerations, and the necessity of having supplies sufficient to carry me through the operations against that fortress, obliged me to defer crossing the Bashilo for several days. I had not overlooked the probability of the unstable Abyssinian people despising the small postal detachments and the pacific demeanour of our troops, but the various difficulties of our transport and scarcity of our supplies kept me without sufficient troops to make the posts of communication as strong as the circumstances required. Each day, however, was bringing forward some accession of strength; and in the meantime I had endeavoured by liberality and every means of conciliation, to engage the petty chiefs between Antalo and the Takazze river to maintain their friendly assistance in forwarding native convoys of supplies. It was the only course that gave chance of success; unfortunately it succeeded but partially. Relieved from the pressure of our main force, the chiefs commenced to interfere with the Abyssinian carriers of our supplies, and to make attacks on our posts and convoys. The local carriage which had enabled me to advance from Antalo, was suspended just at the time when its maintenance was most important: thus it happened that on the 4th April I had only 5 days' supplies to depend upon.

The Force had left all its baggage at Lat, 100 miles in rear, taking on merely the clothes in which they marched, and carrying greatcoats, blankets and waterproof sheets; they had no other encumbrance than a bell tent for 12 officers or 20 soldiers; the daily storms which we experienced rendered this shelter indispensable. The carriage so released was sent back for provisions to the points where native transport was doubtful, and gave me sure hope of ultimate relief from my commissariat difficulties, but the immediate urgency was pressing.

On the 2nd inst. I deputed Br. General Merewether to the Tacazze, to arrange with the Chiefs there to bring in supplies of flour.

Major Grant was directed to return to Lat, and Captain

Moore to Lake Ashangi, to remove obstructions which had arisen at these places. Captain Speedy and Mr. Muntzinger proceeded, the former to Daont, the latter to the borders of Talanta that had been ravaged by Theodore, and through the exertions of these officers, I was enabled to feed my cattle and to obtain flour enough for 11 days' supply, at 8 oz. for each soldier. The native followers received wheat in the grain instead of flour.

Relying on the admirable spirit of my Force, I was prepared to commit myself against Magdala with these means.

Besides the view which I had obtained of Magdala and its approaches, I received most valuable information from a Chief named Beitwuddun Hailo, who had recently deserted from Magdala. Having engaged in some intrigues with Menelek, King of Shoa, he knew well that his lot would be instant death on his master's arrival. It is difficult to give by description alone, a sufficient idea of the formidable position which we were about to assail. The fortress of Magdala is about 12 miles from the right bank of the Bashilo, but the great altitude and the purity of the atmosphere exhibited the whole outline distinctly.

The centre of the position is the rock of Selassie, elevated more than 9,000 feet above the sea, and standing on a plateau called Islamgie which is divided into several extensive terraces with perpendicular scarps of basalt. A saddle connects these terraces with the hill called Fahla. Fahla is a gigantic natural bastion, level on the top, entirely open and commanded by Islamgie. It domineers completely at an elevation of 1,200 feet over all approaches to Islamgie. The sides appeared precipitous, and the summit surrounded by a natural scarp of rock accessible only in a few places, and from 18 to 20 feet in height. Nearly concealed from view by Selassie and Fahla, the top of Magdala was partially visible. The road to Magdala winds up the steep side of Fahla, subject to its fire, and to the descent of rocks and stones. One part of the road is so steep that few horses except those bred in the country, could carry their riders up or down it. The whole road is flanked by the end of Selassie and the broad side scarp of Islamgie. Altogether, without taking into account Magdala itself, the

formidable character of its outworks exceeded anything which we could possibly have anticipated from the faint description of the position which had reached us.

The refugee Chief Beitwuddun Hailo, was very anxious that I should try the South side at the Kaffir Bur (gate) from the opposite range called "Tanta" saying, "If you want to take Selassic, go from hence; but if you want Magdala, you must go from Tanta." This, however, would have been impossible; I had not force enough to divide, and I could not place this vast combination of natural fortresses between me and my direct line of communication. I also perceived that the real point to be taken was not Magdala, but Islamgie, where Theodore had taken post with all his guns, and that Fahla was the key to the whole.

On the 7th I descended to the bed of the Bashilo, and reconnoitred the crossing. The ordinary approach to Magdala is by the Arogie Ravine which commences under Islamgie and is bounded on its right by a spur which extends from Islamgie in a serrated ridge to the Bashilo. A similar spur from Fahla stretches to the water of the Bashilo, and bounds the ravine on its left. The highest point of this ridge is about 2,000 feet above the bed of the Arogie Ravine.

The grand features of the ground rendered it impossible for me with my small force of infantry to hold both sides of the ravine. I considered Fahla the key of the position, and determined to occupy the ridge bearing in different parts the names of Gombage and Affijo, which leads to that imposing outwork. Established on this ridge I could operate on either side of Fahla, as might seem expedient on closer examination.

Between the 4th and 9th inst., my Force was increased by six companies of the 45th Regiment under Lt. Colonel Parish, which, though long delayed through want of carriage, had marched from Zula in 25 days. A wing of the 3rd Bombay Native Infantry under Lt. Colonel Campbell was detained 7 marches in rear, owing to the urgent want of carriage, and I thus lost the services of an able officer and an excellent body of soldiers on whom I had calculated for the attack.

On the 9th the whole force concentrated on the edge of the plateau overlooking the Bashilo, which flows 3,900 feet below

it. Major Chamberlain with the 2nd Punjab Pioneers, supported by a wing of the Beloochees occupied the bed of the Bashilo and repaired Theodore's road. The signallers of the 10th Company Royal Engineers maintained communications. The Royal Engineers and the Madras and Bombay Sappers under Captain Goodfellow, made up the necessary provision of sand-bags, scaling ladders and bags filled with powder for the demolition of gates, stockades, etc. As the only supply of water between the Bashilo and Magdala was under the enemy's fire, all the water carriers of the Force were organized under the command of Captain Bainbridge, Transport Corps with two subalterns (Lieut. Mortimer, Transport Corps, and Lieut. Ramsbottom, Transport Corps), for the purpose of carrying forward regular supplies of water from the Bashilo. The Bandsmen and a party of Punjab muleteers were also organized under Captain Griffith, aided by Lieut. Gaselee, Transport Corps, and furnished with stretchers for the removal of wounded men from the Field.

#### ACTION OF THE 10TH APRIL

All preparations having been completed, I placed the cavalry under Colonel Graves to hold the Bashilo, but ready to advance, and moved the remainder of the Force across the river, under the immediate command of Sir Charles Staveley.

The 2nd Brigade under Br. General Wilby, to remain in the bed of the Bashilo in support; the 1st Brigade under Br. General Schneider, to occupy the Gunborgi spur and advance to a suitable place for encampment, and also to cover a reconnaissance by the Deputy Quarter-Master General of the enemy's position. The Deputy Quarter-Master General reported that the ascent to Gunborgi was extremely steep and difficult, and that the King's road up the Arogie ravine was easy and secure for the mountain guns and baggage; they were therefore ordered to take that route.

When the leading part of the column had reached Affijo I arrived at the front. The King's road emerges from the Arogie Pass at a distance of 1,200 yards from Affijo, and 700 feet below it. I ordered Major Chamberlain's Punjab Pioneers to be sent immediately to cover the head of the pass, and

the remainder of the Brigade to be closed up as soon as possible. The men were greatly distressed by the heat, the severe ascent and want of water. Shortly after Major Chamberlain had taken up his position, the Naval Rocket Brigade under Captain Fellowes appeared, rising from the pass, followed by Lt. Colonel Penn's steel battery, escorted by detachments of infantry. At this time the enemy opened his guns from Fahla and Islamgié, making good practice at the Punjabees, and at the position of Affijo. Notwithstanding the distance which was more than 3,000 yards, the enemy's shot ranged well into the positions, owing to the great command, and probably to excessive charges of powder; but the fire being a plunging one, no casualties ensued.

Almost simultaneously with the opening of the enemy's artillery, a large force was seen pouring down from Islamgié and the sides of Fahla, descending at speed the steep road and the faces of the mountains, until they filled the whole plain of Arojee. Many of the enemy were dressed in red, and almost bore the appearance of our own troops in the distance. About 500, principally chiefs, were mounted.

The Naval Brigade hastened up the road to Affijo, and as each rocket tube came into position it opened on the advancing masses of the enemy who were startled, checked, and driven back at some points, but only to press forward at others. I directed Sir Charles Staveley to bring forward the remaining infantry, which by this time had closed up, to repel the attack. The 4th King's Own regiment under Lt. Colonel Cameron, closely followed by Beville's Beloochees and the Royal Engineers, commanded by Major Pritchard, and the Bombay Sappers under Captain MacDonnell R.E. descended rapidly the steep path leading down to the Arojee Plain with unrestrained expressions of delight at having at last their enemy before them. Opening into skirmishing order they ascended a suitable slope which separated them from the Plain of Arojee, and immediately came into contact with the enemy, drove them back in spite of the efforts of their leaders, in masses, on which the fire Snider told with terrible effect. Several gallant attempts were made by the Abyssinians to rally, but many of their Chiefs fell, and they were driven down the slopes

of Arogie towards the ravines on our left front. A portion of them withdrew up the sides of Fahla, and taking cover in a thicket of cactus trees, opened a teasing fire on Staveley's right causing some casualties. Captain Fellowes, having maintained the fire of his rockets until masked by the advance of the infantry, had been sent to support Sir Charles Staveley. The fire of the rockets, together with some volleys from Beville's Beloochees and the Royal Engineers, supported by two of Penn's guns under Lt. Taylor, cleared Staveley's flank from further annoyance. The rockets were then turned on the summit of Fahla; they were well directed, and, as I subsequently learned, produced a very great effect. A party of the enemy attempted to pass round the sides of Affijo to turn our right, but were checked by a few rockets, and dispersed by the K company Madras Sappers under Major Prendergast V.C. Lieut. Colonel Loch with a detachment of the 3rd Bombay cavalry, accompanied the infantry in support.

Towards the left, Colonel Milward ascended from the Arogie Pass with Penn's battery escorted by detachments of the 4th King's Own Regiment under Captain Kittoe, and the 23rd Pioneers under Captain Paterson, at the time when the guns opened from Fahla and Islamgie. On perceiving the troops of Theodore descending from Islamgie, Col. Milward took up a strong position, and opened fire from Penn's battery. Major Chamberlain, who was holding the Pioneers in hand to cover the head of the pass, moved to his left and joined Col. Milward. A considerable body of Abyssinians bore down upon Milward's position. Notwithstanding the evident effects of Penn's guns, they continued to advance with much determination and order. Chamberlain with his Pioneers met their attack in the most prompt and spirited manner, driving them with great slaughter into the ravines to his left front; not, however, without gallant resistance on the part of the Abyssinians, who closed fearlessly with the Punjabees; the spear wounds received bore witness to the closeness of the conflict. On the extreme left the enemy pressed in large numbers towards the head of the Arogie Ravine where the baggage had arrived. The baggage master, Lt. Sweeny, King's Own Regiment, with great readiness massed the baggage

in a safe position, and the baggage guard consisting of two companies of the 4th King's Own Regiment, and one of the 10th Native Infantry, under Captain Roberts of the former Corps until disabled, and subsequently under Lts. Abadie (11th Hussars) and Sweeny, were brought forward, and most effectually checked the attempt of the enemy to penetrate into the Arogié Ravine. Arrested at the head of the ravine, and driven back by the baggage guard, closed in upon by Chamberlain's pioneers and two companies of the 4th King's Own regiment whom Sir Charles Staveley had wheeled on to their flank, the enemy suffered most severely; large numbers were seen to fall from the admirably directed fire of the mountain guns. Theodore's troops had advanced with the full confidence of men accustomed to victory; they had cast themselves off from their vantage ground, to which there was no return. They had been promised by Theodore, that they should be enriched by the spoils of the English, and it was not without a stout resistance that they were finally driven off the field. A heavy rain continued during the greater part of the action. The troops thoroughly wet and tired, but highly elated with their victory, bivouacked for the night, covering the road to Arogié Pass, and before daylight had re-occupied their commanding position on Affijo, from which they had descended to meet the enemy. The wounded were promptly attended to under the direction of Dr. Currie, C.B., Inspector-General of Hospitals. Many wounded Abyssinians were also carried off the field by our troops and were carefully attended to in our hospitals.

The 2nd Brigade which came up in the night, occupied the ground which had been held after the action by the 1st Brigade.

According to the best information, the probable number of the enemy was not less than 5,000, of whom at least 3,000 were the regular musketeers, the remainder less efficiently armed. Theodore distributed new arms to his troops on the day preceding the battle.

The loss of the enemy cannot be correctly estimated; 349 were buried in front of the left of our position alone, and exclusive of those who fell in Staveley's first attack, 30 very badly wounded Abyssinians were carried to our hospital.

Theodore's Lieutenant, Fetararie Gabsie, and many Chiefs of note were amongst the slain. Nearly all night the calls of the Abyssinians to their wounded friends were heard, and the greater number of the latter were carried from the field. We saw a large number of wounded when Theodore's army surrendered. The British loss was only 20 wounded, two mortally; this disparity of loss resulted from the determined and persistent attacks of the Abyssinians against a better disciplined and better armed force, not better armed, however, as regards the 23rd Pioneers, whose smooth-bore is hardly equal to the double-barrelled percussion gun of the Abyssinians.

There was no hasty flight; the enemy returned again and again to the attack whenever the ground favoured them. I issued orders to prevent the pursuit being carried too far up the hill, which could only have ended by our retiring and giving renewed confidence to the enemy.

On the morning of the 11th Lieut. Prideaux and Mr. Flad arrived in my camp, accompanied by Dejach Alema, a son-in-law and confidential Chief of Theodore with a request for peace. I replied that if Theodore would bring all the European captives to my camp, and submit to the Queen of England, I would promise honourable treatment for himself and his family. Lieut. Prideaux returned to Magdala with the letter containing these terms. In the course of the forenoon he returned again to the British camp with Mr. Flad, but without Dejach Alema; he brought a letter without seal or signature from Theodore, refusing my terms. My letter was returned. I sent back Lieut. Prideaux and Mr. Flad to intimate that no other terms would be granted. I considered that a fuller atonement than the surrender of the captives, when they could be retained no longer, was absolutely required, and must be exacted; and, painful as was the thought of the possible consequences to the captives if Theodore's rage should become excited, I relied for their safety on the apprehension of a renewal of the conflict which demoralized Theodore's troops, and from which Theodore himself was not free, as was involuntarily betrayed by Dejach Alema. I relied also on my threat, which I impressed on Dejach Alema, of unrelenting pursuit and punishment of all who might in any way be con-

cerned in the ill-treatment of the European captives. I pointed out how the power of Great Britain had already reached Magdala ; that no corner of Abyssinia, however remote could screen anyone whom we wished to punish.

Lieut. Prideaux was met on his return to Magdala by Mr. Rassam and the remainder of the British prisoners, and several of those of other nations, all of whom arrived in my camp before evening. My further conditions were not complied with. At the request of Dejach Alema, I had promised to abstain from hostilities for 24 hours. After the lapse of 48 hours, Theodore had not surrendered himself ; reliable information reached me that his army was recovering from their defeat, that many soldiers who had been unable to return to Magdala on the night of the 10th had since rejoined their ranks, that fresh defensive arrangements were being made, and that Theodore and his Chiefs even contemplated a night attack on the 2nd Brigade encamped on the lower ground. I therefore prepared to attack the enemy's position.

I had originally intended first to assault Fahla from the side which fronted our camp, and was screened from the fire of Islamgie and Selassie. But under the altered condition of the enemy, Theodore having by death, wounds and desertion lost half of his army, and his bravest Chiefs, I determined to attack Islamgie by the King's road. All arrangements for this had been considered, and the positions for the artillery reconnoitred and fixed upon, when information was brought to me that Theodore had left Magdala, and that many of the chiefs with their followers wished to surrender. I agreed to accept their submission, and ordered Sir Charles Staveley to advance on Islamgie, relaxing no precautions that I had considered necessary for the attack. The scarcity of water rendered it impossible to retain any considerable body of Cavalry before Magdala ; my personal escort, under a Native Officer, only remained, and with a few details of other corps was sent under command of Lieut. Scott A.D.C., to watch the west side of Magdala, where they took up a good position, until the arrival of the cavalry under Colonel Graves, who completed the investment up to the Kaffir Ber Gate, which was watched by the Gallas. The Bashilo was held by the

Head-Quarter Detachment of the Sind Horse, under Major Briggs, and detachments of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 3rd and 12th Cavalry under Major Miller, to secure that point, and provide against the escape of the enemy in that direction by the Menjara ravine. A detachment of the Beloochees under Lieut. Beville ascended by the spurs of Fahla, and occupied that important position, where they were reinforced from the 2nd Brigade by the Head-Quarters wing of the 10th Native Infantry, under Colonel Field. The artillery was placed in position, and the troops advanced, preceded by Captain Speedy of the Intelligence Department with a small escort of the 3rd Light Cavalry under Lt. Colonel Loch, to communicate with the chiefs who wished to surrender, and to prevent any misunderstanding.

No resistance was offered. Sir Charles Staveley effected an entrance to Islamgie and Sclassie, through a difficult crevice in the rocky escarps. It would be impossible to arrive at any correct estimate either of the numbers of the armed men who laid down their weapons, or of the masses of people, men, women and children, whom we found on Islamgie. It was necessary to collect and guard the arms that were surrendered. It was also necessary to send down all the disarmed soldiers, and the miscellaneous multitude that followed them, to the plain below, before I could proceed actively against Magdala.

Theodore himself having abandoned his attempt to escape, was making preparations for defence, and offering us defiance in front of Magdala. By 3 o'clock the Abyssinians having nearly all cleared away from Islamgie, I ordered the attack of Magdala to be at once carried out. The entrance of Magdala is 300 feet above the terreprain of Islamgie, and the ascent is by an extremely steep and rugged path. Viewing the very difficult nature of the approach, I made the attack as strong as possible, and massed the whole of my artillery fire to cover it, in order to overpower the enemy's resistance and prevent the heavy casualties which I should otherwise have incurred. The assaulting force consisted of the 2nd Brigade, led by the 33rd Duke of Wellington's regiment accompanied by detachments of the Royal Engineers and Madras and Bombay Sappers

and Miners, with means of clearing away obstacles. The first Brigade to be in close support.

I concentrated the fire of the artillery on the gateway and the north end of the fort, which were crowded with the houses of the soldiers, avoiding as much as possible the higher part of the interior occupied by the Abyssinian prisoners and non-combatants. The enemy carefully concealed themselves from view, so that the place seemed almost deserted, although, when entered by our troops, it was found to be thronged with soldiers who had thrown away their arms, released prisoners, and the numerous voluntary and involuntary followers of Theodore's fortunes. The artificial defences consisted of stone walls, loopholed, and surmounted by strong and thick barricades of thorny stakes, with narrow stone gateways. The lower one built up in the interior, the higher one being 70 feet above the lower, and approached by a very steep narrow path winding amongst the soldiers' huts. The attack was ably conducted by Sir Charles Staveley, whose report is annexed,<sup>1</sup> and gallantly carried out by the troops. Fortunately the defences were very unscientifically constructed, and though the attack was met by a sharp fire from the enemy, yet they could not direct it on the head of the storming party without exposing themselves to the rapid and fatal fire of the Snider rifle, and our loss was, in consequence very small. The Royal Engineers and Sappers, and leading sections of the 33rd regiment were long before they could force an entrance, and during that time, nine officers and men of the Royal Engineers and Sappers received wounds or contusions. At length an entrance was found by means of the ladders near the gate, and by the leading men of the 33rd, who scaled a rock and turned the defences of the gateway; the enemy was driven to the second barricade, and when that was carried all resistance ceased. Amongst the dead near the outer gateway, were found several of Theodore's most devoted Chiefs; one of them, Dejach Enjeda, had urged Theodore to massacre all the prisoners, a course from which he was dissuaded by others; close to the second gateway lay the body of Theodore. At the moment when the barricade was forced by the 33rd,

<sup>1</sup> Omitted in the present account.

