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TWENTY YEARS  
ON THE  
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

BY  
G. B. SCOTT  
(*SURVEY OF INDIA*)



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## ERRATA.

Page 2, line 20—*Mount Blanc* instead of *Mont Blanc*.

„ 5, line 16—*and* omitted.

„ 8, fourth line from bottom—*were* not required

„ 21, line 8 from bottom—*rocky* for *black*.

„ 21, „ 9 „ —*black* for *slack*.

„ 109, line 10—*slanting* for *standing*.

„ 142, bottom line—*all are of* instead of *of all are*.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### KHAGAN IN 1867.

Recent events have brought the names of wild tracts lying on our North-Western border prominently into notice that have hitherto been unknown, but to the few local officials in their immediate neighbourhood and to surveyors who have at various times since the annexation of the Punjab been employed in those snowy regions near "where three Empires meet."

The latest name that has thus jumped into importance is that of Khagan.\* A wild glen, long lying unnoticed, and yet for the past forty years forming an effectual buffer between the territories of His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir and the wild tribes beyond—a buffer that just suited the policy of the masterly inactivity party, as it prevented the Dogra from subduing the entire country Cis-Indus when he added Gilgit to his dominions and compelled Chilas to return to its allegiance in the sixties—an allegiance that would have been continually acknowledged, but that His Highness was restrained by the same absurd policy from exercising his rights over the tract. The route taken by his troops before we annexed the Punjab was that across the Babusar Pass, over which our new road will soon

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\* (Written in 1893 when fighting began round Chilas)

run. The traveller, as he stands on the crests of the range, will, on a clear morning, ere the daily fog cap has closed round it, see one of the grandest sights that even the Himalayas have to show; the great mass of the Nanga Parbat (naked mountain, rising from the Indus where that river is scarcely 6,000 feet above sea-level, one stupendous wall of mountain, forest, grass, rock, and snow to the height of 26,600 feet.

Kinchinjunga, Everest and other Himalayan summits rise to a greater height, but surrounded as they are by peaks scarcely less elevated than themselves, their lower slopes shrouded from view by lesser ranges, their vastness can hardly be realised at a glance. But here the great mass of black rock, in parts exposed, in parts snowclad, rises abruptly 10,000 feet above all neighbouring summits, overtopping everything for many miles around.

From its mighty sides—but far below—great spurs are cast forth in every direction, which themselves become mighty ranges, each more lofty than Mount Blanc.

One of these running westward gradually detaches itself from the others, and for nearly thirty miles runs in a long unbroken range, surmounted by numerous pinnacles, throwing its northern waters into the Indus, while those that fall from its southern slopes combining form the Kishenganga River, one of the great feeders of the Jhelum, which it joins near Muzaffarabad on the Abbottabad-Kashmir road.

After this long unbroken run the mountain ranges bifurcate the northern branch continuing its course in a somewhat more southerly direction, the southern turning almost due south for about ten miles, where it wheels round, and adopts an almost parallel direction to the other. The two then continue in a south-westerly direction for about 50 miles, maintaining throughout elevations ranging from 14,000 to 17,000 feet; and throwing out lesser spurs at intervals, the outer slopes falling towards the Indus and the Kishenganga, respectively—the inner forming the Khagan glen. From the point where the two great spurs branch off, a gentle stream flows down an almost level glade, snowclad for many months of each year, but green with rich grass and dotted with flocks and herds from July to October. This little stream, known as the Gittidas Katha, is crossed about six miles from its source by the Babusar route to Chilas. Six miles further down it has been dammed up by natural barriers of broken rocks, and forms the Lalusar Lake, from the western extremity of which it again emerges as the Kunhar River, which, winding under the bases of the great sides of the two ranges, increases in volume and rapidity at every mile, till at last, as a mighty torrent, it passes Balakot 70 miles below, and flows onward to the Jhelum. Very shortly after the annexation topographical surveys were pushed on in some districts, revenue surveys in others. To the party under Major Montgomery fell the pleasant, if arduous, duty of

surveying the lands of the Maharaja of Kashmir and Jammu. To Colonel Robertson's party the almost equally pleasant work in Hazara, &c.

But the border was then disturbed, as it ever has been, and will be, till the Indus tribes are made to feel a master, and the Khagan glen remained unmapped.

In course of time revenue surveys followed, and in the years 1865-66 the party under Colonel H. L. Johnstone, to which I was attached, worked in the lower portion of district Hazara, among hills ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 feet in elevation. So far our work had proceeded peacefully, and the early months of 1867 saw us pushing northward towards the more picturesque glens on the British border.

We had heard much while sitting round our camp fires, from the people of the lower hills, of the terrible dangers awaiting those who attempted to climb the pinnacle-like summits of the Khagan hills, of avalanche and crevasse, and thunderbolts, of the more shadowy dangers from the malignity of *jinn*s, and the amorousness of *peris*, aided by the overpowering fumes of noxious plants; also of the far from shadowy dangers likely to arise from the treachery of the Syuds, the semi-independent chiefs of the glen, and of probable attacks from the clansmen of the border. We were also regaled with tales of the hoards of wealth hidden amid the snow, open to few, though sought by many; of the philosopher's stone and of the elixir of life distilled from the cream-coloured columbine, the secrets of

which have been lost since the death of King Solomon ; of the fields of sapphire, covered with massive ice, unapproachable to the ordinary mortal by reason of the intense cold, and much more of the same, invented or repeated by wandering fakirs and jogis, Hindu and Moslem, who in search of medicinal herbs often wandered among the snows and forests, and amused the innocent mind of the peasant of the lowlands with these harmless fictions in exchange for the night's food and lodging on their return journeys. Of course there were several Europeans in the party, but each had his own section of work, and as a rule we seldom met.

As all are alive and well able each to tell his own tale, I propose to confine my narrative almost entirely to my own experiences, hoping that some at least may be of use to those now following our footsteps, passing beyond them.

My work in the month of April 1867 took me across the Pakli Valley to the crest of the pineclad range that hems in that circular basin to the north. On the 22nd we sat, after closing work on the highest point of Tanglai, and while looking down on the low country, listened while the aged representative of an old Turk family told us of the first advent of the Pathan tribe that now inhabits all the surrounding country, dependent and independent of British rule. A succession of thunder storms had cleared the air, a cool breeze sung among the pines, life was really enjoyable, and the view around was well worth the climb.

Just below us to the south, lay Pakli, a sheet of rice, studded with large mud built villages, often buried in fruit trees : beyond the stony heaps of Briari, overlooking Manserah, among whose great boulders is one still bearing the rock cut "Edicts of Asoka," telling of a race and religion long swept away from these northern lands, leaving only gigantic and interesting ruins behind them. Further south miles and miles of soft looking hills, dividing Upper from Lower Hazara, through which the Sirhun River, after watering Pakli, winds along a stony bed, giving shelter to many a splendid fish in its deep dark pools. To the east rose the forest covered mountains that stretch away towards "The Gullies" and Murree, and fall eastward in rocky precipices to the Jhelum.

To the west the sombre Kaladhaka, or Black Mountain, that hard nut of frontier politics that only needs the strong hand of a Lockhart to crack, further south double-peaked Bahingrah, in the lands of the "loyal" Nawab of Amb, of whose ancestors many dark tales are told. To the north the fertile plateau of Konsh, and beyond, running to the snowy summits that form the British border, the picturesque glen of Bhogar-mung, succeeded by the valleys of the Allahiwal and Kohistanis, falling away to the Indus.

The old Turk pointed to a village nestling close under the base of Tanglai : That is Goolibagh, Sahib, not much to look at now, but once indeed a veritable garden of roses, as its name implies. It was the capital

of my ancestors, once Governors of the land, Lieutenants of the Great Moghul, and the court was no poor imitation of those in Agra and Delhi, and many a time the whole valley below was gay with the many-coloured tents of the Emperors on their way to Kashmir, and the plain alive with horsemen and footmen, with elephants and camels; and the nights brilliant with watchfires and lanterns, while the air was filled with music and song. But evil days came on the Empire, rebellion everywhere raised its head, yet here my ancestors long maintained the honour of the Emperor, till in an evil hour an unworthy representative sat in the Governor's seat. Music and dancing took the place of musket and drum, women and eunuchs ruled the ruler, and many a fair girl was snatched from her home to add to his zenana. At length the sister of two of the bravest and best officers of the army was seized and carried to the palace, while the brothers were away on some distant duty. On their return they vowed vengeance.

“ Rumours had reached Goolibagh that certain fierce warriors from Badakshan had crossed the snows, had burst on the valleys of Swat and Boner, had swept away its inhabitants by fire and sword, and had occupied their lands. These were now seeking fresh adventures and more lands to plunder. Thither the brothers fled, and found a fierce chief named Bhai Khan, supported by an ambitious Syud, ready for any bloody undertaking. The brothers were welcomed, and soon Bhai Khan arrived on the banks of the Indus, near

Tahkot. But his freebooting followers were ill able to meet the Turk troops in open battle. In conference with the brothers a plan of operations more suited to his wild following was agreed on. A great festival was approaching. On such occasions, the then Governor of Goolibagh and his officers, ignoring the precepts of the Holy Koran, indulged to excess in wine and debauchery, and drunken revelries disgraced the whole town. Deciding to take advantage of this opportunity, Bhai Khan dispersed his followers, with orders to penetrate the hills quietly in small bodies, and to concentrate on the eve of the festival on the Tanglai Mountain. Nothing thwarted his arrangements, and while the townsmen were illuminating the streets below, the clansmen were gathering on the heights above. Orders were issued to maintain silence, and to provide numerous pine torches. Towards midnight the descent began, gradually the invaders closed inwards, word was passed along to light all the torches, then sword in hand, with wild yells, the Pathans rushed down on the devoted city. When the sun rose all that was left of Goolibagh was a burning blood-stained heap. Fresh parties of Pathans soon followed, the Turk garrisons were destroyed or driven out, the whole of the northern valleys were distributed among the invading chiefs, and their followers were now known as Swatis, while in each glen certain choice lands and the whole upper portion of Khagan were made over to the Syud and his relatives, which their descendants still hold for better or worse."



Evening was closing in when the old Turk ceased, and we had to hurry down to reach our camp near a village called Gidarpur, not far from Goolibagh, before dark.

Here the Swati Khan came over, and of course gave a different version of his ancestor's exploits and advent, keeping up the conversation well into the night. At three in the morning, just as a drizzling rain had begun to fall, shots rang in the air, the poor sentry at my tent door dropped wounded; the sepoys turned out, but what could be done in the dark?

Much was not thought of the occurrence at the time, but it proved to be the little cloud foretelling the advance of the thunderstorm that burst over this little corner of the Empire the following year. Shortly after I received orders to go on to Khagan.

## CHAPTER II.

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### KHAGAN IN 1867—(*continued*).

The road to Balakot has long been practicable for troops. After leaving Pakli it winds through low pine-clad hills, the connecting link between the Northern Khagan range and the hills round the Gullies. Emerging we reach the bank of the Kunhar some miles below Balakot, and here the first of the grand scenes that await the traveller comes into view.

Under our feet rushes the now muddy impetuous torrent, from which can be heard the constant grinding of rocks being rolled onwards by the swift current. From its very brink rise the stupendous masses that fall from the great ranges on either side. Straight ahead stands Moosa-ka-Moosala, the seat (or skin carpet) of Moses, 11,000 feet above the valley, its crest capped with snow. Opposite on our right, the bold face and smooth summit of Makra, almost as high as Moosa. From each spurs are cast southward, which descending abruptly end, the one on the banks of the Jhelum, the other in Pakli.

The latter especially is densely wooded with magnificent pine forests, over which, for many months in the year, heavy clouds gather towards evening, and as the rain descends, thunder roars unceasingly from dark

to dawn, while ever and anon the crash of lightning striking the tallest trees, and often shivering them to splinters, makes the dweller in tents among the pines tremble in his bed, and wish himself safe in the valley below; till at sunrise his courage returns, and as he comes forth into the fresh clear air he is thankful that he is here on the mountain top instead of sweltering in the heat. And it is hot, for in addition to its low elevation, between 3,000 and 4,000 feet above sea-level, the heat from the sun appears to be reflected down from every side till one might fancy the plains of India cooler and more enjoyable than Balakot.

From the point where the road touches on the river, the Kunhar runs almost due north and south for about five miles. On its right bank, at the far end, stands Balakot, the principal village of the Swati section of the glen, a cluster of mud huts on the end of a spur falling from Moosala. Among them here and there may be noticed a few better built and higher than the others, with wooden pillars supporting verandahs in front. These are the *havelis* of the Khans. Above, around, on every side, the hill slopes for several thousand feet above the valley are terraced and covered with cornfields, interspersed with numerous hamlets and huts, and dotted with groves of walnut, apricot, mulberry and amlook, from many of which hang grape vines of the finest varieties of purple and white. Near one of these hamlets, overlooking Balakot, iron mines were once worked, and to the quantity of iron in

the hill some ascribe the almost nightly uproar of the elements in the heights above. But, historically, the most interesting is the little hamlet of Silli, on a spur of the pineclad Masur, to the west of Balakot. Here the once famous Syud Ahmed, of Bareilly, made his last stand against the Khalsa armies, and died in the cause for which he had lived and fought; and it was through those pine forests overhead that the small remnant of his followers escaped, to recross the Indus, and found the "Wahabi Colony" which has played so conspicuous a part in border politics ever since. Above the hamlets and terraced fields that clothe the lower slopes, is usually a dark belt of pines, then grassy slopes on which might be seen the numerous flocks and herds of the Swatis and Syuds, guarded and tended by the gentle Goojurs, just returning, during these early months, before the days of forest reserves, from their winter grazing grounds in lower Hazara. A careful search with glasses might discover in the extreme upper verge of the grassy slopes, where these are succeeded by rocky boulders lying in endless confusion, an occasional brown bear or two, just awakened from their winter sleep, digging for wild carrots, garlic, and other roots, their usual fare, varied however at times by fat mutton or tender lamb snatched from the flocks, despite the strong spears of the burly shepherds. Above the rocky masses lie sheets of disintegrated shale, sodden by the constant melting of the snows, which may be seen here lying in patches rapidly

dissolving under the rays of the summer sun, or in great sheets where a change of aspect turns the slopes from the west. The patches, streaks, and sheets, gradually increase in size as a higher elevation is reached, then merge into the great coat of snow, only broken here and there by some great boulder or by some serrated ridge of rock. On the summit of Moosala is a small enclosure, now dedicated to the mythical Moosa, and decorated with little flags, the prayers of the faithful that they may be had in remembrance in the great day of reckoning; but probably sacred at some far previous period to the Panj Pandoo, to Sitaram, or some other still more primeval deity of the mountains. After the Sikh conquest had extended to Kashmir and Peshawar, and the Dooranis had been driven into the Khyber, the bulk of the Hazara chieftains submitted more or less reluctantly to the Infidel yoke, but seldom lost an opportunity of rising against their rulers and oppressors. Ruthless massacres of isolated Sikh outpost garrisons were followed by heavy retribution whenever the Sirdars found time and means to again advance in force into the hills and valleys. Portions of the Swati country never entirely submitted, others were simply invaded, overrun, and abandoned, while the valley of Allahi remained ever untouched behind its mountain barrier.

But the defenceless chieftains of Pakli, lying in the open valley on the high road to Kashmir, were entirely subservient, as were those of Balakot, though these had

the forest clad mountains, backed by snowy ranges, as a safe line of retreat. After the British annexation these lost whatever little show of independence they had previously maintained, and though some were granted jaghirs for helping Colonel Abbott during the Khalsa wars, for the bulk of the land held by their tenantry, they took rank as Lambardars or Revenue Collectors, &c.

There were four of these in Balakot in 1867. The eldest, a tall quaint individual, with hooked nose, keen eyes, long silky beard, and pleasant manners, named Kala Khan. Strict orders had been issued that every help should be given to the survey parties, and Kala Khan came down to meet us with most profuse offers of assistance which, I may add to his credit, he conscientiously fulfilled throughout the years the survey party remained in his lands. The youngest and most interesting was a young man of 24, named Mozaffer Khan. Brusque, almost rude in manner, with a face deeply pitted by small-pox, Mozaffer prided himself on his advanced opinions, which he had picked up as a student in Abbottabad. As a matter of course he affected to be above religious and social prejudices, and enjoyed, rather too much at times, a glass of brandy or other liquor. He had, however, availed himself of the Moslem marriage laws, and had taken four wives in succession though he only lived with the youngest. He had separated himself from the others, and given them separate establishments, simply because they disappointed

his hopes of early securing a son and heir. The fourth had lately supplied the deficiency, and he professed unbounded affection for her. He refused, in spite of jeers and scoffs, to keep her in *purdah*; on the contrary he had chairs placed for her and himself outside his *haveli*, and every evening sat there chatting and toying with her openly.

On the evening after my arrival he waited till Kala Khan and the others had left, then opened on the subject of religion. He had found, he said, much to admire in every sacred book, but the book of books was the Apocalypse of St. John. This he had almost learnt by heart in Persian, and he revelled in the imagery of the New Jerusalem. He kept me talking till late at night, and left me to indulge visions, perhaps, of the young chief becoming the first fruits of the Christian Evangel. What a field for some earnest and able missionary? How well the conversion of the proud mountain chieftain would read in some religious tract for the times? Perhaps I had been dreaming of the Pathans smashing their swords before turning them into ploughshares, when in the early morning I was roused by most discordant noises: some poor fellow was being unmercifully beaten with fists and sticks, while a loud voice shouted "Maro, maro, mardalo." The yells of the unfortunate man made me fear he was really being killed, and rushing out, I found Mozaffer, as master of the ceremonies, wild with rage, foaming with anger and gesticulating wildly. For

the flocks and herds passing Balakot to the grazing grounds further up the glen, their shepherds had to pay a fee, when crossing the bridge, to Government. The chiefs exacted a similar fee for themselves. To avoid paying, the Goojurs often slipped by quietly at night, or took their charges across the upper slopes. The Khan's retainers were ever on the watch for such delinquents, and the poor fellow being so fearfully thrashed had been caught in the act of passing during the night. The loss to his pocket had sent Mozaffer's Christian angel adrift, and he stood forth again the cruel avaricious Pathan.

The poor fellow died of cholera a few months later, and perhaps it was the best that could have happened to him, as he was rapidly becoming a slave to the bottle.

Balakot is not a pleasant place to encamp in during the hot weather, especially in *rowtis*, small single fly-tents to which even the Kabul tent is luxurious; so after securing some fine mules with stalwart *drabis* (Anglice drivers) at Rs. 8 per mensem for man and beast, and having arranged with the obliging thanadar of the local police station to send up fortnightly supplies of wheat, ata, sugar, tobacco, and other commodities dear to the sepoy heart, we started up the valley.

The road for the first two stages passes along the left bank of the river, now close to the waters' edge, now crossing rocky scarps where a false step would mean certain death, anon rising by zigzag ascents to



more easy terraced slopes half a mile above the river. There is little to interest the traveller here. All the lower slopes are terraced and cultivated, while numerous scattered hamlets and huts, all of the matchbox shape, hang from the hillside for many thousand feet. The whole shows that the valley supports a fairly large population. All are of the Swati clan subservient to the Khans of Balakot, though these are now merely lambardars, with jaghirs for good services in the past. The men are, as a rule, tall and active looking, and should make good soldiers, but their want of courage has been conspicuously shown on more than one occasion. They are no match even for their own clansmen across the border, who are themselves about the poorest fighting lot between Gilgit and Beluchistan. The clothing of men and women is similar to that worn throughout Hazara, dark indigo blue long coat and trousers, or jacket and trousers, with sheet, occasionally relieved by a white turban or sheet on the head.

The village of Kowahi, the first halting place—before it was swept away by a landslide—was, if possible, more hot and stifling than Balakot; and already ripe mulberries hung in clusters on the trees. Passing Paras we encamped next day on the picturesque banks of the Bhunji Katha, near its junction with the Kunhar, after losing two hours or so in repairing the road across a rocky scarp, where it is formed by stakes some 6 feet long, forced at intervals into the crevices in the face of the rock, and overhanging the river. On these

other stakes are laid across, then branches and mud. The two ends are buried under heavy piles of stones, to give the whole stability. A false step crossing, or, for a loaded mule, pressure against any projecting rock, means certain death in the torrent roaring round the rocks below.

Very pleasant trips may be made from this part to the peaks near the sources of the Bhunji—pleasant but dangerous, and only practicable after the end of June. The ascent upstream to where the Neela Nuddi joins the Bhunji is steep and rough, but very beautiful. Close below, the waters rush and roar and foam round the boulder strewn bed, and the rocky banks. All around rises over the slopes of the overhanging mountains a forest of pines and firs of gigantic size, mingled with the lighter foliage and more varied forms of the walnut, sycamore, poplar and birch. The air, cooled by the waters of the stream which has so lately left the snows, is refreshing and invigorating. In the thickets of birch that run up the lesser feeders the gentle musk deer may be seen sliding away in great terror. Beautiful pheasants, startled from their nest, may flash a few moments in the sun as they cross to the further side and crash down out of sight.

A few miles of forest, then the glen opens out into a green valley, with the large village of Bhunjli clustering up the hillsides. Splendid deodars once clothed the slopes around, and, perhaps, ere this, the Forest Department has succeeded, to some extent at least,

in its efforts to repair the damage caused by the wholesale destruction of these fine timber trees under the auspices of a speculating Punjabi Military Civilian in the sixties, before the first representative of the Forest Conservator found his way there.

One often hears of the denudation of hillsides by forest fires ; much of what is seen and attributed to this cause near the Himalayan sanatoria may, with more truth, be ascribed to the great demand for timber and firewood wherever a British Cantonment is located. The villagers have burnt the fallen needles year by year for centuries without denuding the hillsides. Timber contractors did more damage in the first ten years after the annexation, by orders of Government, and often against the protests of the people, who are now debarred from the grazing lands that belonged to their forefathers before Job Charnock started Calcutta.

The Bhunji Katha starts in a comparatively low pass, and is in itself an inconsiderable stream, but its affluent, the Neela Nuddi, which joins it below Bhunji rises in the small but deep glaciers that surround the Jimgarh peak and its neighbours. The ascent up the nuddi is very gradual, and mules may go up it a long distance. Gradually the forest that covers the lower slopes thins off, soon small clumps, then solitary, often lightning charred, trunks alone remain, then all is green soft grass to the very edge of the glaciers. That edge is a wall of blue ice, torn and jagged into a thousand blocks and splinters, fissured in every direction

and for ever slowly falling forward. Beyond is a field of snow over a mile in breadth, crossed by numerous crevasses from a foot to a dozen yards in width. Some gaping widely and easily avoided, others hidden under fresh fallen snow, which may deceive the most careful and give way under foot, hurling the unfortunate traveller into the depths of ice, never perhaps to be seen again, till the glacier moving on deposits him in time on the moraine forming below. As a fact two of my party did fall into a crevasse near here, and it took a rope of 75 hands length, formed by tying all our turbans, kamarbands, and puttis together, to haul them up again. Fortunately the block of snow which had bridged the crevasse, and had fallen under them, was several feet wide and deep, and formed a soft cushion for their fall. Thus they escaped contusions, and scrapes from jagged icicles on the way, and on arrival at the bottom, and also were saved from sliding away down the icy floor into hidden recesses from which nothing could ever have rescued them.