Theodore fell, as I have since learned by his own hand, his troops immediately fled, some by the Kaffir Ber Gate, which was found choked with arms that had been cast away in their flight. Of these fugitives, the greater part fell into the hands of the Gallas, and the remainder, seeing the fate of their comrades, and hearing the taunting invitations of the Gallas, returned to Magdala and surrendered.

The command of Magdala was entrusted to Br. General Wilby who held it with the 33rd and wing of the 45th regiments. So thickly was the fortress inhabited, and so great was the crowd of people, that it was no easy matter to establish order. Guards were placed at the gates and such places as required protection. The Abyssinian prisoners were released from their chains, and the very numerous body of Abyssinians whose histories and condition it was impossible at the time to investigate, were collected in an open space in the centre of the fortress, where they could be protected, and where they quickly threw up small huts for themselves, and remained until their final departure.

On the 15th, the 4th King's Own Regt. relieved the 33rd in Magdala, and the 45th were moved to Islamgie to reinforce the detachment of the 10th Native Infantry under Colonel Field, for the protection of the captured arms and ordnance, and to furnish working parties for their destruction. The inhabitants of Magdala were collected at Arogie where great vigilance was necessary to protect them from the Gallas, who were lying in wait, both day and night, for opportunities of plundering and destroying them. Notwithstanding the friendly relations with the Queen of the Gallas their people were so little under restraint, that it was frequently necessary to fire upon them to drive them from molesting our water-parties and carrying off the mules. A party of them, in search of plunder dared even to make their way into Magdala, where they were captured by the guard of the 33rd regiment. On the 15th and 16th the disarmed soldiers and people of Magdala made their exodus from Arogie. Every consideration was shewn them, and they were allowed to take all their property. The Arogie defile was guarded by infantry; and their procession, after crossing the Bashilo, was guarded by



THE FORTRESS OF MARDAI.  
Photographed by Major B. G. 1917.

cavalry patrols until they reached Wadela. No doubt many of these people deserved little mercy at the hands of the peasants of Talanta, who had suffered so much misery from Theodore's troops; but, having surrendered to the British force, it was incumbent on us to protect them until they reached a point of safety, from whence they could go to their native districts.

On the morning of the 17th, orders were issued to clear every one out of Magdala by 4 p.m. At that hour the whole of the captured ordnance having been destroyed, the gates of Magdala were blown up, and the whole of the buildings were committed to the flames. The wounded Abyssinians who had no friends to take charge of them, were conveyed into our hospitals. The elephants and heavier ordnance having been sent in advance on the 15th, on the 18th April the force recrossed the Bashilo on its return to the coast.

A further despatch on the return journey was completed on the 1st June from the Commander-in-Chief's camp at Kumayli. A few extracts from it will suffice to close the narrative of the Expedition:

In continuation of my despatch No. 40 dated 12th May, I have the honor to report that I this day passed the Suru Defile with the last column of the Abyssinian Expeditionary Force, the 25th Bombay Native Light Infantry, and the 27th Belooch Battalion. The march from Talanta to Antalo was trying, from the frequent severe storms of rain which appeared to accompany us, and from which our troops, in some degree, and more especially the followers and transport animals could not fail to suffer.

The wild border tribes of Abyssinians and Gallas, through whom our route lay from the Takazze to Antalo, being very little under the control of their distant almost nominal rulers, and who were perfectly well behaved on our advance, finding by degrees our vulnerable points, had been for some time making attacks upon our muleteers and camp followers, when venturing far from their escorts, and on some occasions even on our armed soldiers. In the first instances, some camp

followers were killed, and in the last, our soldiers being driven to use their weapons, several Abyssinians and Gallas were killed and wounded. Considerable numbers of armed men, principally Gallas, watched our march from the hills, and though restrained by the pressure of our columns, they made attempts on our line of baggage, but met with little success; soldiers were freely interspersed along the line, and the rear-guard from Marowa to Antalo was continuously under the command of an experienced officer, Lt. Colonel Bray, of the 4th (King's Own) Regt. until we reached the coast.

This was a very clear indication of what a force returning in difficulties would experience.

In the friendly territory of Prince Kassai, the troops returned to marches made easy by the improved roads, and the increased supplies of articles of food, turned into great luxuries by a period of privation, which were stored in the fortified posts of Antalo and Adigrat. All local information led me to believe that there would be no danger of floods before the middle of June, but owing to the extraordinary severity of the spring rains, a succession of floods during the early part of May did much damage to the Suru Defile road. On the 19th of May, with hardly any warning, a heavy flood, coming from a lateral tributary which enters above Suru, filled the Suru Defile channel so suddenly that seven camp followers and some cattle, not being instantly removed from the water-way, were swept away and perished. On the 30th January full precautionary instructions were issued to secure the safety of the troops in the pass, and I had no apprehension on their account. The losses of the 19th arose from avoidable causes, and were not likely to recur. In case we might be detained during the rainy season, an alternative line, turning the Suru Defile, had been surveyed by Lt. De Thoren, 45th Regt. Q.M.G.'s Department, by which a safer, though less even path might have been opened. By the exertions of the garrison of Suru, directed by Capt. Christie, R.E., the damage to the road in the pass was rapidly repaired after each flood. The severe weather in the high mountains with the reaction after excitement, and the scanty food, naturally increased the sick lists, but there are few bad cases. The wounded are rapidly recover-

ing; and although the total number of sick ultimately amounted to 260, no member of the force, however humble, has failed to obtain transport when required.

The whole Force have returned in safety to the coast, and the greater part have already re-embarked.

Thereafter follows a statement of the services of the troops under Sir R. Napier's command. Omitting personal references too numerous to reproduce, the following extracts are among those of general interest :

Those who first claim notice are the Pioneer Force, who landed at Zula in October last and consisted of Major Marrett's Mountain Battery (Native), the 3rd and 4th Companies of Bombay Sappers and Miners, the 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, and the 10th Native Infantry under Colonel Field who commanded the whole. Their labours were not commenced under very encouraging circumstances. A barren shore, so shelving that the troops had to wade several hundred yards daily in landing stores, a supply of water so scanty that it disappeared immediately, and a temperature so sultry that any exertion was oppressive, but the spirit of the troops never flagged. Encamping grounds were cleared, 20 miles of road were made from the coast to Kumayli and towards Suru, a depôt was established at Senafe, and huts erected for the muleteers. . . .

At 50 feet below the surface, they (the Punjab Pioneers) found sweet water, an inestimable blessing to the Ishmaelites of Zula, who in their gratitude were ready to worship the Pioneers. . . .

Elephants have frequently been employed for the transport of artillery in Indian warfare, but it has been generally by means of draught; when guns have been carried, it has been only for short distances. It has been the privilege of this campaign to prove that elephants could carry Armstrong 12-pounder guns and 8-inch mortars over steep mountains for many hundreds of miles. There were 42 elephants employed in the conveyance of ordnance and ammunition, and of these 5 have been lost from hard work and want of water during the operations before Magdala.

In addition to the severe mountain marches, in which each soldier carried a heavy load, regiments often worked at the roads on the line of march, or immediately on arrival in camp. Not infrequently every available man of a regiment has been on working parties or outlying picket. The constant storms of rain and the cold nights of the high altitude were encountered cheerfully, on rations reduced to 8 oz. of flour and meat only. An increase was made to the allowance of meat, it is true, but that increase gave no compensation for the articles of rum, sugar, and compressed vegetables, which had to be left behind. . . .

Seldom or never have Cavalry had such a variety of duties in maintaining communications for so many miles, climbing over mountains, and through forest ranges, often benighted, where a false step would be destruction, and in danger of treacherous attacks from the wild border tribes, who are honoured among themselves for slaying without reason and without scruple. . . . Major Palliser with the head-quarters of the 10th Cavalry, arrived at Attala in most opportune time to preserve our communications which were very seriously assailed.

The Royal Engineers have rendered invaluable services during this Expedition which has given such an ample field for their employment. Their energy and skill are shown in every work from the first landing in Zula to Magdala, and require a special separate report.

The very great services of the Commissariat Department . . . require a separate report to do full justice to the officers and subordinates of their establishments.

The campaign has been one of severe military labour from the first landing to the re-embarkation. Every regiment of infantry carried its own pack of tools, and became pioneers, working hardly, whether in the long marches of the advance, or the more trying monotony of the plains of Zula. The port of Zula with its landing piers; the railway with its numerous bridges; the road through the Kumayli Pass to Antalo and Magdala; the water supply at all the stations; the intrenchments at Adigrat and Antalo; the Commissariat and transport lines, and the camping grounds, where the most

perfect order was required to water quickly many thousands of animals ; all formed one great military work on which the campaign has been supported.

It would be impossible for me to do full justice to the merits of each portion of the force. All ranks and classes have been inspired with the same honourable spirit, whether in military labour or in conflict with the enemy, and have borne themselves as if success depended on their own individual exertions and devotion.

I beg permission gratefully to acknowledge the confidence placed in me by Her Majesty's Government for India, and the unhesitating promptitude with which all my requisitions have been complied with.

I am deeply sensible of the support and encouragement which I have received from His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge in every stage of the Expedition.

On May 24th the Commander-in-Chief reached Senafe ; on the 25th a review was held in honour of the Queen's birthday, and was attended by Prince Kassai.<sup>1</sup> A few days later, in consideration of the great services rendered to the British by the latter Prince, Sir Robert Napier presented Prince Kassai with six 5½-inch mortars and six 4-inch howitzers together with the smoothbores of two Native Infantry Regiments which were being re-armed with Enfield rifles, and a great quantity of Commissariat stores, and some ammunition. Great difficulty was experienced in conveying the Armstrong guns back to the coast, owing to the necessity for forced marches, and the exhaustion of the elephants, who frequently threw off their loads.

The Suru Defile which since the end of April had been subject to several violent and sudden floods, was successfully passed on the 24th May, and the

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, 1872, crowned as Johannes II, Emperor of Ethiopia and known as King John of Abyssinia.

Armstrong battery was safely housed on board ship by the 29th.

Further letters to Lady Napier on the 6th and 28th May contain the following remarks :

Everything has been a complete success, and has justified to the letter all my proceedings and arrangements. That we succeeded in spite of all my demands not having been complied with, will be the more to our credit, because everything shows that we should have been saved much, had we had all that we asked for. . . . However, it is all over now. The army never doubted me, and I relied on them. . . . It would be difficult to express to you all the care that has been on my mind—the vigilance necessary to have everything right in its place—and the anxiety when I had the whole work before me to do, that is, Magdala, looking immense and impregnable, with only a limited supply of food, less water, and utter destruction in case of failure. And at the same time the chance of a success stained by the massacre of the captives, as the alternative which I had determined to adopt, rather than purchase the safety of the captives with the honour of England. But God has helped us wonderfully. . . .

You will find me looking much greyer than I was, and in want of all the kind things you can say to me. . . . I shall only be able to remain a very short time. I do not want to be Commander-in-Chief in Bengal, but to have a little time to live quietly with you, love, and my children. I am well . . . but I am very tired and want to be idle. . . .

Napier passed the defile on the 1st June, all stations in his rear having been evacuated. The troops destined for England returned to Suez, thence by rail to Alexandria, and so home in four transports, the remainder being conveyed to Bombay. By the 18th June the last man of the Expedition had left Africa.

Before the Force had left the Dalanta Plain, Napier in a General Order of the 20th April had described to the troops in a few stirring words their performances,

his congratulations and thanks ; and by the time they had reached Antalo on the return journey he had the satisfaction of conveying to them congratulatory telegrams from the Queen, the Duke of Cambridge, and the Secretary of State for India.

Stanley says : " These were the first blasts of the universal Jubilee that convulsed all England, wafted to the interior of Abyssinia. . . . Though a little war, it was a great campaign . . . the fame of it resounded with loud reverberations over wide Asia and established her prestige on a firmer basis than ever."

On his arrival home, Napier was received with great enthusiasm. For his services he received the thanks of Parliament, and a pension of £2,000 a year. He was raised to the Peerage and made a G.C.B. and a G.C.S.I. London and Edinburgh conferred upon him the freedom of their cities, together with Presentation swords, and the Universities bestowed upon him Honorary degrees.

Mr. Disraeli, at that time Prime Minister, referred in Parliament in glowing terms to his magnificent exploit, adding that happy was the man who, during his career, had thrice received the thanks of Parliament.

Lord Napier of Magdala, as he now became, did not remain at home for more than a few months. He felt it his duty to resume without long delay the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, believing that the interests of those officers who had served with him in the Abyssinian campaign might otherwise be neglected, and no General Commanding was more careful than Napier that the services of those under him should be adequately represented for their due rewards. It was not until the summer of 1869 that he returned to England, and in 1870 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief in India.

## CHAPTER XIV

### COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF 1870-1876

Commander-in-Chief in India—Major Roberts, D.Q.M.G.—Finance—Army Reductions—Death of Lord Mayo—Lord Northbrook—Russia and Central Asia—Budget Discussions—Famine—Railways—Army Reorganization—Visit of Prince of Wales—Departure from India.

In the preceding chapter, it has been seen that Sir Robert Napier, now Lord Napier of Magdala, had established his reputation as the foremost soldier of the day in the British Army, combining the skill and knowledge of the Engineer with the experience of a Commander in many theatres of war. To this he added a natural gift for diplomacy, and great experience in affairs of State, acquired when, first as a Member, and afterwards as President of the Council in India for some years, he had to deal with every kind of question relating, not only to military affairs, but also to public works, politics and financial matters. The brilliant success of the Abyssinian Expedition, together with its strange and romantic setting, seized upon the imagination of the whole of Europe to such an extent that Napier, the most modest and retiring of men, almost "awoke," like Lord Byron, "to find himself famous." Immediately on his arrival in England, he was commanded by the Queen to Windsor, and from that moment commenced an acquaintance

which ripened into the sincere friendship of nearly every member of the Royal Family. Numerous letters testify to the degree of intimacy which he enjoyed, and which may be ascribed, not to his skill as a courtier, so much as to the sterling worth of his character and his invariable courtesy displayed alike to people of every walk in life.

A careful study of the Abyssinian campaign shows that its successful outcome was the result of no mere accident. Never was a campaign more dependent upon the exertions of one single man, and that man the Commander-in-Chief, who calculated the value of every mule-load, the capacity of every water supply, consulted the whims and won the support of the Abyssinian tribal Chieftains, maintained a high discipline and at the same time gained the entire confidence of the officers and men under his command. If further proof were needed, the disastrous experiences of the Italians in the same theatre of war, many years later, give an idea of what would have happened, had there been any serious hitch in the conduct of the campaign. But all this implied a very heavy strain of work and responsibility, as is evident from the private letters to his wife, and the pathetic cry that he "does not want to be Commander-in-Chief in Bengal," but "is very tired, and wants to be idle."

Now that the time has come when he has again taken up the reins of office, there is little trace of any wish to be idle. He arrives in India some time in April, 1870, at once commences his inspections, and is soon immersed in the office work which must have been very heavy in taking over the Command of the Army in India.

Nevertheless, he is able to write to Sir William Baker

in March, 1871, on completing a tour in Assam, and say that, with few exceptions, he has seen every station in the Army that he did not see in the spring, and that he has now made acquaintance with the whole Indian frontier from Karachi to Dacca. The Punjab he had been familiar with throughout his career, the Sind frontier he became acquainted with when Commander-in-Chief at Bombay, but he could not rest until he had traversed the Eastern frontier also. The advantage of this soon became evident. The tea-planters of Assam had been raided. On the 30th June, Napier deploras the abandonment of punitive measures by the Government, but by the 14th July they had tardily consented to an expedition to punish the Loshai marauders. But even then Government had not accepted the plans which he had submitted immediately on his return from Assam, and he disclaims responsibility if they are not adopted. Eventually the Expedition takes place in the winter of 1871-72, and Major Fred. Roberts is sent as Chief Staff Officer with the Force.

Major Roberts, afterwards Earl Roberts of Kandahar, had already served under Napier in Abyssinia, where his duties in the Q.M.G. Department detained him at the base. In his well-known book, *Forty-one Years in India*, Roberts relates his first meeting with Napier at the siege of Lucknow, how his reply to Sir James Outram regarding the holes made by our engineers in the walls of houses and enclosures to admit the passage of guns and transport, aroused the ire of a wounded officer lying on a couch at the end of the room, who asked him, had he measured the width of the holes. The wounded officer was Colonel Robert Napier, Chief of the Staff to Sir James Outram, and he evidently

considered Roberts a very bumptious young subaltern. However, Roberts, now a Major in the Quartermaster-General's Department at Head-quarters, was sent to Calcutta to organize, equip and despatch the Force which he accompanied. The Expedition, under Brigadier Bouchier, C.B., was successful. Roberts had benefited by his experience in the Abyssinian Expedition, and Napier was evidently pleased with the manner in which he carried out his duties. He was given a C.B. on Napier's recommendation, and was appointed Deputy-Quartermaster-General at Head-quarters, where he remained during the whole period of Lord Napier's Command, being appointed Quartermaster-General in 1875.

Writing of this expedition in February, 1872, Napier says :

Loshai is going on well, and I hope in another three weeks the parties will have returned successfully. Hitherto it seems as if every point had turned out so as to verify my advice and warning. Suppose ordinary infantry of the plains had been sent to cross ranges over 6,000 feet in the wet and cold, or Madrassies from their Southern climate as Norman wanted ! One dash of the Goorkhas among the enemy gives a respect for our troops that never leaves them. . . .

Later, in July of the same year, he writes to Baker :

I am very much obliged to the Indian Government at Home for appreciating the assistance I gave. Lord Mayo said that everything conceded was done by him with a pistol at his head. It was true that I only wrung things by absolutely throwing the responsibility of failure on the Government in such a manner as could not be hid. . . . The Foreign Department which is utterly contemptible, being vexed because their foolish plans were not accepted, reluctantly admit success. I was surprised at there being any allusion to the Commander-in-Chief in the Government letter, and most heartily withdraw

any claims of my own to let full credit accrue to the Commanders, Officers and troops of the Expedition. I am fully rewarded by their success ; all I want to do is to induce the Government to take a fair look at the things which they refused, the consequences of some of them, and to amend their ways in future, so that we may not always be paying for experience.

Though Napier was careful to award praise where praise was due, he could on occasion be severe in the opposite sense, as the following letter shows :

I expected that General X. would petition—he is simply a fool—he did not do what he was ordered, and hesitated in what he was forbidden to do. It was the silly desire of Lord Mayo and the Foreign Secretary A. to meddle and send the Manipur force. X. had clear instructions from General Bouchier to bring a small force of 500 men, the number being fixed by the number of muskets that were available. He was ordered to go to a certain point and no further ; he took 2,000 men whom he could not feed, and he led them on to a place beyond where he was ordered to go, so between want of food and fever, he lost great numbers of men, and had to retire just when he might have been of use at his proper post, had there been any need of his services at all. Had he been under my orders, I should have brought him to a Court Martial. Besides wasting the Manipur Rajah's means, the mortality was very great indeed. The Government of India can forward the papers if called for. General Bouchier, now at Home, can show the whole case. I have no doubt the Government will answer the Memorial satisfactorily. The Rajah was thanked for unreservedly placing his whole means at the disposal of the Political Agent, who was not thanked for misusing them. . . .