After crossing the glaciers the real climbing begins, but except for short intervals here and there, the ascent from this side is easy except where one has to clamber over, round, or under huge boulders, perched on a narrow ridge with only six inches of rock between the feet and the depths below.

The summit reached, 15,500' above sea, a magnificent view is obtained on all sides on a clear day. To the south the eye can wander up and down the grandly

picturesque valley of the Kishenganga, across the hills of Kashmir, across the snowy summits of the Bhimbar to the plains of the Punjab. One might fancy those white streaks to be the waters of the Jhelum and Chenab wandering away to the sea. To the west the nearer hills fall away down to the Jhelum and Hazara; in the far distance the snowy summits of the Safed Koh, overhanging Jellalabad, seem like a distant white cloud. More distinct are the snowy Kafiristan and Swat. To the north the view is bounded by the Moosa-ka-Moosala range. Yet many a snowy rocky pinnacle may be seen shooting up over the lower passes. On the east for many miles runs a serrated ridge, ever and anon, at Bichali, Shikara and elsewhere, shooting up in needle-like points to elevations exceeding even that on which we stand, and away in the distance is the glorious Nanga Parbat again. The serrated ridge and its pinnacled peaks are the southern range, the watershed dividing the valleys of the Kishenganga and Kunhar. Beneath the rugged crest stands a thousand feet wall of black precipice, slack and naked, on which even snow can find no resting place, but is cast as it falls to the flats below, here to accumulate, freeze and form the "granaries of God" the perennial source of water-supply for the thirsty plains.

Among these crags, scarce accessible to the boldest climber, the pretty ibex has found its last shelter in these regions. Compelled by hunger it descends to

the lower valleys during winter : but returns, ere yet the shepherd and his flocks seek their summer grazing grounds, to the most inaccessible cliffs, and seldom leaves them again till the snow has driven its enemies off again. The persevering Englishman, with a couple or so of good shikaris, might succeed in securing a head or two, but it is dangerous work. Not that the snows are deeper or the peaks more difficult than many farther east, but being more open to the influences of the heat below, the snow thaws earlier, and the roll of small avalanches, accompanied by huge rocks and showers of stones from the heights above, is incessant from sunrise till long after sunset, and at any moment one of these may sweep the hillside where the shikari is painfully picking his way, and carry him below, to be buried for ever under its ponderous mass.

Leaving the Bhunji Katha, the path or road up the Kunhar continues along the left bank of the stream, under the great spurs through terraced fields and scattered hamlets, past the village of Jared to the junction with the Kunhar of another large feeder known as the Manur Katha, which also has its source among the snowy heights of the southern range. A trip up this valley would be an exceedingly pleasant one, and under the distant summits the ibex may again be sought, while bears, brown and black, range among the grassy slopes and lower rocky ridges, musk deer slide among the birch woods, and the marmot yells its indignant inquiries at the intruder from behind the masses of

rocky debris below the snows. The hillsides to the height of 10,000 feet are covered with dark forests of firs and many Goojur families build their wretched jhoogis in the grassy glades.

Returning to the main valley, where the Kunhar takes a circular bend northwards, we pass the last hamlets of the Balakot Khans, and encamp at Dewan-bela, so called from the massacre here of some unhappy Dewan of the Dogra Governor, who was here lured to his fate by the crafty Syuds of Khagan, who lord it over all the valley eastward of this spot.

Here my Swati friend, Kala Khan, bade me adieu and God-speed, as he handed me over, with a knowing smile, to the loving care of the Syud representative who had been sent to meet me, a very pleasant fellow named Syud Ahmed Shah. The forests had now encroached on the valley; cultivation almost ceased; and it was cold enough under the pines to enjoy sitting round huge camp fires, on which whole trees were cast without a thought of their value lower down.

The Syud chatted and laughed, and told of all the dangers that awaited me ahead if I persisted in going on, but promised none the less to do all in his power to assist me. A landslip had swept away portions of the direct road between this and Khagan Khas, the main village of the Syuds, and as it was still under repair, the Syud advised me to send my mules on unladen by this route, while we were to cross the Kunhar to the right bank with the baggage, and proceed *viâ*

Patendas, a cooler and easier route to Khagan. The last thing at night he promised to have any number of Goojur coolies to help us along in the morning. The mules were to start off before daylight. On turning out of my tent in the morning, I found the worthy Syud waiting for me in gorgeous array—green silk coat, green Kashmir shawls, with worked borders, a turban and kamarband, a handsomely mounted and sheathed sword, pistols and knife, green embroidered sandals, &c. He met me with the sweetest of smiles and most cordial greetings. I did not like the getup. I knew that it has often been the prelude on the frontier to some treacherous act. I looked round in vain for the promised coolies, and asked the Syud where they were. He calmly replied that he had told me coolies were not to be found here among the independent sons of the mountains, &c., and again commenced his account of the perils awaiting anyone foolhardy enough to attempt survey work in Khagan. Cutting him short, I told him that I would give him half an hour to think it over, and ordered my men to prepare loads for coolies. When the half hour was up, Ahmed Shah strolled calmly up to me again, this time with half-a-dozen armed retainers. Hesitation now would have entailed, perhaps, a month's delay, while letters passed to and from Abbottabad. Near me was a mule trunk, containing my few cooking things. I suddenly raised it, and, placing it on the Syud's grand head-dress, told him I could manage with so much luggage,



and ordered him to move on. In a moment the hillside was alive with men, staring from every rock. My sepoy, fearing an attack, closed in, but these were only the coolies hidden away to await events. In less than ten minutes our loads had all been lifted, and we were on the march, Ahmed Shah smiling blandly as before. The "bridge" was the most primitive I had ever seen up to date; merely a thick pine tree with its branches cut away, and the upper side cleared of its bark and slightly planed with hatchets. The Syud, as we approached, amused himself by giving me an account of how a young Goojur and his wife had slipped while crossing a few days before, and, falling into the torrent below, had never been seen again. However, we all passed over safely, and towards evening camped below the village of Khagan. This consisted of three or four clusters of huts, rising in terraces on the steep hillside, each cluster formed round the more imposing *haveli*, or residence of one or other of the chief Syuds. These stood out boldly from the rest, distinguishable by their greater size and height, with pillared verandahs in front of each. One striking circumstance was that the village did not boast a single *musjid*; the reason assigned being that none of the Syuds cared to be so openly hypocritical as to erect churches, after their repeated acts of treachery in times past.

Next day Mehndi Shah, the eldest brother, paid me a short visit. He had a most forbidding cast of features, and looked far more willing to cut my throat

than pay compliments, and indeed he had not many of these to spare. All the same, I should have been more inclined to trust to him in an emergency than his more pleasant brothers and cousins, and I have little doubt that given favourable circumstances, he would have made his mark.

The Syud family is now divided into several branches, each holding a portion of the jagir, and collecting dues from the shepherds who graze their flocks and herds in certain valleys. Some add to their income by wandering across the border collecting tithes, often extending their operations as far as Chitral, and even at times, it was said, into Balkh and Badakhshan.

They, with their brethren at Palas on the Indus, at Pariari in the Black Mountain, in Bogarmung, and other places, doubtless possess great influence, and as a rule they are of course inimical to the British. Being, however, very avaricious, the almighty dollar would no doubt enlist their sympathies, at least outwardly, on the side of the Government.

The Khagan Valley has now become a veritable glen. The Kunhar alone separates the bases of the opposite spurs, which fall with astonishing abruptness from the peaks above. On the north the water from the melting snows falls in places without a break in long cascades several hundred feet in height. On the south an ascent of 9,000 feet may be made without a break to the peak above, which is only three miles in direct distance from the river.

Round the Khagan village, and also round Rajwa and other hamlets, some five or six miles further on, terraced fields may still be seen on the hillsides, but after that all cultivation ceases. There are no regular villages: nothing but more or less temporary structures, where Goojur families spend the summer months and where the ghee and wool are collected for sale to the Kathries or Banyas, who yearly wander up the glen with mule or donkey loads of tobacco, cotton, cloth, indigo, salt and other commodities, which the Goojurs take in exchange for the produce of their flocks. The Pathan element has now ceased. Except a few of the Syuds' retainers, the people are all Goojurs—great, strong men, but little given to fighting. A quiet, gentle race, asking only to follow their flocks and herds in peace, and submitting tamely to all the demands of the Syuds.

Over each family group is an Elder, or Mokadam, to whom all disputes are referred, and through whom the Syuds transact all money and other affairs. The men are usually dressed in white flannel jacket, knickerbockers and putties—spun and woven by their wives and daughters; the women usually wear loose cotton trousers and jacket, and throw a cotton sheet over their heads. The children, naked as often as not, seem to have an immunity from the complaints that destroy so many of them where they are more gently nurtured, and play and sleep unconcernedly in slush or snow on the coldest days and the bleakest hillsides; their only shelter being often the leaside of some huge rock.

As climbers men and women are unsurpassed, save perhaps by an occasional shikari. Their food consists entirely of thick makhai (Indian corn) cakes, cheese, and an occasional piece of mutton or beef. Their chief drink is buttermilk, for they seldom indulge in fresh milk, which is set apart for ghee.

Their only weapons are, as a rule, spears, or rather alpenstocks with spear heads attached ; firearms are scarcely seen amongst them ; and few talwars or knives. Simple in their tastes and habits, seldom is an angry word heard amongst them. Monogamy appears to be the general practice. A sum of money, or cattle and sheep, are given to the father of a girl at betrothal, but this appears to be intended to cover the expenses of the marriage dinner, to provide a few silver ornaments for the bride. and the necessary household furniture, such as it is—a bedstead, a stool, and a spinning-wheel of lacquer work. Metal cooking pots are seldom seen, all cooking and storing being done in the ordinary chatty or *gharra*. Utterly ignorant of reading and writing they yet do not appear to be much under superstitious influences. The only religious act, if it can be called such, I have ever seen performed, was the tying of a rag to some shrine or old wayside tree. Yet when urged, both Syuds and Goojurs can relate, or invent tales and legends connected with certain glacier beds or mountain tarns regarding peris and jins, but these appear to be importations from Kashmir or modifications of Hindu or Moslem legends, altered by wandering fakirs to suit the locality.

Many of these centre round the Saifar Maluk Lake or *sar*, the overplus waters from which enter the Kunhar near Narang, about ten miles above Khagan. This is a little hamlet of Goojurs, lying in a small grassy stretch on the left bank of the Kunhar, and here we encamped two days after leaving Khagan. The previous night was spent near the Bhimbal Katha, which after emerging from the snows that lie round some of the highest peaks of the northern range, flows down a gently sloping glen, that, when clear of snow, towards the close of July, is one sheet of green, dotted with numerous flocks and herds. I had determined to visit these peaks, as from them a fine view is obtained of some of the upper valleys of the independent Kohistanis but was obliged to postpone the trip for the present.

There was nothing, however, to prevent a trip to the legendary lake above Narang, and as from there the ascent of some important peaks could be made from a point nearer their summits than the central valley, I decided on turning up to it, with tents and baggage. The ascent is rather steep and rough for the first mile or more; the stream, falling with great rapidity from the highlands above, rushes and foams round boulder and crag. As on the Bhunji, forests of pine, with their bluish green foliage intermingled with sombre firs, rising to the height of a hundred feet or more, and the lighter foliage of other trees, clothes the slopes. Under their shade one hardly feels the climb up the narrow pathway, which, ever ascending, winds in and

out among the trees, and every now and again crosses the bed of the stream itself, when the day is still young and the rush from the meltings snows has not reached it. Suddenly the ascent ceases, and a great barrier of rocks, through which at one side the stream has found an exit, is before us. Passing through the gap, a silent lake of the deepest blue, half a mile across, lies at our feet, silent and dead; not a fish in its icy waters, not a bird hovering over its still surface. Only the marmot shrieks his alarm at the strangers. Beyond is a green glade, about a quarter of a mile in width, winding between the bases of the great mountains that rise in sublime grandeur on either side; treeless and bare of all but grass, and here and there a cluster of creeping juniper. Some with rounded slopes, gently rising higher and ever higher, till on nearing the summits, 7,000 feet above, they are crowned with walls of rock mingled with ice and snow; others precipitous from their very bases, and looking as if every breeze would hurl them bodily into the valley below.

At the head of the glen is the usual icy barrier, where the glacier ends from which the stream is fed, and beyond, the dark crags from which the glacier is formed. There the ibex still roams, the cry of the snow-pheasant is heard from the heights calling to its brood, and the ever-recurring crash of avalanche and rocky boulder toppling over the icy cliff is echoed and re-echoed from every side, but all else is still, silent and dead.

Though material beings are few and timid in the quiet glen, the lake, the green vale, the glacier fields, and the icy caves below, have for generations past been the favourite dwelling place of ethereal creatures of surpassing loveliness, or surpassing ugliness and strength, alas ! now driven from their haunts by the surveyor, the forester, the engineer, and the riflemen from the infidel West, to seek more secure haunts away among the crags of the great Nanga Parbat, where even the mad Englishman cannot follow them. But English visitors were few and far between in those days, and from the hidden depths below the glaciers, where were palaces of ice adorned with turquoise columns, furnished with couches of sapphire, and jade, and amber, draped gracefully with ever fresh falling snow, nightly, when the moon was near the full, emerged through the dark cavern mouths the Queen of the silent lake, and her bands of lovely fairies and nymphs dancing and singing the lays of ancient days, when the world was yet their own, as they tripped down the green vale and plunged into the silent lake, across whose waters at such a time the moon cast the shadow of the square-headed Mali-ki-Parbat, and the slender shaft-like pinnacles of its sheeted sisters.

Woe to the human wretch who at such a time crossed the Ice Queen's path. In a moment rendered senseless by scents of narcotic plants, culled from among the rocks, he was dragged helplessly forward and thrown mercilessly into the deep waters, never to be seen

again, for his body would soon be sucked down into the subterranean depths, through which the waters that feed the lakes flow in a continuous stream, till they reach the waters under the earth, and feed the great Woollar Lake of Kashmir, which stream formed the highway for the fairies of the Saifar Maluk when once a year they used to visit their Kashmirian sisters.

I spent several days near the quiet lake, at the foot of the glaciers, and on the surrounding summits, but never had the good or ill fortune to meet either peri or jinn, and even the khalashis at last began to doubt at least the present existence of the aerial beings.

The excursionist, taking the lake as a centre, may spend a pleasant week among the grassy slopes, peering into the glacier beds, or scaling the neighbouring heights, and gazing from their needlelike summits on the valley below. This scaling of peaks is not quite pleasurable after a time, especially if you must keep it up whether you will or no. Such was my lot at that time.

Already the loud rolling of thunder, night after night told that the massive rain clouds, blown forward by the monsoon, had now crossed the Indian continent, and having skirted round the vale of Kashmir, had begun to burst against the face of the great walls that bound its northern glens, and gladly, could I have done so, would I have arranged to spend each night in the deep valleys. But at each *station* several hours' observation was necessary, and as by nine o'clock, even on the clearest mornings, the little snow wreaths, like the smoke from



steamer funnels, began to obscure the tops of the higher peaks, it was necessary to be on the ground at dawn which could only be done by camping on or near the summit. I have said that overhanging Khagan village rises a peak over 15,000 feet in elevation. Its central position made me determine to pay it a prolonged visit. I had ascended to a peak near it, in company with poor Ahmed Shah, from the village itself, while there, returning in the evening. This had determined the Syud on avoiding such climbs in my company in future as much as possible; and as there was no chance of "complications" with borderers on the southern side of the glen, he had asked a few days' leave, and left with me two of his best shikaris--Karam and Nadir: the former, a pleasant, willing fellow, quiet and unobtrusive, but ever ready to go anywhere; the latter, a wiry little chap, with reddish hair and beard, and greyish blue eyes. Keen as a wild cat at times; at others rather sullen and annoying. With these as guides, a party of Goojurs carrying my small tent and a few necessary articles for kitchen and comfort, a couple of Gurkha sepoy's of the escort, and my khalashis with instruments we started one morning for Chumbra.

I found afterwards that we had better have ascended from Rajwal or Bhimbab, but doubtless the Syud had good personal reasons for persuading me that the ascent from Saifar Maluk Sar was almost easy enough for mules! I did not accept his ideas of the best routes thereafter. The rest of the escort,

with the mules and heavier luggage, remained by the lake.

At early dawn, while the air was still almost raw and chill, and the sun had not yet tinged the hill tops, Kamar, Nadir, and myself, with my dogs and guns, started ahead, to see if we could find anything to slay. Next came our Gurkhas, keener for slaughter of any kind, from a Pathan to a rat, than ourselves ; nowhere happier than among the cool mountain breezes, yet not unwilling to be relieved by the next detachment, so that they might return to their " bal-bachas" and little fat wives, their purchases in the bazaar, and their tales in the guard-room or the lines-- to be enhanced in value now after their trip through the romantic glen.

Next came the khalashis, with instruments, mostly men of Rawalpindi or Poonch, the same as now accompany our troops and our batteries from Quetta to Mandalay as Drabis or drivers.

Then the Goojurs, with the tent, the bedding, provisions, &c., all rolled into round bundles in their heavy blankets, and carried on the nape of the neck, with head bent forward ; apparently about the most inconvenient of any of the methods used in the Himalayas.

As we leave the lake, and begin our march with much talking and shouting and ordering, we appear quite a large gathering, giving life and action to the scene ; but as we gradually zigzag in single file up the hillsides, and gain the height of some 1,000 feet or so above the glen, how small we look, a few little dots,

crawling, and barely that, up the great rolling masses ; and how far away are the summits we are making for not even in sight yet, nor likely to be for some hours. Gradually the last tall scorched pine is past, and we are marching over green soft grass, at every other step picking the ripe strawberries, or forcing our way through the heatherlike juniper that now covers the hillsides in many places. The Goojurs come slowly and steadily behind, after giving a long sad gaze upwards, then resting awhile to search among the rocks for the succulent rhubarb which they munch to quench the fast coming thirst. Another hour, and we are about half-way between the valley below and the rocks above. The rests are now more frequent. In spite of the cool air and the pleasant breeze, the sun's heat tells on the climbers, and we have yet scarcely begun the day's work. However, the Goojur is not easily cast down in his native hills, and as the sun reaches the meridian we cross the last hundred yards of sodden grass and the many-coloured carpet of flowers that edge it off, and reach the region of rock and snow.

Here a long halt is called, and soon every man has deposited his load and is busy sucking ice. Each Goojur produces his thick and coarse, but well baked Indian-corn cake, and breaking a morsel begins to munch. A careful search in the hold-alls produces, perhaps, a bit of cheese also, and a small lump of rock salt, which is carefully licked and redeposited for the next occasion. Then some one with a quick eye notices

a cattle-shed, or jhoogi, some thousand feet below, and after much talking and persuasion a couple of the younger men start off for *lassi*, or buttermilk, while others scatter to collect bundles of dry juniper twigs for the night's fires, as only a solitary bush here and there, clambering round some steep rock, will be found higher up. For myself a kettle is soon boiling for tea, and I have my breakfast of tender mutton chops and chappaties, perhaps a few potatoes. But bread I had not seen for months, nor will see till I return to civilisation. In time the *lassi* arrives, and each takes a pull in turn from the *ghurra*, which is soon emptied, and carefully placed on a rock, with an implied promise of its being returned to the owner some day. Then follows a short smoke, and the loads are resumed. The ascent is now more trying, the rarified air begins to tell, the rocks are wet and slippery, and the loose shale slips from under us as we step on it and often carries one back several feet much to his disgust. However, the snow is now reached, and though at first it is most tiring work pulling one's feet at every step out of a couple of feet of half liquid snow it gradually deepens and becomes firmer, while by choosing a route under shade one finds it firm enough to tread on without sinking an inch. But even of this one may have too much. As we approach nearer to what we hope is the summit, the snow is frozen into hard ice, and hatchets must be used to cut steps for the feet, often across an almost perpendicular surface. The first man or two get along all right with this help

but soon the steps are sodden and by the time the last man has crossed scarce a vestige of them is left for his feet. Now we pass under a rocky ledge. Alternate boulders and blocks of snow form a fringe above us, that may at any moment be loosened from their frail hold, and with a sudden rush sweep us to eternity. For this ledge we are making, and at length have the pleasure of twisting and sliding through a gap, and find ourselves on a serrated ridge that will allow of a dry hand-over-hand climb to the peak above, as the sun has almost entirely melted such little snow as can find a footing on so narrow a basis. All are pretty well blown by this time, but there, straight ahead of us apparently less than half a mile distant, is the summit of the peak we are making for. So, after long viewing the scenery below, we push on again, and at last after some very stiff work, with a last spurt we are on a peak ; but not the highest. A few enquiries elicit from the shikaris : “ That is Manoor, Sir, not Chumbra that is still many miles away ! ” The sun is now rapidly falling westward. Go on to-night we cannot, so after a long discussion it is decided to postpone our further march till next day. It is disappointing, but one must get used to that. The worst of it is that between us and Chumbra, though on the same range, there is a deep descent to a pass about half way, not to mention several ups and downs between. Meantime, the Goojurs cluster round us, and great is their disgust at finding we have come to the wrong place ; but not a single growl escapes them.

There is nothing to be gained by staying up here the night, so after reconnoitring the ground we turn back a little way and descend some distance to the head-waters of the Manoor Katha. Here the tent is pitched behind a huge boulder, and the Goojurs and khalashis seek other sheiter, for a thunderstorm is brewing, and we are likely to have a wet night.

At early dawn we are up again. A dense fog envelopes everything, but that does not prevent our moving on ; and our next march is begun with a long descent, and then another climb, the counterpart almost of yesterday, but being on the southern face, the slope from base to crest is more easy, and there is very little snow and more grass. By noon we have again reached the crest of the range, but far below the great peak, the northern face of the hill, presenting a very different appearance to the southern, being extremely steep and almost entirely covered with snow, except on the rocky cliffs. Up along the crest we go, over this boulder under that ; now stepping out when the crest is broad, anon creeping cautiously, step by step, where there is scarcely standing room between death on either side. Up, still up, and now again towards evening we reach a peak, but again not the highest. That is, however, but fifty yards from us, but what a fifty yards !