In Napier's correspondence may be traced the many points of interest which absorbed his attention as a special member of the Viceroy's Council—Finance—the improvement of Peshawar and other barracks—the

withdrawal from Gwalior—the Russian advance in Central Asia—Persia—the Irrigation Bill—Inspections and Camps of Exercise—Fortifications—Army reductions—the Yarkand Embassy—the Income Tax—Jurisdiction of Civil Courts—Discipline—Railways and the merits of the broad gauge—the Indian Staff Corps.

In all these questions Napier had a great deal to say. He was not invariably successful in all his protests or recommendations, but his influence was very great. The fact that his lifelong friend, Sir William Baker, was a member of the India Council in London doubtless added to this influence, and gives us at the same time an intimate acquaintance with Napier's own opinions on every subject through his constant correspondence with one so closely bound to him both officially and privately. Added to this, his influence with the Duke of Cambridge made his position unassailable in regard to purely military affairs, and on other Indian questions, whether concerned with irrigation, roads, railways or matters of high strategy, he was himself an expert, and few people can have been qualified to dispute his knowledge.

As regards finance, much of Napier's time throughout his career appears to have been taken up in the constant fight for funds to enable him to carry on public works both military and civil. In his earlier days in the Punjab, he was cramped by the economies of John Lawrence, and now, as Commander-in-Chief, he had to encounter the efforts, first of Lord Mayo, and then of Lord Northbrook to show a credit balance at the expense of the Army and the Public Works.

Napier's views on finance are well illustrated by the following letter to Lord Mayo, written before he actually became Commander-in-Chief :

UMBALLA, April 3rd, 1869.

*Private and Confidential.*

In considering why fifteen millions of increased revenue are nearly balanced by increased expenditure, it is necessary to remember that the income from reproductive works has hardly commenced to come in ; that increased prosperity brings an increase of revenue, but also a rise in all prices of labour !

The prices of all the products of labour have increased simultaneously with the increase of prosperity ! The favourable years for cotton threw, it is said, forty millions into Bombay, which has rendered money cheaper than before.

The result has been that we have been obliged to give to all servants below a certain rate, compensation for the increased cost of food, in other words, a sliding scale of increased pay !

Referring to the difference between past and present expenditure, we shall, on investigation, find that in several important branches, the finance Commission and its department brought down establishments to such a state of inefficiency, that hardly had the fictitious economy been taken credit for, than it became necessary to increase them. Stores hastily sold "en masse" were repurchased at enhanced prices. Steamers were sold for small sums, and their places were taken very shortly by hired tonnage.

That much necessary reduction took place, no one than I more readily admitted, but it was often insisted on without reference to any consideration but the order for reduction to a certain amount, and there was in after years an inevitable reaction.

If any honest reduction can be made, *let us by all means make it*, but I trust whatever is done, will be done with the higher appointments, and that no step will be taken to unsettle the Native army, which would be a very serious misfortune.

Regarding the shelter of troops, the improved accommodation was the result of much deliberation, based on the experience of many years passed in close contact with the soldier—not from hasty visits in a cold-weather morning, but from observation of the effects on the soldier of discomfort and mental inaction.

As the Dalhousie barracks in Fort William reduced the mortality from  $9\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or in other words, only 25 men died instead of 95, we may say that Lord Dalhousie saved at least twenty thousand pounds in ten years ! even if we pass over the humanity of saving seven hundred men. Besides there was the invaliding of worn-out men, and thus, it is more probable that the saving, in a pecuniary view, was the full cost of the barracks in a very few years. This may be an extreme case, but if, in twenty years you cover the cost of your barracks, it is in every way a gain.

I never feel very much alarmed at Indian Budgets. I know that a very little management puts them over or under a million or so, and I cannot see why we should make a deficit by charging the cost of the Barracks, which will certainly last generations, into the very year in which they are built, instead of merely paying the interest of the money, and a sum to go towards a sinking fund to pay off the barracks in a given term of years.

Who can say how long we shall have a peaceful opportunity of completing our necessary works ?

The Police Force is an excellent preventive measure under the shadow of a regular army, but if our army is reduced, in any time of trouble, the vast body of armed men spread over the country, would not fail to be a source of anxiety, especially when the military heads have been virtually cut off the body, in order to make room for civil ones.

I believe much economy might be exercised in utilising the Native Pensioner.<sup>1</sup>

The above letter gives the key-note to many of

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was sent to General Sir W. Birdwood, Commander-in-Chief in India, by Lieut.-Col. Hon H. Napier for his perusal, and the above letter is doubtless the one referred to by him in a letter to Lieut.-Colonel Napier, dated Delhi, 4th January, 1926, as follows: "The whole correspondence is . . . extraordinarily interesting, and, curiously enough, I have been able to quote a paragraph in one letter regarding the possibility of raising a loan to improve our men's lines. It is curious how history repeats itself in this way, and I fancy your father's remarks of 1869 will rather astonish our Finance people now."

Napier's views and actions. His ardent desire to improve the well-being of the British soldier as the truest economy led him to great schemes of barrack improvement, not always favourably regarded by short-sighted Viceroy's. He had no sympathy with the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy of cutting down approved projects after their construction had commenced, and leaving material in many cases to rot on the ground, in order to balance the Budget or produce a fictitious surplus, and so please the Government at home.

An interesting example is that of the barracks at Peshawar. In November, 1871, he writes to Baker at the India Office and explains the unimprovable condition on the old cantonments, how the provision of double-storied barracks "to raise men above the malaria" and at the same time form an enclosure that would exclude night thieves, would serve the double purpose of giving the men fresh air and saving them much night duty in a place so notorious for thieves and marauders, that it was said one half of the garrison had to watch while the other half slept—doubtless an exaggeration, but one showing the general tendency. In former days, Napier's roads and canals had contributed largely to the productivity and prosperity of the country, and, as he told Lord Mayo, the income from reproductive works had hardly commenced to come in in 1869. It is not surprising, therefore, that a slight deficit in the Indian Budget failed to alarm him.

Lord Napier was not pleased with the cession of the fort at Gwalior, in the capture of which magnificent place he had been present during the Mutiny, and he had no great opinion of the steadfastness of the loyalty

of certain great Indian princes in a time of trouble, should such an event occur as the invasion of India by the Russians. He pertinently remarks in a letter of the 26th September, 1871: "Our treatment of the Gwalior State from first to last has been paternal towards a wilful child, stimulated and instigated by artful men about him, who hate us for our supremacy." And again: "If we withdraw from Gwalior because Scindia dislikes the curb on his power, we shall have no better reason for not withdrawing from Secunderabad because the infant Nizam may want to play at soldiers when he gets a little older, or from Mhow, because it threatens Indore." However, in this instance time appears to have justified the Government's action. For many years a garrison was kept close to Gwalior at Morar, but in later days, thanks to the undoubted loyalty of his successor, measures have been taken further to emancipate him from British control.

In the matter of fortifications, Napier writes an interesting letter on the 14th March, 1871, in which, after stating that he had completed his programme by seeing every station in the Army, and by having traversed the whole of the Indian frontier from Karachi to Dacca, he expresses his conviction that we "never at any time had so little hold of India. We have no root, no place in the affections of the people, no fortified places. . . . The result of my observations and reflections is that when the day of trial comes upon us, our collapse will be as complete and sudden as that of France."

Succeeding generations of Britons will do well to ponder these words of Napier, and guard against any such possibility. Napier had seen many wars in India, had been through the Indian Mutiny thirteen years

before, and the collapse of France from her high estate was still fresh in his memory. With the as yet indefinite threat of the advance of a great Military Power towards the Indian frontier, it is not surprising that he devoted both time and energy towards supplying some fortified places at important strategic points in India, and especially on the line of her sea communications with the Motherland. That he was not able to accomplish as much in this direction as he had hoped, he ascribes, as will be seen later, in some degree to the Famine, but more to the obstructive tactics of the Military Member of Council under the direction of the Viceroy.

Plans for the reorganization of the Army in India were looked upon by Napier with great suspicion. Under the guise of most of them he detected the desire rather to reduce the strength of the army than to improve it. Under Lord Mayo they were simply plans for reduction in order to reduce expenditure. In May, 1871, he writes to Baker: "Lord Mayo and Norman (Military Member of Council), I believe, continue to cherish their plans of reduction, and the Secretary of State, by the plan of referring back to them, manages to elude the opposition of your Council." During the previous year, Napier had been involved "in the unwelcome task of maturing schemes for reductions in Army expenditure," in which he confessed that he had not made much way, and some of which he had been able to defeat. He declares that "Lord Mayo's proceedings are disclosed as systematic hostility to every military charge."

That Napier was no reactionary in military matters, but quite the contrary, is shown by his keenness in training the Army for war by camps of exercise, first

initiated in India, by him, and inspections, some of the latter being unexpected and informal. From Assam he writes :

I am sure my visits to stations and isolated Corps have done much good. Zeal has been stimulated and industry encouraged. All have felt that I have a real interest in them, and that I know now enough of the officers personally to discriminate between those specially deserving and others. I know also, better than before, the value of the opinions of those on whom I have been obliged to rely for the fitness of officers. And especially I believe I have given a good stimulus and direction to Field Exercise, leading Commanding Officers not to be glued to their parade grounds, but to shake out their regiments in the open country, and make use of the intellects of their officers.

At the present time this sounds like a commonplace, but Napier was the original reformer.

“ It has been only a beginning to let me see what is wanted, but if I should have health to remain, I hope, in the course of my Command, to keep pace with the military pace of the day in other places.” But in this respect Napier was in advance of it.

By July, 1871, Napier had succeeded in obtaining two lacs of rupees for a Camp of Instruction at Delhi during the ensuing cold weather—a most unexpected piece of liberality, somewhat marred, however, by petty economics at the instance of the Military Member of Council, such as the refusal to bring up Madras and Bombay officers except at their own expense, so few could afford to come as spectators.

The camp proved a great success. Napier writes : “ The country for our operations was everything that could be desired. Everyone entered into the affair heart and soul, and this extended to the rank and file.

The only malcontents were, I believe, a few idle men who prefer idleness and writing to the papers rather than real work. . . . The weather has been rainy to a degree quite unprecedented, but the health has been very good, and of 16,000 men, one man only has been tried by a District Court Martial."

In another letter he says: "There is a strong band of book soldiers who cry out and write and criticise. One of them as D.A.Q.M.G. put his Division into low ground, and had it swamped in the rain, although he was a theoretical authority. . . ."

During July of this year he is also occupied with the railway question, and writes as follows:

I send you a copy of my Memo. regarding the Indus Valley Line. I have given a more full report also of which I have not a copy ready. I should be tempted to accept a narrow gauge, if I believed we should get it a few years sooner, but I fear, either way, we shall be a long time before we get either one or the other. For Indian purposes the narrow gauge would be at present only an experiment, particularly as regards the carriages for the hot weather travelling. The other gauge we know, and the advantages of concentrating the rolling stock of all the broad gauge for an emergency outweigh other considerations. But I should be strongly tempted to put a narrow from Jhelum to Peshawar, or from Rawul-Pindi to Peshawar, if there is to be any delay in ordering the line on to Peshawar, so as to be able to support Peshawar immediately, but if the broad gauge will be ordered on to Peshawar at once, I should of course prefer to see this system completed, leaving the narrow gauge for any minor systems, feeders and cross lines.

Another very important question was dealt with by Napier at this time. He inherited from Sir William Mansfield, the late Commander-in-Chief, a list of officers that could not be entrusted with military command:

They were not fit to have regiments, but, remaining at stations fell into command by seniority. It was necessary to prevent this, but in doing so he sanctioned rather a harsh order, that they might leave if they did not like serving under their juniors, but could not quit their stations. He writes: "This I did not notice, and it is very hard. I shall certainly let them go where they please. It would be an infinite relief if they might go and live at home with a small addition to their English pay, until their succession to their pension or 'off reckonings.' It is absurd keeping men here whom we will not employ."

The tragic assassination of Lord Mayo in February, 1872, when on a visit to the Andaman Islands, put an end to a régime that Napier did not altogether appreciate. Though the Viceroy had favoured his scheme for a Camp of Exercise, he was persistent in pressing for army reductions of which Napier did not approve. In writing to Baker at the India Office, Napier says: "I drew out most reluctantly on the part of the Secretariat the telegrams asking to reduce the Cavalry. I am so glad you declined. Advantage was taken of my absence from the Council to abolish so much that had been resolved in favour of the soldier, that I am satisfied they cannot stand. I was really excluded from the Council. . . ."

It is interesting to note, however, that at this time there must have been some question of Napier succeeding Lord Mayo as Viceroy. In a letter of the 15th March, 1872, he writes to Baker:

I quite agree with your feelings, we must forget differences of opinion, and remember only the fine qualities of the man. It is a very sad warning of the uncertainty of everything here. How little one thought, when he left my tent, that we should

never see him again ! I was about the last to say good-bye to poor Lady Mayo at the station. She seemed to feel going at the last very much.

I am gratified at what you say of the feelings at the India Office regarding myself. I not only never had a thought that it was probable, but I had no desire to enter on a course which requires a man ten years younger. I dare say I could have done some good, but then I should have found opposition, and many who forgive one for being second, could never forgive being first—I mean, of the Indian Services. But, as I say, the probability never entered my mind for a moment, and I laughed at the suggestion of friends here. If there had been a difficult war pending, it might have been otherwise. I used always to hope that no crisis might come.<sup>1</sup> In the small matter of the Loshai expedition, I had been able to get through foolish opposition ; in a more serious matter I might have failed.

There are many rumours now afloat arising, no doubt, from Lord Mayo's assassination : one is that at the Mohurram all the Mahomedans are to rise and kill all the Europeans when the soldiers are at church on the 18th. Only the Mahomedans are to do this, to begin at Benares ! The Sikhs are to do something of the kind at Gwalior, where there are not 200. I do not think it is a proper time for reducing our army, though I attach no importance to these silly stories.

As at the time of Lord Elgin's death, the Governor of Madras was summoned to act as temporary Viceroy. This was now Lord Napier of Merchiston, the head of the Napier family, created Baron Ettrick of Ettrick the same year, presumably in order to distinguish him from Lord Napier of Magdala.

Napier writes from Calcutta on March 1, 1872 :

Since I wrote to you I have seen the acting Viceroy, whom I am disposed to like very much. I have seen him only twice, once I called, and we rode out together, and once in Council, when we had a long discussion, in which he showed

<sup>1</sup> During Lord Mayo's Viceroyalty.

both dignity and temper—suavity I should say. I do not know what his advantages over me are in other matters, but in good looks I must confess that my branch of the Napiers in my own person falls very short. On the other hand I think my sons and daughters are better-looking than his. His face is very pleasant. . . .

The arrival of Lord Northbrook, the incoming Viceroy, took place about May, 1872. Napier writes from Simla :

About Lord Northbrook—I have seen but little of him ; that little I like, both publicly and privately. In Council he expedited business, and his view of such cases as have come before him have been generally sound. I of course approve of his views of the conduct of the Military Department, of which I think I wrote you something in my last letter. But it really must be very difficult for a Viceroy at first to escape being fooled by the burst of adulation that greets him. From having been a hard-worked under-strapper at the War Office, to come here and find himself received with a chorus of praise and credit that he had not dreamed of. The Press and Public worship him because he is wealthy—the Members of Council and Secretaries worship him to find out his weak points, and to make him believe in them. I can fancy a new Viceroy rubbing his eyes and pulling his hair to find out if he is really the same man that was puzzled and snubbed about the Control Department. Strachey is now applying the poultice to him that he did to Lord Mayo. I hope he may not be successful.

In July, Napier says :

I find Lord Northbrook very reasonable, he seems desirous to have my opinion, and gives it due weight so far as we have gone. His Staff who are of the New School interest themselves in Army questions, and are all in the line of improvement of Indian as well as British officers. I am very glad to be so helped, and am quite ready to keep pace with any improvements. I have said that the Indian Officers will be quite

as ready as British Officers to take advantage of as much education as the Government will provide for them. . . .

For the first six months all went well. But in March, 1873, Lord Northbrook first propounded his ideas which were not to Napier's liking, and by July of that year they had received definite shape. Napier, in 1871, had written that "our only power in India is our British Army, and it is a sure game for any needy or scheming Commander-in-Chief to gain the goodwill of the Government by proposing reductions and proclaiming that they are merely readjustments involving no loss of strength." Lord Northbrook, as Under-Secretary for War, must already have been involved in Mr. Cardwell's Reorganization Scheme of 1872 for the British Army, and doubtless came to India pledged both to retrenchment and reform. It is not surprising, therefore, that they did not long remain in agreement.

Napier writes to Baker on the 14th July 1873 :

At length the secret is out. The Viceroy sent me a paper containing his views on, really army reductions—ostensibly army reform. There is at the beginning much assumption which I dispute; he depreciates the Native Army unfairly—considers it merely fit to meet the ordinary troops of the Native States of India, and accepts the exaggerated views of the discontented class. He proposes what was proposed to me when I came—to club three regiments into a brigade, to localise the Headquarters in the District, if possible, from whence recruiting is to take place. The officers are to be promoted on one regimental list, passing from battalion to battalion as promoted—an officer to each company.

Napier objected to this as entirely upsetting existing arrangements, objected to the constant changing of officers which Native troops very particularly dislike, and to Native officers being pushed back from the com-

mand of their companies. Also a regiment is apt to acquire local ties and imbibe the religious or political feelings of the neighbourhood, not at all to be desired in India, where, after the Mutiny, different classes and races had to be mixed and isolated. Such a brigade, Napier pointed out, would be united in feeling as regards themselves, but greatly disunited as regards their officers. Fortunately the India Office supported Napier, and by August, 1874, Lord Northbrook professed to have abandoned the idea of any extensive reorganization. In fact, the time for reorganization was not yet ripe. Too short a time had passed since the Mutiny, and it was not until 1891 that Lord Roberts, when Commander-in-Chief in India, increased the number of class regiments, and inaugurated a system of linked battalions in groups of three battalions—a measure justified in his opinion by the then greater strength of the British Army, and the increased means of rapid communication.

Meanwhile in October, 1872, when both Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief left Simla on their extended tours, Napier had met Lord Northbrook at Mooltan, where there was a question of the erection of a small fort on a better site than that hitherto chosen. "I have advised a small strong work which may serve as a nucleus for a larger work when the possible invasion of India may render it advisable. I parted on very friendly terms with Lord Northbrook. I cannot say what the pressure of finance or of advisers nearer at hand may incline him to, but he seems prepared to take a reasonable view of military wants. He is willing to complete properly the huge barracks which have been built, and to consider fairly the wants educational and material of soldiers."

Thence Napier proceeded to inspect the site for a new Hill station at Murree, and superintended a Camp of Exercise in the Indus Valley between Rawal-Pindi and Peshawar. The camp turned out well, the troops, much improved since the previous year, tried the new drill, opinions being much divided. Napier remarks :

There certainly is no ground yet for discontinuing the Line formation—on the contrary, I think its merits are brought more into relief. It never was tried in the Franco-Prussian war, only columns against skirmishers, or against troops under cover. The tactics of Wellington which scribblers denounce as out of date, were lines against columns, and they treated the column as the Prussian tactics did the French columns, and as the French troops, under cover, treated Prussian columns, until they were turned by superior numbers. After the French veterans were out of the Field, it seemed to matter little what the French levies did—they were beaten in every way, and without ceremony. . . . Much is made of the collision between the Native troops : it was the fault of the Officers not having properly explained the orders to their men ; and the frontier regiments being very wild. The Pathans in their natural state resort to stone-throwing just as English schoolboys do. . . . Our review at the close of the camp was very successful—great numbers of the Frontier Chiefs came down to see it, and I have no doubt the political effect will be very good.