Nowhere along the ridge had it been more than half-a-dozen yards in width, and not seldom scarce half-a-dozen feet, but all had been dry and firm ; now between us and the peak there was an abrupt fall of thirty or

forty feet, bridged across, however, by a wall of frozen snow ; at its base the thickness of this causeway perhaps six feet, tapering upwards on both sides, and on the northern slightly overhanging the great gulf below. Scarce twelve inches of icy snow remained to form a causeway, the only approach between ourselves and Chambra on this side. On the north side a sheer fall of five hundred feet or so to the glacier below, yawned to our right ; to our left a shorter, but still fearfully dangerous descent of some fifty or sixty feet. What was to be done ? Calmly and with steady steps Karam walked across this fearful bridge ; was I to follow or turn back ? Turn back now, and never again would I be certain of gaining my point. With inward trembling, but outward calmness, I followed, keeping my eyes straight ahead, and in a few moments, that seemed hours, I had joined the fearless shikari. I turned, my dogs were tremblingly following my footsteps, but not another man would venture ! Without loads the Goojurs would not have minded it, but burdened and wearied they feared that the narrow wall might at any moment give way and hurl one or more of them to eternity. Reluctantly they turned back, and after a detour of 4 or 5 miles, climbed the peak from the south-west, while Karam and myself went to the summit and sat down to wait for them. Here we sat as evening closed round us ; the sun gradually sank below the horizon, the pink and crimson of snow and cloud gradually changed to cold white or grey ; darkness lay on all below, save

where here and there in the sombre forests a slight twinkling light showed where the Goojurs guarded their flocks. The storm-clouds that hung heavily over the mountains had passed off, and all was clear and serene above, as the bright moon slowly rose over the distant snow fields, and again lit up, though with milder rays, glacier and pinnacle. But how small we felt, we two little things on that solitary height, nearly 16,000 feet above the sea and quite 8,000 above the valley below. Not a sound was heard, save the ever-recurrent fall of snow block or boulders far below, and we had even ceased to speak ourselves when our ears were gladdened about 9 P.M. by voices ascending the south-western slope.

By midnight my little tent had been snugly pitched, behind a huge rock, about thirty feet from the crest on one side, the Goojurs had found snug corners among the rocks on the other, my *kit* had fed me, and then himself, and all were fast asleep. Up at early dawn ere the sun rose, and while my tea was preparing, I had my theodolite up and was making desperate efforts to complete my work before the fogs should rise again. These were at present lying far below, in the northern valley a rolling sea of cloud, from which little wooded islets shot up here and there, and into which the great mountains shot forth long arms as peninsulas, enclosing many a sheltered bay. On the southern horizon an ominous bank of dark cloud was rapidly rising; and soon from the inland sea rose deep mutterings, to be answered shortly from the approaching masses to the south.



Ever and anon swift lightnings shot through the waves below, while forked streamers illuminated the cloud bank to the south. Gradually the whole northern mass began to rise, one set of islands and peninsulas sunk beneath the waves giving place to others, and suddenly a dense dark volume of fog rolled over the field of snow beneath us. The theodolite began to rattle like a galvanic battery, evidently it was time to seek shelter. With ever increasing rapidity the northern waves rolled onward and upward, majestically the southern storm-clouds poured over the summit of the opposite range, and soon the opposing roaring masses joined battle all along the line, the range on which we stood being the meeting place of the terrific hosts.

I had during the previous evening told Kaim the Goojur mokadam, to send two men with some letters to Kaghan in the early morning. I now remembered this, and just before the storm burst called Kaim to tell him not to send the men. He came to the crest between us, and yelled out that the men had gone, then at once turning he screamed out : "Will you fellows be off, the sahib is asking about you." In vain I roared back that I did not wish them to go ; he persisted that they had started long ago, and added : "Allah ki kasm " Thoughtlessly I replied : "Allah may be nearer than you think." I had scarcely said it when a fierce flash almost blinded us, a terrific roar seemed to shake the mountain to its base, and down came the hail in torrents. Kaim fell as if shot ; rushing up I dragged

him into my tent, and forcing open his rigid jaws poured some brandy down his throat, and then my *kit* and I rubbed his stiffened limbs as hard as we could. After a while he opened his eyes, looked round, and said : “ I’ll never tell a lie again ” In spite of all that was going on, we could not help laughing and on examining him found that only one hand that had held an alpenstock and one leg that had not been covered by the thick blanket in which he had been enveloped, had been struck, seared as if with hot iron. He was soon all right again, and I need hardly add that “ When the de’il was well the de’il a saint was he.” Meantime the first crash had been followed by others as terrific, the thunder rolled echoing and rechoing from every side, the lightning seemed to “ run along the ground,” blue flames ran up and down the rifle barrels, played round the rocks, lit up the edges of ice, and then rushed like flaming arrows into the surrounding gloom to disappear far, far below. For fully an hour there seemed to be no cessation of thunder and lightning and snow—snow in heavy flakes—though this was the month of July, till it lay nearly a foot deep on everything around. Then came a break, a bright bit of blue sky, through which the sun’s rays darted on the fresh fallen snow, and made it shine with dazzling brightness.

Fresh muttering to the south told us that all was not yet over ; perhaps what had passed was but a prelude to what was coming, so at least thought the Goojurs who crowded round me and begged me either to return,

bag and baggage, to a green flat some 2,000 feet below where there was a semblance of a hut where they could find shelter, or at least to let them go. Allowing myself to be persuaded, not unwillingly, we soon packed up and hurried down the steep slope as fast as we could, and had barely time to get the tent up again this time in the lee of the ragged hut, when the storm again burst over us. It was well we did go below, for, on returning next morning, an enormous boulder lay across the little platform where my tent had been!

Having done all necessary round this side, our next move was towards the great Mali-ki-Parbat, over 17,000 feet in elevation, the highest peak in Khagan. From the west there is no possibility of a successful ascent, as the face of the mountain on that side rises like a wall from base to summit. On the south and north side too, though one may reach the base of the final ascent, there is no chance of going further, as these sides, with the one facing west form three sides of a square, more inaccessible than the highest wall of any fort. On the east alone does the ascent appear practicable, as there is a broad and fairly gentle ascent, a field of snow, from the glacier below, and, as a rule, wherever snow rests there men can go. To get at it we turned southward, and visited first the "fairy" glaciers, and the peaks above, whence again a fine view of the Kishenganga Valley can be obtained. Here ibex were seen several times, and their haunts were more easily approached across the snow than further west.

We sighted a splendid buck one morning perched on a ledge of rock away near the summit of a peak overhanging the glacier below with nothing between the base of the rock and the snowy waste a thousand feet below. Karam decided to try his luck and started off alone telling me to keep a look out below in the pass between the peak on which the fine beast was standing and the one opposite. For nearly an hour we lost sight of the bold shikari, then suddenly he appeared round the shoulder of the hill about 100 yards below the point on which the ibex still stood guarding his does. With feverish anxiety, not unmixed with the dread that at any moment we might see him fall, to be crushed to atoms below, we saw him glide round a rock here, slide along what appeared a perfectly smooth surface there, now leap across from the point of one rock to another. Ever and anon we saw him poised with hand raised. When by scattering a little flour he watched the direction of the breeze. Nearer and nearer he moved. Then suddenly we saw him step back, kneel, his matchlock rising slowly to his shoulder ; and just as we hoped to see the smoke and the poor beast fall the latter wheeled, and in a moment he and his does were bounding down the fearful descent towards where we lay. Reaching the base in safety on they came nearer and still nearer, the male leading with head thrown back, his beard brushing the snows, on he came, up to and past us: as he did so I fired, the fine beast gave a bound then rolled over in the snow ; with a shout we rushed

forward—were within a yard—when with a wild snort and a long spring he dashed forward ; and ere we could recover from our surprise was across the ridge and away down the opposite slope, lost for ever.

Poor Karam looked very crestfallen on return, a stone had slipped from under him at the critical moment, disordered his aim, and startled the beast.

Working round the southern side of the great mountain to its eastern face, we found a cleared spot and spent the night, to allow of a fair start in the morning. By sunrise we were on the move, leaving our tents below, taking only enough for breakfast with us and our instruments. The whole route lay over frozen snow, intersected by fissures in every direction, through which was needed very careful steering indeed. As we neared the last great ascent, the ice was even more broken than further down, but the fissures not so deep. Taking advantage of a long strip of debris that crossed a section of the face we got on faster, and then came the last long pull. Here we were obliged to cut steps and be careful of the footing, not that there was much danger here of serious injury, but an involuntary slide of a thousand feet to be followed by a return journey to the starting point would not have been pleasant. As we approached nearer and nearer to the summit and looked down with pride on the poor 15,000 peaks below we were all as elated as possible, though our legs felt as if great logs were tied to them, our eyes red with the glare from the unstained snow, and perhaps, our breathing began

to be laboured. Fifty, forty, thirty yards more ; but we never crossed the thirty yards ! At our feet a great crevasse cut horizontally across the mountain side from the black precipice on the north to that on the south, fully fifteen feet across and only slippery ice to spring on to on the off-side. We had brought no pole with us, or other appliance for such an emergency, so contenting ourselves with the thought that but for that crevasse my theodolite would soon have been on the summit, we commenced our rapid descent, after wrapping ourselves in blankets, by long snow slides, to the more level fields of snow below.

The next few days were spent in observing from other peaks in the neighbourhood, not so high, but far more dangerous to climb than the eastern slope of Mali. On one of these we had the benefit of another storm, not much less furious than that we had experienced on Chumbra. We now returned to the Saifar Maluk Sar, and thence to Narang and Bhimbal.

Ahmed Shah now rejoined, as my next ascents would be to the peaks overlooking Kohistan, and in the absence of some influential man there might be unpleasant neighbours. The Bhimbal Katha is practicable for mules up to the very verge of the snows, and the summits of the range are near enough to allow of their being reached in time to secure observations, and to return to camp before nightfall. The grandest peak in the neighbourhood is Harifa, nearly 17,000 feet in elevation. From this a great spur is thrown northward, which

after continuing at the same elevation, about 16,000 feet, as the range from which it springs and in a single crest for some miles, breaks up into numerous spurs, whose rugged sides fall with fearful abruptness to the Indus, often ending in rocky scarps of great height washed by the waters of the river and impassable by man or beast. On either side this central range lie the Neela and Chicharga Valleys. The upper portion of the former can be seen from here for miles ; a gently sloping grass covered glen about half a mile in width and dotted with hamlets—Lehdi, Esak, and others—the summer quarters of the Kohistani shepherds. On either side the glen rise walls of rock and snow, these about 10 miles down the glen, close inwards, forests succeed the grass, the glen becomes a narrow rocky gorge hemmed in by gigantic crags and rock-covered mountain spurs, rising ever higher and steeper till they culminate in the serrated crest of the ranges above. As it approaches the Indus the hillsides recede again, leaving several square miles of open country covered with fields of rice, watered by the constant supply in the Neela Nadi, which flowing onwards falls into the Indus near the large village of Palas of the Syuds. About half way from its source it is joined by the Chor Nadi, which rising behind Moosa-ko-Moosala also flows at first through an almost level grassy glen, more elevated than that at the head of the Neela Nadi, and it is also hemmed in by a rocky gorge before joining the Neela.

The Chicharga Valley is longer and in parts wider than the Neela Nadi, but much the same in every way. It too flows westwards, and falls into the Indus near another large village called Jalkot. The rest of the Cis-Indus Kohistan is a wild region of rock and snow and forest, with level stretches along the banks of the Indus at intervals. The people are a fine stalwart race, but not much given to fighting. I was told that when on the warpath they usually marched at night in a single file, attacking at early dawn. Orders from the chief, who led the van, were passed down the line from hand to hand in silence in the shape of one or more pieces of stone. But how they elaborated such very primitive methods into a code I could not discover. Evidently their evolutions are simple.

The Syud assured me that they objected strongly to any Englishman visiting or looking into their country, and especially to any boundary marks being erected. I was not erecting boundary marks, but survey signals in the shape of poles some twelve feet long, which we carried to the peaks often with great difficulty. I had erected one on Maliksiri, which Ahmed Shah assured me would be thrown down by the Kohistanis, and sure enough before we had reached the tents the pole was gone. Another was procured by morning, and I again ascended Maliksiri and replaced it. Early next morning that too had gone. I had insisted on Ahmed Shah accompanying me on both occasions for "fear of complications." I started the third time, again



taking him with me, and erected a third pole. He was nearly worn out when we got home the third evening, and the pole remained untouched, and was still there when I visited the peak again two years after. A party of Kohistanis under a mokadam spent the next day in our camp, they spoke the ordinary Punjabi dialect as a rule, and seemed to be very pleased with their visit. Far from resenting our presence there, they asked me to go to their side of the glen for bear shooting, my Enfield rifle having taken their fancy ; but at that time it was against orders to cross the border. There was nothing of unusual interest that occurred for some days after this. The marches of the Central Valley to Sahock and Battakundi lie along the right bank of the stream, winding under magnificent forests of fir. The pine is now scarcely seen, only the dark pulundar fir. The lower slopes of the mountains are now covered with green sward, the upper are snowy but less rugged than those lower down. The numerous lateral glens running to the north and south are more level, ending usually in some snowy sheet under a semi-circle of cliffs, in the centre of which is usually a small but deep tarn, the intensity of whose blue, almost black, is strongly contrasted with the dazzling or dead white around. Ibex are less common here, brown bears more so, while every glen has its colony of marmots, whose querulous yells startle the intruder at every fresh bend in the valleys. A small rat, with broad rounded ears, not unlike a marmot in miniature, is also to be found among the rocks.

Up to this time there had been no difficulties in the way of supplies. Even if our rations from Balakot did not arrive in time, we had plenty of mutton and makhai (maize) cakes to fall back on. But pushing up the glen steadily, we reached Battakundi before any of the flocks and herds, and while snow yet lay in the central valley. Several days had elapsed since the next relay of mules had been due, but we heard nothing of them, and the Syud professed to have failed to get any information, though he had sent men as far down as Dewan-bela. We had now but 7 seers of rice, and 12 seers of wheat ata, for over forty men, no more salt or tobacco, no sheep nor goats, nor even makhai, or milk or butter. Once again Ahmed Shah began to chuckle and say: "I told you." Of course he could have supplied us with makhai and mutton had he cared to do so, but his object was to turn us back, not to help us on. We divided the ata and rice still remaining between us the first evening, and with carrots, rhubarb, &c., from the hillsides, with some *masalas* that the sepoy and others fished out from their stores, we succeeded in making very fair curries, but what was to be done next day? The Syud's only reply was: "I told you so, you'll have to go back;" but as usual he was not the last to laugh. I started half-a-dozen Gurkhas down the glen before dawn, myself taking Ahmed Shah with me to try and get something to shoot and to keep him ignorant of the departure of the Gurkhas. We came across several brown bears that

day. The first two we met face to face about 20 yards off. I fired my rifle rather hurriedly at them, and of course missed. One went off, but the other came straight for me. I had fixed my bayonet before firing, and now waited for him. Fortunately for me, he did not like the look of it, and rushed away on one side. Later on I got a splendid chance of showing what my rifle could do, specially for Ahmed Shah's benefit. I managed to put a bullet clean through the heart of a bear at 300 yards; the poor beast rolled over without a groan and continued to roll down the grassy slope till he landed on the brink of the stream below. But a more fortunate occurrence was the arrival of my Gurkhas about eight in the evening with a dozen sheep and goats, so none of us went starving to bed that night, as we had feared would happen. Of course we paid the Syud for them next day, and succeeded in making him "discover" a maund or two of makhai ata, lest we should need more mutton next day. Our supplies arrived a few days later, and we had no more want of food. Three more easy stages, along the banks of the Kunhar, without a single obstacle in the way of rough ascents or descents, or anything but a few shaky bridges that needed repairs, brought us to the great natural barrier of rocks accumulated by the constant action of the snows, behind which the waters of the Lalusar, a lake some three miles in length and half a mile broad in parts, fill up the gap between the rocky spurs which fall around it from the surrounding

heights. The lake is probably nearly 12,000 feet above sealevel. Therefore the highest peaks in the neighbourhood are only from 2,000 to 3,000 feet above it, and as the slopes fall gently inwards the ascent is very easy as compared with anything lower down.

Just before reaching the lake a lateral stream from the south falls into it, which possesses a melancholy interest connected with the great Indian Mutiny.

Scarcely had the wretched 55th Native Infantry mutinied in Nowshera and Mardan and commenced a march towards the Swat Valley, when Nicholson's Cavalry came down on them and destroyed a number. The remainder pushed on and offered their services to the Akhund. But the *Badshah*, who might have welcomed them, died about this time, the Chiefs were ill inclined to bind another kingly yoke on their necks, and the services of the sepoys were not accepted. They were, however, permitted to march away in safety, and seem to have decided to offer themselves for service to the Maharaja of Kashmir, and marched eastward. Ere they reached the Indus, however, the district authorities had prepared to oppose their crossing, and they were compelled to march up the right bank of the river, where alone they were free from the British vengeance. Unmolested, they passed along the base of the Black Mountain and through Allahi into Kohistan. Meantime, the Khagan Syuds, who had been under surveillance in Pakli, offered to rouse the border tribes against them, and aided by those of

Palas, they raised a force of Swatis and hemmed the sepoy in on the Indus near Palas. A fierce fight ensued, but the native regiment did credit to its previous training and discipline, and kept its enemies at bay from noon to dark.

Lighting their camp fires as usual, to cook their evening meal and lull suspicion, the sepoy continued their march after dark, and had put a good space between themselves and the Syuds before dawn. There now commenced a pursuit, but the Kohistanis declared they would not let men, flying from religious persecution, be further molested in their lands. So the remnant pushed on to Chilas. Here, unfortunately for them, they decided to turn south and push into Kashmir by the Babusar Pass. This they crossed in safety and descending by the Lalusar, turned up the stream I have noticed above, since called the Poorbiala Katha, and encamped by the little Doodibat Sar (Lake) just under the snows near its source. But a few hours more, and they would have entered the Kishenganga Valley, and been safe from the Syuds at least. But these had watched their prey from the heights, and now with a large body of Swatis and Goojurs took possession of the pass over which the Poorbias must pass after crossing the intervening snow.

Wearied and hungry—it was said, few, if any, of them had eaten anything but handfuls of grass and roots since leaving Chilas—they started, still in order, across the snows at dawn and began the tiresome ascent. As

they approached the pass wearied with their march across the snow, showers of rocks and stones were hurled down on them, under which numbers were buried, and the wretched survivors fell back to the lake. Here they formed square and awaited the end. Their ammunition having fallen short they could no longer return the fire of their enemies, and were being shot down in their ranks. When at length a Subadar held up a white cloth and asked for a parley, the Syuds swore on the Koran to let them pass if they surrendered their arms. This they did at length, when the Syuds provided them with food, and the poor fellows, grounding their arms, went off to cook. The arms removed the Syuds again surrounded the band, now reduced from 700 or 800 to 200, and binding their arms marched them down the glen to Khagan. Several threw themselves from the rocks and bridges *en route* into the Kunhar, but the greater number were made over to the civil authorities, and by them executed. The Syuds returned to Khagan, but the stigma of treachery and impiety has clung to them ever since.

Although I had been the first of our survey party in the glen, I was not the first to reach Lalusar. A goodly camp was already formed on the lake. Colonel Johnstone, Captain (now Colonel) Sandeman, and Mr. Ribbentrop of the Forests were before me; and next day saw us all on the crest of the range overlooking Lalusar on our side, and the upper glens of Chilas on the other.

The Colonel had not forgotten his beer, and as the barrel was broached the old gentleman, puffing from his exertions, burst out : “ Fourteen thousand feet ! In England they climb a hill four hundred feet and write a book about it.” It is so, is it not ? Or up the Thames in a boat with a dog ! We discussed the distance of the Indus and the possibility of taking a run down to it *via* Thak, but “ political reasons ” made us turn back and sleep by the side of the lake again. A deputation of Chilasis waited on the Colonel next day, and professed great admiration and friendship for the Britisher. They have a chance of showing it now (1893.)

A few miles above the lake the mule track turns up to the left, and crossing the Babusar Pass descends to Chilas, and here British territory ended for the time. Traders have used this pass constantly during the summer months, July to October, but deep snow covers the whole glen and the mountain slopes for the greater part of the year. With a good road and constant traffic, however, it could probably be used throughout the year, especially if its course is marked out by telegraph posts at frequent intervals.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BLACK MOUNTAIN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD IN 1868

Having completed our tour from Balakot to the Babusar Pass, perhaps my readers will not mind turning back, and after glancing again at the wild regions of Chilas and the Cis-Indus Kohistan, accompanying me westwards to the country round the locally famous *Kala Dhaka*, or Black Mountain, reaching that locality to join one of the many expeditions sent to punish or coerce the paltry, but troublesome, tribes that inhabit that region. We have seen from the heights above Lalusar that Chilas is a wild tract of massive mountains of rock and snow, whose sides, as they fall in great spurs towards the Indus, sometimes end in precipitous crags, at others become bold rounded spurs, whose sides are covered first with snow, then grass, and, lastly, grand forests of pine and fir. Between the spurs run deep watercourses, now steep and rugged, anon gently sloping, and forming excellent pasturage for the numerous flock and herds of the Chilasis. Here and there are clusters of huts, large enough, like Thor Thak and Chilas itself, to be styled villages, but usually solitary shanties, which the Goojur shepherds find a shelter during the warmer months, are the only habitations; while between the months of October and



June all but the lower portions of the valleys and glens are uninhabited snowy wastes. Proceeding westwards we come to the headwaters of the Chicharga Katha and the Neela Naddi, streams that rising in the snows divide Kohistan in sections, and find their way more or less abruptly to the Indus, where, on open spaces between the river and the hills, lie Palas, Jalkot, and other large villages of the Kohistanis, and certain families of Syuds, already mentioned. Round these villages are fertile tracts that, together with the produce of their flocks and herds, supply the wants of a population of about 20,000 souls, of whom some 4,000 are capable of bearing arms. The entire area of the tract is only about 1,000 square miles, or less than half the area of the British district of Hazara, and of this fully two-thirds are quite uninhabitable during eight months of every year. Another source of income is found in the sale of large quantities of deodar and other timber to merchants from Attock and Peshawar, which after purchase are floated down the Indus as rafts to the former station. Continuing westwards we pass along the southern edge of a narrow glen known as the Chor, where the pasturage is so rich that its possession has been a constant source of strife between the Kohistanis and the Allahiwal, in which the latter have generally been victorious, which does not increase our idea of the fighting qualities of the Kohistanis. For of all Pathan tribes the Swatis are, I think I have already said, the most contemptible as a foe.

We have now got back to Moosa-ka-Moosala, and as we stand by the shrine that crowns its summit, we look down on the Chor to the north, Khagan to east and south, and another picturesque glen to the west known as Bhogarmung—within the British boundary. The great range we have followed thus far continues westward from Moses' seat, gradually decreasing in elevation till at length it falls abruptly to the Indus near the village of Tahkot, thirty miles from where we stand. For about twelve miles it forms the limit of British territory with the Bhogarmung glen to the south, and Allahi to the north. Thence the boundary turns southward, the turning point being a peak known as Malki, 12,500 feet in elevation. From Moosa and Malki spurs are thrown southward towards Pakli; that from Moosa divides Khagan from Bhogarmung. That from Malki divides Bhogarmung from the petty Swati Khanships at the base of the Black Mountain, which are still independent of British rule. Several little streams rise near the summit of the range, but gradually converge into the two main branches that are divided from each other by a central spur thrown from a peak called Kundi, which, after keeping a uniform height for some eight or nine miles, suddenly falls in precipitous crags, and, ending abruptly ten miles from the starting point, permits the two streams to combine, and form the Sirhun River, which we have seen before, watering the Pakli Valley and wandering away south through the hills of Hazara to the Indus. The eastern of the two

upper glens, and the whole valley after the junction of the streams, are occupied by Swatis. The western glen is part of the patrimony of the Syuds. Where the Sirhun enters Pakli stands a masonry police station, a small fort, with bastions at two corners, like all police stations in these parts, capable of standing a siege against such weapons as can be brought against it by the borderers. From Shinkiari a fairly good mule road follows the windings of the Sirhun, leaving it occasionally to avoid some precipitous crags, but as a rule running close to the water's edge between rich fields of corn, past numerous villages where, during the summer months, the orchards of apricot and peach, and nectarine, pear and mulberry, are loaded with delicious fruit, and often buried under loads of grape vines of both purple and white varieties. Above the terraced fields are dense pine forests intermingled at intervals with other trees of variegated foliage, amid which the black bear roams, and pheasants abound. But the ibex, the marmot and brown bear are nowhere to be seen. Up to the junction of the two branches of the stream before mentioned the road is fairly easy; after that it becomes more rugged, and at length begins a winding steep ascent to the crest of the northern range. This last portion for three or four miles is extremely steep and narrow, but can be avoided by turning up to the left before reaching the junction, and following the crest of a lateral spur opposite the village of Dewal to the top of the western range, and following that range by

the small plateau known as Paleja to the Malki peak whence the entire valley of Allahi is dominated, and to which a British force could advance without the slightest chance of being annoyed by flank attacks or night alarms. Towards this peak I was making my way in September 1867 after returning from Khagan. My guard had been increased to forty sepoy, twenty being Gurkhas of the 5th Battalion, and twenty Sikhs and Punjabis from the 2nd P. I.

In addition, the Swati Khans and Syuds accompanied me with about 100 militia, their clansmen or retainers and to give additional security the Thanadar of Shinkari, with some police, also joined the party. By all accounts I was the first European who had attempted to climb the heights above Allahi, and it was feared that the inhabitants of that valley would certainly attack us. Nor did these fears appear groundless, for as we neared the last ascent wild shouts were heard and presently numerous swords were seen flashing among the rocks in the ridge. Here was a dilemma. It was my duty to take observations on the ridge which is the British boundary, and unless I crossed to the other side the Allahiwals had no right to molest me. But I was undoubtedly about to raise their hitherto well-guarded *purdah*, and their objections were well founded from their point of view. A halt was called; near me, about 500 feet lower than the crest, was a ledge of rocks; between this and the final ascent was a pass, clear of forest. Taking up a position behind this ledge

I ordered my men to load their rifles, while an animated conversation in very loud tones was being carried on between my militia following and the men crowning the heights. At first Khans, Syuds, and Thanadar all tried to persuade me to turn back, but this I simply refused to do ; and matters were beginning to look very black when one of the Syuds offered to go forward and speak to the Allahiwals trusting in his sacred character to be safe. He calmly walked up the ascent and sat down among the occupants of the crest. Presently two more men were called for, and when these went up three of the others came to meet me. Judging from their faces that a defiant attitude would best serve my turn, after the first greetings I drew my revolver, fired several shots in quick succession over their heads, and asked if they could withstand such weapons. Astonished they all clutched their ears and cried "*tobah tobah Sobhan Allah.*" After this a few minutes' conversation, not to mention the rifles of forty sepoy, calmed their minds, and on my promising not to cross the range, they returned to their followers, and ere long not a man could be seen. News of the probable encounter had meantime been sent the to the nearest villages, and as night closed in numerous torches were seen ascending to where we had halted for the night, and shortly my small force exceeded 300 men, among whom at least a third could show scars where the swords of enemies or friends had fallen in party-strife. Here a ear,t here a couple of fingers, a nose or a hand were missing ; all seemed excited to

the highest pitch, not unpleased, however, that for the present at least all was peace. The sepoys alone seemed annoyed that their services had not been called into requisition. Yet, had there been a conflict, they might have fared badly. The terrible sword charges of the Bonerwal and others in the Umbeyla campaign of 1863 were still fresh in men's memories, and several of my small guard had personally witnessed them.

With our present weapons such charges can seldom be driven home, but at that time the Frontier Force was armed with the clumsy Brunswick rifle, carrying an ounce belted ball. The metal of the barrel was very thick, the butt heavily bound with brass. The loading of these weapons was a study in itself. First a powder cartridge was drawn from the pouch, bitten, and the powder poured down the barrel; then the belted ball, covered with wax cloth, had to be taken from the bullet pouch and carefully fitted into the grooves at the muzzle, not a pleasant operation when the enemy is advancing in long strides, sword in hand; next a small wooden mallet, carried by each soldier, was drawn from the belt, and by its aid the bullet was persuaded to go down the barrel a few inches. Then came a long pounding with the iron ramrods, often aided by driving the ramrod against a rock or tree, till the bullet got home. Lastly the cap was fitted on, and, perhaps, a heavy sword bayonet; then the weapon was ready to fire at an enemy up to a out 300 yards, with some faint chance of it hitting some one in the advancing mass. On the

whole, a clumsier weapon could hardly be found, except, perhaps, the match or flintlock of the clansmen opposite. A long iron barrel on a thin crooked stock, the barrel usually so heavy that an iron fork is needed to steady it when a rock is not handy for the purpose. Into this is first poured a charge of powder about three inches long, each grain as large as a No. 3 shot; this is rammed down under a bit of cloth usually torn from the end of the turban; next a bullet, not always round, sometimes needing a little rubbing down on the nearest rock to make it fit, is forced down the barrel by continuous hammering with an unwieldy ramrod; then from a small powder horn the blaze pan is primed; then flint and steel have to be used to light the match, when a convenient rest having been found, the Pathan is prepared to fire. It is not to be wondered at that under such circumstances fighting at close quarters was frequent. The Pathan trusted to his *tulwar*, the Gurkha to his *kookri*, and the Punjabi to the butt end of his rifle, unless, as was specially permitted on the frontier, he carried his own sword. However, for the present all was over in the fighting line, and every one was busy preparing the evening meal. Above us stood the snow-clad ridge on which the moon was peacefully shining, below were the deep valleys in gloomy darkness, around us a forest of pines and firs rising a hundred feet above their roots, dancing in the glare and flicker of torches and the numerous fires that were soon blazing in all

directions. Round these flitted the blue-clad warriors, still wearing sword and shield, the matchlocks being grouped close at hand. Presently the bleating of sheep and goats, requisitioned from the nearest flocks, was rousing the echoës, ere long to be silenced as one after another was *hullal'd* in Allah's name, cut into small fragments, spitted on the iron ramrods, and scorched in the blaze of the numerous fires. Meantime others had produced flour from their hold-alls, which, wetted in a neighbouring spring, and kneaded on the flattest rocks, was soon baked into cakes in the ashes. Ghar-ras of *lassi* (buttermilk) also arrived from the Goojur's huts, and soon all were busy with their evening meal, except a strong party holding the pass, and eight sentries guarding the tents behind the rocky ledge. The meal ended, all gathered in groups round the larger fires, some to sing, some to tell long tales, till one after another rolled himself in his sheet or blanket and slept. By midnight all was so quiet that the pretty flying squirrels might be heard flapping among the trees, and the owls hooted undisturbed by the unusual gathering.

The night passed quietly away, and next morning I had the satisfaction of placing my theodolite on the highest peak, overlooking the Allahi glen, from the hamlets of Ganthar and Gangwal just below me, to Sachbiar on the Indus. Messages of peace had been sent ahead by the Syuds, and such little excitement as was manifested when first we appeared overhead soon



calmed down, and no attempt was made to molest us. Not only so, but shortly after a deputation, headed by the men over whose heads I had fired the revolver the previous evening, waited on me, protesting that had they known it was a *sahib* coming they would not have pretended opposition. They had blood feuds with men on either side of their line of march from their grazing grounds in the Chor to their villages in Lower Allahi and had taken my men for some raiding party on the warpath. They now proposed that I should escort them past their foes, and they would after that escort me as far as I cared to go in the direction of Takhot. The opportunity was not to be lost, and for the next few days I was busy sketching the neighbouring independent glens lying between the British boundary and the Black Mountain, which had previously been a blank on our maps. On return to recess I made this over, and it was sent to the Head Survey Office in Calcutta with an appreciative letter; but so completely had the masterly inactivity policy saturated every official brain at headquarters at that time that the sketch was returned "not required"—and I was warned that if I "continued to put myself in positions of danger," I should be transferred to Lower India.

However, I had my revenge next year, when the storm long brewing on this border burst at last.

I have, I think, previously remarked that when the British annexed the Punjab, the Khalsa armies had extended their conquests over all the plain country

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inhabited by Pathan races. In the hills of Hazara the conquest had not been completed. Some sections of the Swati clan had come under the yoke entirely, others had been overrun, but not annexed. Allahi had not even been invaded. The frontier, as it actually stood at the annexation, became the British border, and a curiously irregular one it was—and is, for practically it has here remained unaltered, despite the constant provocation given by the border clans. Yet there is some method in it, as it follows a distinct watershed that divides the streams that flow southward and south-westward from those that flow northward and north-westward to the Indus. That is, the whole country drained by the Kunhar, the Sirhun, and the Unhar, which flows through Agror and enters the Indus below the southern extremity of the Black Mountain, is British; all north of that is independent, though inhabited by sections of the same tribe. The range we have followed hitherto continues westward for about fourteen miles, then falls abruptly to the Indus near Tahkot. But the British boundary turns southward from Malki, follows the crest of the great wooded Paleja spur for ten or twelve miles, then curves westward and again southward, enclosing the fertile plateau of Konsh, where the watershed has fallen to some 5,000 feet in elevation. Then it turns westward again along the northern limits of Agror, falls again to the Kungalli or pass, from which it ascends still along the watershed, a spur connecting the hills we are leaving with the

Black Mountain. It follows the spur upwards to the crest at Chittabut, or the white rock, then runs along the crest of the great mountain southward, till it, too, falls to the Indus near Darband. Between the Black Mountain and the Paleja spur lie the fertile Swati khanships or cantons of Nandihar, Tikari and Deshi, each under its own Chiefs, forming a kind of loose confederacy.

Had these been annexed thirty years ago they would now have been peaceful, contented and revenue-paying portions of the Empire, instead of being a constant source of intrigue, annoyance and expenditure. Divided from these by the Chaila Mountain is the Allahi Valley or glen, the last of the Swati khanship. This valley is about twenty-five miles in length and some fifteen broad at its widest part having an area of perhaps, 300 square miles, the upper portion a narrow rugged glen, but lower down ever widening, till on nearing the Indus the hills widen out to a breadth of about ten miles, and between them is a richly cultivated valley, dotted with villages. The total population is about 20,000, of whom some 4,000 to 5,000 are capable of bearing arms. It is divided from Kohistan to the north and east by a spur, which, starting northward from the main range about two miles east of Malki, falls abruptly to the Ajri Galli, or shepherd's pass, leading from Allahi into the Chor and Kohistan: then rises rapidly again, culminating in a needle-like peak over 14,000 feet in elevation, known as Shamsher

from its likeness to a sharp sword. From this peak it curves northward and westward, now rising to rocky crags 10,000 to 12,000 feet high, anon dropping abruptly to low passes practicable for laden mules at all seasons, often less than 5,000 feet in elevation; and at last falling abruptly to the very bank of the Indus. Again and again have the Allahiwalas, without provocation, left their valleys and raided into Bhogarmung, Konsh, and even Agror, and always with impunity. Not till 1888 did a small force enter the glen then, only to march down the hill and march up again, after blowing up a tower or two. Yet a force pushed up the Bhogarmung glen and the Paleja spur to Malki could dominate the whole country, occupy an unassailable position, and subject the entire glen to obedience in a week, probably without firing a dozen rounds of ammunition *necessarily*.

Though Nandihar and Tikari were not annexed by the Sikhs, Sirdar Hari Singh, annoyed by their constant raids, once crossed from Agror with cavalry only, swept aside all opposition, cut down every male he came across, and carrying off the women and children to Manserah, there sold them by auction, after giving them over to his soldiers for three days. Such was Home Rule in those days.

The Black Mountain, so-called from the dark forests that cover its slopes, a range isolated from all other hills near, except at the point known as Chittabut, is some thirty miles in length, from its northern extremity,

washed by the Indus near Tahkot, to its southern extremity near Darband. About twenty miles of the crest attains an elevation from 7,000 to nearly 10,000 feet. From this crest many bold spurs are thrown to east and west, some broad, rounded, and covered with grass, or near their bases terraced with fields; others narrow, rocky, and in places almost inaccessible. Among the deep ravines that lie between the spurs are numerous small hamlets, and on the banks of the Indus, which washes its western base, several large villages. The eastern slopes are occupied by Swatis and a troublesome family known as the Pariari Syuds; the western by the Hassanzai, Akazai Chagarzai and Akund Khel, clans of the great Yusufzai tribe. The armed men of the whole Mountain might number some 6,000 or 7,000, or if joined by the men of Nandihar, &c., perhaps they could on occasion collect 10,000 for a few days, but this is a large allowance, and in case of invasion fully half of these would be required to guard their families, their homes, and their flocks and herds from each other, or from their trans-Indus brethren.

The first conflict with the Black Mountain tribes occurred as far back as 1852, and arose out of the cold-blooded murder of some Salt Customs officers. Among the low rocky hills near Kalabagh on the Indus, some eighty miles below Attock and at Bahadur Khel, about half way between Kohat and Bannu, salt of a dark colour is gathered in large quantities without

much labour, and is carried on kafilahs of camels by Pathans to all the border across the Indus, and to the hills and valleys beyond. On this till lately no duty was levied, and it was sold at a much lower price than the red salt dug in the salt range near Pind Dadan Khan and Shahpur, on which a duty was levied. Consequently, had it not been prevented, the black salt would soon have run the red out of the market. To levy a duty on the black salt in those days would probably have roused the whole border from Bannu to Hazara. Therefore to confine its use to the trans-Indus, a preventive patrol line of customs officers, with a strong staff of peons, was placed along the whole line of the Indus as far north as Hazara. Beyond this as one side of the river was independent territory, it was impossible to bar the way, and large quantities percolated, as it were, through Yusufzai ; along the further bank of the Indus to Amb, and thence *viâ* Darband and Agror into Hazara and Kashmir. Below Amb patrols did much to lessen the traffic, yet smuggling was constantly carried on, and between smugglers and patrols many a sharp sword fight occurred. For though the patrols could discover and prevent *boats* crossing, the salt was carried across on *shinaz*—inflated goat skins, usually tied together under a light wooden raft, or a *charpoy*.

As early as 1851 a zealous Customs officer named Carne, either with a view of extending the preventive line through the lands of the semi-independent Chief of Amb, of whom more anon, or merely with the view

of taking a look round, determined on making a tour through Pakli and Agror to the Indus. Now the little State of Amb, inhabited by the Tannawali, a tribe distinct alike from the Yusufzai on one side and the Swati on the other, had held its own on the river bank against all-comers for many generations. The brave and fiery chieftain who ruled during Sikh times, was ever an uncompromising enemy of the Khalsa, but joined the British officers and heartily aided them so soon as they appeared on the scene. Consequently, though he became the subject of the new Government for his lands cis-Indus, he was left almost entirely independent as to his actions and revenue collections.

When Carne determined to view the land, the old Chief was dead, and his son, Jehandad Khan, reigned in his stead, but was completely under the influence of his chief minister, Bostan, who considered he had been aggrieved by the British, and bore us no good-will. Consequently Colonel Abbott, Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, warned Carne and advised him to keep away. In spite of the warning Carne, taking with him a subordinate, name Tapp, and half a dozen sowars, started for Agror, and attempted to push on to Darband. Beguiled, it was supposed by Bostan, into leaving the main road where that crosses a low spur of the Black Mountain, and turning up a narrow path, where his escort of cavalry could not act, the party was suddenly confronted by a large body of Hassanzais who demanded their surrender. Tapp tried to persuade his chief to

dash forward and chance it. Carne, however, thought resistance useless, and gave up his weapons. Tapp, on the contrary, levelled his piece at his approaching foes, but Carne threw up the weapon, which exploded harmlessly in the air. All were now seized and disarmed, the native escort was allowed to go on its way, but Carne and Tapp were taken away prisoners. After a short time Tapp again endeavoured to free himself and was murdered; shortly after poor Carne was stripped and stoned to death. The result was the first expedition to the Black Mountain. It was composed of many elements, British artillery and infantry, two regiments of Dogras from Kashmir, Punjabi police from Rawalpindi, matchlock men of the Meshwani, a brave Pathan tribe of Lower Hazara, and lastly a detachment of the Guide Corps.

The British regulars, encumbered with "double-poled tents, doolies, palkis and hundreds of camels" were, of course, out of the fighting altogether. The others marched in three columns to the crest of the Black Mountain, over the ground covered by the 1888 expedition, south of the line taken in 1868, attacked and drove the Hassanzais from their positions, burned several villages, and having thus "severely punished" the Hassanzais and "brought them to terms" returned to their several quarters. This small campaign ought to have shown that the Black Mountain tribes were anything but a formidable foe. The fighting was done by about one thousand of the Guides, police, and levies



alone, while the regulars were struggling through the ravines below with their impedimenta. The chief interest of the expedition, however, now lies in the names of the British officers who were there: Napier of Magdala, Hodson of Mutiny fame, Mackeson, who died by the hands of an assassin in open Court, and whose name is now seldom heard, except in connection with the road leading into the Khyber. A Government resolution decided that the results of the campaign were decidedly satisfactory. As no more British officers wandered among the glens and valleys for many years, none were killed and if raids continued, why such things will happen, on a turbulent border. Many eventful years passed before troops again marched into Agror. The great Mutiny came and went. The Umbeyla campaign had made many change their views as to the courage and powers of combination of the tribes, whether with or without sufficient reason we may see later on. The original plan of the 1863 campaign contained a proposal to visit the tribes of the Black Mountain after the "Hindustanis" had been driven into the Indus, but as that event did not come off the other also was postponed or lost sight of. However, a day of reckoning was approaching.

The next large disturbance began more or less in connection with the survey and settlement operations in Hazara. Ata Mahomed Khan, the semi-independent chief of Agror, had lost several claims in land disputes in the law Courts of Abbottabad, and feared he

might lose more if a regular settlement of his valley was carried out. As matters turned out afterwards, he would have done well to have waited. I have mentioned in a previous paper that a sentry had been shot in a survey camp in Pakli in 1867. Of course, no one knew who did it, but it was suspected that Ata Mahomed knew something of it. Perhaps he did, for shortly after his conduct became so openly hostile that it was decided to place a police post in Agror. A party of twenty police was sent into the valley, and while a masonry police station was in course of erection the men occupied some huts in the central village of Oghi, and it was reported that they had a goodly sum of money with them to pay expenses. Ata Mahomed raised the old cry of salt duties, and warned the neighbouring tribes that if once the police post was permanently established their trade would be hampered, and probably their country annexed. These fears and the prospect of plunder resulted in a promiscuous gathering of some 500 men—Hassanzai, Chagarzai, Akazai, Syud and Swati—who at early dawn, on the 30th July 1868, attacked the police, and but for the determined stand made by the Jemadar and some of his men, the whole party would have been destroyed. Such conduct could not well be overlooked, and the Deputy Commissioner, accompanied by some companies of the 5th Gurkhas under Colonel Rothney, and a mountain battery, marched to Oghi, arrested and deported Ata Mahomed to Rawalpindi. This was the signal for a

general gathering of the clans, and on the 2nd of August the enemy's columns, with flags flying and drums beating, invaded Agror. Parties of Swati levies from Balakot, Pakli, &c., who held outposts, were first attacked, and bolted to their homes. Next the camp of Akram Kham, the young Nawab of Amb who had promptly joined Colonel Rothney with some thirty armour-clad cavalry and as many matchlock men as he could spare from the defence of Amb, which was also in danger, was attacked, but the young Chief held his own and beat off his assailants. From the 2nd to the 8th the enemy increased in numbers and boldness, and following their own sweet will plundered and burnt some twenty villages of their own clansmen under British rule, but considered hostile to Ata Mahomed. On the night of the 8th they even attempted to storm the Gurkha camp, but, throwing down their tents and rolling them into breastworks, the little men kept their foes at bay, and with the aid of the guns compelled them to keep at a safe distance for the future. On the 9th reinforcements began to arrive, and the Gurkhas, who had bravely held their own, but had been with the Tannawali in a rather ticklish position for the last day or two, were able to turn the tables and by the 12th the enemy had been driven out of Agror, and returned to their villages, to await the consequences of what, they soon began to allow, were very rash actions. From their hilltops they could see the dust daily rising in Pakli, denoting the arrival

of regiment after regiment, and soon they were dismayed by seeing the tents of the avengers filling the whole valley below.

As luck would have it, I was at this time once more approaching Allahi through Bhogarmung, not far from the place where I had been threatened the previous year. The morning of the 11th of August was unclouded, the early mornings in these altitudes being delightful. Rain had cleared and cooled the valleys. At early dawn my camp was struck, and quite unconscious of all evil I calmly climbed the mountain sides. My escort was smaller than usual, only nineteen sepoy of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, of whom seven were Pathans, one of these an Allahiwal, the rest Sikhs and Punjabi Mahomedans, besides some forty militia, "catch 'em alive" as they are known locally. So little did I expect fighting that I had a young friend with me out for a holiday. About one o'clock we reached a pretty green clearing in the forest, by the side of a sparkling stream, at an elevation of about 11,000 feet. The crest of the range was still 2,000 feet above. Heavy fogs hung over it, so I decided to encamp here for the night. While the tents were being pitched I went to look round for shikar; while scanning the rocks with a telescope I noticed a party of sixty men or so rapidly coming towards us along the crest of the range. My guide, and chief of the levies, was a rough old warrior, named Datoola. Of him I inquired who these men could be. "Salt smugglers," he replied, but seeing

two unfurled flags amongst them I rather doubted his statement. On my calling his attention to the flags he at once advised me to strike my tents and take up a more defensible position. Possibly, he said, it is a raiding party going to the Chor, but if they see a defenceless camp they might be tempted to attack it. The old fellow's conduct throughout that day is still inexplicable to me. He was agent to one of the principal Chiefs of Nandihar who held lands in Bhogarmung, and was then in arms against us. He must have known that fighting was going on in Agror, that our troops had been hemmed in, that the whole border was up, yet not one word of warning had he given me up to this moment. Yet from this time he stood by me well. I can only conclude that, this being the 11th, the tide had already turned in Agror, and he had determined to be on the winning side. Anyway he played his cards well. I was still quite unprepared for an attack, but choosing a strong position above where I had intended to encamp, I commenced throwing up a strong breastwork, not omitting to have several loopholes from which we could fire without exposing our heads. It was about two miles from the border, so I could not be accused of instigating the attack by going beyond the "red line." On my left was an impracticable precipice, falling over a thousand feet to the forest below. In front, the bold, clear face of the great range towered above us, but between us was a fairly deep dip, from which the spur on which we stood took its

departure. At this point the crest of the spur narrowed to a causeway a few feet across, with the precipice on one side, and a steep fall on the other. My right could only be approached across the clearing, where I hoped our rifles could tell with effect. Between the dip and myself were ledges of steep faced rocks. My whole arrangements were made by way of precaution, for even now I expected nothing more than a demonstration, with perhaps a few shots. We were still busy with our breastwork, when a deep murmuring of many voices reached us through the fog. Then began the lowing of many cattle, the bleating of flocks of sheep and goats, crying of children, and screaming of women, and finally the sharp pat-pat of distant musketry. Presently swarms of cattle and sheep, women and children poured down the hill slopes to our right, and men with faces expressing genuine alarm came tearing down the slopes with cries that hundreds and hundreds of Allahiwal were coming down on us. "Fly, sahib, fly," they yelled; but it was too late. At this moment I received the first news of what had been transpiring in my rear: a policeman came with a letter, dated the 8th, ordering me to hurry back. "The whole country is up, keep your guard well together, and trust neither Swati nor Syud." It was now about 3 P.M., the fog rose, and imagine our feelings when fourteen banners, each surrounded by a band of blue-coated warriors, were seen on the slopes above us. Many were not 600 yards away and howling for their prey. What could we expect?