About this time Napier paid a visit to Runbeer Singh, the Maharajah of Kashmir at Jammoo.

The morning after our arrival, he had a drive of wild animals for us. It would have been nicer without the shooting, which was rather a shame when the poor creatures clustered about the machan.<sup>1</sup> The only animals that seemed to know there was no grace for them were the pigs which hurtled by rapidly. The Dogras, the Maharajah's clan, make fierce war on them and eat them greedily. I was obliged to shoot two or three

<sup>1</sup> Screened seat tied up in the branches of a tree.

wretched animals as I was rapidly sinking into discredit. I told the Maharajah that I was by no means angry even with the pigs, but he was jealous for my honour, and contrived, I believe, to kill one and said it was me. A much more interesting sight was his "force" the next day—two capital infantry regiments and his bodyguard, well-dressed and well commanded, by men who had been in our service. . . .

The gamekeeper at one of his country visits at home, after Abyssinia, may almost be pardoned, in his ignorance of Napier's kindly disposition, for the remark: "Bless you 'e don't care for our sort of shooting, 'e only likes to shoot men!"

Frequent allusions are made in Lord Napier's correspondence to the Russians whose progress he watched with the eye of a connoisseur. The Black Sea Conference was held in London in 1871, in consequence of Russia having torn up the Black Sea Treaty, and the advance of Russia upon Khiva took place in 1873, when Lord Granville was Minister for Foreign Affairs. Napier says in February, 1873:

We have been looking over maps to see what the Russia-Granville boundary means. Russia as usual takes a good step forward. She would be much impeded and put to expense and delay, if we were to support the people who still resist her with arms, money and volunteers even. And she will temporise and be civil. As soon as Khiva is disposed of, and she is firmly established there, it will not be difficult to find cause of offence against the Afghans and their borderers, who are not much under any control, and we shall be unable to offer good reasons to the contrary. In any time of difficulty we shall find that our feudatories have been tampered with. Under the financial and reducing policy, we shall be found with insufficient forces, with our long lines of communication from the frontier to the sea, unsupported by properly secured posts. Whether the event comes ten years or twenty years hence, I believe the result will be the same.

As early as 1871 Napier had news, through the report of a Native officer travelling from Kabul to Turkistan, of Russian doings in Central Asia, of a force of 7,000 well-disciplined and war-trying men at Samarkand, of 50,000 men at Tashkend, and of a Shah at Bokhara under Russian tutelage. On the Native officer's return to Kabul, the Amir of Afghanistan made him relate what he had seen and heard, and was able to corroborate his news from his own news-writers. The Amir said: "They are at no distance from my frontier, there is only the river Amur between us—indeed, a few are on this side of the river. I am at a loss to understand what the English Government thinks of this state of things, and what their views are. Although I myself have communicated with them on the subject, they do not seem anxious to arrest the progress of such a formidable adversary."

Lord Napier evidently had had some difficulty in persuading Lord Mayo of the truth concerning Russia's movements in Central Asia, for on June 20, 1871, he wrote :

I must add another of Lord Mayo's ideas, that Gortchakoff tells him everything that the Russians are doing in Central Asia. The state of Afghanistan is unfortunate, everything seems to combine against our having permanent influence in that country. We may hear of a Russian officer at Herat any day.

Later on, Lord Napier's remarkable prescience in regard to Afghan affairs can be traced in his correspondence. Referring to the Seistan Boundary Commission, which he afterwards quoted as one of the causes of the war with Afghanistan some years later, he wrote in July, 1872 :

Nothing of importance has come up except Seistan Boundary affairs. The proceedings of General Goldsmid seem to me very weak, and if we proceed to arbitrate when our Commissioner was prevented from seeing the country, we shall eat much dirt. The Persian Commissioner was most insolent, but, like the Alabama Commissioners, General Goldsmid seems to think he must not let his Mission be an empty one, and as Afghanistan is further off, it may be thought that she can easily be made to accept our decision, but it will be far otherwise. If you give an Afghan twenty favours and one refusal, he forgets the first and never forgives the last.

A letter of the 8th August, 1873, points to further aggressiveness on the part of Russia, and in his Memorandum on Persia, given in the Appendix, it is shown how Sher Ali, the Afghan Amir who came to meet Lord Mayo at Umballa in 1872, might have been converted into an ally by different treatment. Again in 1873, the Amir's Mission to India failed, Lord Northbrook having interposed in favour of the Amir's son, Yakub Khan, then a prisoner. Napier remarks with reference to this affair in a letter of the 13th September, 1873, that the Kabul Envoy had gone off with ten lacs of rupees and 15,000 rifles without giving any *quid pro quo* on the part of the Amir, and thinks "We had better exchange Foreign Departments!"

Then, in 1874, in a letter dated October 20, to the Duke of Cambridge, Napier says:

The conduct of Sher Ali has certainly been uncivil if not unfriendly. . . . I was inclined to attribute the refusal to allow Sir D. Forsyth to return<sup>1</sup> via Kabul to a real apprehension for the safety of the party, but his additional and gratuitous affront would lead me to believe that he is resenting our Seistan arbitration. That the Afghan Government would

<sup>1</sup> From a Mission to Yarkand.

do so, was foreseen by a part at least of the Government.<sup>1</sup> . . . The Foreign Office, not appreciating the situation, and underrating the Afghan side of the question, would not allow Col. Pollock who went on the Afghan side to have any voice, but placed the whole power of deciding in the hands of Col. Goldsmid who knew nothing of the Afghan claims, and who allowed himself to be bullied by the Persian Commissioner and prevented from visiting the boundary to make enquiries. It would have been far better to have let them fight it out. The rumours of a Russian trading mission to Kabul would give colour to the idea that Sher Ali is disgusted with our lukewarm advocacy, and is trying to conciliate the Russian."

And this is what actually happened. Lord Roberts, in his *Forty-one Years in India*, gives a very clear account of the steps which gradually led up to the Afghan War. The danger of standing aloof from Afghanistan had been emphasized by Sir Bartle Frere, and Lord Lytton who had replaced Lord Northbrook in 1876, at once demanded to send an envoy to Kabul. The Amir demurred, flirted with the Russians, and matters went from bad to worse. Finally, in 1878, after Russia had concluded the war with Turkey, and was able again to turn her attention to India and Afghanistan, the report of a Russian Mission of importance to Kabul, forced the Viceroy to despatch a similar Mission from the British side under General Sir Neville Chamberlain, Commander-in-Chief of Madras. This Mission being refused entry, led to the Afghan War. When Roberts reached Kabul in 1879, he found that the Amir had been welcoming Russia there since the failure of the 1873 Mission, and that the town had become "Russianized."

Thus was developed the long series of British and Russian rivalries in Central Asia. There were many

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix—Minute by Lord Napier on Persia.

wiseheads who ridiculed the idea that there was ever cause for anxiety about the Russian advance in Central Asia, but those who have been behind the scenes know that the danger was very real at all times, and sometimes became acute even after the Afghan War. It was openly acknowledged by Russian Commanders such as Skobelev, that Russia would never have penetrated the desert wastes of Central Asia, had there not existed the lure of a wealthy India beyond, and had we not consistently opposed Russia in the direction of Constantinople. The North-West frontier of India was our "tendon Achilles," and the Russians knew it; indeed, we never ceased from telling them so. A secret report from one of our most distinguished officers in India, the late Sir C. MacGregor, fell into Russian hands, and gave them many useful hints as to how to get to India. Russian railways and harbours connecting Russia in Europe with Central Asia, were carefully constructed, before the close of the nineteenth century, with a view to the rapid transport of a much greater force than could ever have been required to operate against the people of Central Asia. At times, the bazars of India quivered with excitement at the news of what proved to be a mere change of garrison of Russian posts near the Afghan frontier, and this state of affairs continued until 1907, when the Anglo-Russian Agreement came into being.

This great relief to India was attained, thanks in the first place to the crushing defeat of Russia by the Japanese, and in the second place to the efforts of the two Governments represented at St. Petersburg by M. Isvolsky, Russian Foreign Minister, and Sir Arthur Nicolson,<sup>1</sup> British Ambassador. Their efforts

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carnock.

would, however, have proved fruitless, according to Mr. Steed, *The Times* correspondent, in his valuable Memoirs, had it not been for the special intervention of the Czar Nicolas II.

But more than once during that period, we came very near to operations against the Russians both in Europe and Asia.

Lord Napier's Memorandum on Persia already referred to (*vide* Appendix) recommends the acceptance of the Shah's request for the moral and material support of Great Britain, including the loan of British officers to organize the Persian Army. The British Government unfortunately did not seize this opportunity, but adopted one of his recommendations in placing a main post of observation at Meshed, under the direction of a British Military officer, and a Consulate-General was subsequently established, which proved of great utility.

A letter from Napier to the Duke of Cambridge, dated 13th May, 1875, says :

The question of Persia has been before the Government here. Lord Northbrook is averse to anything being done, and takes a view diametrically opposite to mine. He sent his opinion privately to Lord Salisbury without our knowing it, and while the several members of the Government were reading through a small chest of voluminous records. Having sent in his own opinion, I imagine there will be no particular anxiety to send on any adverse ones, and there is no saying when the composite Government opinion may reach the India Office. I have therefore sent a copy of my own opinion for Your Royal Highness' information.

That Lord Napier, assisted by his Quartermaster-General, made a careful study of the future theatre of war, is shown by his correspondence. Sir Charles

Staveley writes to Lord Napier that as Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay army he has received a demand from the Viceroy, through the Governor of Bombay, to furnish a report as to moving an army to Herat in case of need. He adds: "I propose telling him, if you have no objection, that you were good enough to let me see a very complete plan you had drawn up on the subject, and which you were about to forward to him. That I conclude therefore that any information from me is now unnecessary, but if it is necessary, such as the means of providing transport, provisions, etc., for the column you propose should start from Jacobabad, in this Presidency, and which I noted should consist of 30,000 men and 92 guns, I should be glad to collect it."

Amongst Lord Napier's papers is also a very interesting document, presumably received from the British Foreign Office, dated September, 1851, containing a translation from a German work, *Geschichte Peters des Grossen*, by Edward Peltz, Leipzig, which purports to give Peter the Great's will as transmitted by the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg to the King of France in 1757, and shortly afterwards made public. The will itself is said to be deposited in the archives of the Palace of Peterhof, near St. Petersburg, and among official circles in Russia was well known to exist before the Great War.

Opinions differ as to the authenticity of the will, but as the preamble says:

Independently of its authenticity there is much intrinsic interest in the document as embodying principles of action which have been notoriously followed by Russia during the last 100 years, with such modifications as time and circumstances, and the variations of European equilibrium have

rendered necessary. The ninth rule is especially worthy of attention at the present moment.

9th. We must approach as much as possible to Constantinople and towards India. He who can once get possession of those places and reigns there, will be the real sovereign of the world. With this view we must provoke ceaseless wars, and suggest constant quarrels, at one time with Turkey, and at another time with Persia. We must establish docks and wharves in the Euxine, and by degrees make ourselves masters of and possess the sea entirely as well as the Baltic, which is a doubly important element to the success of our plan.

We must hasten the downfall of Persia, push on into the Persian Gulf—if possible re-establish the ancient commercial intercourse with the Levant through Syria, and force our way into the Indies which are the store houses of the world. Once there, we can dispense with the gold of England.

Lord Napier's views at this time on the strategical problem of the North-West frontier of India are well shown in his letter of the 8th May, 1874, to the Duke of Cambridge as follows:

Your Royal Highness asks my opinion regarding the question of Afghanistan and particularly Herat. I used to think that we might safely await our enemy in India, but the progress of Russia has been so different from what was expected, she has advanced so methodically, bringing up her communications so regularly in her rear, and habilitating herself so firmly, that by the time she arrives on our borders, she will not be easily pushed away. I am now therefore inclined to meet her in Afghanistan, if she touches it, and to proceed against her at once if she occupies any more of Persia, or any part of Afghanistan.

For this we ought to be prepared, our army ought to be ready, our railways completed to the foot of the Bolan and Khyber passes. Our transport should have a more organised care—and our Native army should have some more reasons to be quite contented with the service; that is, we should be able to command the best class of men. I do not think

Russia should be allowed to advance a step nearer. Lord Northbrook, I think, does not believe in the danger, though I may be mistaken. I am of opinion that in dealing with our frontiers we should proceed without the least reference to what may be said by Russia. Our Khelat frontier requires action.

After the first successful Camp of Exercise at Delhi in 1871-72, and that on the N.W. Frontier in the following winter, camps were held all over the country, the Commander-in-Chief visiting them in turn. In the winter of 1871-72, Roberts, as D.Q.M.G., accompanied him on his tour, and in remarking in his autobiography how much Lord Napier did to improve the army by means of Camps of Exercise, adds: "No Commander-in-Chief ever carried out inspections more thoroughly than did Lord Napier."

To a person conversant with Indian geography, the programme of his tour in 1873-74, as contained in his letter of 9th October, 1873, shows that he included in one winter tour stations in the Himalayas, the N.W. Provinces and the presidencies both of Bombay and Madras, finishing up with Central India, so that with exception of the Punjab, he travelled over nearly the whole of India in the course of a few months!

Concerning administration, an instance of Napier's high moral standard is well shown in the case of the deposition of the Gaekwar of Baroda. In his official Minute of the 29th June, 1874, Napier says:

I should be extremely sorry to see it put forward in any degree in extenuation, that the shameful abuses that have been brought to notice, will be found to exist in an equal or worse degree in any Native State in the Empire. If it is so, it is very much to the discredit of the British Government and its Political Department that things should go on under

the cover of British bayonets, without being the subject of the most urgent advice and remonstrance by the Political Officer. The way in which these abuses are alluded to, would argue that they are of small consequence and not to be interfered with.

A pencil note in Lord Napier's handwriting adds: "This was the false argument supplied to palliate matters, and depreciated Phayre's report." General Phayre was the British Political Resident at Baroda, and his adverse report on the conduct of the Gaekwar, had not been appreciated by the Foreign Department.

The Mutiny had caused a heavy deficit in the Indian Budget, and the revenue, derived chiefly from land, opium, salt and a few Customs duties, not being sufficiently elastic, had to be raised. It was therefore decided in 1859 to introduce, among other items of taxation, an Income tax. This policy, at first approved, and afterwards regretted by the Home Government, was opposed by Sir Charles Trevelyan, who, eventually as Financial Member of Council, with support from Government, succeeded in obtaining an equilibrium by the reduction both of military expenditure and taxation. As has been seen in a former chapter, Napier, as Military Member of Council, had strenuously opposed this policy, well knowing that for every reduction in taxation both the Army and the Public Works had to suffer.

Up to the present, however, the Income tax had survived, and it soon became apparent that Lord Northbrook was bent on abolishing it. Historians have described this tax as having been both a burden on the Indian people and insignificant in value. Such was not Napier's view. On April 5, 1872, he wrote: "We have finished the Budget discussions; the

surplus which seemed so favourable has diminished at the last so seriously, that, but for the Income tax which it is determined to keep on, there would be a deficit. . . . I am in favour of the tax. I should be glad to have the extra £100 a year which the tax takes from me, but I am glad the tax is maintained. . . .” As a matter of fact, it was not the inhabitants of India who were relieved by its abolition, but the European merchants, and the small but rapacious class of Indian traders. And a letter from Sir R. Temple, at this time Financial Member of Council, stated that the Income tax amounted to nearly £600,000, and begged for Lord Napier’s presence in Council for support in opposing its abolition.

However, a letter from Napier, dated 16th April, 1873, announced that the Viceroy had decided to abolish the tax on his own responsibility, and so informed the Council.

He was reminded that the exercise of his authority was only necessary when there was a majority of Council against him, and he had not put the question. This put out his proceeding which was *rather* theatrical, but it turned out that he had a majority. Mr. Hobhouse, who had strongly defended the Income tax, when it came to the vote voted with the Viceroy, so no exercise of supreme authority was necessary. Ellis, Temple and I have recorded our Minutes, of which the two last have given offence, though they only contain what we believe and know to be truths that have been commonly put forth in discussing the question. . . .

On this occasion Lord Northbrook had ordered the Public Works budget for original works in Bengal to be cut down to 10 lacs, and only on Lord Napier’s pressing remonstrance, supported by the Council had given £120,000 more. In the same manner other things

were limited to enable him to have a nominal surplus, and the wants of the troops were consequently neglected for another year.

During the ensuing winter Napier paid a visit to the Madras Presidency, and was agreeably surprised to find the Madras troops so efficient, the Native Infantry well drilled and smart in the Field. He entirely dissented from the wholesale condemnation of them which had taken place, nor did he approve of the new proposals for abolishing the Commander-in-Chiefships of Madras and Bombay, and for dividing India into a series of small commands on the model of Prussia. "What is the extent and population of Prussia compared to our Indian Empire? The Commander-in-Chief, even to see his army, must travel many thousands of miles in the year, and would then fail in seeing one half of his troops," said Napier, who was himself indefatigable in that respect.

On the 12th February, 1874, he writes to say that his horse had fallen back with him on rising out of a nullah, and rolled over him, which laid him up for several weeks, just as he was concluding his inspections at Hyderabad, on his way back to Bengal. Rumours of famine now began to be heard. At first Napier is sceptical and writes: "The famine, I fear, presses, since all Public Works expenditure is reduced, and no reliefs or Camps of Exercise are to take place. Is the pressure so severe, or is the famine, like Caleb Balderstone's fire, to cover all reductions desired, to please the newspapers and Calcutta merchants? It is better this should be the reason rather than famine pressure."

Soon however he is convinced, and by the beginning of March, 1874, writes: "Relief arrangements are

already in progress regarding the famine ; there will be hard work to get them completed in time, but there is hope. The worst district is 100 miles from the Ganges ; I am giving officers and soldiers in every direction to aid in organizing relief works." A week later he writes again : " I have considered it my duty to give every aid at once without hesitation—officers—regiments—men—selected for duties of organization, etc.—the whole army, if necessary to ward off a greater calamity than war."

But by April Napier writes : " The famine has as yet developed no severity, but every nerve of Government is strained to avert it—about 800,000 people now are fed at the famine works " ; and on the 15th May : " Temple says that the Government arrangements have got ahead of the famine. The scurrilous public declare that there is no famine and that the abuse of the relief works is flagrant ; that Government will be as much embarrassed to dispose of the grain as they have been to get it brought up in time. Of course, there will be abuses, and when people are working with a rope round their necks, the other end of which is in the hands of an excited British public, to be pulled if there is any famine suffering, they will spend anything rather than be found to have left anything undone." Napier concludes that " the Government have acted for the best, have not gone to the extent that England would have urged it to, but have done so much that half the world will accuse them of extravagance, if they succeed in preventing demonstrations of famine distress." And yet at this time anti-British propaganda in Russia accused us of having deliberately fostered famine in India in order to kill off a too numerous population. The writer, when

Military Attaché at St. Petersburg, many years later, found this belief prevalent among well-educated Russian officers.

Finally, Napier writes in October of the same year, 1874: "I have been much disappointed that no notice has been taken of the troops in the Famine. The Viceroy has praised Temple and the Civilians and the Secretary of State has praised the Viceroy, but the Native Troops who have behaved admirably, have been unnoticed. If I can only get an opinion from the Civil Authorities, I shall thank the officers and men in General Orders."

The railway question, already mentioned in the previous chapter, continued to drag on. The experience of the famine emphasized the evils of a break of gauge, and in March, 1874, Napier wrote to Baker:

I have sent for the railway gauge papers. . . . I hope the case is not finally settled; now that Lord Salisbury is at the India Office, he surely will not allow the opinion of the Indian Government to be buried in the unfair way in which it was by the Duke (of Argyll). It is impossible to travel as I have done without being deeply sensible of the evils of a break of gauge. Imagine one just in front of the famine districts, going to Hyderabad; the folly it would have been to break the gauge at the junction of the G.I.P. is most striking, and through the absurd folly of Ellis, the evil is intended between Agra and Delhi. I do hope you will have influence with Lord Salisbury to stop the prosecution of the narrow gauge beyond Lahore. If anyone were to call for the correspondence in Parliament, the Duke's conduct would be exposed. . . .

In May he was "rejoiced at the order from the Secretary of State to have the broad gauge in the Gwalior branch," but as regards the Northern Punjab line they were drifting into completing it "on a gauge that everybody condemns except Strachey and Wil-

liams. . . . I do hope something may be done. Lord Northbrook would jump at an opening to have the broad gauge settled, but apparently is too much hurt or too proud to reopen a question in which he got such a rebuff in the Duke's last order." Finally, a telegram arrived announcing the broad gauge for the Indus line, and left the Government of India to determine the gauge of the Northern line, and Napier is satisfied that the broad gauge will be ordered for the line throughout.

At this time, or rather two or three months previously, his mouth being sealed by the famine regarding expenditure, Napier was on very good terms with Lord Northbrook, but when the discussions on the next Budget took place, and a surplus of 3 millions was announced after the requirements of the famine had been provided for, he felt it his duty to submit a Minute which practically amounted to an indictment against the Government. Napier pointed out that although the so-called surplus had commenced a year before the famine, the military needs of the country had been neglected prior to that period. He proceeded to enumerate the military demands which had been shelved on the plea of lack of funds. These included defences needed for Aden, Bombay, Burma and the River Hoogly leading to Calcutta, and the building of seven hospitals for British, two for Native troops, and a much needed water supply for several cantonments. In 1862 the Government had allotted 10 millions for the erection of new barracks, and of that sum only  $3\frac{3}{4}$  millions had been actually spent on new constructions, while £200,000 worth of material had been left lying about the unfinished works. He emphasized the additional loss sustained by the State

in the neglect of the accommodation necessary to preserve the health and moral conditions of the British soldier, who as Napier said: "won India, reconquered it, and through whom alone, under good government, we shall retain it."

The above Minute, after much delay, was duly criticized by the Military Member of Council, whom Napier accused of disingenuousness to use no harsher expression in regard to it, and this is a good example of the friction engendered by the system which permitted, and indeed required the checking of the Commander-in-Chief's proposals by the Viceroy's military adviser, necessarily a junior officer, referred to in a previous chapter. Napier, foreseeing delay, had taken the precaution to send a copy privately to the India Office with a hope that it might find its way to Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India. It is not known what happened, but the military estimates for the following year showed an increase.

In matters of discipline Napier was very strict. He did not shrink from punishing insubordination with the extreme penalty of martial law as was evident from his letter to the Duke of Cambridge in May, 1867, when Governor of Bombay. At that time he succeeded in practically stamping out the crime of insubordination in the Bombay Army. As Commander-in-Chief he had to see that such crimes should not be tried by Civil Courts, where Civilian Judges were unable to "appreciate crimes against discipline." In a letter to Baker of the 28th March, 1873, he says: "I hope no hasty order will be issued bringing all capital offences by soldiers under the Mofussil High Courts. After several ineffective sentences by Civil Courts, to which I resorted at the urgent advice of Romaine, I got on,

in which insubordination was coupled with attempt to murder. The unfortunate man was sentenced by the Court Martial to be hanged and was executed. Since then not a single case has occurred." On the other hand, he defended the soldier from too severe treatment at the hands of a Civil Court. Many years later, after he had relinquished the command of Gibraltar, the British Government referred to him for advice as to the desirability of removing the clause in the Army Act which excepts Gibraltar from those places where there is a Civil High Court within 100 miles, and where British soldiers must be tried by a Civil Court for capital offences. Napier's successor had recommended the abolition of the clause, but Napier defended it, because the military orders to Sentries at Gibraltar were those of a fortress in face of the enemy, and they had orders to shoot any person not obeying their challenge. As many well-to-do inhabitants of Gibraltar lived by smuggling, it would have been a temptation to a Civil jury to condemn a soldier as guilty of murder, who should happen to kill a smuggler in the course of his duty.

The clause was retained.

Napier's five-year Command was approaching completion at the end of 1874, and Napier himself wished to relinquish his command. But, as Baker hinted, the India Office wished him to remain, and when the Duke of Cambridge added his powerful appeal to Napier to remain another year or two, supported as it was by Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, and Lord Northbrook as Viceroy, Napier could not do otherwise than consent to remain for another year, although he had begun to feel the burden of forty-six years in India.

The Duke of Cambridge, in thanking Napier for acceding to his request "in so handsome a manner," drew his attention to an article in *The Times*, from its correspondent in Calcutta, abusing the Native army. The Duke did not believe the statements, but asked Napier to furnish him with material to refute the assertions. This letter is dated 13th January, 1875, and the Duke added that he was anxious regarding the paucity of European officers, and that there was no reserve of these, and he would like to see a considerable augmentation in the numbers of the subalterns of European regiments, so as to give this reserve for the Native army in a time of emergency.

Napier's reply to this was to forward a Memo. by General Brownlow explaining the reasons for the present organization and why there is so much bitterness in the expressions of discontent. He adds: "There are no doubt matters which require to be improved as regards the officers, but great improvement has taken place, and the Native army is really better than ever it has been."

On 29th April Napier writes :

I now refer to Your Royal Highness' remarks regarding General Brownlow's Paper. In sending it, I think I mentioned that he went rather to extremes in one way, as those who clamour for the old organization do in the other. It is impossible to suppose that Brownlow really means that the Native officers are the backbone inclusive of the European Officers. What he means is that the European officers, being on a pedestal above the regiment, the Native officers are the backbone of the Native portion—that is, the good class of Native officers. The regiments that mutinied had no backbone, the Native officers were nonentities, never having been entrusted with command or responsibility. They had everything to lose ! the good pay or pension they had earned ! But

they were old and feeble, raised by seniority, and they were swept away by the young men. But hardly any Native officers, if even a single one, went against us who was of a good family and position.

And many that were strong enough stood by us, saved and brought in European officers, and others. By making the Native officer's position higher and educating him a little, he will be the more likely to be loyal, and to understand his interests as depending on our stability, than to go against us. In another mutiny, the Sepoys would have neither gunners nor artillery. The mixture of races, the better established discipline and obedience, and the vast diminution of our Native army, are the guarantces against mutiny. We shall never keep it away by having an ignorant soldiery without prospect of rising to an honourable position. I can quite understand an officer of the old Bengal army, or of the present Madras and Bombay armies, who was brought up in the old style of Native army, if he has not seen what has been done elsewhere, being unable to understand that the Native officers of every part of India can be taught, and raised to the positions of Company Commanders, and that they will fill them efficiently. . . . I do not expect the process to be otherwise than slow, as long as the officers remain who will not believe in the possibility of teaching their Native officers. But I saw enough of the Bombay and Madras armies to be convinced that the only obstacles to success are the prejudices of the European officers. . . .

I have proposed a Camp of 20,000 men for H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

This deliberate opinion of Napier regarding the capacity of the Native officer for command of a Company is very important, based as it was on intimate knowledge of his behaviour in all circumstances, and on a sympathetic and generous comprehension of his character. The Native officer when given a chance by proper education and the practice of command will, he believed, rise to his responsibilities. Many

British officers shared that opinion without being persuaded of the wisdom of so improving the Native officer. It is therefore of particular interest to read Napier's opinion that we shall never keep a mutiny away by having "an ignorant soldiery without prospect of rising to an honourable position." In later years the Indian Government recognized that fact to some extent by instituting a cadet college in India, but the exigencies of modern war with its heavy demands on the young officers, made an increase to the number of British officers in a Native regiment essential, and proportionately reduced the opportunities of the Native officer for the command of a company, on which Lord Napier, ever the generous champion of the Indian soldier, laid such stress.

Indeed, the question of the officering of the Native army is still, and must long remain most important and difficult of solution.

The future war in Afghanistan, which General Roberts brought to a successful conclusion a few years later, is foreshadowed in Napier's correspondence. In a letter to the Duke of Cambridge, dated November 27, 1874, Napier reports the treacherous arrest of Yakoob Khan by his father, Sher Ali, the Amir of Afghanistan, at the instigation of the mother of the heir apparent Ali Doola Jan, and states that the border chiefs and two chiefs of the Ghilzai tribe have taken up the quarrel. He adds: "It is at this time that Lord Northbrook has again written to press reductions of the Native army. I have frankly stated that I consider it unnecessary to enter again into details, as the reasons against reduction are much stronger than they were in 1871 and 1872."

Other letters of this date give evidence of the

thorough investigation which was made by Lord Napier and his Quartermaster-General of a future theatre of war in which the latter achieved such great distinction.

An interesting letter from Lord Napier to Lord Northbrook about this time, November, 1875, contains recommendations for increasing the pay and pensions of the Native army, amounting to a sum of over 10 lacs of rupees. He places the pay of the Native soldier first in urgency, stating that it had not been increased during the "present century" for the first six years of a soldier's service. He considers an increase to the means of the private soldier as "an absolute necessity of the most urgent nature."

Napier continues :

None of these items (including good conduct pay, compensation for dearness of provisions, etc.) need wait on organization, and if you could obtain sanction from the Secretary of State, which might be communicated by telegram after receipt of your letter, the announcement by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales that Her Majesty by your advice had granted these boons to the Native Army, would have immense political effect in stimulating the loyalty and attachment of the Army. The Army and the people would feel that they have a tangible sovereign, a want that has scarcely been satisfied since the days of the prosperity of the Mogul Empire—we may say, since the days of Shah Jehan. The time is short, but the object to be attained is very great. . . . I trust everything will go off happily at the Prince's landing. I trust to you to save my character for loyalty as I could not be present.

The Prince of Wales' visit proved an immense success, as the Duke of Cambridge had prophesied in a letter to Napier announcing his departure in October. The Prince arrived in India on the 23rd December, and early in January reached the camp at Delhi, which had been pitched for him alongside that of the

Commander-in-Chief, on the ground occupied by the British Army during the siege. Thus was realized the Prince's "greatest wish and fondest dream," namely to see and to know India, and, as his unfailing courtesy added in a letter from the Prince to Lord Napier five years previously, "to meet Lord Napier there."

Unfortunately just before the great review took place, Lord Napier had an accident from his horse falling over a small ditch and broke his collar-bone. A telegram from General Probyn conveyed the Prince's regrets, and that Lord Napier must not think of riding. Nevertheless, Napier was able to be present and remained mounted throughout the parade, which lasted for several hours, before he consented to lay up. It must not be presumed from his frequent falls that Napier was a bad horseman. Quite the contrary was the case. But throughout his career he was ever a bold and reckless rider, and in his younger days, his friends frequently prophesied that he would break his neck riding, as there was nothing too foolhardy for him to attempt in feats of horsemanship. He was a good judge of a horse and was invariably splendidly mounted.

The Prince left on the 7th March, 1876, and Lord Roberts writes in his Memoirs :

In less than a fortnight our dear old Chief followed, and I saw him off on 10th April. I was very low at parting with him, for though in the earlier days of our acquaintance, I used to think he was not very favourably disposed towards me, when I became more intimately acquainted with him nothing could exceed his kindness. He was universally regretted by Europeans and Natives alike. The soldiers recognised that he had carefully forwarded their interests and worked for their welfare, and the Native Princes and people felt that he was in sympathy with them, and to this day they speak of "Lat Napier Sahib" with the deepest respect and affection.

Lord Napier was succeeded in the command by Sir F. Haines. The *Civil and Military Gazette*, one of the leading papers in India, contained an article dated 8th April, 1876, warmly supporting a suggestion that the armies of India should subscribe a day's pay towards a fund which had been started in Calcutta to commemorate Napier's career. In the course of a laudatory article describing his services, the *Gazette* says that he took over a discontented army at the commencement of his period as Commander-in-Chief :

That General found the crime of insubordination with violence towards superior officers alarmingly prevalent when he assumed command. Firmness and justice tempered with mercy have succeeded in almost totally stamping out this crime from the ranks of the army in India. Lord Napier makes over to-day a charge to Sir Frederick Haines, of which both Generals have every reason to be proud, and for the splendid efficiency of which, England has to thank Lord Napier and the regimental officers who have carried out his anxious endeavours to keep the regimental system by which the British Army made its fame and brought glory to its colours. . . . There are financial philosophers who have spoken of him as a Commander-in-Chief who "thinks in lakhs," meaning that he was reckless of the cost of the measures he proposed, or the reforms he desired carried out. This is a calumny worthy of the narrow-mindedness which gave rise to it. Lord Napier admired economy in army administration as thoroughly as the most radical army reformer, but he demurred when called upon to sacrifice efficiency to the cry of economy. And for this the soldier has reason to be grateful to him. With a vast and ever-increasing civil expenditure, with no proper system of audit and check, the wail of our Indian financiers has always been "the cost of the Army. Cut down military expenditure, and behold a surplus!" Lord Napier would not lend himself to this cry, and hence the tears of his opponents in the Council.

## CHAPTER XV

### GIBRALTAR

1876-1882

Early in 1876 Lord Napier had been offered, and had accepted the responsible post of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the City and Garrison of Gibraltar. On his departure from India he returned home and resided for some months in Cavendish Square, and saw a good deal of the official world and of London Society. He had brought with him from India three or four handsome Arab and Australian horses, and was a frequent rider in the Park. Besides various official functions, he made a point of attending the House of Lords, and of speaking on military subjects and other matters on which he had special knowledge.

He was much interested in the Institution founded by Captain Walters of the Corps of Commissionaires, attended the parade, and in a letter to *The Times* signified its importance to the Army, and begged for the financial support of the British public.

Before taking up his appointment at Gibraltar, Napier obtained permission to accept the invitation of the German Emperor to attend the manœuvres in that country, in Prussia, as the guest of the Emperor, and in Saxony as that of the King of Saxony, being treated by both Sovereigns with marked distinction. It was not until the 10th October that he actually

arrived and assumed the command of the famous Rock Fortress. A letter from the Governor of Algeciras, dated 13th October, thanking Lord Napier for his courteous announcement of his appointment as Governor, and for his sincere desire to promote friendly intercourse with the neighbouring Spanish Governor, shows that Lord Napier was prompt in ingratiating himself with the Spanish General who cordially reciprocated Lord Napier's sentiments. Thus General de Torres y Ferrado became a personal friend, as did also his successor, and these courtesies served to smooth over more than one awkward frontier incident. Indeed, one such occurred almost immediately, as a letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, shows. In it is mentioned an affray of British officers with Spanish villagers which was happily brought to an end without putting a stop to the officers' hunting. The meets of the Calpe foxhounds were, and doubtless still are, a great feature in the social and sporting life of the British garrison, who, by the civility of the neighbouring officials, were enabled to ride for many miles in Spanish territory in every direction.

Another letter from Lord Carnarvon in June, 1877, asks for Lord Napier's opinion on the Defences of Gibraltar. A reply to this must have been promptly forthcoming, as General (Sir Lintorn) Simmons, Inspector-General of Fortifications, writes to Napier on the 3rd July as follows: "Your confidential report to H.R.H. rather startled me, as I was surprised to find some of your magazines, and especially the large store-magazine, are so imperfectly defended against Artillery fire"! In regard to the North Front, General Simmons thought the apprehension of danger, in a report of

some two years back, before Lord Napier's arrival, was exaggerated, but said he would do all he could to get Lord Napier's views responded to. Four or five months later, General Simmons came himself to Gibraltar to inspect, and in his report entered in detail into such matters as the protection of magazines, water supply and armament. He also recommended the installation of a few guns of the heaviest calibre. The result of this was that in April, 1878, the Secretary of State for War requested Lord Napier, who was in England at the time, to confer with the Defence Committee as to a site for a battery of two 100-ton guns.

Eventually two batteries were erected for the 100-ton guns, one called the Victoria and the other the Napier of Magdala battery. During Lord Napier's tour of service at Gibraltar, several other batteries were erected of heavy guns varying from 38 tons to 12 tons, casemate barracks were built, magazines were enlarged and shell stores constructed and better protected, as was also the water supply improved and better protected. Fresh regulations were recommended by Lord Napier and eventually carried out by which the Sanitary Commission, a civilian body which had complete control over the water supply of the fortress, was brought under Government control in spite of some opposition on the part of the townspeople.

They were troublous times between 1878 and 1882, what with Afghanistan, South Africa, and the Russo-Turkish War, and it behoved the Governor and the Home authorities to be especially vigilant with regard to the Mediterranean fortresses. At the same time Lord Napier did not neglect his opportunites as a Civil Governor. Early in 1877 a much-needed new wing

was added to The Convent, the Governor's town residence, and Lord Carnarvon wrote in November that he was "very pleased to hear of the satisfactory result of the improvements." In January, 1878, in taking farewell of Lord Napier on relinquishing office, Lord Carnarvon gracefully referred to the satisfaction he felt in having been able to place the "fortunes of our greatest foreign fortress in such guardianship as yours," and added that he had managed to secure a copy of the famous portrait of Lord Heathfield by Sir J. Reynolds, now in the National Gallery, for the Convent at Gibraltar. Lord Napier was also able to have restored the magnificent drawings in charcoal on the white-washed walls of the Patio in the Convent, of scenes during the siege of Gibraltar so gallantly defended by Sir George Eliott, afterwards Lord Heathfield, in 1782.

Among the important public works undertaken by Lord Napier during his tour of service as Governor may be cited the New Market, the Civil Hospital, the Signal Station at Windmill Hill (a great boon to the Shipping, the upper signal station being frequently enveloped in fog), the Lunatic Asylum and the Savings Bank. Some of these works were not completed until after Lord Napier's retirement from active service, but he continued to take the greatest interest in their progress, received periodical reports of their construction, and their final completion was a source of great pride and satisfaction to him.

Meanwhile, however, events of great importance were taking place in Europe. Russia had declared war on Turkey in April, 1877. The Russians crossed the Danube in June of that year, but thanks to the stubborn resistance of the Turks at Plevna, it was not until the opening of 1878 that the Turks were pros-

trated, and the road to Constantinople was open to Russia. This situation created great alarm in England, and the war feeling rose high. The music-hall song—

“ We don't want to fight, but by Jingo, if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the  
money too ”—

aptly described the prevailing sentiments of the Tory Party, and gave rise to the name of “ Jingo,” uttered as a reproach by the pacifists, but hailed with pride by chivalrous Tories.

Lord Beaconsfield was at that time in power, and considered it necessary to take practical steps to arrest Russia's progress towards Constantinople. A supplementary vote of 6 millions sterling for naval and military expenditure was taken on the 9th February, and the British Fleet made a demonstration up the Straits of the Dardanelles, only to return to Bezika Bay on the news of peace between Turkey and Russia. However, it soon became evident that Russia intended going on towards Constantinople. Lord Napier was hastily summoned from Gibraltar, which he left on the 28th February, 1878, and was appointed to command any Expeditionary Force that might be sent against Russia, with Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley as his Chief-of-Staff. Lord Napier remained in London for some months in close collaboration with the War Office. Amongst his papers are some interesting Memoranda by Sir Garnet Wolseley, including replies to questions put to him by Lord Napier as to the time required for mobilizing an Army Corps and placing it on the island of Mitelene, etc. Sir Garnet Wolseley was in favour of gaining possession of the Gallipoli Peninsula, if possible by sending a few British

officers and endeavouring to raise a Turkish force in British pay, or by taking the Bulair Lines if only occupied by about 23,000 Turkish troops, or if the Russians were in too close contact, he advised a landing on the Peninsula, and the seizure of the batteries at Kilid Bahr. This was written on the 17th March.