Of my forty "catch 'em alive" scarcely six, with Datoola, had remained; the rest had scattered on various pretexts. My guard was all I had to depend upon, nineteen men, of whose fighting qualities I knew nothing. We looked into each other's faces and read much. However, we had little time for consideration. The yelling suddenly ceased, a silence followed, and after an old grey-beard had called aloud the "Allahi Allah," one stepped forward and offered us terms of surrender. The sepoy were to march away with their arms, unmolested. I was to be given up, only to be kept as a hostage in place of Ata Mahomed Khan. It was very tempting, but I remembered Tapp and Carne. However, I explained the terms to the havildar, and asked what we should do. His reply was, "We should look fools going back without you: our faces would be blackened for ever." "Then let us fight," I replied, "but all will be killed certainly." The answer came calmly: "I have had pay for seven years."

Hastily dividing our little band into four sections, telling them not to fire without orders, then to fire volleys with care, I called out to the others that if they wanted to come they could do so. I did not intend to move. A wild yell, a volley, and a mad charge, sword in hand, followed. A steady fire met them as they reached the causeway. The leader, in white (Ghazi) costume, was shot dead, others fell. The first charge was broken, later on a second, and a third also. The whole body now fell back and commenced making

breastworks, overlooking our position, calling out that they would do for us at night. Seeing this, the "catch 'em alive" again took heart and returned. Reinforcements began to pour in from our side, and as the fogs closed down on us again the opposing clansmen were yelling across at each other in no choice language. Datoola now counselled a retreat, and as I hesitated, he suddenly seized my arms from behind, and being a much more powerful man, forced me bodily out of the breastwork, and threatened to carry me away to Abbottabad, unless I at once agreed to retire. "I am not going to be fined for your amusement," he said. On receiving the promise he released me, and soon the sepoys and myself were rapidly retiring along the crest, only fearing that at any moment the fog might rise and expose our movements. An easy track followed the crest for four miles, but then came an awkward place, where only one man at a time could descend even in broad daylight; no one at night. It would not do to be caught there, so after a couple of miles we turned sharp down the face of the hill, and were soon hidden in the depths of the forest. About an hour after, just as darkness was closing in, heavy firing, drumming, and yelling, told us that the attack had been renewed. But the enemy had to content himself with pulling down the breastworks to search for a missing foe. We soon heard the pursuit pass overhead while we hurried downwards through the forest. Sending on our mules and guard, being very tired, I made for the base of the



precipice I have mentioned above, with a few men, and slept there till the moon rose, the enemy feasting on captured cattle away on the heights above. At early dawn I rejoined the guard, and crossing the Sirhun, threw down the rough bridge we had thrown across it a few days before, and arranged for breakfast. Here fresh orders to retire rapidly reached me and the Khan of Bhogarmung, bringing some baskets of fruits advised us to push on at once, eating these as we went along, as he had received intelligence that a strong party of Nandiharis was hurrying up from the west to intercept me. We gave these the slip about 3 P.M., hearing their drums approaching as we descended the Sithani Galli. Pushing on till 7 P.M. of Friday, the 12th, we again decided to halt, and had just unloaded a mule or two when Datoola arrived begrimed with dust and smoke, and asked if we were mad. The Allahiwal, he said, were still pursuing, and would be on us before daylight if we stayed the night. So we moved on, and in heavy rain, continued down the glen all night, arriving at Shinkiarri at six on the morning of Saturday. It had been a long and weary walk for all of us, specially so for the sepoy, with their heavy muskets and ammunition; and on entering the police station we all laid down and slept till evening; had dinner, and slept again till daylight. Next day we went on to Manserah, where troops were collecting, and received orders to join the force. The Allahiwals, looking on their ill-success as an evil omen,

returned to their homes, refusing to act longer with the confederacy against the British. This was the first defection, and foretold the collapse of the whole. To quell the disturbances in Hazara, and to meet any contingencies those might give rise to along the inflammable border, troops were hurrying up from all parts of the Punjab. The 19th British, present Yorkshires, strengthened by their roadmaking party in the Gallies ; that fine regiment the 20th Punjabis, who marched in that month of August in ten marches from Mian Mir to Hazara, a distance of 240 miles ; the 38th Foot from Sialkot ; the 1st and 4th Gurkhas from Bakloh and Dharmasala, emulating the long marches of the other corps ; the 31st Punjabis who covered 440 miles, and two companies of the Sappers and Miners, who covered 600 miles in twenty-nine days—all without the aid of the then non-existent strategical railways. These long marches from distant stations had been necessitated, because it was considered impolitic to weaken the Peshawar Valley garrisons, lest our enemies in that direction should take the opportunity to attack us.

Umbeyla was still fresh in men's memories, and all were convinced that heavy fighting was before them, hence the zeal displayed by all. Hence also the enormous force concentrated—a Nasmyth hammer to crush a pin, as it turned out. Possibly a small force may have had to face a formidable gathering ; another frontier *fiasco* was undesirable. But when the clansmen saw the masses of troops, over 10,000, pouring into

Agror, all who were not immediately interested returned every man to his own home. The Akhund of Swat, certain that so large a force could only be intended for purposes of annexation, hastened to show he was not in league with the Black Mountain tribes, by proclaiming a *jehad* against the Wahabi colony who had caused the Umbeyla war, and compelled it to leave the limits of his jurisdiction. It soon became evident that if any great combination had been intended, it had been nipped in the bud. However, it was decided that a "demonstration in force" was necessary, and the delinquents were informed that not the overflow of the Indus in 1857 would compare with the terrible consequences of that which they were now to experience for their insults to the British flag. As, however, no enemy was visible, it was decided to postpone the advance till October.

To those among the troops who now for the first time found themselves among the border mountains there was much both novel and picturesque.

After marching through the low hills between Abbottabad and Manserah, and across the Pakli Valley, whence glimpses of the snows are obtained, the route lay, through the pine forests covering the western range, to the Susal Galli, from which pass the traveller looked down on the small valley of Agror, nestling under great mountain slopes, green with cornfields, but disfigured by the blackened ruins of many hamlets and solitary homesteads, in striking

contrast with the white tents of the troops. Rising grandly from the valley is the Black Mountain, towering thousands of feet above, its bold dark forest-covered spurs falling grandly from base to top, while many a hamlet, surrounded by terraced fields, nestled in the deep and rugged ravines between them, difficult of access from below, easily defended and having a secure line of retreat up the mountain slopes behind. To the right the Kun Galli, over which pass the route lay into the guilty valleys of Tikari and Nandihari ; to the left the great double peaked Bahingrah, capped by a shrine so sacred that when in 1866 a survey officer encamped near it, would take his observations from the peak, and clear vistas through the trees for that purpose, the saint was so angry that on that November evening he persuaded Allah to show his anger by hurling meteors in hundreds of thousands in every direction of the heavens throughout the livelong night. The Surveyor pretended that the earth was passing through a meteoric zone, but the clansmen knew better. Between the bases of the Kaladhaka and Bahingrah, through the defile where Carne and Tapp were murdered, may be seen across the Indus the Mahaban, beyond which lay Boner, Swat, and all the land where every man does that which is right in his own eyes—a land to which many hoped fate would soon take them when once the advance began.

“Tommy,” too, must have been interested in the strange assemblage gathered to fight by his side in

the novel warfare. Here a compact little force of Dogras from Kashmir, equipped for mountain warfare their rows of tiny tents, now called tents d'abri, in regular square. Their mountain guns, on slight iron tripods drawn by men, carrying 1lb. and 3lb. balls some hundred yards, dignified by the names of *sher-bachas* and *bagh-bachas* (sons of leopards and tigers). In command was a stout old Sikh warrior, with the Gilgit medal—the design Tangrot, a mountain fort—displayed on his breast, in common with many of his men. In another part of the field Akram Khan's Tannawali Cavalry, covered with chain armour, and wearing steel helmets, distinguished by their gallant charges in the late fighting, were now more pleasantly engaged in tent-pegging. Elsewhere were columns of blue-clad "catch 'em alive" following a couple of drums and pipes, playing a wild *ghazal*, conspicuous amongst them the stalwart Meshwani of the Gandgarh, who had fought for Kaka (uncle) Abbott and Nicholson against the Sikhs, and followed Mackeson in 1852 over this very Kaladhaka ; and on the present occasion did good service in burning homesteads, harrying the enemy up the rugged water-courses, and doing such other light-footed work, for which regulars are ill adapted. Tents soon filled the whole valley, not so luxurious as those of 1852, yet still far more so than the 80lb. Kabul tent of the present day. Much was said at the time of taking the present opportunity of putting an end once for all to frontier raids by visiting

in succession the valley of every tribe that had dared to molest the peace of the border ; it was not yet fully realised that Lord Lawrence's Viceroyalty had but a few months to run, and that the necessity of handing over a seemingly peaceful heritage to his successor was of more consequence just then than the securing of a prolonged peace by six months of war. Nor had the disease called by Sir Charles MacGregor " Ambela on the brain " begun to die out yet.

Stores and provisions poured into the valley in such quantities that one might fancy we were preparing for a march to the Oxus at least. Allies and enemies alike grew impatient, and began to ask if we had come all this way to shoot quail, as this was about all the British Subaltern found to do while the month of September passed idly away. To our Survey party, however, the delay was of much use. An earthen model of the Black Mountain slowly formed itself in our office tent, daily altered or added to by information received from numerous spies and border malcontents who wished to see their own villages given to the flames in return for personal injuries. As I was the only one of the party who spoke Pushtu, I had plenty to keep me employed, and soon a very fair map was ready for the General.

At last a stir and bustle announced that the long expected order to advance had arrived, and on the night of 2nd October cooked rations were served out and a week's supply prepared to be carried on mules.

Sunrise of the 3rd presented a busy scene. The 20th Punjabis were already entering the Kun Galli (pass) and puffs of smoke here and there told us that the 1st Brigade, under Brigadier-General Bright, was already engaged. Staff officers rode about in all directions, the numerous Brigadiers and staff, the former with brand new capes and telescopes, like the Wellington statues looked prepared to drive the foe to the ends of the earth if necessary and fussy Assistant Adjutant-General and others were evidently determined to be in at the death, Meantime it was difficult to see the enemy. The bulk had gone off to look after their crops, feeling confident that they would have ample time to return while the British were striking and loading their myriads of tents. However, as the tents remained standing, and very light marching order was enforced, the leading troops were at Muna-ki-danna, a small plateau half way up the slopes of the Black Mountain, before the look-out pickets of the enemy could give the alarm. It might have been possible to reach the crest that day, but no one could say, after Umbeyla, how soon 10,000 of the enemy might gather round us; and as night fell an attempt of some thirty or forty of those who had collected from the nearest hamlets to rush the outer pickets, convinced the Brigadier that the gathering of the clans had begun.

The 2nd Brigade, who were to have marched up another spur, and were bivouacked at the base of Barchar, were quite impatient at being out of the

terrible fighting going on at the Danna, to judge from the incessant roll of musketry and the booming of the guns far into the night. Reinforcements were urgently needed ahead, so Vaughan had to turn with the 2nd Brigade and push on at dawn to support the 1st Brigade. Sunrise showed that several pine trees had been severely punished by the night's fighting, but no enemy was to be seen, except a small party waving their swords behind a pine tree abatis about 600 yards ahead. Soon dense columns of Gurkhas and Punjabis were moved forward against this entrenchment, covered by the fire of the 9-pounders, which had come up on elephants, and by numerous rockets. The abatis was stormed "at the point of the bayonet," and one of the enemy lay dead behind it; the rest had bolted. Two Punjabis were carried past who had been hit by one of our shells. The advance was continued with unabated vigour, in spite of an occasional shot or two from the forest covered flanks, and by the evening of the 4th the 1st Brigade was concentrated and entrenched on the crest of the Black Mountain near a large tank, which was unfortunately quite dry. Springs of water were found for us by the "catch 'em alives," and after dinner all went to sleep, fully expecting to see a hundred banners waving on the Machai peak ahead of us when morning broke. But the morning of the 5th saw no large increase to the opposing force, and our infantry, now covered by the fire of the mountain guns, once more pushed boldly forward, and the evening saw



us hunting for water round the summit of the Machai peak, 9,000 feet in elevation, the highest peak of the range, which commanded the whole country of the offending tribes. Our loss up to this had been about four killed and a dozen wounded, all with musket ball, except the two Punjabis mentioned above. It all looks very amusing now, but no doubt it was a difficult bit of country physically for troops to manœuvre and fight in, and doubtless had our advance been slow, had any protracted halt been made either at Muna-ki-danna or Chittabut there would soon have been a formidable gathering of Swatis, Pathans, and Wahabi Hindustanis who among the rugged rocks on the crest and the dense pine forests on all sides, could have collected in numbers unperceived, and made sudden attacks on the head and flanks of our long columns of infantry, inflicting heavy losses. The 19th Britishers were armed with the new Sniders, and on fairly open ground these would no doubt have been used with deadly effect, but in such country an enemy could be hidden within a dozen yards of the line of march, and waiting a favourable opportunity could dash in, sword in hand, from so short a distance that even breech-loaders would hardly be more deadly than the old Brunswick or Enfield musket against them. Our greatest difficulty so far had been want of water, and that evening those who were on the Machai peak had to be content with a very short allowance indeed, and next morning could only spare as much as would damp one corner of our

handkerchiefs to wash with ! However, fine springs were found close at hand during the day.

From the Machai peak we looked down over the valleys of Nandihar and Tikari to the east, entirely at our mercy. The steep slopes falling from the crest westwards to the Indus were more difficult, but doubtless our infantry could have scrambled down to the villages on the banks of the river, and even driven the Wahabis across it without much trouble, covered by parties holding the ridges of the spurs on either hand. The Hindustanis, whose tents were clearly visible at Judbai on the left bank, evidently thought this quite possible, for we saw them soon after making haste back to the off bank again. The Pathan Chiefs, too, saw that the game was in our hands, for they shortly after sent in a deputation asking that their Jirgahs might be allowed to "come in" and make terms. This was of course permitted, and the Commissioner, Colonel Pollock, after an interview, advised the Chiefs to walk through the lines of troops bivouacked for miles along the crest, and judge from what they saw what they might expect if they continued opposition. This they did, protected by a small Gurkha guard from possible insult, and accompanied by an interpreter whose answers to some of their questions were not reassuring. Two nine-pounders had been carried on elephants to Munna-ki-danna, and two of these animals were brought on to the crest. "Whatever are those monsters," asked a Chief. "They are buffaloes of

the Sahib's country," was the reply. "La Allah ! if these are the buffaloes, what are the horses like," asked the astounded Khan.

The men of H. M.'s 19th were enjoying their rest and the climate in their own peculiar way : some sleeping, others mending and patching, others quietly romping and joking. "Are these the terrible *goara log* ?" asked the Chief. "We heard that they were fierce as tigers, and ate the flesh and drank the blood of their enemies ; here they are playing like children and hardly trouble to look at us." "You should see them when they are angry," replied the interpreter. "Even now, if ordered, they would shoot you down like so many animals." "But don't they hate us?" persisted the Chief ; the interpreter shrugged his shoulders and moved on. I tried to explain that while fighting we were enemies, but that even during the battle, if those much abused soldiers were to find any of their enemies wounded, they would be more likely to bind their wounds than murder them. The old fellow gave an incredulous click with his tongue ; and said he had heard such things, but had not believed them, and so moved on. The Chiefs had consented, of course, to the mild terms offered by the Commissioner, so the fighting was over. Towards evening several standards were flaunted opposite the position, about two miles away ; these were reinforcements from further north, they yelled at us and flashed their swords, but the politicals ignored them, or could not see them, and

did not allow the peace to be disturbed in consequence.

At 8 o'clock that night a royal salute was fired from the top of Machai to proclaim at once the peace, and our position on the crest to all whom it concerned. An officer on his rounds was fired at and very slightly wounded about an hour after, but the politicals were certain the Chiefs had nothing to do with it. So leaving our would-be foes flaunting their banners over the way, and lurking sharp-shooters of the enemy among the trees to pot at our fellows as we marched, our return journey was begun next day, disturbed only by some shots at the rear guard, for which the village of the Pariari Syuds was burnt. Then our long columns turned into and marched over the Tikari and Nandihar Valleys, halting where convenient, hurting no one.

A proposal to demonstrate against Tabkot was made and a reconnoitring party ascended the hills between to look round, but a telegram from Simla strictly forbade any further "complications," and we marched back again, and returned to Oghi by way of Konsh. Shortly after the force broke up. Our late enemies purchased our accumulated stores at ridiculously cheap rates, and carrying them to Rawalpindi sold them on profitable terms.

The war was over, only the distribution of honours to all heads of departments, brigades, &c., and medals to every one, remained to be done. That a strong feeling of disappointment pervaded all ranks cannot be

gainsaid. Doubtless a writer in *Indian Public Opinion* expressed the almost general idea in the words, "and the sons of Aka, and of Chagar, of Hassan, and of Deshi came unto the Commissioner, and he darkened the door of his tent, and he said unto them: Will ye make peace for so much? And they answered and said: Yea, for so much."

The Commissioner subsequently wrote almost pathetically: "Although I am aware that my proceedings met with the full approbation of the Lieutenant Governor" (Sir Donald McLeod, I may mention a pupil and friend of Lord Lawrence's) "there are reasons why I should explain proceedings which to those unacquainted with the circumstances might seem to have been characterised by undue leniency. In dealing with the Pathan tribes of the border, on an occasion like the present, our object should be rather to effect what is called in Oriental phraseology 'lifting up their *purdah*' than to kill numbers of them or unceremoniously to impose fines, or to uuroof or burn villages, or destroy crops: such punishments, cruel even when rightly directed, fall with the greatest severity on the least guilty members of the offending community, and our best officers, civil and military, have always held similar language. As regards this expedition, I am satisfied that the aims and objects of Government were fully attained, when our troops at a slight sacrifice of human life established themselves on the most commanding position of the enemy's country, and that enemy had

submitted to us." He goes on to say : " Assuming the question to be put, could we by pursuing a different course to that adopted have secured better results ? " I unhesitatingly reply in the negative. The tribes are poor, proud and scattered over a rugged and unproductive country. To have demanded from the heads of such a people, when tendering their submission, fines or compensation, or to surrender, to undergo punishment, any of their leaders, would have been to dismiss them to their houses dispirited but desperate men ; and had we used our troops in acting against them along the difficult western spurs running down to the Indus they would have given us no chance of meeting them on equal terms, and the affair would have degenerated into a guerilla warfare in a country where our troops would, in a measure, have lost their superiority by reason of the ignorance of locality and inability to act in close order. In such operations we should have lost many valuable lives ; at best we should have secured no better results than we have actually secured, and at most it is not too much to say that we might have been in a vastly inferior position, while in any case the expenses of the expedition must have been enormously increased." This all sounds very humane and very plausible, but that very different opinions as to the result of the operations were held by men in high positions is evident, as having necessitated this apology.

Had the results corresponded in the slightest degree with the hopes above expressed, the question might

have been closed. But before a year had passed Colonel Rothney was again punishing villages near the border for raids on British territory, made without the smallest provocation. Year after year offences against the peace and safety of the border were committed by the "humbled tribes." Three times again have British troops marched up the hill and marched down again, and as the policy of 1868 has apparently been followed in 1888 and subsequently, we never know for certain when another expedition may be needed. That policy having, therefore, proved a failure, we may with advantage examine into the causes which have left this small section of country as troublesome as ever, while where a more bold and thorough policy has been adopted against far more formidable tribes, a lasting impression has been made.

In August 1868 the offending clans had without provocation first attacked a body of police in their own quarters, several miles from the border. They had next invaded the valley in force, and surrounding the British force sent to restore order, had deliberately burned 20 British villages, killing men, and carrying off herds of cattle. Throughout the history of the border nothing so unprovoked, or so determinedly hostile, had been attempted by any frontier tribe, nor has been done since. For offences not nearly so outrageous the Jowaki Afridis were completely ruined, the Samana Range has been annexed, the Zhob and Bor Valleys and others have been occupied by permanent

garrisons ; the Zaimukht country was overrun and held till completely subdued. For far less offences Amir Sher Ali was driven from this throne, and Burma has become a British province. The tribes in themselves are utterly contemptible as a foe, their country is an isolated group of fertile valleys and a mountain range only thirty miles in length, cut off from the rest of independent country by the Indus. A British force of picked troops was collected, man to man equal in numbers to any enemy that could have been kept together without starving for a week. Provisions had been purchased and collected within three easy marches of the crest of the mountain, sufficient to feed the troops for three months. That crest had been gained with very little loss, and opposition was practically over. Our position on the crest was practically impregnable, the line of communication with the open cultivated valleys of Nandihar, Tikari and Agror were short and easily protected. Columns operating from the crest down the western spurs to the Indus, preceded on the march down and covered on their return by strong bodies of skirmishers holding the ridges, could have gone where, when, and how they pleased. Had the force moved along the crest to Tahkot, then indeed the *pardah* would have been effectually opened. As it was, we peeped down one ravine, then marched away, and the lands of the Chagarzai and others are still a blank on our maps—a positive blank, when those maps give exact details of country as far as Herat and the Hindu



Kush in other directions. The Chagarzai and their friends must have smiled at our simplicity in accepting their word for it, that they had not been implicated, while Tahkot and Allahi, whose banners were flaunting within a couple of miles of our force when the royal salute was fired, were left openly jeering at us.

When Cavagnari raised the *purdah* of Jowaki land he burnt no villages, he accepted a small fine, but he left not a single ravine unvisited and unmapped. When Sir Robert Sandeman accompanied a force into the Zhob Valley in 1885 he had marched all over it, except one small elevated glen named Khaisor. Not liking this little blank on our maps, the Survey officers asked to be allowed to take an escort to the crest above from which the glen could be seen and mapped. He demurred at first, but he was told plainly that hereafter whenever he wanted a criminal, or heard of a raid, he would be told that the former was in Khaisor, the latter had come from Khaisor, and the prisoners and cattle had been taken to Khaisor, till he would wish Khaisor had had its *purdah* opened, or had gone to the bottom of the sea. Three days after Khaisor had been sketched from the overhanging peaks.

If the Black Mountain country is not thoroughly subdued now, while our hands are free, it will assuredly be a sharp thorn in our side when we shall have more important affairs on hand.



## CHAPTER IV.

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### DERBAND TO AMBELA IN THE SIXTIES.