Lord Napier also consulted Colonel Home, of the Royal Engineers, then in charge of the Intelligence Branch of the Q.M.G. Department. The political situation was still obscure, and various combinations were suggested, according to whether Austria would aid us and whether Turkey would fight on our side, or be forced by Russia to fight against us. Acting on the latter supposition, Colonel Home emphatically declared the Asiatic side as the most favourable to attack, on various grounds, such as a good landing and defensive position near Bezika Bay, easily to be captured and held, better roads, stronger forts commanding the straits to be reduced, etc. In view of our subsequent operations in the Great War, it is interesting to observe that Lord Napier's opinion coincided with that of Colonel Home, as is evident by a further Memorandum by Sir Garnet Wolseley, dated 30th March, containing some very shrewd remarks on the military strength of Russia, how it was overestimated by non-military men at the same time that they underestimated the value of our own force. Sir Garnet concludes: "Should the position assume a more serious aspect, steps should be taken for seizing the Bulair Lines . . . or should that have in the meantime become impossible, an Army Corps should be landed at or near Bezika Bay, and the position from Kum Kalch extending south towards the Bay,

or east towards Eren-kui occupied, and the batteries commanding the Dardanelles from the Asiatic shore seized, as recommended in Lord Napier's Minute." However, as events turned out, the British Fleet which had been able to penetrate to the Sea of Marmora unopposed, confronted the victorious Russians before Constantinople, and a temporary arrangement was made by which the Russians remained outside Constantinople, and the British did not land. Matters still remained critical. It was decided secretly to call out the reserves, and to bring Indian troops to Malta. Prince Bismarck then intervened with proposals for a conference at Berlin. The Congress took place and peace was made by the famous Treaty of Berlin.

A farewell letter from Sir Garnet Wolseley, dated 18th July, 1878, thanking Lord Napier for his kindness, deploring the peace, and expressing the hope of again being associated with Lord Napier, marks the close of this episode.

Lord Napier returned to Gibraltar early in October, and his further correspondence shows that, apart from local affairs, he was much preoccupied with occurrences in South Africa and Afghanistan, and as these events influenced his movements, and are referred to very frequently in his letters, it is necessary to give a brief outline of what occurred. His friend, Sir Bartle Frere, had been appointed Chief Commissioner in South Africa, and war had broken out between Great Britain and the Zulu King Cetawayo. Lord Chelmsford had been appointed to command the British troops on Lord Napier's recommendation. The defeat of the British forces on January 22, 1879, created much alarm. Lord Napier was again obliged to return to England early in February and was pressed to

assume the command in South Africa. This he resisted, urging that it was not wise to withdraw a Commander the moment he suffered a temporary reverse. He did not wish to supersede his friend. On one occasion, in the course of conversation with a Royal Princess, who accused him of being, as was afterwards said of Lord Wolseley, our only General, and anxious to obtain command, Lord Napier replied: "Madam, you are more unjust than the British public." On the 20th March, 1879, Lord Napier sent a Memorandum to the Duke of Cambridge explaining how he had recommended Lord Chelmsford for the command as being the General most fitted for the post, and enumerating his past services. He added that he placed the Memorandum in His Royal Highness' hands to be used as H.R.H. might think proper, to be read in the House, if necessary.

The result of Lord Napier's chivalrous behaviour was that Lord Chelmsford was not superseded by him, and was soon able to retrieve his disaster by a victory that put an end to the war.

As regards Afghanistan, the position was that at the end of June, 1878, the Amir Sher Ali had received a Russian Mission at Kabul. Although the favourable conclusion of the Berlin Congress occurred just in time to cause the Russians to desist from making an offensive and defensive alliance with Afghanistan, the alarm of the Indian Government was such that the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, with the approval of the British Government, at once insisted on the Amir also receiving a British Mission at Kabul. Acting under Russian advice, Sher Ali sent an evasive reply, and when the Mission, under Sir N. Chamberlain, reached the Afghan frontier, near the Khyber Pass, it was refused admission.

This occurred on the 21st September, 1878. The British force was formed in three columns, an ultimatum demanding an apology and the acceptance of a permanent Mission in Afghanistan was issued on the 30th October and expired on the 20th November. The advance commenced the following day. The Afghan army was defeated by General Roberts at Peiwar Kotal. Another column, under Sir S. Browne, advanced to Jelalabad. Sher Ali fled to Turkestan with the Russian Mission, and his son, Yakub Khan, released from prison, assumed the Government. Then Sher Ali died on the 21st February, 1879, and Yakub Khan proposed peace to the Viceroy, who agreed to negotiate under certain conditions. These included the Khyber, Khuram, Pishin and Sibi districts to remain within British dominion, and the establishment of a permanent Mission at Kabul. Yakub's reply was unsatisfactory.

Here, to digress for a moment, it is interesting to note that Lord Napier wrote to the Duke of Cambridge on the 18th March, 1879, thanking him for the perusal of Lord Lytton's letter, and added: "I do not like it as regards Afghanistan, and believe the frontier as indicated will not be a workable one. It appears to be intended to abandon all those who deserted Sher Ali and Yakub Khan to come to us, when we make friends with Yakub Khan and retire from our advanced position."

To resume. At that time General Roberts was in occupation of the Shutur Gurdan Pass at the head of the Kurram Valley, the Peiwar Kotal and Ali Masjid had been taken; the enemy had been beaten near Jelalabad, and a successful skirmish had taken place near Kandahar. But the Afghans had not suffered a

severe defeat. Yakub Khan, instead of receiving an envoy at Kabul, came himself to the British camp at Gandamak, between Jelalabad and Kabul, in May, 1879, and the treaty of Gandamak closed the first phase of the war. General Roberts remained with his force in the Kurram, and with some misgiving saw Major Cavagnari cross the frontier on his way to Kabul as British Representative, in accordance with the late treaty. By September, Cavagnari and his party had been treacherously murdered by the Afghans, and by Christmas Eve of 1879 the avenging army of Roberts entered Kabul.

Severe measures had to be taken by General Roberts in restoring order and to punish those guilty of Cavagnari's murder. General Roberts was accordingly blamed by a certain section of the British public which is always more concerned with the welfare of Britain's enemies than that of herself and her friends. There is evidence in Lord Napier's correspondence of his having taken measures to defend General Roberts' reputation from such unworthy attacks.

The question of how to dispose of Afghanistan now had to be decided. For the past year, Lord Napier had been urging the retention of Kandahar and Jelalabad. This policy was, however, opposed by Lord Lawrence and other ex-Viceroy's. Then followed Lord Lytton's policy of conciliation and the consolidation of Afghanistan under Yakub Khan. The failure of this by the murder of the gallant Cavagnari, while lamented by Lord Napier on personal grounds, was greeted by him as offering the British Government another opportunity of amending their weak decision of withdrawal. He accordingly again wrote to Lord Lytton on the 3rd October, and while condoling with

him on the loss of the officers, and the ruin of the prospect which seemed to him so fair of establishing a free and independent Afghanistan, laid stress on the importance of keeping the road from the Shutur Gurdan to Kabul open during the winter, and assured him that with the experience of the former occupation of Kabul for the winter, "we rest quite confident in the wisdom and foresight of the General in Charge." He added: "In the correspondence of the late Sir A. Roberts, now in possession of his son General Roberts, there is a full detail of the errors of proceeding which led to our former disasters. No man therefore could be better warned against a repetition of them." He finally stated that he had received from General Stewart a statement of his reasons for recommending the abandonment of Kandahar, but that he had not found them convincing. In a further Memorandum on the 12th October Lord Napier enumerated the various policies then open to the Government, including the possibility of establishing Abdur Rahman as ruler of the whole of Afghanistan, but concluded by preferring the annexation of the district of Kandahar to British India, to be carried out in the most complete manner, leaving nothing to chance, and bringing up the railway as rapidly as possible. In a letter to General Dillon, he remarked with reference to General Stewart's preference for withdrawal, that the latter seemed to forget that "our object is to have the position of Kandahar as an Advanced Guard enabling us to prevent the occupation of Herat by an enemy."

However, in March, 1880, Lord Beaconsfield's Government was dissolved, and his place was taken by Mr. Gladstone. It is not surprising, therefore, that the policy of withdrawal won the day, and Abdur

Rahman Khan was invited to rule over, at any rate, Northern Afghanistan. General Roberts was making preparations to evacuate the country, when news was suddenly brought of the defeat of the British Kandahar force at Maiwand by Ayub Khan, a brother of Yakub Khan, advancing from Herat early in July, 1880. Then followed Roberts' famous march from Kabul to Kandahar in relief of that town, which put an end to the war, and by September, 1880, the British troops had evacuated Afghanistan.

Abdur Rahman Khan proved an exceptionally able monarch, and the kingdom of Afghanistan is apparently now established on a firm basis with complete independence, and control of her foreign relations with other Powers. But military strategists will probably agree that the North-West frontier of India would now be in a more satisfactory condition as regards its capability of resisting foreign aggression, had Lord Napier's suggestions been adopted; and had he been able, in the spirit of the true British Empire builder, he would have added another and fairer province to the great Indian Empire to which he had already so worthily contributed.

But before the fate of Afghanistan had been decided, Lord Napier's attention was taken up by another war in South Africa, and also by his appointment as Ambassador Extraordinary on the occasion of the second marriage of the King of Spain. As Lord Napier pointed out to the British Government, the nomination of the Governor of Gibraltar to such a duty almost amounted to an indiscretion, seeing that Spain had never abandoned the hope of regaining possession of the much coveted fortress, and had even been intriguing towards that end. Indeed, the very

title of the Governor of the neighbouring port of Algeciras, who was also styled "Governor of the fortress of Gibraltar, temporarily in possession of the English," showed what the feelings of patriotic Spaniards must have been. Nevertheless, Lord Napier's reputation and tactful treatment of his Spanish colleague, won for him a cordial reception at the Spanish capital, while his personal charm and courteous behaviour ensured the success of his Mission.

No sooner, however, had Lord Napier returned to Gibraltar early in December, 1879, than he was urgently summoned by the Duke of Cambridge to attend the proceedings of an Army Committee then sitting in London. Lord Napier obeyed the summons with some reluctance, chiefly on account of his frequent absences from his post as Governor of Gibraltar, which caused him qualms of conscience in accepting the salary of the appointment, even though acting under orders, but partly owing to his health which was very liable to suffer from the sudden change to the rigours of an English winter. A letter from the Duke, dated 4th February, 1880, bears eloquent testimony to H.R.H.'s appreciation of Lord Napier's assistance. The latter was not long detained in England, and was able to return to Gibraltar in March.

Lord Napier's correspondence at this time shows his deep preoccupation at the disastrous defeats which our arms had undergone in South Africa at the hands of the Boers, which rendered him more than ever suspicious of the recent so-called short-service reforms, and apt to contrast the young British troops with the hardened veterans to whom he had been accustomed. He expressed his belief that the British

soldiers of the present day were no longer able to counteract and make good the effect of bad leading by their officers, which was also very apparent, as it had been in the past.

His grief at the death in April, 1881, of Lord Beaconsfield, for whom he cherished the greatest admiration, was most sincere. Ever since the days of Abyssinia, Lord Beaconsfield had treated him with great regard and friendliness, and Lord Napier felt that Great Britain could rely on this the greatest of her Ministers to keep the old flag flying, and maintain British honour and British interests both at home and abroad. His disenchantment with Mr. Gladstone and disgust at the conclusion of peace with the Boers was therefore all the greater.

Lord Napier spent the spring and summer months at Gibraltar, busy with his multifarious duties which included the furthering of the public buildings in which he was interested, and in laying out public gardens on the North Front over an area of ground which had previously been used for market gardens, affording a perquisite to the Governor of some £300 a year, and handed them over, before his departure, to the care of the Civil authorities. He employed the labour of his own corps, the Royal Engineers, to carry out these improvements, and an amusing story is told of a young subaltern of Engineers superintending the fatigue party in laying out beds and paths. On being addressed by the Governor during this occupation, he remarked that his own mother would be able to do the job far better than he could. This remark was repeated by the Governor jokingly to the Officer Commanding R.E., who passed it on to the young officer's immediate superior, with the result that the

subaltern was ordered off to his quarters instead of meeting the Governor at dinner. Lord Napier heard of this just in time to insist on the young officer's presence, and took occasion to remind him on the next occasion that "Adam first planted a garden." In little ways such as these Lord Napier endeared himself to all ranks.

By the month of July, Lord Napier was again in England, Lady Napier having taken a house at Ascot, where she gave birth to her youngest son. The Prince and Princess of Wales graciously signified their intention of acting as sponsors for the child, who was christened by the names Albert, Edward, Alexander, in the Chapel Royal, St. James' Palace, only the Prince and Princess and the immediate relatives being present.

On his return with Lady Napier and some of the children to Gibraltar the P. & O. Steamer *Australia* broke down on entering the Bay of Biscay, and became perfectly helpless, the propeller shaft having been broken. All attempts to tow her failed, and the vessel drifted until close off the coast of Guernsey. Fortunately the weather moderated, which saved her from drifting on to the rocks and becoming a total wreck. Further attempts during two days having failed to move her, H.M.S. *Valorous* was sent to the rescue by Admiral Farquhar, commanding at Plymouth, and the passengers were taken off. Lord Napier, who had been very active in calming the passengers, and assisting in the maintenance of discipline, was the last to leave the ship, and was nearly drowned in doing so. He was then seventy-one years of age.

For some days Lord Napier and his family were

most hospitably entertained by the Admiral at Devonport before resuming their voyage, which was completed in fine weather without further incident.

During one of the visits to Gibraltar of the Mediterranean Fleet, when the Duke of Edinburgh was in command, it was arranged that a combined military and naval review should be held on the North Front, and Lord Napier, as was usual, offered to mount His Royal Highness for the occasion. The Duke, however, not at all to Napier's liking, insisted on holding the parade on foot, promising to give his reasons for so doing subsequently. The review duly took place, and shortly afterwards Lord Napier received the Duke's explanation. This consisted of two clever drawings, by Captain Willoughby Verner of the Rifle Brigade, depicting a former and similar review, in which the preceding Admiral, mounted on one of Lord Napier's spirited Arabs, galloped up to the Head-quarters Staff, but instead of pulling up on his haunches to salute the Governor, continued on into Spain, dropping, first his cocked hat and then his sword. The second sketch showed him returning, seated beside his wife in a hired carriage with the horse tied on behind.

Napier had the honour of entertaining the Duke and Duchess of Connaught in the new wing of the Convent, and hoped at one time also to receive the Duke of Cambridge, who, however, much as he would have liked to visit the Rock, could not spare the time to do so.

At another time, on the occasion of the voyage of the young Princes Edward and George, as midshipmen on H.M.S. *Bacchante*, Lord Napier received an urgent telegram from the Prince of Wales, who had heard a rumour that the midshipmen had

amused themselves by tattooing the noses of the young Princes. The possibility of the future Heir Apparent to the Throne wearing the indelible marks of a midshipman's freak on so prominent a feature had filled the parents with alarm, and Lord Napier was bidden to ascertain the truth. Without betraying his object, he was able to invite the young Princes to dinner, and after a careful, but surreptitious inspection, to telegraph a reassuring reply.

Towards the close of the year 1881, Lord Napier's constant friend and Chief, the Duke of Cambridge, was much worried by the intrigues of a clique of junior officers with Mr. Childers, the Minister of War, more or less hostile, in the background; and the Duke contemplated resignation.

That His Royal Highness did not in fact resign until some years later, was probably due to the support and encouragement he received at the hands of Lord Napier and other officers of the old school. In a letter to General Dillon in November of that year, Lord Napier says he "cannot believe that the country will allow a clique to worry out a Commander-in-Chief who possesses the confidence of the army in his justice and knowledge of the Service," and notes that "Mr. Childers has disclaimed the anonymous attacks as coming directly or indirectly from him."

Save for a brief visit to Granada in June, Napier appears to have spent the whole of 1882 at Gibraltar, and amongst the measures which he took at that time for improving the well-being of the soldier may be cited the provision of Reading and Recreation rooms.

As an instance of the varied duties that fell to his lot as Governor of Gibraltar, may be quoted the

installation of a new Roman Catholic Bishop who had to be installed in March, 1882, against the wishes of the people, literally at the point of the bayonet. The Duke of Cambridge wrote on this occasion to Lord Napier congratulating him on his arrangements, which seemed to have been most judicious and prudent, and to have met with complete success. H.R.H. only wished that the Colonial Office had taken his wise advice, and that he had not been called upon by the Government at home to take any part whatever in the proceedings.

The Duke of Cambridge also sympathized with Lord Napier in a difference of opinion with the Spanish authorities regarding the action of the harbour police at Gibraltar. This was sufficiently important to occasion a visit to Gibraltar by Mr. Morier, the British Minister at Madrid, who had done his best without success to persuade the Governor to make to the Spaniards certain concessions of which Lord Napier did not approve.

Lord Napier relinquished the Command of Gibraltar at the beginning of 1883, and left, amidst universal regrets, in H.M.S. *Grappler* for Oran, *en route* to Egypt.

He had succeeded in doing much for Gibraltar in its defences and in the City buildings, as well as in the care both of soldiers and civilians.

But, as in former days, he did not shrink from spending money or shirk responsibility. Once satisfied that an object was urgently needed in the public service, he managed to obtain the Government's sanction for the requisite expenditure. Lord Derby's letter to his successor, dated 8th January, 1883, points to the reluctance with which the last-named

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Colonial Secretary had acceded to his wishes, and his determination that such extravagances should not be continued by his successor in the Command.

It was, however, a fortunate episode in the history of the famous fortress, when it secured the services of a Governor who was at once able and willing to obtain the necessary grants and expend them judiciously in adding to the security, the healthiness and the beauty of the old Rock of Gibraltar.

In Egypt Lord Napier took a special interest in going over the battle-fields, and at Tel-el-Kebir erected a monument in honour of the first brave soldier to surmount the enemy's breastwork. This was a Private of the Cameron Highlanders, a regiment which had gone from Gibraltar, and was much esteemed by Lord Napier, and had been very popular in the garrison.

CHAPTER XVI  
RETURN TO ENGLAND  
1882-1890

Field-Marshal—Constable of the Tower—Death and Funeral.

On his return to England, Lord Napier, who had been promoted to the rank of Field-Marshal, on relinquishing the Command of Gibraltar, wrote to his great friend General Dillon,<sup>1</sup> his faithful staff-officer since China days, and lamented that there was not likely to be much "Field" about it. Although nominally on the active list, as every Field-Marshal is, he was never afterwards actively employed, which is not surprising considering that he was now seventy-three years of age. But he continued to be consulted by various Ministers of State, Viceroys and Commanders-in-Chief for many years.

He took up his residence near Camberley, where one of his sons was a student of the Staff College, and another a Sandhurst cadet, and besides taking part in numerous debates in the House of Lords, he occasionally attended Field days at Aldershot, riding round in plain clothes with the Duke of Cambridge, or assisted at one of the Duke's inspections of the Royal Military College.