Leaving the Black Mountain, with its forests of pine and oak, its once dreaded clansmen, its memories of Tapp and Carne, of Battye and Urmston, murdered in cold blood, of Cruickshank, Beeley and other victims of half-hearted policy, the humiliations that have surged round "The Piffers" and others as they returned "by order" after profitless marching and hungering and thirsting on its naturally delightful slopes—leaving it to remain a constant weariness, a thorn in the flesh, to successive civil officers, till some bold hand places the "red line" on the Indus, and fevered "Tommys" from Peshawar occupy cottages on its cool and breezy slopes—let us move onwards along our borders and glance over the past and present of the lands of the sons of Joseph, which may at no distant date become of first-rate importance in the coming struggle for Asiatic supremacy.

From Oghi the road to the Indus descends the Valley of the Unhar River, which, washing the southern base of the Black Mountain, falls into the Indus near the small Tannawali village and fort of Derband. Across the Indus is Amb, the "capital" of the little State which for many years was of importance

in frontier politics, as a "buffer" State between this corner of British territory and the trans-Indus tribes, and whose Chief we saw last heading the charge of his small body of armour-clad cavalry against the Swatis at Oghi. The total area of the little canton does not, perhaps, exceed 100 square miles. Amb itself is but a cluster of mud huts, with a rickety tower boasting two small cannon of ancient manufacture. Yet from its walls went forth in days gone by chieftains as daring and ruthless as the petty barons who once fought and drank and married and died on the banks of the Rhine. And that so short a time ago that but a few years back the toothless old Jemadar of Cavalry, in his dotage, still inquired if his horse trappings were in order, his sword sharp, his armour ready for the foray in case kaka (uncle) Abbott should suddenly call for Jehandad's risala, or Painda Khan, "the silent Chief," be mounting his black charger and plunging into the Indus, vouchsafing no other word or sign to inform his devoted clansmen that "boot and saddle" is the order of the day, and some doomed Khalsa outpost his destined prey.

From Derband the Indus for some 25 miles flows southward between mountain masses, whose slopes often fall to the water's edge, and sometimes recede sufficiently to allow of some hundred acres of land being brought under the plough by the inhabitants of the small villages and hamlets on its banks, or among the hillocks under the slopes.

The hills to the left as we descend are in British Hazara. Those to the right are occupied by several sections of independent Yusufzais. A good riding road follows the left bank of the river, and as we ride downwards we may think of the days when the Macedonian phalanx formed in the valley to the west, hidden from us by the great Mahaban Mountain, whose summit rises to 7,000 feet above the sea, or one may listen to the tales of the great Rani who governed all the country to the east, in days gone by, whose numerous *kots* and *gats* (forts and rocks) dotted the hill tops; and who drove her rival, after much fighting, to seek a refuge among the great white cliffs of Bahingrah which stand 6,000 feet above us, overtopping the forest that clothe the southern slopes—cliffs that even the hardy Goojur will scarce dare to approach, nor the shikari in pursuit of bear or wild goat; cliffs that none with eyes to see have ever dared to ascend since Anda Shah—the blind Chief—sought refuge there in his dire distress.

On the crest of the Mahaban some would seek Aornos, or one of the many Alexandrias of the great Macedonian, and probably find it in the ruins of Shahkot on the highest summit of the mountain. But Pathan jealousy and "political" caution have hitherto closed the gates of research among these ancient mountains. Yet twice have British troops ascended to the summit, twice has the smoke of burning homestead, or rather of "fenced cities,"

proclaimed the presence of punitive expeditions. On each occasion, however, the stay was too short to allow of scientific exploration, or even of useful surveys. On both occasions the expeditions were primarily directed against the little colony of Hindustanis known among the tribes as Mujai-i-din, warriors for the faith ; among our native troops as the " Badmashes (scoundrels) of Malka Sittana." As we ride or float down the Indus we pass the ruined stone structures that once were the strongholds of Sittana, Mandi, and other hamlets ; on the crest above once stood Malka, and farther south on the same range, overlooking the valley of British Yusufzai, stood Mangal thana. Each in turn occupied by the strange foreign colony, each in turn given to the flames by British troops for numerous offences committed on border villages by this band of irreconcilables.

Despite the evil they have caused, there is much of romance and interest attaching to the band, most of whom for God and faith have left their pleasant homes in the far south—Patna, Bareilly and Oudh, Mymensingh, Dacca, Malda, and other places on the banks of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, and gathered here, far from their mango and plantain groves, from their *pan* and *supari* gardens, from the genial warmth and ease of their native land—to live amid the rugged rocks and as rugged clansmen of the border. Aliens, in all but the Moslem faith, and even as such looked on as pestilent heretics, defilers of the Kaaba, insulters of

shrines, disbelievers in saints and angels and miracles ; Wahabis, yet as refugees for the faith not annihilated, useful allies to hurl in the forefront against their foes, permitted to find a precarious existence and a dwelling place, now with one, now with another, border clan. Great must be the faith and devotion that has survived through all.

Nearly a century has passed since the original founder of the colony, after following the fortunes of the fiery Pindari leader, Amir Khan, Bonerwal, as a freelance, Syud Ahmed Shah, left for dead on some battlefield, as legend hath it, saw in a vision an Angel of the Lord beckoning him to rise and preach. and draw the sword against all the idolatrous upstarts who had risen on the ruins of the Moghal Empire—Sikh and Mahratta and Christian. Wandering to Delhi, and there becoming assured of the sacredness of his mission, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca. There he imbibed the tenets of the fierce sect of Wahabis, which allows allegiance to none but sovereigns of the true faith. Returning eastwards he suddenly appeared in the mountains between Ghazni and the Indus as a mighty preacher. He soon found himself at the head of a considerable body of mountaineers eager for spoil, and also of a band of zealots from southern India eager only for the blood of the infidels.

In 1823 he marched *viâ* Kabul to the mountain valleys of Yusufzai, thence in time to the plain of that name, where the late conquests of the Sikhs had roused

a fierce spirit of resentment and opposition, that was only restrained from open hostility when a strong force was in the neighbourhood. Here the Syud was joined by many influential Chiefs of the low country under the encouragement of the Barukzai Sirdars of Peshawur, who held that city in semi-independence. Roused by the Syud's preaching large numbers flocked to his standard, and Peshawur itself fell into his hands. Next he surrounded a Sikh force under Budh Singh sent against him, and threatened its annihilation. But Ranjit was already hurrying up. The Barukzai Sirdars, who had only joined his standard in the hope of throwing off Sikh domination on one side, and the claims of the Dost on the other, suddenly deserted him. Budh Singh sallied fiercely out on the wavering clansmen, and soon the Syud was a refugee in the mountains. Here he formed an alliance with the then rising Akhund of Swat, Abdul Ghafur, and on the withdrawal of the Sikh troops treacherously murdered the Khan of Hund, who had given intelligence of the Syud's movements to Ranjit, reoccupied Peshawur, and soon extended his sway from the Khyber to the Black Mountain. Had he now used his power with wisdom, he might have become a petty sovereign, with ecclesiastical powers, with whom our officers might have been glad to form an alliance against the Sikhs in 1849; and to support as a buffer between ourselves and the once injured, now powerful, Dost Mahomed of Kabul.

But the zealot was more prominent in the Syud than the administrator. Levying heavy contributions by way of tithes, he had made his wild subjects weary with his exactions, and he roused further opposition by forbidding resort to sacred shrines and the giving and receiving of money for betrothals. He followed this up by insisting on the daughters of several influential chiefs being bestowed in marriage on his Hindustani followers. At length the patience of the clansmen was exhausted, and arrangements were made for the assassination of the Syud and the destruction of his Indian followers. On the crest of a low hill in the plain of Yusufzai, known as Karamar, and on which yet stands another of the great rocks on which the "Edicts of Asoka" are inscribed, a brilliant flame on an appointed night gave the signal of insurrection, and all the adherents of the Syud in the valleys of Peshawur and Yusufzai were slaughtered. But in immediate attendance on the Syud was a disciplined band of 2,000 Hindustanis, under a mullah of known courage; these the Pathans feared to attack, so the Syud escaped the fate prepared for him. But his influence had waned, his prestige lessened, the Akhund suddenly discovered that his tenets were heretical, and fulminated anathemas against him in true European style, till at length the Syud left Swat and marched into Hazara. The Sikh forces were soon in movement against him, the Swatis of Hazara were not as the Yusufzais of Swat, and the Syud was brought to bay above Balakot. Here in an



entrenched position he awaited and received the attack. Again and again with desperate valour he drove back the assaulting columns, but the Sikh artillery rapidly thinned his numbers, and at length his assailants hemmed him in on all sides. Once again, sword in hand, the Mujai-i-din dashed on their foes, but their leader fell, and as darkness closed in, three hundred only of the band of two thousand made good their retreat into the forests of Bhogarmung. Thence returning to the Indus as suppliants, they were suffered to settle down among the low hills between the river and the Mahaban.

Here they remained for many years, and as they were useful to the Amazai and other border clans in their opposition to the Sikhs, they were permitted to build small stone forts, to cultivate a few hundred acres of land, to gather recruits from time to time, to extend their dwelling-places to the crest of the mountain, to collect money from the faithful in lower India, to buy arms, manufacture ammunition, and in time to become to the British officers who succeeded the Khalsa a constant source of annoyance, and to the dwellers in border villages a constant dread. As early as 1853 they were attacked by Major Abbott, in connection with the Black Mountain disturbances of that period. In 1858, having been largely recruited from mutinous regiments, they were attacked by Sir Sydney Cotton, who drove them from Sittana and Mangal thana to seek a home further inland, and at length they were

the cause of the Ambela Expedition of 1863. Nor was this the last of them. Driven from this neighbourhood by the Akhund in 1868, they arrived but too late to offer their swords to the Chagarzai. Next they stirred up trouble at various times from their new settlements at Palosi and at Tahkot, till the day they rushed, sword in hand, on the bayonets of the Royal Irish at Kot Kai in 1888. Yet once again we shall probably hear of them when the "red line" is advanced to the Indus.

It is hard to realise that many of these Mujai-i-din, who, with the physique of girls, have yet on this border, in the garb of the *Ghazi*, charged, not once but many times, recklessly to their death, on bayonet and rifle, without pause or hesitation, are from the banks of the Ganges, and differ in creed alone from the Bengali, "the slave of slaves" for many generations, a race that from its Hindu element has never placed a soldier in the ranks of any army. We pass their ruined homesteads ere we reach the turbulent village of Khabbal, where the western hills cease, and the British boundary, leaving the Indus, turns westward to enclose the valley or plain of British Yusufzai.

From this point the Ab-i-sin or Indus, which has for many hundred miles roared and rushed between rock-bound walls, now leaves the hills, and, gradually widening, spreads its fertilising waters over the plain, till they are again forced together and rush vehemently through the gorge at Attock. Here the Indus receives the waters of the Lundai or Swat river, which, rising

in the snows between the valleys of Swat and Yassin, enters the plains at Abazai, forty miles to the west of the Indus.

The Yusufzai plain is a somewhat irregular segment of a circle, with the Swat river as the chord and the base of the frontier hills as the arc. Here and there long, rugged, rocky spurs are thrown into the valley from the north, and in places isolated rocky hills rise some hundred feet above the plain. Along its southern and western portions lies the Maira, an undulating low ridge which our Government has made great efforts to fertilise by a canal from the Swat river. A large portion of the valley is almost barren: here sandgrouse and deer abound. The rest is a vast field of barley, chequered with cotton, and sugarcane, and poppy, and dotted with numerous large villages. Nearly in the centre of the valley is the little fort of Mardan, mud built, where for many years has been quartered—when not on service—that most useful regiment of cavalry and infantry “The Guide Corps,” bearing on its rolls the names of Hodson and H. Lumsden, Sir Sam Browne and Jenkins, Bellew and Hammond, Stewart, and no less than three Battyes, with whom is associated the name of Cavagnari.

The villages are large collections of low mud huts intersected by dirty narrow lanes, which during wet weather are turned into slushy watercourses; the whole unrelieved by any pleasing feature. Even the towers that stand sentinel in the border villages are here

wanting. The people are tall and of fine physique, but there is a peculiar joylessness expressed in every feature. Gaunt and solemn, deprived by the strong arm of the law from the amusements of all others dear to the Pathan heart—battle, murder, assassination—they seem utterly devoid of all other resources for pastime. Save for the sullen drum and the shrill pipe, no sound of “music” is heard in the streets. No fairs or happy gatherings, where for a time the women can forget their slavery.

How different must the scene have been ages ago, ere the Moslem had swept away the Buddhists or other dwellers of past ages. Scattered in numbers over the valley are long, low mounds, consisting largely of broken pottery, which on excavation have been found to cover the ruins of many ancient towns and villages, so numerous that it is certain the valley supported a dense population, intelligent and industrious. Nor are these dead heaps all that tell of a glorious past, when probably the valley was resplendent with the gilded domes of many stupas. Here are some of the most interesting rock-built cities of the Buddhist era. On the Karamar hill stands one of the great rocks with ancient inscription. To the north of Mardan lie the ruins of Takht-i-Bahi, whose excavated treasures, large stone figures of Guatama, and friezes illustrating his life, now adorn many museums.

Here, too, on the crest of a range overhanging the plain, stand the crumbling walls of a vast city now

known as Ranigat or the Queen's rock, believed by General Chesney and others to be the Aornos stormed by Alexander before he advanced on Taxila, whose ruins, now known as Shah-ki-Dheri, or the King's heap, or hillock, cover the low hills not far from the Nicholson Monument in the Margalla, some 14 miles west of Rawalpindi. The walls of Ranigat still standing, facing the steep ascent from the plains, are built of hewn stones, carefully placed, with chips of stone let in vertically, horizontally and in standing rows between each stone. Arches may still be traced of lofty dwellings and temples, under whose *débris* lie hidden many stone carvings. Below all are in places long masonry passages, in parts well preserved, which it has been conjectured were aqueducts; if so, they tell of a time when water must have been more plentiful among these mountains than now, when all are bare, barren, and waste. In enormous hollowed out rocks, the homes once of hermits, shepherds now shelter their flocks. The ruins cover a large area, and the city must have looked very imposing from the plains. Just after the Anibela campaign it was the haunt of one of the most atrocious of the many outlaws that, flying from justice and unable to find a resting place among the border villages for fear of angering the British, found here a safe refuge, whence, wherever a favourable opportunity occurred, they raided the villages within the border, harrying the cattle or carrying off children of the village *baniyas*, who were

redeemed for money placed in some appointed spot. The leader of the gang, Ataola Khan, had been a village lambardar, who, on returning one evening from the fields and finding his wife nursing their child, told her to bring him a drink. On her replying that she would do so as soon as the child was satisfied, he seized the little thing and dashed its head against the door, saying his wife's first duty was to him. He then fled over the border, and was for years the plague of the countryside. The Arms Act had not been enforced on the border in those days, and every one carried weapons for the purpose of defending his home from sudden raids, which duty, however, was seldom thoroughly performed except when officials happened to be present, as in many cases the raiders had sympathisers if not helpers in every village. As a consequence of a half-wild and vindictive race having their weapons ever at hand, murders and faction fights were very frequent. During a single week as many as eighteen murdered men were brought into one tahsil station. The most trivial disputes often ended in bloodshed. On one occasion I was encamped near a large village lying on either side of a stream bed some 30 yards across. Hearing firing towards sundown I walked down to see what the row was, and found several men lining the opposite banks and firing across at each other. A dispute had arisen as to whether the new moon had been seen the previous evening or not, the event being the close of the fast of the Ramazan. The party on one side

declared the moon was due that evening, the other side declared they had seen it the previous evening, and had broken their fast, for which they were reviled as Kafirs. They retorted that the other side were Kafirs for increasing the fast beyond the prescribed period. Angry words led to blows, and eight men were killed and wounded before peace was restored.

Across the border, under the blessings of Home Rule, the strife might easily have led to an inter-tribal war, and started blood-feuds to last for generations.

The traveller desirous of visiting the ruins of Rani-gat, must obtain the sanction of Government, for though within three hours' walk of the actual British boundary, and actually within the nominal boundary, any attempt to go there without sanction and escort, would assuredly lead to bloodshed.

The pathway leading from the plain, the very one Alexander must have climbed, if this was Aornos, starts from the little hamlet of Nawagram, about 18 miles west of the Indus. The ascent is steep over rough boulders, but the scene is well worth the trouble. After gazing over the vast scene of ruin, let us turn to the hills beyond. From our feet the hill falls away northward in grassy slopes about a thousand feet to the valley of the Khudo Khels. Below us is a little valley or glen, and in it a snug little village known as Bagh or the garden—well so named, for streams of watercourse through its mulberry groves, on whose branches grape vines weigh heavily. It is a little

colony of Syuds, which for the nearer glens is a "city of refuge" from the avenger of blood. Also for the outlaw, the murderer, the raider, and ravisher. For except in matters ceremonial and doctrinal differences, the Syuds act on the principle of judge not. Orthodoxy must be upheld, tithes, alms, fasts, feasts, strictly enforced, wine and pork abjured, but beyond that why should they interfere? That which is written must happen; the murderer has but fulfilled his fate. *Kismet* was too strong for him, let him rest here in peace and arrange for the due payment of tithes. Or if his destiny has compelled him to plunder his neighbour's cattle, he must ensure a tenth being paid in the musjid, and then proceed to pray with washen hands.

Above the Bagh is the main Khudo Khel village of Chinglai, burnt in 1858. Higher stands the crest of the range connecting the Mahaban with the hills of Boner. To the right is a little circular valley, intersected by numerous watercourses, winding between hillocks, and small plateaux covered with brushwood, with here and there a few villages of mud huts, with groves of mulberry trees. The various streams converge, and after meeting, break through a rocky gorge some two to three miles in length to the plains. Standing high above the valley are the heights of Mahaban, where stood once the small but fortified and picturesque village of Mangal Thanna, built and inhabited by a family of Syuds and their Hindustani followers; till their constant hostility roused our long-suffering Govern-



ment in the days of Herbert Edwardes and Sir Sydney Cotton. So one morning a column marched up the heights, and after enjoying the pleasant breezes and picturesque scenery for a few hours, blew up everything that could afford shelter to man or beast, and returned to the plains fully convinced that the "moral effect" would last for years, if not for ever! Before the close of the year depredations recommenced. The border tribes knew our strength partly, our weakness thoroughly: until they saw our troops actually on the move they knew they could sleep in peace: if these unexpectedly arrived before the clansmen were prepared, it only needed that the Chiefs should "come in" and agree to terms to escape severe punishment. Yet but for the foreign colony it is quite possible that our troops would never have come into serious contact with the tribes on this border. And even while Cotton's force was driving the Hindustanis from the lower slopes, they were preparing for us a much wider trouble, which but for the devotion of one man, and he a Moslem police officer of low rank, might have ended in a second rebellion almost as formidable as that of 1857. Hunter, in his "Indian Mussulmans", has told the tale too well to need repetition. Suffice it to say that the proclamation of peace and mercy had scarcely been promulgated in 1858, when seditious conspiracies again commenced in Patna. The attack on the Hindustani colony at Sittana had brought this really insignificant body of men into prominent notice, and a busy correspondence

soon began between its leaders and the heads of the Wahabi community in India. The former persuaded the latter that they were at the head of a regular army of formidable strength, and only needed more money and men to enable them to invade India at the head of all the border clans, and to raise again the banner of Islam.

Money and recruits were found in abundance ; remittances in various ways found their way to the treasury of Syuds Mobarik and Mahmood, now entrenched at Malka, a strong position on the far side of the Mahaban above Amb, and not far below the ruins of Shahkot where they considered themselves safe from attack. Parties of men were observed marching steadily along the Grand Trunk Road towards the border ; aided on their way by the various agents of the conspirators at certain centres.

Prominent among these was Mahomed Shaffi, of Umballa, who had grown rich as meat contractor for the troops before Delhi, to whom war meant more money, and who heartily entered into the conspiracy. The plot thickened, almost every Mussulman of importance had been sounded, and the time was nearly ripe for a general rising, to be aided on this occasion by the armies of the faithful enrolled under the banners of the Syuds of Malka and Sittana. To a Mussalman Inspector of Police belongs the honour of exposing the whole plot and nipping rebellion in the bud. At the risk of his reputation, his position, his pension, and by

the all but certain sacrifice of his only son, a boy of sixteen; Mahomed Hyat Khan, after securing copies of the correspondence, exposed the whole conspiracy. Mahomed Shaffi and the Patna Wahabis were seized. The former tried and sentenced to death, escaped martyrdom by a legal flaw, and all were transported. This ended the hopes of rebellion in India, and the Punjab Government decided by a bold stroke to destroy the Wahabi colony at Malka, root and branch.

Could we from Ranigat follow the rugged watershed that forms the British boundary westward, we would in time reach the site of the Ambela struggle. But this is impossible, so returning to the plain we must ride along the base of hills past Shewa, Parmuli and other villages, past the Karamar hill, and on to Rustam Bazaar. Here a path, after following the bed of the Panjdarrah, enters the low hills, and gradually ascending the rugged slopes, round successive spurs, reaching the pass facing the large village of Ambela. Below us running northwards for several miles is the open valley of Chamla, green with wheat fields, watered by a considerable stream which at the northern end of the valley joins the Barando river, which after draining the Boner Valley, breaks through a rocky gorge, dividing the Mahaban from the farther hills, and falls into the Indus above Derband. Skirting the western side of the Chamla Valley is a low rocky ridge, dividing it from the large circular basin of Boner, which is itself divided from the valleys of Swat to the north and west by

massive forest-covered mountains ; and from British Yusufzai by the continuation of the rugged range on which the pass is situated. Just above the pass to the right is a small plateau, then several hillocks continuing eastwards to the Mahaban, to the west stands the great Gooroo mountain, its sides broken by rocky terraces and clothed with pine forest more or less scanty.

Thus it will be seen the Mahaban, with its Wahabi stronghold, lies between the Indus on one side and the Chamla Valley on the other. Any attempt to destroy the Wahabis from the side of the Indus would have been useless. As the troops advanced these could retire for ever while the slow advance up the steep slopes would give time for every border clan to send its contingent to oppose us. It was, therefore, decided to feign an attack from the Indus, but to make a real advance up the Panjdarrah, across the pass into Chamla and pushing rapidly down that valley turn on the Wahabi from flank and rear and drive them to the Indus to be destroyed or captured. The Chamla Valley could be reached in two days from Yusufzai ; a British force could thus encamp in perfect safety, protected by cavalry and horse artillery. The advance to Malka would be but a day's march over easy slopes. The crest of the Mahaban reached, a couple of days would suffice to drive the enemy before us to the river. Thus with say, ten days' rations in hand, an expeditionary force could easily do all required. The Khan of Amb

was prepared to prevent any retreat of the Wahabis across the Barando.

History records the names and number of the troops engaged in this expedition, but it does not record how one evening in the month of September 1863 Sir Neville Chamberlain, in command of the Frontier Force, met Sir Robert Montgomery and his advisers in council at Murree, and tried in vain to impress upon them the serious nature of the undertaking, and the necessity for concentrating so large a force that successful opposition on the part of the *combined* tribes would be impossible. He had not the slightest doubt that with 5,000 picked troops, well equipped, he could meet and overthrow any possible force the tribes could bring against him in open combat. But he could not with 5,000 men advance up the Chamla Valley to the Barando, scatter detachments along the western slopes of the Mahaban to prevent the Hindustanis slipping past him in that direction, keep open communication with his base 30 miles in rear over a pass and through a long rugged defile, and at the same time detach a force to hold the pass against a possible combination of the numerous and powerful tribes of Boner and Swat on his flanks. The advisers of the Local Government were convinced that there would be no combination against us. The Akhund of Swat had just declared the Hindustanis to be heretics, not for the first time. The Bonerwals had no cause to fear our movements; they had never molested us; they would be informed by

proclamation and letters that our one sole object was to turn out the Wahabi heretics, and to molest no one else. The entire expedition would not take a week. If the advance was made rapidly we would pass the only practicable roads into Boner before the tribe could take the alarm or concentrate, and long before the news had spread through Swat we would be on the Indus. What occasion was there for holding the pass or keeping open communication with the base? To gather 10,000 men was more than the Local Government was able to do without the consent of the Supreme Government, and if Sir Hugh Rose, the Commander-in-Chief, was called on to furnish so large a force he would most decidedly keep it under his own control, then it would no longer be a local war, and probably lead to the Punjab Frontier Force being placed for the future under that Chief instead of the Local Government.

The military Chief of the local army was too loyal a soldier to do more than state his opinions; these were overruled, and he accepted, with what misgivings he alone can know, the heavy responsibility placed on him. Nor when we consider frontier operations of later years, can we altogether blame the Local Government for its views. There can be little doubt that nowadays a force of 5,000 men could do what Chamberlain failed to do. But times have changed, weapons have improved, above all mobility has been perfected. Roberts on his march to Kandahar was not encumbered with camels or double-poled tents, half the impedimenta

that made desperate efforts to do a long march up a narrow winding path among ravines and hillocks and thorny jungle in October 1863. No one nowadays would think it a hardship to go on service without his four-poster or couch. Early in October 1863 clouds of dust rising from every road converging on the frontier announced the march of troops, some *via* Rawalpindi and Attok, some across the hills of Hazara all well pleased to be on active service again and soon near Nawakilla, about 10 miles from the hills, the clansmen might discern from the mountain tops a white city of tents rising on the plain. Several times in the past troops had marched against the Hindustanis and their allies the Amazai and Jaduns of the Mahaban, but never had there been so great a gathering as this. Have these English, who have crept up slowly step by step from the sea, not yet enough to satisfy them? Do they covet our poor valleys also? That in the first case the Hindustanis were to be attacked was well understood, and that the line of the Indus was again to be followed was the general opinion of the tribes, for there alone were any preparations made for opposing the advance, but from the first there is ample proof the Hindustani leaders shrewdly guessed the real point of attack, and made capital of their knowledge. It was intended to issue proclamations as above stated, before the actual march of the troops, assuring the people of Boner and Chamla that unless they deliberately interfered with us they would be

unharméd ; but it seemed evident that such should only be issued at the last moment lest the Hindustanis should escape. Had the force been large enough to meet any possible opposition there would have been little harm in this, but as everything depended on the quiescence of the Bonerwals it was a great mistake not to have at least privately communicated with their Chiefs. It is easy to be wise after the event, but if all enterprise across the border, any seeking after knowledge even without entering the forbidden land. had not been so sternly ignored, discouraged, even resented, we might in this case have been wiser before the event.

On the 18th October only were copies of the proclamation sent to the Chiefs of Boner and Chamla and the Mahaban, and could not possibly have found their way to the scattered homes of the Khans—who alone had influence enough to restrain their clansmen—when on the 19th October the first brigade of our troops occupied the crest of the pass, and *blood had been shed*. Our proclamations, too, had been forestalled and discredited in advance : our secret had been carefully kept from the only tribe who should have known it, but when men of the race and creed of your enemy are in your ranks, are your confidential advisers, the advisers of your all-knowing Politicals, your servants, and your commissariat contractors, how can such things be hidden ? Proclamation for proclamation. The Chiefs of the Hindustanis had widely distributed the following ere yet the British troops had received their final orders.



“ In the name of the Lord.—A large force of the infidels has arrived at Salim Khana with the object of plundering this country. It is therefore incumbent on you immediately on receipt of this letter to proceed to Chamla ” (mark that to Chamla, not the Indus, so well had the secret been kept) “ and bring with you all your allies and retainers. Lose not a moment in carrying out these orders, else the infidels will plunder and devastate the whole of Chamla and Boner and Swat and annex them ; thus we shall lose at once our religion and property. Be true, therefore, to Islam, and be not careless. The Kafirs are, above all, treacherous and deceitful, they will enter your hills on any pretext, they will declare their quarrel is only with the Hindustanis, that they will in no wise harm a hair of your heads, but will return to their own lands once they have destroyed the Hindustani heretics. But believe them not, for assuredly they will take away your *izat*, and your herds and flocks, and will open your purdah and annex your lands and take away your religion, then will it be too late to regret—so take warning in time.” Signed as these documents were by the sacred hands of Syuds and Moulvies, did they not plainly foretell the very words of the British proclamation ? Nay, foretold the very movements of the troops and was not Chamla—which, it now transpired, was subject to Boner—already invaded, Boner threatened, and the tribesmen who were not to be molested, already shot down ?

## CHAPTER V.

### THE AMBELA CAMPAIGN.

On the night of the 19th October 1863, after a pretended advance to the Indus had been made, the first brigade turned, and pushing up the Panjdarrah (stream bed) occupied the pass. Early on the 20th the rest of the force advanced from Nawakilla and soon the entire route was enveloped in clouds of dust. Cavalry, horse artillery, long lines of camels encumbered with superfluous baggage in spite of orders, all pushed on as if a plain lay before them. Soon the hills were entered, the whole were massed or slowly moving forward among great boulders and on the brittle sides of rugged ravines, or round the corners of rocky spurs covered with thorny acacias which caught fast hold of great double-poled tents and unwieldy bundles as camels and mules filed past, dragging the former clumsy beasts groaning and helpless to their knees, generally in some narrow way where all in rear were compelled to halt till the loads were readjusted, or the poor brutes shoved down the hillside to die and rot, or wander back to the line below to add to previous confusion. In vain easy chairs and cumbersome bedsteads were hurled over the slopes; in vain officers tried to keep order; fortunately no enemy had thus far appeared on the scene. After great exertions and further delay the

elephants carrying the 9-pounders were urged forward pushing all else aside, and reached the crest about ten at night ; another halt was called all along the line, to allow of the mule train carrying rations for the first brigade, now on the crest, to pass on. As darkness deepened so did the moaning of the camels, the shouts and oaths of the drivers and escorts. Down the whole length of the defile all was confusion. Happily on the crest it was not so. Brigadier Wilde had carefully prepared for an attack. Whatever the Bonerwals had intended so far they had not in any way opposed the advance nor yet did they attack our position. Had they done so, had they rushed sword in hand down that narrow glen from every side that night, the Ambela force would certainly have been annihilated. At first sight it may appear that the wisdom of the Politicals in keeping the movement secret was justified, but as we have seen it was no secret. It appears that the chiefs did not credit the assertions of the Syuds till our own actions proved their words to be true. What then of the wisdom of laying open a British Army to such fearful disaster as a night attack would have involved ? It would have been bolder and wiser to have told the Boner chiefs what we intended doing, then to have met them openly if they had opposed us ; and as this would probably have occurred while our baggage was still in rear, our whole force intact, their certain defeat would have resulted. One lesson taught then, yet not remembered as it should have been, was that

it is next to impossible, especially in India, to keep intended movements on a large scale secret ; another is that even when kept secret it is all but impossible to "surprise" a mountain glen by night movements, except over well known roads. Throughout the 21st baggage and supplies continued to arrive on the crest, but the morning of the 22nd dawned before the entire force was prepared to advance. Thus three days of the proposed ten had passed, and only one day's work had been done.

On the morning of the 22nd the cavalry party that was to have reconnoitred the Chamla Valley on the 19th rode down the farther slopes. Escorting Colonel Reynell Taylor, the Commissioner, and finding all quiet rode on down the pretty valley several miles. As they returned they saw the Bonerwal standards appearing in the pass to the west leading into the Boner Valley, while small bodies of armed men were moving down the hillsides as if to intercept the return. Some of these attempting to seize a strong position right in their way, the cavalry charged and cut them down ; and war had begun. The 20th Punjabis were moved down the slope to cover the return of cavalry, and ere these regained the crest, the enemy had shown the spirit that was in him, charging sword in hand *up* the slopes to the very points of the bayonets. Following up rapidly again and again till midnight, they attempted to rush the camp.

The first British officer of the many killed in this "little war," Lieutenant Gillies, fell this night blown

up by the explosion of an ammunition waggon. The die was now cast. Next morning the chiefs of the Chamla Valley came into camp, the Bonerwal jirgah sent in a respectful reply to the proclamation, but already fifty of their clansmen had fallen, and blood for blood has always been the law of the land. Within the week heretic and orthodox were fighting side by side ; no need now to seek the Wahabi Colony on the Mahaban—it was here. Sir Neville Chamberlain's worst prognostications had been fulfilled. It was now his part to make the best of a bad beginning, bear the burden with the best grace possible, and trust to get out of it somehow with the usual British pluck and luck. It was above all things necessary to stand fast against all odds.

Any retirement in the face of an enemy would perhaps have been disastrous, invasion and rebellion would assuredly have followed. He must hold on till reinforcements could arrive in sufficient numbers to allow of the original programme being carried out, or at least till opposition ceased.

There was then no railway line nearer than Dehli, except the 30 miles between Amritsar and Lahore. Lord Elgin the Viceroy was dying at Dharm-sala from the effects of hardships incurred during a journey through the hills. Fortunately the Lieutenant-Governor was not a man to shirk responsibility. The 7th Fusiliers, the 23rd Punjab Infantry from Mian Mir, the 93rd Highlanders from Sialkot and others were

ordered to the front ; but the end of November had arrived before they reached their destination.

Meantime much had been done and suffered. I have already described the position of the pass and its surroundings. Here the British force entrenched itself in stone breastworks, and placed pickets on prominent knolls and other points to prevent the main camp in the pass being taken by surprise, and to break the force of attacks on that position. The most prominent of these were the Eagle's Nest and Vaughan's on the left under the Guru, the Crag and Water pickets on the right. Each of these usually garrisoned by one or two hundred men, supported by larger bodies when necessary, became the scene of hard even desperate fighting, and each attack resulted in the death of British and native officers and men in numbers quite unprecedented in previous "little wars," and in heavy proportion to the numbers engaged.

Scarcely had the first shot been fired in the Chamla Valley than the gathering of the clans began. To one who has only seen the mobilisation of a modern regular army, the advent and massing of a Pathan or Afghan irregular force is a revelation. The sun may rise on a scene of perfect peace, men ploughing or reaping, women at their domestic duties, children driving cattle and sheep slowly to pasture. Towards dusk a beacon fire blazes up on some prominent peak, a few shots are fired and repeated from hamlet to hamlet, the sullen *dag dag dag* of the great drums roll up the glens, all is activity.

Every man girds on his sword and shield and takes up his gun, snatches his goat's skin bag of flour from the blackened walls ; examines his powder, his tinder, and his bullets, winds his sheet or blanket round his loins or across his shoulders, and starts for the rendezvous prepared for a ten days' outing. If the enemy is near, the cattle are driven to the mountain fastnesses, the women carry off the children and household goods to the top of rocky crags or the crests of steep ranges. the villages are deserted or watched by the old men from neighbouring points of vantage. The fighting men are pushing along valleys or crests of ranges and spurs to the seat of war, with standards flying, drums beating, shrill pipes squealing some wild air, to which the younger men are dancing sword in hand. As the foe is seen wild "Allahi's" ring in the air, and every man lets off his gun towards the enemy.

If no assault is delivered the clansmen amuse themselves half the night, harassing the enemy by constant yelling and firing into camp ; then roll up in their sheets or blankets and sleep in peace till breakfast time. In a prolonged affair, brothers, cousins, sons, take each others places in rotation, week and week about—thus it was in Ambela. Ere the first week had passed the standards of the Hindustanis, the Jadun, the Amazai, from the Mahaban ; Hassanzai and Chagarzai and Swat from the Black Mountain and Chakesar marched in from the north, and found the Bonerwal and Chamlawal already gathered.

Shortly after, an unusual commotion below announced the arrival of the Akhund or teacher of Swat with the clansmen of the Swat valleys. Later came contingents from Dir, from Bajawar, and even from the Kunar Valley, till from fifteen to twenty thousand men had gathered under the sacred banner of Abdul Ghafur, the teacher, the hermit, the saint against whom all the arts of the infidel would avail nothing. This man had started life as a shepherd boy away among the snows and pine forests of Bar or Upper Swat. Tradition says he was religiously inclined from his early youth, his religion taking a turn that in this land of marauders must have been incomprehensible. While driving the flocks and herds to pasture he would drink no milk but of his father's own cow or buffalo, and would prevent his goats from nibbling even the hedges of his neighbours. He is an example of the poor but serious youth, who, having nothing of his own, wanders forth from his home to seek some wise expounder of the Koran, and sit at his feet to learn, performing in exchange for food, raiment and instruction such menial offices about the temples as are required, such as drawing water for the feet of worshippers, sweeping the premises, &c., and who, when with his companions in sufficient numbers, is led by the *mullahs* in the forefront of battle, becomes the *ghazi* who has sworn to be victorious or die.

Abdul Ghafur not easily content, wandered from teacher to teacher in search of wisdom, and at



length instead of becoming the *mullah* or officiating priest of some obscure mosque, became an ascetic hermit on the banks of the Lunda or Swat River near Attock ; adopting the opinions of the *Kadaria* sect, who hold the doctrines of man's free will and personal responsibility against the sects that uphold predestination of good and evil absolutely. He soon had a school of disciples during the troublous times of Sikh domination, and became for a while a military leader. Defeated and driven by the Sikhs to his native hills for refuge he returned to an ascetic life, which did not, however, prevent him from marrying a girl of a saintly family, by whom he had three children, two boys and a girl. The saintly character, blameless life, and political sagacity of the Akhund soon raised him to the highest place in the councils of the Yusufzai tribes, while his fame spread far and wide from Persia to the Ganges, and brought numerous pilgrims to his little homestead.

His love of heaven did not militate against his love of country, and for a while he was active in urging opposition to Khalsa and British. Shrewdly conjecturing that the latter, after coming all the way from the sea to the base of the hills, would soon wish to advance again he endeavoured to found a monarchy. But his Saul was not well chosen. The "Badshah" was never very popular with the clans, and died just when there was a possibility of his fulfilling the desire of a lifetime, by driving the infidels across the Indus in

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1857, while Dehli was holding out against our small army.

Of late years, however, he had advocated peaceful principles, and appears to have been very reluctantly drawn to Ambela, partly by the earnest request of the Bonerwal *mullah* and even a deputation of women, partly by the fear that one or other of his religious rivals, the Sittana *mullah* or the Kotah *mullah*, would take the place so long held by himself as the greatest teacher of the border. Thus persuaded, however, he entered heartily into the war, proclaimed a *jihad* throughout the border valleys, and raised his sacred banner near Ambela before the British force had been a week in the pass.

The first attacks on the British position were made chiefly by the Bonerwal from the Guru side, and the Hindustanis and Mahaban tribes on the right; but as each fresh contingent arrived it was sent forward to try its strength and courage. More than once the very entrenchments round the main camp were threatened, and once a furious attempt was made to seize the guns. But calm courage, and devotion to duty, with discipline on one side, proved more than a match for fiery zeal, daring enterprise, patriotism, and numbers on the other.

Yet at times matters were acknowledged to be very critical indeed. England always expects her sons to do their duty, and they do it. But what of those who of the same faith, same blood, many of the same clans

as their opponents stood side by side with the British soldier, whose hearts in this hour of trial adhered to their British officers even to the death, against all ties of religion and kindred. A lad of the 20th Punjabis was seen weeping silently over the body of a dead clansman by the wall of the crag. It was his father, *Kismet* explained all, and consoled him for his loss. To the Sikh of course the enemy of the British was his own hereditary foe, to the Gurkha he was lawful *shikar*. But Pathan and Punjabi Moslem stood loyally also to the colours.

Day by day saw bodies of fine young officers carried in, sometimes fearfully hacked, who had gone out with calm courage to their fate a few hours before. The fighting round the crag was so bloody on both sides that it was known as the *Katalgarh* or slaughter fort; and by this name is the campaign still known among our sepoys. A rugged knoll on the extreme right of our position, so placed as to command the camp on the plateau, easy of access and affording cover on the enemy's side, steep towards camp, more easily attacked than supported—here raged the fiercest fights. Sir Charles (then Major) Brownlow with some companies of his "Chapli fire-eaters" the 20th Punjabis, composed chiefly of Afridis and Sikhs, held it one night against great numbers. So sharp was the struggle that the enemy entering the left corner were driven out by the Major and some volunteers, who used the stones of the breastwork to drive out the assailants. A company of

another brave regiment, fiercely and suddenly attacked, fled in confusion, leaving its brave officer Lieutenant Davidson to stand and die alone at his post. It was customary for the enemy to strip and mutilate the dead. On this occasion some one had commenced the process by half drawing off one of the boots of the dead officer, when a chief interposing prevented the desecration of the body of the bravest man that chief had yet seen.

Again a company of the brave old 1st Bengal Fusiliers, then the 101st, also broke and fled from the place, causing panic and confusion among the camp followers and others, which might have ended in disaster, but for a bold stand made by parties under Major (now Sir Charles) Ross of the 14th Sikhs, at the base of the crag, and the fire of the ever ready mountain guns, till reinforcements arriving, the position was retaken, Sir Neville Chamberlain leading the assault in person, and being so severely wounded that he was obliged shortly after to resign the command. Every regiment in turn, British and Native, Sikh and Gurkha and Pathan vied with the others in courage and devotion. But all this fighting and slaughter without advancing was beginning to tell on those whose high priest on the other side was continually breathing out anathemas against them, as well as on the other troops, wearied of constant watching and fighting, without apparent result, on the bleak hill top.

Meantime the enemy's losses had been very severe. Many contingents were content with one struggle

returning hurriedly home again after one dash. The Bonerwals wearied and hopeless of success, and bearing the burden of feeding the vast assemblage, began to treat for terms. The Akhund and Hindustanis, on the other hand, held out bitterly against peace, and at the solicitations of the former, another sacred leader, from the Kunar Valley near Jellalabad, arrived bringing reinforcements from Bijawar and Dir, and a nostrum for averting cannon balls. This was tried immediately on the Katalgarh, with such effect that nearly a third of his volunteers were killed or wounded, and the rest fled to their homes again. Fresh troops were seen to arrive on the British side daily, and at length the enemy began to realise that the question now was not of driving the British across the Indus but of securing their own homes from destruction.

Meanwhile changes had occurred in India. Owing to the extravagant ideas on the "crisis" of the Home authorities, Lord Palmerston had sent out Lord Lawrence as the best man for the occasion. With Lord John came one of his former Lieutenants, Major James, Commissioner of Peshawar, who had been on furlough when the Ambela Expedition started. Both were pledged to bring the war to an end somehow. Major James arrived on the scene when the bravest of the opposing tribes, the Bonerwal, and others were anxious to come to terms. Personally known to many of the chiefs, he got them into camp, and shortly after it became evident that the dissensions in the ranks of the

enemy had widened. Rumour had it that Major James summoned each chief individually into his tent closing the *pardah* each time. The Khan being seated after a few commonplace questions, James went on with his writing for quarter of an hour or so, and then politely dismissed his visitor, through the opposite door, without raising the question of peace or war. An escort was at hand to safe-conduct him to the outer pickets without meeting the other chiefs. When all had returned to Ambela, and all professed to have come back without discussing terms, each suspected that the others had been bribed to forsake the confederacy. Suspicions increased, quarrels arose, even between the chiefs of the same tribe, and as the Hindustanis accused all alike of corruption, there was an end to cohesion. Major James now made special proposals to the chiefs of each tribe in turn. Doubtless he had a large command also of " Secret Service money."

His arrangements with the Khans of Swat, kept secret from the military authorities, placed the latter in a false position; and to all appearances prevented what might have been a far more effective and successful termination to the war. Sir Hugh Rose had determined to change the state of affairs at Ambela by advancing a force towards Swat and, if necessary, invading that valley *viâ* Lund Kwar on its southern side and had even detached troops to move in that direction.

The march of a brigade from Mardan to the Shahkot Pass, east of the Malakand, would undoubtedly have

alarmed the Akhund for his own home, and Swatis, Bajawaris, Mohmands, and all the contingents from the west would hurriedly have withdrawn from Ambela leaving only the Bonerwals and the Mahaban tribes already at enmity, to face the strong army now concentrated and ready to advance there. These tribes would have been compelled to submit to any terms imposed, and their prestige lowered for ever.

But James had assured the Khans of Swat that their country should not be invaded, and that while they still confronted us. Doubtless it meant at the time that they would not be invaded through Boner. But James extended it to all the lands of Swat perhaps fearing the commencement of another war on a larger scale. So the column intended for Swat turned eastward and joined the rest of the troops at Ambela.

Two months had now elapsed since the pass had been occupied, the whole power of the tribes had failed to dislodge it. The enemy still numbered 15,000 including the half-hearted; the British force was now 9,000 eager to advance. Surely the time for secret negotiation had gone by.

However, Major James thought otherwise, and the Bonerwal chiefs informed him that they were willing to treat, but that the Akhund's party, which but for diplomacy would now have been holding the passes into Swat, still held out, and intended attacking the British position on the 16th. *They* advised that our troops

should now take the initiative and attack Ambela, in which case the Bonerwals would stand aloof.

In consequence General Garvock now in command decided to advance. The enemy on the 14th had pushed forward detachments, and taken possession of a strong position on the British right known as the conical hill and had occupied the neighbouring village of Lalu in great force. At early dawn of the 15th the 101st led by Colonel Salisbury in person moved out, and calmly advancing under a heavy fire went straight up the face of the hill coolly and quietly, and after a sharp struggle on the crest drove the enemy down the other side in confusion ; following them up they next advanced on, stormed and burnt Lalu, and the broken bodies of the clansmen were soon in full retreat to Ambela. Meantime large bodies of the enemy, thinking the force was abandoning the position on the crest advanced boldly to storm the left side of the entrenchments ; their attack was received, repulsed, and followed up, by a general advance down the several slopes falling into the plain. That night our force encamped in open ground between the crest and Ambela. At early dawn the advance was resumed, Turner's brigade from Lalu deploying towards Ambela from the right. Some troops of cavalry under Probyn and Hawes threatened the enemy's left and his line of retreat to Boner, Wilde's brigade advancing in front. It was soon evident that the enemy was thoroughly disheartened. Ambela was deserted, and the sacred banner of the Akhund



was seen hurrying along towards the hills. One party alone proved game to the last. Some two to three hundred Hindustanis suddenly burst out from a ravine and charged straight on to a Pioneer regiment, killed and wounded four or five officers and for a brief space drove the regiment backwards. But rallying the Muzbis turned on their foes, the 7th Fusiliers cut off their retreat, and the whole body fell fighting to the last man. It was the last attempt at opposition. The horse artillery now came forward into the open country and round shot and shell soon hurried forward the retirement of the enemy's masses.