In April, 1884, he was the first to call attention to the dangerous position of General Gordon by a speech

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Martin Dillon.

in the House of Lords. He had heard that the Government did not contemplate sending an expedition to his relief, but he suggested that in case they might be compelled to change their minds, the Government would do well to consult the scientific departments as to what preliminary steps should be taken, either from the direction of Suakin or from Cairo.

In the one case the distance to Khartoum was about 445 miles, and in the other case 1,200 miles. Taking the former route, he pointed out that 200 miles of the 445 ran alongside the Nile, and of the remainder, 100 miles was desert, which could be traversed in two stages of 50 miles. Then came 145 miles of level country between the desert and the sea, which could be crossed by troops at any time of year, provided they were equipped properly, as there was water and more could be obtained by sinking wells. "At that time the Mahdi's followers were not in possession of Berber," as Lord Napier remarked when he again drew attention to the matter in another speech in the House of Lords on February 27, 1885, "and nothing would have been casier than for a force to have crossed over from Suakin and given a hand to Gordon." Nothing, however, had been done all through the long months of 1884, until August, when Lord Wolseley had been entrusted with the command of an expedition, and had decided on the Nile route.

Lord Napier did not object to the Nile route, but presumed that the Government would at once have proceeded to lay down rails vigorously, so as to cross the cataracts, and to supply steamers and river transports, especially as permanent communications from Cairo to the extremities were necessary in any case; and were necessary now. Lord Wolseley, he said,

required support and better communications with Cairo. "No one should criticize the action of Lord Wolseley in sending forward Sir Herbert Stewart. That was a most gallant and brilliant advance towards the relief of General Gordon."

In spite of his advanced age, Lord Napier would himself have gladly undertaken the relief of General Gordon, had it been entrusted to him, and there is little doubt that he would have chosen the route from Suakin, and would have insisted on timely preparations. But this did not prevent him from warmly supporting the officer in command, as he always did.

Lord Napier also did all he could to prevent the abandonment of the Soudan. In the same month of March, 1885, when the question of building a railway from Suakin to Berber was discussed in the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury remarked that one would require Aladdin's lamp to build such a line, but Lord Napier pointed out that a railway of a temporary character could be rapidly constructed, and might be used for a permanent structure later on. As regards the desirability of opening communications with the Mahdi, Lord Napier remarked that "the Mahdi from first to last had shown no disposition to treat with us. From the first overture made to him by General Gordon, he had persistently said: Put on my uniform, and I will spare you. That evinced the spirit of a fanatic, and as such he should be treated. We should have to beat him or let him alone," and he hoped that we would beat him. Unfortunately, Lord Napier's advice was not followed, and the Mahdi was suffered to tyrannize over the Soudan for many long years.

In 1886 Lord Napier spoke in the House of Lords on the behaviour of soldiers in Civil riots, and urged

that the duties of soldiers in all circumstances should be very strictly defined. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, replied that it could not be denied that, as soldiers do not cease to be citizens, officers and soldiers acted to a certain extent at their peril. He agreed that it was desirable to make that peril as slight as possible, but it could not be removed altogether. In spite of an intervention by the Duke of Cambridge, who wished the Government to put a test case in order to ensure the Queen's Regulations and the Law so clearly going together that there could be no mistake or misunderstanding, the Lord Chancellor declined to be more precise, and said that there was no doubt that an ordinary tumultuous assembly could not properly be dispersed until after the Riot Act had been read, because after that it became a felony to remain, and the troops might use all the force that was legitimate for the purpose of preventing a felony. But in the case of a mere ordinary tumultuous assembly, not meeting for felonious purposes, it was obvious that they would not be justified in resorting to the force that might be used in the case of felony.

The last subject of importance dealt with by Lord Napier in the House of Lords was that of mediation between Italy and Abyssinia. On more than one occasion he had been utilized by the Government of the day to bring his influence to bear on King John of Abyssinia, whom he had been instrumental in placing on the throne, to induce him to acquiesce in certain measures desired by the British Government, and Napier had invariably insisted on fair play to King John as a condition of such assistance. On this occasion also, a perusal of Lord Napier's speech evinces

a kindly and chivalrous care for the interests of a country and its ruler with whom he had been so intimately associated.

In December, 1886, Lord Napier was appointed Constable of the Tower of London, the honour of which post he greatly appreciated in view of the distinguished Commanders who had preceded him, although the duties were merely nominal. Some three years later, owing to an attack of influenza, contracted while attending the funeral of his old friend and brother-officer, Sir Henry Yule, Lord Napier, after a few days' illness, died at his residence in Eaton Square on the 14th of January, 1890, surrounded by his family. The Duke of Cambridge paid a visit to his bedside, but he was already unconscious. He received a State funeral, the most impressive since that of the great Duke of Wellington. The body was conveyed from his house in Eaton Square to the Tower of London, whence the procession was formed on foot through a vast crowd of sympathetic onlookers to St. Paul's Cathedral where the burial took place in the presence of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge representing the Queen, and a large and distinguished congregation.<sup>1</sup> Lord Wolseley led the Headquarters Staff, the escort was formed of Royal Engineers and amongst the Pall Bearers were many of his brother officers and old comrades in arms, the chief of whom was Field-Marshal Sir Patrick Grant. Many were the telegrams and letters of regret from high and low in all parts of

<sup>1</sup> Count Hatzfeldt represented the German Emperor, Herr von Rath, the Ex-Empress Frederick (a token of the warm friendship that had continued ever since Lord Napier had made her acquaintance.)

the world, and many were the sympathetic letters and anecdotes which appeared in the Press regarding his career.

The leading article in *The Times* of the 15th January is a measure of the high place which he enjoyed in public esteem, and extracts are therefore quoted from it as follows :

Not in the British Isles alone, but throughout the whole Empire, the news of the death of Lord Napier of Magdala will be received with the deepest regret. The loss of an eminent public servant will be lamented no less than the disappearance of a familiar figure from contemporary history. An element of selfishness in the grief is the highest tribute which can be paid to his memory. Though Military records supply exceptions to the rule, generally at the age of 80 a soldier must be presumed to have finished his active work. If another hostile cloud, as in 1878, had blown up in the direction of England, it is not likely that in later years Lord Napier of Magdala would have consented to be designated for the command. But the opinion of the country continued to rest upon him as the foremost of surviving British officers, and statesmen retained their faith in him as the sagest of military counsellors. National confidence is not earned in a moment, and once won, it is steadfast. Lord Napier of Magdala had conquered it slowly and surely.

Never was there a career which ascended along more regular and indisputable stages. At every point it was able to bear the minutest inspection. Nothing in it was due to favour. It owed nothing to accident, unless of the sort which offers conspicuous occasion for failure as well as for distinction. Long before his name was current at Home, he had done enough to demonstrate capacity for the loftiest of military trusts. The Engineer to the Durbar of Lahore, and to the Administration of the Punjab, the Chief Engineer at the sieges of Mooltan and on the field of Goojerat, Outram's Chief of the Staff, the victor of Jaura-Alipur, the second in command to Sir Hope Grant, at Pekin, and the Commander-in-Chief in

Bombay, had civilised kingdoms, captured famous forts, been again and again face to face with death, performed an infinity of splendid exploits, and remained one of a mass of officers indiscriminately able and meritorious. Thanked by Parliament, decorated by his sovereign, praised by every superior he had served and advanced to exalted and lucrative posts, he was still comparatively unknown. Then came the opportunity which always arrives at last. He led a British army over the mountains of Abyssinia, routed Theodore's forces at Islamgie, and stormed a citadel which else might have been counted impregnable. Thenceforward his countrymen recognised him for that he had proved himself full 20 years before, a military genius fitted for any and every task which war can set a people. . . .

Great Britain loses in Lord Napier of Magdala an illustrious soldier and one of the kindest and most estimable of men. In the race for renown which he was far from despising, he was often outstripped. The more rapid progress of others left no touch of bitterness on him. He never scorned to be a lieutenant because he might reasonably have expected to lead. By an experience which is almost more extraordinary, when it was his turn to go manifestly and irreversibly to the front, his ascendancy provoked no jealousy or envy. He had been nobody's enemy or maligner. His reward was the somewhat unusual converse and to be without detractors. Goodness and graciousness such as his are not substitutes in a campaign for professional intelligence and strategy. But in combination they become military virtues in themselves.

To the Committee of distinguished men who approached the Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir Henry Isaacs, with reference to the erection of a memorial to Lord Napier's memory, the Lord Mayor replied that they were all proud of the distinguished men, who fought for their country, but they were specially so when a great commander attracted to himself by his nobility of character, his sweetness of disposition and his charming modesty of demeanour, the love,

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admiration and respect of the whole community. Such a man was Lord Napier of Magdala, and of such a man they deserved and they intended to possess a lasting memorial. As a result of this, public subscriptions were contributed, and a replica of the statue by Boehm which was erected in Calcutta when he left India, was set up to his memory in Waterloo Place, London.

In 1923 this statue was removed to its present beautiful site in Queen's Gate in order to make room for a statue of King Edward VII on the identical spot where it had remained for nearly thirty-three years. It would be safe to say that no one more than Lord Napier himself would have appreciated the singular and signal honour of giving up his place to the Sovereign to whom, as Prince of Wales, he owed so many marks of friendship and esteem, and who had himself selected the site to do him honour. It would be equally safe to say that no one less than King Edward would have desired this to occur.

## APPENDIX A

### REPORT OF THE ENGINEER OPERATIONS OF THE SIEGE OF LUCKNOW BY BRIGADIER R. NAPIER, COMMANDING ENGINEER BRIGADE

LA MARTINIÈRE, 31st March, 1858.

The City of Lucknow<sup>1</sup> stretches in an irregular form on the right bank of the Goomtee for a length from East to West of nearly 5 miles, and an extreme width at the West side of 3½ miles; the East side diminishes in width to less than 1 mile.

Two bridges, one of iron and the other of masonry, span the Goomtee, leading the traffic of the country from the North of the Goomtee into the heart of the City.

A canal of deep and rugged section enclosing the City on the East and South sides, bears away to the South-west, leaving the approach to the West side of the City open, but intersected with ravines; towards the North-east where the canal joins the Goomtee, its banks are naturally shelving and passable.

The City is too extensive to be commanded by any single point, and has no such predominant feature as would imperatively direct the attack.

\* \* \* \* \*

In recommending the East side for attack, I was guided by the following reasons:—

The West side presents a great breadth of dense and almost impenetrable city, resting on the strong buildings on the river bank. After overcoming these obstacles, there would have remained the Kaiser Bagh with the enemy's principal defences still to be reduced.

The East side offered: 1st, the smallest front, and was

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Map of the Reliefs. Capture of Lucknow, facing p. 90.

therefore the more easily enveloped by our attack ; 2ndly, ground for planting our artillery, which was waiting on the West side ; and 3rdly, it gave also the shortest approach to the Kaiser Bagh, the Royal Garden, and place to which the rebels attached the greatest importance ; more than all, we knew the East side and were little acquainted with the West.

The enemy, profiting by experience, had strengthened their defences by works exhibiting prodigious labour. Sir Colin Campbell's former route across the canal, where its banks shelved, was intercepted by a new line of canal of very formidable section, flanked by strong bastions. This line of defence was continued up the canal beyond the Char Bagh Bridge more or less complete, and the banks of the canal as before noted were scarped and impassable.

A strong battery for three guns resting against a mass of buildings called the Hazrat Ganj, supported the outer line at the junction of three main roads.

A second line of bastioned rampart and parapet rested with its right on the Imam Bara, a strong and lofty building ; thence embracing the 32nd Mess House it joined the river bank near the Moti Mahal.

A third line covered the front of the Kaiser Bagh.

The enemy were represented to have about 100 guns, a report which was doubted, but has proved quite true.

The bastions on the outer line of defence were not fully armed, the enemy seemed waiting to ascertain our real point of attack before bringing forward their guns.

All the main streets were also commanded by bastions and barricades and every building of importance, besides being loop-holed, had an outer work protecting its entrance.

It was ascertained, as one part of the City after another fell into our hands, that it had been the intention of the enemy to offer a very determined resistance, even after their outer lines should be taken. Houses far in the depths of the commercial parts of the City were found carefully defended with mud walls and parapets, several of them mounting guns ; and in addition to vast quantities of gunpowder found lying in large buildings, almost every house had its own small supply.

## MEANS FOR THE ATTACK

*Ordnance**Naval Brigade :*

Guns, 8-inch	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
„ 24-pr.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
Howitzers, 8-inch	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2

*Artillery :*

Guns, 24-prs.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
„ 18-prs.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
Howitzers, 10-inch	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
„ 8-inch	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Mortars	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	43

A complete Engineer Park with material for two cask bridges calculated to bear the heaviest ordnance.

Having in my possession a very accurate survey of part of the City and its environs by the late Lt. Moorsom of H.M.'s 52nd Regt. and being aided by the excellent information received from the Intelligence Department attached to Major-General Sir James Outram, G.C.B., I was enabled at a very early period of the operations to determine which side of the City offered the greatest facility to our attack. Formidable as the defences thrown up by the enemy on the Eastern side of the City were described to be, it still appeared most evident that they were in reality obstacles less difficult to be overcome than the heavy and dense portions of the City to the West ; and I would add here that though I hardly gave full credit to the native statements as regards sections and extent of the enemy's works, yet it was proved on inspection that the intelligence given me was remarkably good and clear.

The side of attack being fixed, the two next steps of primary importance were, after taking up a position in the Dilkoosha Park, to bring a direct fire on those points in the enemy's fortifications in rear of the canal, the fire from which would affect the line by which we should cross them, and to enfilade those fortifications from the left bank of the Goomtee.

These two operations being completed, and the first line of fortifications in our possession, the next step was to establish ourselves at Bank's House and the Bungalows and from that position to reduce the Begum's Palace.

A glance at the map<sup>1</sup> will show that this palace is on the extreme point of a line of strong buildings, which extend to the walls of the Kaiser Bagh, and secure us a covered way for our safe but irresistible progress into the heart of the enemy's position, turning successfully their 2nd and 3rd lines of fortifications, and avoiding entirely the fire of their artillery.

The elevated gateways and roofs of these buildings commanding the ground on either flank would give us the choice of positions for establishing our batteries to bombard the Kaiser Bagh, and the other parts of the town.

Should the fall of the Kaiser Bagh not entail the abandonment of the City by the enemy, the successive reduction of their strong positions on the banks of the river would be necessary.

Much importance was attached to vertical fire, for which the ample provision of 42 mortars was made in the siege train.

The interval which elapsed between the arrival of the Engineer establishment at Alum Bagh, and the commencement of the attack was most valuable, and was profitably employed in preparing a large supply of gabions and fascines, and proving and perfecting the Cask bridge; also in practising the Department in the rapid construction of batteries, Field Powder magazines, etc., etc.

Six guns forming Battery No. 4 had been placed in front of the Dilkoosha to protect the camp, to keep down the fire of the enemy's batteries on their 1st line of fortifications, and check two or three guns that the enemy had advanced to the Northern angle of La Martiniere.

*The first operation of the siege* was the construction of two bridges of casks over the Goomtee, below the Dilkoosha House on the night of the 4th, and morning of the 5th March. On the 6th General Outram's Division crossed to the left bank of the Goomtee, and encamped on the Fyzabad road.

On the 7th it was supplied with the following ordnance for the siege operations on the left bank: four 24-pounders, four 18-pounders, four 8-inch howitzers, ten 8-inch mortars;

<sup>1</sup> The map which accompanied this report is not available, but sufficient details, it is hoped, has been entered on the general map to enable the reader to follow the operations. The Begum's Palace lay south-east of the Hazrat Ganj.

to which were added five 10-inch mortars by order of H.E. the Commander-in-Chief.

On the 8th the enemy's fortifications were reconnoitred from the left bank of the Goomtee by H.E. the C.-in-C., accompanied by the Chief Engineer and Captain Taylor and Major Nicholson, R.E.

During the night a battery (No. 1 R.) for ten guns en barbette was constructed at the Kokral bridge to command the enemy's position near the Race Stand and opened fire at daylight on the 9th.

On the same day General Outram, after defeating the enemy, occupied the whole of the left bank as far as the Badshah Bagh, and established Battery No. 2 R. of twelve guns to enfilade the enemy's first line of fortifications. No cover was required. The enemy made no reply, and abandoned their defences.

During the night of the 8th, Batteries 1 and 2 left the former of four guns to batter La Martiniere, and the latter of four guns to silence the enemy's right batteries, were prepared and opened fire early on the 9th.

Two guns of the Naval Brigade were placed under natural cover to fire on La Martiniere in flank and reverse. After a severe cannonade La Martiniere was taken on the afternoon of the 9th with little resistance from the enemy and a trifling loss.

Late in the afternoon, the 1st line of fortifications having been abandoned by the enemy, was seized by the 42nd Highlanders and Wyld's Sikhs, forming the advance of General Lugard's Division. Our troops penetrated as far as the bridge on the La Martiniere Road, and secured themselves in a strong position for the night.

Early on the morning of the 10th, Battery No. 3. (Left) for four guns, one howitzer and three 8-inch mortars, was established with little labour under natural cover to breach and shell Bank's House, which was taken the same morning.

In the right attack, Battery No. 4. (R.) for four 24-pounders, two 8-inch howitzers, and five 8-inch mortars was constructed near the Badshah Bagh to fire on the Kaiser Bagh.

Thus on the morning of the 10th the enemy's first and most

formidable line of fortifications had been completely taken possession of.

In the left attack, Battery No. 4 (L.) for four guns and eight mortars was constructed near Bank's House to breach and bombard the Begum's Palace. In addition to this, two guns (one 8-inch gun and one 8-inch howitzer) of the Naval Brigade were placed in position in the D bungalows,<sup>1</sup> and six 5½-inch mortars, their fire being also directed against the Begum's Palace and the bastion in front of Huzrat Gunj.

These batteries were selected and the guns brought up with such energy that they opened very soon after Bank's House was in our possession.

Communications were made between the bungalows and Bank's House.

On the right attack, roadways for guns were made through the Badshah Bagh; and the Dilaram House was seized and fortified, under a heavy fire from the Chutter Munzil.

During the night a battery No. 4. (R.) of four 24-pounder guns, two 8-inch howitzers and five mortars, was erected in front of the Badshah Bagh and opened fire at daybreak on Kaiser Bagh.

The fire from our batteries which had been continued all night, having made two practicable breaches in the Compound wall of the Begum's Palace, and severely shelled the interior, it was taken by assault at 3.30 p.m.

The European barracks and Kuddum Russool were also occupied on the morning of this day.

A breastwork was thrown up during the night for two guns to fire at the enemy's bastion in their 2nd line of fortifications, which commanded the road leading past the Begum's Palace from Bank's House.

A serai on the right of this road had been taken at the same time as the Begum's Palace. A battery No. 5 (R.) for two 24-pounders was thrown up on the North side of the Goomtee, and on the right side of the Iron Bridge to subdue the enemy's fire from the opposite side of the bridge and command the Stone Bridge.

On the morning of the 12th the attacking force on the left

<sup>1</sup> N.E. of Major Bank's house.

then held a strong position in the Begum's Palace, the European barracks, the Kuddum Russool, the Secundra Bagh, and the Shah Nujjeef; whilst the right attack was in position from the Iron Bridge to the Badshah Bagh.

Openings were made during the night into Jaffir Ali's Compound, and a serai on the right of the road occupied, in advance of the one taken the preceding evening, together with a mosque overlooking it.

Four 8-inch mortars were moved into this serai, and two 8-inch mortars placed in position in its rear, also five 10-inch mortars placed in the serai taken on the 11th March, the fire from all being directed on the Imam Bara and buildings between us and the Kaiser Bagh.

In the right attack, one battery No. 6 (R.) for four 8-inch guns was erected in front of the Badshah Bagh to fire on the Residency and thence on the buildings extending to the Kaiser Bagh.

Another battery for two 24-pounders was erected on the left of the Iron Bridge to subdue the fire from the opposite side of the river.

At daybreak of the 13th the house and compound called Ferar o Dowlah's, in advance of Jaffa Ali's, was taken possession of, entrances having been cut during the night.

A battery (No. 8 L.) was formed within 70 yards of the Imam Bara and in Ferah o Dowlah's compound for two guns (one 8-inch, one 24-pounder) to breach the outer wall of the Imam Bara. The guns were placed in position in the afternoon, and by evening had effectually breached the outer wall and partly breached the inner.

In the right attack, four 8-inch mortars were added to the armament on the right bank of the Badshah Bagh, so that we had a fire on the Kaiser Bagh this day of ten 8-inch, four 10-inch mortars, four 24-pounders, two 10-inch howitzers, and on the City from the Iron Bridge batteries of three 24-pounders and one 8-inch howitzer.

On the left we had five 10-inch, nine 8-inch, and four 5½-inch mortars directed on the Imam Bara and the Kaiser Bagh with the intermediate buildings.

On the 14th March, a heavy fire having been kept up all

night on the breaches until 9 a.m. of this day, the breaches into the Imam Bara were deemed practicable, and accordingly the building was assaulted and taken at 10 a.m. without much opposition from the enemy.

The troops following up this assault by an advance along the road towards the Kaiser Bagh, obtained possession of an outer courtyard of the Palace itself; and the Engineer Officers and men were busily employed for the remainder of this day in securing this portion of the Kaiser Bagh, and the Mess House, Motee Mahal, and Tora Kotee, all of which buildings were found deserted by the enemy.

On the right attack, we held the same position as yesterday, our batteries principally directing their fire on the Residency and other buildings in advance of the Chutter Munzil.

The 15th found us in possession of all the principal buildings up to the Chutter Munzil between the City and the Goomtee, and a secure lodgment in the Kaiser Bagh.

Engineering operations were immediately directed to assist the troops through the remainder of the various courtyards of the Palace, to complete our communications with the rear, and to clear away such parts of the enemy's works as impeded free and practicable communications between the different posts.

On the morning of the 16th General Sir James Outram, G.C.B., crossed the Goomtee by the bridge of casks, and drove the enemy from the Residency and Iron Bridge, and later in the day seized the Muchee Bhawun Stone Bridge and Imam Bara.

Six 8-inch mortars were immediately placed in position in the Imam Bara, and maintained a steady bombardment on the enemy's position in the City throughout the night. Two Naval guns and five 10-inch mortars were also posted at the Residency, and kept up a steady fire upon the City during the night of the 16th and morning of the 17th.

From this time all siege operations ceased, though parties of the enemy still obstinately clung to the streets of the City and suburbs, and were not dislodged till several days afterwards.

I have no precise information concerning the proceedings of the force of His Highness Jung Bahadoor, which acted on

the opposite border of the City at too great a distance for its effects to be visible from our line of attack.

On the 17th of March, by desire of H.E. the Commander-in-Chief, the Goorka picquets were extended from the Char Bagh bridge down the Cawnpore road, to connect with those of the British Regiments in the Kaiser Bagh, which had advanced half-way between the two points.

The Char Bagh bridge was repaired by order of General McGregor, material being furnished for the purpose by the Engineer Park, and communication along the Cawnpore road was completely opened. . . .

## APPENDIX B

### ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

#### GENERAL ORDERS

By His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, Adjutant General's Office, Head Quarters, Camp Dalanta Plain, 20th April 1868.

“Soldiers and Sailors of the Army of Abyssinia.”

The Queen and the people of England entrusted to you a very arduous and difficult Expedition; to release our Countrymen from a long and painful Captivity, and to vindicate the honour of our Country, which had been outraged by Theodore, King of Abyssinia.

I congratulate you with all my heart, on the noble way in which you have fulfilled the Commands of our Sovereign.

You have traversed, often under a tropical Sun, or amidst storms of rain and sleet, four hundred miles of mountainous and rugged country.

You have crossed ranges of mountains, (many steep and precipitous), more than ten thousand feet in altitude, where your supplies could not keep pace with you.

In four days you passed the formidable Chasm of the Bashilo, and, when within reach of your enemy, though with scanty food, and some of you even for many hours without either food or water, you defeated the Army of Theodore, which poured down upon you from its lofty Fortress in full confidence of Victory.

A Host of many thousands have laid down their arms at your feet.

You have captured and destroyed upwards of thirty pieces of Artillery, many of great weight and efficiency, with ample Stores of Ammunition.

You have stormed the almost inaccessible Fortress of Magdala, defended by Theodore and a desperate remnant of his Chiefs and Followers.

After you forced the entrance to his Fortress, Theodore, who himself never showed mercy, distrusted the offer of it held out to him by me, and died by his own hand.

You have released not only the British Captives but those of other friendly Nations.

You have unloosed the chains of more than ninety of the principal Chiefs of Abyssinia.

Magdala, on which so many victims have been slaughtered, has been committed to the flames, and now remains only a scorched Rock.

Our complete and rapid success is due, Firstly—To the mercy of God, whose Hand, I feel assured, has been over us in a just cause ; Secondly—To the high spirit with which you have been inspired !

Indian Soldiers have forgotten the prejudices of Race and Creed to keep pace with their European Comrades.

Never did any Army enter on a War with more honourable feelings than yours. This it is that has carried you through so many fatigues and difficulties ; your sole anxiety has been for the moment to arrive when you could close with your enemy.

The remembrance of your privations will pass away quickly ; your gallant exploit will live in History.

The Queen and the people of England will appreciate and acknowledge your services ; on my part, as your Commander, I thank you for your devotion to your duty, and the good discipline you have maintained throughout.

Not a single complaint has been made against a Soldier, of fields injured, or villagers wilfully molested, either in person or property.

We must not, however, forget what we owe to our Comrades who have been labouring for us in the sultry climate of Zoolla,—the Pass of Koomaylee, or in the monotony of the posts which maintained our communications. One and all would have given everything they possessed to be with us ; they deserve our Gratitude.

I shall watch over your safety to the moment of your re-embarkation ; and shall to the end of my life remember with pride, that I have Commanded you.

R. NAPIER, Lieutenant-General,  
Commander-in-Chief,  
Abyssinia.

नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

## APPENDIX C

### MEMORANDUM ON PERSIA BY HIS EXCELLENCY LORD NAPIER OF MAGDALA

*Simla, May 4th, 1875.*

The Shah of Persia having expressed a wish to restore the friendly relations which formerly existed between Great Britain and Persia, and to receive assistance in Military Officers, etc., to discipline and train his army, the question has arisen, whether we should meet his wishes and give the assistance which he asks for.

2. It may be objected to the measure that the Persians have shown themselves always a fickle and unreliable people: that the very troops that our officers formerly trained were employed in direct opposition to our wishes and interests, against Afghanistan, so that it required a war to stop them.

3. That the supplying of officers free of all charge, may cause diplomatic complications with Russia, while, on the other hand, to secure regular payment from the Persian Government would be very difficult.

4. Moreover it is said, that Persia has some kind of agreement with Russia, for a joint action against the Turcomans.

5. Finally, it might be urged, that such a sudden impulse of friendship and alliance with Persia, culminating in a supply of officers and, possibly, in some pecuniary assistance, will give umbrage to the Russian Government, which, as far as we know, has not made any very recent move, nor done more than make some friendly advances to the Ameer Shere Ali; and has not, as yet, made a move against the Turcomans of Merve; but we feel no confidence that she has not some sudden move in contemplation, which will come upon us unawares and under a shower of artful explanations, or a bold assertion that the measure is necessary for Russia.

Those who advocate inaction, on the ground of these arguments, would, it appears to me, have us to remain quiescent until Russia actually infringes on the territory of Affghanistan, and if she should occupy the northern part of Persia, that we should accept the situation and take the southern parts near the sea. I confess, I think there is great danger in this shrinking policy, which increases as it grows older, and would lead us to be inactive, perhaps fruitlessly protesting and being disregarded, until Russian bases of action shall have been formed on the salient points around India. Each advance of theirs would render it more difficult for us to repel others, until the disquiet in India would unsettle the minds of our subjects, would deprive them of all confidence in our power of protection, and involve us in a protective expenditure, in order to be ready at every point, that our revenue could not meet.

The difference between our position and that of the Russians is, that they being Asiatic themselves, and constantly absorbing the people of the countries which they conquer, take a firmer root in the ground they occupy, than we seem ever likely to do in India.

They are incorporating with the mother country, its new acquisitions, by rail and steam, and by planting colonies, while we are separated from our real base by the sea, and depend mainly on our admirable and invincible 60,000 Europeans, a resource which is exhaustible!

Under this view of our position, I think, we should do everything in our power to prevent the nearer approach of Russia.

The Black Sea treaty should stand before us, as a warning that the opportunity only is required to induce the Russian Government to repudiate, boldly, any obligations or assurances that may have served to disarm our measures of self-preservation.

I do not think Russia in Central Asia is at all ready for a struggle now. If we were to advance an Army against her possession of the Khanates, we should probably give opportunity to all the recently conquered people to rise, and we might drive her back for a certain number of years, but the effort would be much more costly for us, than for them, and

could not be often repeated ; whereas their discomfiture would be temporary, and would soon be recovered.

I have not adverted to the moral objection, that we should have, to depriving the parts of Central Asia, now being brought within reach of civilization, of its benefits, and to throw them back into anarchy ; because it is as little likely that we should launch such an expedition against Russia, as that she should send one from such a distance against India.

It is necessary that we should keep Russia at arms' length, by means of Affghanistan and Persia, and prevent her, by every means in our power, from absorbing any portion of them ; and to this end I would give Persia the friendship she seeks, and the assistance in officers and subordinates that she needs.

I would also strengthen the Embassy by well selected officers from India, placing one at the Head Quarters of the Embassy, and one at Meshed.

I think they should be military officers, as the questions they have to watch and study are military ; and they should have the means of being liberal, and of making their influence felt, and their friendship valuable.

They should be men acquainted with Persian, and of genial manners and disposition, calculated to disarm enmities and make friends.

Bearing in mind our former troubles in Affghanistan, they should be men of irreproachable conduct.

I cannot doubt that the services of India could produce many such men.

These officers should have the means of maintaining reliable agents in the Russian possessions, to obtain information.

Further, I should comply with the wishes of Persia by sending her officers to instruct the troops.

The unpleasantness of having to press the Persian Government for payment might be avoided by paying the officers from the Indian Treasury, and the diplomatic difficulty be removed, by arranging that the Persian Government should pay such small additional allowances as it would not distress them to meet : it does not appear, that any difficulty on these points should be considered insuperable.

Next, with regard to the conduct of Persia, it does not become us to condemn her for her fickleness as our own policy has not been free from reproach on that ground.

We do not know whether diplomatic mismanagement may not have caused the Persians to disregard the advice of the British Minister, in the action against Affghanistan: we have at times been apprehensive of Affghanistan, and have directed the mind of Persia against her.

Only recently Lord J. Russell said, that the Persians and Affghans might settle the Seistan question by force of arms.

Our officers and Drill Instructors were withdrawn before the campaign against Herat.

It is not necessary for us to be offended at Persia having entered into any kind of plan with the Russians, for coercing the Turcomans of Merve.

What was her situation? With Russia pressing on her in the north, by its demands and pretensions, and undermining her administration by intrigue; threatening her with the necessity of Russian action and encroachment on account of the Turcomans' excursions and lawlessness, which Persia is too feeble to repress; on the other hand, the eastern Persian borders ravaged by these same Turcomans, who are only prevented from making it completely desolate by the resistance maintained at a few points, by ill-supported chiefs and their clans!

It is extremely natural that Persia, with no other resource to look to, should fall into any plans for relief, that Russia may offer, to put an end to such a state of affairs, even with a conviction that the bargain would be a very hard one, ending in landing the Russians well across the Attek.

The final objection, that the sudden renewal of intimate relations with Persia may give umbrage to Russia, is part of the "shrinking policy."

That it will appear inconvenient to Russia is most probable, but Russia will have no real right to take umbrage at our renewing our ancient relations with Persia, which do not and cannot threaten her possessions; if Russia does take offence, it will be simply because it would interfere with her plans of encroachment, which we cannot too soon unmask and arrest.

There remains to be considered what effect the approximation to Persia will have on our relations with Affghanistan.

The action of the latter state, or rather of its ruler, Shere Ali, has been far from friendly.

At the time of the meeting with Lord Mayo, he was disposed to receive our agents, if the reports of conversations are at all to be relied on.

In all that Shere Ali is reported to have said, and in the conversation of his Envoy at Simla, in 1873, the constantly recurring point was the Seistan question !

It appears that the national pride is bent upon that point of antagonism with Persia, and that the hopes of Shere Ali, and his people rested on our deciding that they should recover what had been gradually taken from them by Persia, even, it is said, to some extent, while the Affghans withheld their own hands at our bidding.

Had that question been decided in the way that, in the rooted belief of the Affghans was the just way, it is probable, that we should have had no difficulty in establishing Agents at Herat, or Kandahar, or Bakh, and a visit from a British Envoy might have been welcomed at Kabul.

But the decision, according to Affghan belief, went the other way, viz. entirely in favour of Persia.

The manner in which the British Commissioner was checkmated by the Persian Commissioner, and the arbitration jumped at, in spite of the objections of Pollock and the Affghan representative, has of course been made known to the Affghans, and we appear in the light of false friends, who having tied down the Affghans by our advice, and the promises which we exacted from them, allowed their territory to be alienated.

Of course much might be said of our anxiety to relieve the Affghans of any thing that could interfere with the restoration of a firm government; that Persia, if it had come to war, would have had better means of taking, than the Affghans of holding, Seistan, and that the struggle would have risked the throne of Kabul for Shere Ali.

These reasonings, if put, would never be admitted by an Affghan mind, especially since the improved stability of the Government has given confidence.

The Seistan business appears to me quite sufficient to account for Shere Ali's altered conduct, in addition to his disappointment that we would not make a treaty to assist him, without reserving a right to judge whether his conduct merited our assistance, and that we would not commit ourselves to acknowledge his son, Abdoolla Jon.

Why he has retired from the reception of the money that was available for him, although he takes the arms, it is not easy to say; possibly because he fears some conditions may accompany the gift as has been suggested.

However it may have been caused, it is certain that Shere Ali, who came down to Umballa to see Lord Mayo, and was reported willing to receive our agents, refused a passage through his country to Sir D. Forsyth's mission, and has left his subsidy untouched.

It is most likely that, in this jealous mood, he will view with suspicion any assistance of the kind asked for, that may be given to Persia.

To counteract this, it would be expedient to send a Native Envoy to Kabul, as advised by the Nawab Gholam Hussun Khan.

The business of the agent would be, to endeavour to obtain the confidence of Shere Ali.

To intimate to him that it is necessary, for our mutual interests, that we should have agents to ascertain what is going on in Central Asia, and give us warning of anything likely to affect us injuriously.

That we should be glad to have them at Balkh and Herat, but as he has not felt able yet to invite us to send them there we have been obliged to employ them from the Persian side.

Shere Ali should be assured that the operation of the diplomatic agents, and officers in Persia, would be guided by the principle, that nothing is to be done that could give umbrage to Affghanistan.

He might be reminded that we twice made war on Persia to drive her away from Herat.

The military officers, and the troops that may be placed under them, if properly employed, would enable Persia to establish posts, to protect her frontier, so as to leave no pretext

for Russian interference in the north, and to give peace to her people in Khorasan.

The actual selection of the officers, and the terms of their employment are matters of detail, to be settled when the main action shall have been determined.

They should have the means of living liberally, independent of the stipend to be received from the Persian Government.

The seniors should speak Persian, but the others may learn it, if held under some obligation, after arriving in the country. The selection of officers well suited for the duty required, is more important than that they should carry a knowledge of Persian with them, though this would be of the utmost value.

I should prefer Sir R. Montgomery's plan of giving Indian Drill Instructors instead of English ones, and among the officers selected should be some good leaders of Irregular Cavalry.

We have long wanted to advance agents and plant them as standpoints towards Central Asia.

The side of Affghanistan may not immediately be open to us, though Shere Ali has not recently been made aware of our wishes; but we have a favourable opportunity of re-establishing our influence in Persia, and of placing a barrier against further Russian encroachment on the side of the Attrek.

If we lose the opportunity it may not occur again, and we shall have cause to repent it, for we need it more than ever.

We should do all in our power to prevent Russia from working round our flanks.

If she were to seize the northern part of Persia, we should at once oppose it. The people of Persia, supported by a British Contingent, and aided by British arms, supplies and officers, would render the task of conquering the country as difficult and exhaustive as the conquest of the Spanish Peninsula was to France.

NAPIER OF MAGDALA.

## APPENDIX D

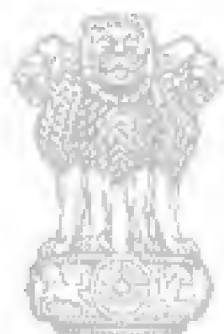
### ITALY AND ABYSSINIA SPEECH OF THE RIGHT HON. LORD NAPIER OF MAGDALA

*Extracted from "Hansard's Parliamentary Debates," Vol. cccxviii.*

HOUSE OF LORDS,  
*Friday, 29th July, 1887.*

Lord Napier of Magdala asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government would take any steps towards mediating between the Government of Italy and King John of Abyssinia, in order to prevent, if possible, the loss of life and the misery which a war between Italy and Abyssinia would entail, and also to enable Her Majesty's Government to fulfil the 1st Article of the Treaty with King John of Abyssinia, which guaranteed for him a free transit through Massowah? The noble and gallant Lord said, he was induced to ask the Question by a grateful remembrance of the assistance afforded by King John and the Abyssinian people to the British troops in Abyssinia. It was not his desire to enter on the question of the occupation of Massowah by the Italian troops. Although Massowah was really a part of Abyssinia, and ought, by right, to be restored to King John; yet, unfortunately, in the present state of his country, he could not hold it against any country possessed of a Fleet. He (Lord Napier, of Magdala) confessed that he viewed with satisfaction the occupation of the African Coast by a highly honourable and enlightened nation such as the Italians, and hoped that close intercourse with Abyssinia would lead to much social improvement of that country. King John had done much to create law and order in Abyssinia. He ruled

over a wild and unruly people, including many feudal Chiefs of considerable power, and therefore had had to exercise some severity. They must not forget that it was not very long since their own Penal Code was very severe; but King John had done much for the improvement of Abyssinia, and for promoting commerce; and it would be a subject of great regret if war should throw back all that progress. The origin of the quarrel was not generally known; but it was supposed that the Italians had advanced on the neutral ground which had been previously maintained between Abyssinia and Massowah. Probably the Commanders on both sides had gone beyond the wishes of their Rulers. It was much to be regretted that Abyssinia did not appeal for the mediation of England before blood had been shed. If they could possibly mediate between the two countries, it would be a benefit to humanity. The Italians were a military nation with a highly disciplined army, and perfect weapons of offence, and there could be no doubt that they must ultimately prevail; but the Abyssinians also were a brave race of hunters, and good marksmen; their country was very difficult. If the advance through the long dangerous passes would be difficult with an enemy thoroughly acquainted with the country, able to travel long distances rapidly, and requiring little commissariat, a retreat might be disastrous, as the passes were liable to sudden floods which came with little warning, and swept away everything in their path. He trusted that Her Majesty's Government would endeavour to mediate between the two countries. It would be a great benefit to humanity.



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