For a brief while the Akhund's banner was again flaunted on the crest of the pass to Boner, but the guns galloping forward soon made the standard-bearer seek a safer spot further back. Even in the flush of victory the British commanders would not violate the wishes of Government or the Commissioner: with regard to Boner a halt was called and the troops quietly fell back to the open country, while the enemy collecting on the crest in dark masses sat sullenly there around their banners. That night the Akhund of Swat and all the western contingents marched home.

The Mahaban and Black Mountain contingents started northwards, and the Bonerwals came in and asked for orders. To decide on the next move was no easy matter. For two months our troops had been hemmed in; again and again the enemy had gained partial if temporary successes at the various pickets magnified

throughout the land into glorious victories. True; the fighting on the two last days had been brilliantly successful on our side; the enemy had suffered heavily and were in full retreat. To advance into Boner and Swat would still have been seriously opposed perhaps, and the experiences of the last two months had not been of a nature to keep the fighting spirit at high level. To have now attempted an advance in that direction would have been a breach of faith. But to the non-political there appeared every reason for the carrying out of the original programme, that is, an advance of the whole force down the Chamla Valley to the Barando and Indus. This would have been an unmistakable evidence of final victory, some recompense to the British and Indian regiments who had so long sustained the honour of our arms. Had this been done the Black Mountain Expeditions of 1868 to 1888 would in all probability never have been needed, nor the various blockades of Boner, Swat, &c., for petty raids committed since.

But against this course were several good and some plausible reasons. Foremost was the difficulty of supplies which no doubt was a serious one. Unfortunately the Commissioner tacked on to this the idea that while our troops were waiting for rations, perhaps a week or more, the tribes might become alarmed, fear annexation, and again combine against us. This was certainly a weak assertion. The force now collected was in an open valley, well able to meet all possible

opposition, supplies could have been collected and brought up in a week, in fact there were thousands of maunds lying at Nawakilla, and we could have well afforded to have permitted the tribes to draw their own conclusions without troubling ourselves as to the result. Probably a very little persuasion, plus that frontier diplomacy called Secret Service money, would have induced the Akhund himself to come into camp and have a quiet time there. But the fact is the troops were wearied and so was India at large of this struggle on a hillside which had cost us 900 men in killed and wounded of whom 40 were British officers. The new Viceroy had come to end not to prolong hostilities. Too much blood and treasure had already been spent in the attempt to drive a few hundred fanatics, of whom half had fallen in action, from their refuge in the mountains. The hills ahead were cold and bleak ; the Christmas rains already overdue might begin any day, when sometimes for a whole week and more a cold searching drizzle falls unceasingly, wetting everything in tents, and finding out the weak points in every constitution soon fills the hospitals. To give up the game for these reasons would, perhaps, have been a wise policy, to do so for fear of a fresh combination of the tribes was either a weak one or intended to blind the public. If the winter rains had come on, the clansmen would have been in far more need of shelter than the troops occupying a valley studded with villages, and they must long ere this have eaten all their

surplus rations. If it had been decided that further operations were not desirable, not worth the trouble and expense, and the force after a decent halt at Ambela had marched away quietly and deliberately no one could have found much fault with the arrangement.

The course actually adopted, simply, so far as one can judge, for sentimental or theatrical reasons, was about the least sensible that could have been followed. It was cheap but fearfully risky. This was to insist on the burning of the Hindustani dwellings at Malka, the then stronghold of the Mujai-i-din, not by marching a sufficient force there, but by the hands of the Bonerwal, and to ensure this being done thoroughly one regiment—the Guide Corps—was to accompany the Bonerwal, thereby being placed at the mercy of their late enemy.

Had there been really the slightest fear that the tribes would reunite here was the very incentive to do so. A body of 800 men with several British Officers placed absolutely as hostages in their hands, or if not as hostages, then as victims to be sacrificed to the manes of the slaughtered clansmen. With this Corps was the ex-Commissioner Colonel Taylor, and among others Major (now Lord) Roberts.

As if to give the late enemy every chance of destroying this force, scarcely had it started on its perilous mission than the main body began its retirement, and several regiments actually marched away.

The Guides and Bonerwal went northward down the Chamla Valley, then turned south-eastward and com-

menced the torturous ascent of a deep ravine leading to Malka. Several bodies of Pathans with banners flying a sure sign of defiance, marched along the hill top, parallel to the troops. These turned out to be late arrivals from the far north, marching to join the confederacy, and eager to flesh their swords in the bodies of the infidels. The Amazais too were sullen and looked on with no pleasure on this march of a small detachment into their country. At one time so threatening was the outlook that a halt was called. At this time a single shot must have been followed by a complete massacre; and as a consequence the return of the whole army. What then as to the supply of rations and the Christmas rains? The chief offenders would have marched away to their distant glens, carrying the arms and possibly the heads of many *kafirs* to adorn their musjids, while the rest of the troops must have returned to hard fighting and worse troubles.

Fortunately the Bonerwals remained staunch, especially their one armed chief old Zaidullah Khan. The Amazai dreaded the opening of an eternal blood feud with the more powerful Bonerwal and the cloud blew over.

Except when 200 of the same Corps were sent with Cavagnari to Kabul, never were troops placed, more gratuitously and stupidly, helpless in the power of their enemies. The force bivouacked at Malka and that place was destroyed. The Guides then hastened back and before Christmas the entire army was back at Nawakilla.

When our troops were in Afghanistan in 1879-80 the courageous sword in hand charges of the Bonerwal were still in men's minds. After our force returned from Kabul it was a common sight to see monkeys trained to show how the British army went to Kabul and how it returned.

In the former the animal raised his head and tail and shouldered a stick with much zeal. The latter was depicted with downcast head and tail and stick trailing along the ground. Perhaps the monkeys knew that trick in 1863. Diplomatic reasons may read well in despatches; the peasantry not being able to read draw their own conclusions. *Retirement is the result of defeat* of some kind, a sure sign of weakness.

Times have changed since then, hill warfare is better understood; Martinis and screw guns have done much to render sword in hand charges things of the past.

Tribal combinations are still, however, possible, and if owing to our own carelessness these tribes are again arrayed against us, the *talwar* and matchlock may have been replaced by the Berdan rifle and the clansmen's slender resources replenished with Russian roubles.

NOTE.—The above was written in 1893; in 1897 the tribes have again been arrayed against us and the occupation of Chitral, &c., has kept away Russian roubles. But Afghan rupees and Martini and Snider rifles have done us more harm than *talwars* ever did, and these of all are English make.







## CHAPTER VI.

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### THE KHAIBAR PASS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD, 1878—80.

When the writer on Indian Frontier affairs looks at the elaborate maps of Afghanistan now available, although far from complete, when the newspapers announce, in quite ordinary terms, that a British Officer and staff have been escorted to Kabul by a troop or so of the Amir's Cavalry, that English Engineers and English workmen are employed regularly in the workshops of the city, that English Doctors, Dentists, and last, but not least, an English lady have been invited to attend the Amir or his household, it is hard to realise the dark cloud of ignorance of the country and the people, the impenetrable *purdah* that hung between the British border and all beyond on the day the Chamberlain Mission was turned back from Ali Musjid.

To the south, towards the Bolan and Quetta, the perseverance, energy and tact of the late Sir Robert Sandeman and his assistants had to some extent raised one end of the curtain, and those interested had begun to realise the fact that the "Suliman Range," which even a year ago was supposed by Lord Chelmsford and others to be a safeguard to India, was a

misnomer ; that behind the steep rugged fringe of mountains, intersected by rocky streambeds, that fronted the Derajat, lay not an impenetrable mass of mountains but broad open valleys practicable for all arms, from the Arghandab to within a dozen miles of the plains of the Indus.

But farther north all was still dark, and no one, however desirous of doing so even at his own personal risk, was permitted to penetrate the veil for fear of " complications." The destruction in 1839 of a Brigade composed of about 500 British soldiers, and some battalions of Hindustani sepoy, disorganised by cold, hunger, and the incapacity of their leaders, was coupled in the public imagination not with the dark defile of the Khurd Kabul, but with the Khaibar pass. The almost unopposed advance and return of Pollock's " avenging " army had faded into nothingness in the memories that hung round the preceding tragedy. The Afridis, who as a body had been rather for than against us, whose levies had done good work on our side, and had stood loyally by their British officers to the last, were clubbed up with the Gilzais and others, who had destroyed the Kabul Brigade, and were looked on by all but those who knew them intimately, as a great, freedom-loving, terribly treacherous and bloodthirsty nation, ever ready to rush down in their thousands, sword in hand, on any army daring to molest them among the bloodstained rocks of the deadly " pass " that ran from the British border towards

Kabul, through their lands. With them there could be but one safe policy—“Let them severely alone.”

From 1837 to 1841 British troops had passed up and down the road, yet scarcely a route survey was available. Ali Musjid Fort was described in the *Gazetteer* as a small mud fort on the top of a hill, too high above the pass to interfere with the march of an army below, but which it would be necessary to take to prevent its being occupied by marauders intending to harass the baggage. Of the surrounding country there were only maps, made from distant views or native information, useless for all strategical purpose so far as details were concerned. The published Survey Department map showed the Kabul River running in a straight line from Michni to Dakka, and though the fact that between these two places it made a semi-circular bend, with a 10-mile radius, had been brought to notice in 1869, by Colonel H. C. Johnstone, who had visited the peaks above Michni to assure himself of its course—and whom I accompanied with a plane table,—the then Chiefs of the Survey Department evidently thought it of little consequence when no one cared whether Kabul was 30 miles away or 3,000.

But the rapid advance of Russia, the constant warnings of that self-devoted sentinel of the border Sir Charles Macgregor, and finally the arrival of the Russian Mission at Kabul, at length compelled the abandonment of our “masterly inactivity” for a forward policy.

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Among the few who had early seen that that day must come stood out prominently at this time Major Cavagnari, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawur, whose actions and policy during the years just preceding had done much to show that against our improved weapons, improved Punjabi Battalions, and improved knowledge of hill warfare, the long dreaded Afridis and other border tribes were unable to cope in battle even on their own hillsides. The isolation of the Jowaki section of Afridis, and its complete humiliation with little loss of life on our side, or for that matter on their own, had brushed aside once for all the incorruptible and invincible theories.

The Amir for the first time since the annexation of the Punjab, had occupied Ali Musjid Fort with regular troops, and mounted on its old walls, and on the surrounding heights, several pieces of artillery.

This garrison of itself could never have contemplated an advance on Peshawur, or even have attempted to invade British territory. But its presence undisturbed at our doors, in the midst of the restless borderers, would have been taken at once as a proof of weakness and fear on our part, and would have encouraged every man that carried a sword, and that means every man between the ages of 16 and 60. to expect an early invasion of India, and set loose every discordant element from Bunnoo to the Black Mountain.

Not even a peace at any price Government could have tolerated such a state of affairs : the one then in

power was certainly not one to tamely submit to insults and war was declared.

As usual it found us quite unprepared. The Railway had at that time only been carried as far as Jhelum, the section between Jhelum and Lahore differing in gauge from the other lines. From the terminus to Peshawur ran the fine Grand Trunk Road, 140 miles, along which baggage, stores, ammunition, &c., could only be conveyed by bullock wagons or beasts of burden. No special arrangements for transport had been made, such Transport Department as there was was merely a branch, a despised one, of the Commissariat Department. For the three columns advancing towards the Khaibar, Kuram and Kandahar at least 100,000 camels, and perhaps the same number of mules, ponies and bullocks, would be required. For years there had been no great war. The transport animals required for "petty" frontier expeditions had been procurable in quite sufficient numbers to meet requirements for two or three months, in the districts of the Upper Punjab; and though the camel and mule drivers when first seized growled, of course they knew that their animals would never go more than two or three days journey from the frontier, they would be harassed a bit at first, but when things settled down they would be fed at Government expense, and well paid for, and though some would die, the greater number would return to their homes before the hot weather set in, when camels are allowed to remain idle, are dosed, and

shaved, and otherwise nursed to enable them to recover from past fatigues and prepare for the coming colder working season. The mules would return to their mountain homes, and those that were sick or sorry would soon renovate among the grassy slopes of Hazara and elsewhere. The drivers would carry home money enough to pay past debts or increase their stock. So the *zabardasti* that had compelled them to work for the *Sirkar* was not an unmixed evil, and every one was satisfied. But an advance on Kabul was quite a different matter, and no one would voluntarily place his services at the disposal of the *Sirkar* for such a purpose. Still, if it must be so it must; the Governments of the past had always sent out and forcibly compelled all animals found to proceed to army centres, it was the *dustoor* and perfectly well understood. But this war was to be a gentle one. We were only going to fight the Amir and his regular army, not the tribes. We were not going to let the peaceful inhabitants suffer either within or without our border. The pudding was to be made without breaking eggs. Among other things all transport animals were to be supplied voluntarily by their owners, there must be no compulsion; and to ensure a good supply the rate of wages was to be Rs. 15 per month per animal, instead of Rs. 8 or Rs. 9, the usual fare at that time. For this liberal rate owners and drivers of animals carrying on a peaceable trade near their own homes, where food for man and beast was

cheap and abundant, were to voluntarily offer their services to accompany the troops into distant, unknown, much-dreaded regions, where snow and ice and rocks alone were supposed to be, and often were, alone procurable for several months of the year. There was to be no compulsion, but so many thousand camels, mules, bullocks, &c., *must* be ready for the troops at Rawalpindi, Peshawur, and other centres by a certain date ; a week or so from the date of the order !

The District Officers got their orders and passed them on, and on the specified dates the troops were all on the march. In one District at least there was no "compulsion," at least not by the District Officer. The collecting of the animals was made over to a rich native banker, who was to be the Government contractor ; he must guarantee to have the animals, with a driver for each three, by the specified date. He would receive Rs. 15 a month for each animal, and would pay the owners of drivers of the animals and provide fodder on the march ; and as some help was needed on such an emergency he could get the rural police and Tahsil peons and village chowkidars to assist him. This these did effectually ; it was not astonishing to see how willingly the camel drivers left the loads they were carrying at the time, wood, grass, grain, cloth, anything lying on the roadsides to rot, and hurried off to the contractor's quarters. At least the animals hurried in, but in most cases the drivers did not, and coolies from the bazaars usually led

the animals to the regimental headquarters to which they were told off in batches. For the present the purpose was served anyhow, and the last days of November saw the armies of invasion awaiting the signal to advance. We will look at the camels and their drivers again, perhaps, later on.

The day fixed for the advance was the 21st November 1879, one month being allowed the Amir to reply to the ultimatum from Simla. Meantime the Guide Corps and 1st Sikhs of the Punjab Frontier Force were moved forward and encamped at Jamrud, an old Fort a few miles from the entrance to the Khaibar, about 16 miles from Peshawur, which had been untenanted since the annexation, but had before that been occupied by the Sikhs. Here many a fierce fight had raged between Afghan, Pathan and Khalsa, and here was killed Hari Singh, one of the bravest and most ruthless of Ranjit Singh's Sirdars. Cavagnari spent much of his time in the camp, awaiting the development of events, and opening negotiations with the Afridi and Mohmand Chiefs whose lands flanked the intended line of march. The question was whether when we advanced we should have only the Amir's regular troops to fight, or whether these would be supported by the whole strength of the tribes on either side. A question that may come up again soon—emphasised.

With the Afridis the difficulty seems to have been easily arranged. The Jirgah argued that once our troops entered the pass all trade would cease. The



dues paid by Kafilahs using the pass were their chief source of income, without these they must either starve or steal, and they preferred the latter. God had given the Afridi nothing but rocks, but thank God they were rocks, and every army passing through hitherto had paid its way. We had paid them for the use of the pass in the former wars ; if we agreed to do the same now we were at the liberty to use it. As for the Amir he had sent his troops down, and forcibly occupied Ali Musjid. They did not like quarrelling with the Amir, and the soldiers were their co-religionists and countrymen, but if we turned them out the Afridi would be well pleased. With the Mohmands it was different. Unlike other tribes the Mohmands recognised the rule of certain individual Chiefs, and most of these recognised the suzerainty of the Amir.

The principal Chief was the Khan of Lalpurah near Dakka. Most of the largest villages of the Mohmands lie in the valley of the Kabul River below Jellalabad, and are open to attack by the Amir's troops at all times. The present Chief, Mahomed Shah Khan, had been placed in power by the direct action of the Amir himself who had been displeased with the hereditary Chief, Naoroz Khan, whose daughter he had married (the mother of Yakub Khan), and had driven him into exile. The sons of Naoroz were in our camp, treated with marked respect, which said plainly to Mahomed Shah Khan that he would again have to make room for them when we advanced, unless he came to terms before that

But our relations with the Mohmand Chiefs in the past had not been of a kind to encourage Mahomed Shah Khan to cast in his lot with us before he was compelled to.

During the previous wars a rival of the then Chief of Lalpurah had joined our army at Jhelum, had been placed on the *Gaddi* when we advanced, and had to fly into British territory as soon as we retired again. It has been a too common fate of all those who have helped us in our wars to be left to the tender mercies of our enemies when we have turned our backs. Mahomed Shah Khan saw nothing yet to convince him that we intended to do more than bluster. I was credibly informed that the Amir himself never expected us to advance in earnest, till it was too late.

So for the present the Mohmands joined the Afghans and a contingent encamped on the Rotas heights, from which they could observe every movement on the plains below, and prevent any surprise on the Afghan left flank.

From Jamrud itself nothing could be seen of the hills beyond the front faces of the outer fringe. Straight ahead, across some 5 or 6 miles of open undulating country, is a dark looking entrance, the Shadi Bagiar, where a dry water course enters the plain at the point where Mackeson's direct road to Ali Musjid enters the hills. To the right rise in precipitous crags one above another the mountain mass, culminating in the Rotas heights, 5,600 feet above sea and 3,000 above the Pass.

From this steep southern end the crest and slopes of the mountain run northwards in a compact block till they join at Sapparai plateau the spurs thrown eastward from the prominent peak, so marked a feature of the landscape as seen from Peshawur, known as Tatara, or Laka Sar, rising to 6,600 feet above sea. Further north the slopes fall in long spurs to the Kabul river, and are occupied by Mohmands and a small tribe known as Mullaguris. Washing the eastern base of Rotasis a stream that rises at Panaipal above Sapparai, and after a steep descent eastward turns southward and enters the Shadi Bagiar watercourse about 2 miles to the north of Jamrud. Up this stream 7 miles from Jamrud, is the little Afridi village of Lashora. To the south-west of Jamrud stands another sharp peak—Sarkai—rising to 3,400 feet from which fall to north and south narrow ridged serrated rocky spurs, the northern ending in the Shadi Bagiar, the southern ending on the banks of the Khaibar stream, which runs here between steep banks, honeycombed with cave dwellings, enters the plains, and turning north-eastwards flows past Jamrud. Farther south rise the hills that close in the valleys of the Afridis—and continuing southward divide the Peshawur from the Kohat valley.

How longingly we gazed at those hills, hiding all beyond, and tried here and there to get a glimpse through the openings. But every move that looked threatening, and might hasten hostilities, was strictly

forbidden, and for a fortnight I had to content myself with making preparations for the future.

From Trigonometrical and Revenue Survey stations in and round Peshawur the positions of Tatara and several other prominent peaks beyond the border had been fixed in previous years. These I supplemented by fresh observations from the Gorkatri and other places well out on the plain, and soon had a sufficiency of points plotted on my plane table to allow of mapping the country beyond without having recourse to troublesome prismatic compasses and perambulators when once we had started.

As time wore on, on the plains towards Peshawur began to rise a vast white city of tents, and the dust and smoke of moving troops lay thick and heavy in the air.

Then short reconnaissances were started, not only to see what lay round us, but to accustom the pickets on the Rotas' heights to seeing small parties moving about without anything serious resulting. At length one morning before dawn, Cavagnari, Jenkins and some others found ourselves on the crest of the northern spur falling from Sarkai, whence the entire valley wherein lay Ali Musjid could be seen—a dense mass of hillocks and ravines covered with thorny jungle and hemmed in by steep ranges. About 10 miles to the west was a dark gorge, with the precipitous cliffs of Rotas frowning down on it from one side, and the equally craggy steps of Aspaghar rising to 6,000 feet on the other. At the foot of this gorge lay the road to

Kabul in the bed of the Khaibar darrah, which flowing under the Fort and eastwards for two or three miles turns south, and winds between steep banks of clay under the acacia covered hillocks for another 8 or 10 miles, then again flowing eastward receives the waters of the Bazar Valley, and at length finds an exit from the hills. From our feet the hillside fell abruptly to a small plateau known as Shahgai, across which, at this early hour, could be barely discerned the Mackeson road leading to the fort—passing a little round tower called Kotagwet, and a small enclosure known as Abdul Rahman's boorj. The farther edge of the plateau was ended by the steep cliff falling down to the stream bed. The guides pointed in the direction of the gorge for the fort, but even Jenkins' sharp eyes could discern nothing, till suddenly the sunbeams penetrated the gloom, when the glint of the guns and the white tents discovered to us the enemy's position, and the walls of the fort perched on a conical hill about 500 feet above the bed of the Khaibar, with hillocks of almost equal size in front, covering the fort, and capped with stone breastworks and thorny abattis. So far no sign of any outlying pickets or patrols had been seen, but about 8 o'clock a small body of cavalry in scarlet coats rode leisurely up the Mackeson road to Kotagwet and dismounted. It was evident that the enemy expected no attack yet, or at any rate no night attack. Lest their sharp eyes should see us on the sky line we got down and returned to Jamrud.

At length the month had passed. All was bustle and stir. From far and near troops were pouring in—some fresh from healthy hill stations, others weakened by fever and heat in the plains, but all keen to get on. Indeed one of the most sickly battalions—the 4th R. B.—was credited with having volunteered to attack Ali Musjid single handed, which caused some little bitterness among the others, as expressed in a remark to a comrade by a man of the 17th with regard to the latter regiment relieving the former of some guards. “Them’s the beggars Bill that wants to take Ali Musjid and they can’t take their own hospital guard!”

Orders were issued on the 20th November at Jamrud. Tytler’s Brigade, consisting of the 17th British, the Guides, and 1st Sikhs, were to fall in at 5 P. M. and march northwards to Lashora, stop there and have a rest till dawn, then continue up the stream to its source at Panaipal, next descend a stream falling down the other face of Rotas, to Kata Kushtia in the Khaibar, about 3 miles above Ali Musjid, on the enemy’s best line of retreat, and the only one along which artillery or heavy baggage could be taken. Each man to carry one day’s cooked and three days’ raw rations. No tents, bedding or furniture of any kind. Macpherson’s Brigade, consisting of the 4th Battalion. Rifle Brigade, 4th Gurkhas, 20th Punjab Infantry, and a Mountain Battery. to form up as soon as Tytler had started, and follow him. From Lashora to send a detachment up the Rotas’ slopes,

but the main body to continue the march to Panaipal, then to turn southward following the crest of Rotas, thereby covering Tytler's advance below, till the heights above Ali Musjid were reached, when, of course, that position would have been no longer tenable, as the Brigade would have been 3,000 feet above, and within rifle range. Rations and great coats only to be taken. The third and fourth Brigades, under Appleyard and Brown, were to advance up the Mackeson road, then develop a front attack as soon as the flanking brigades had had time to approach their destined position.

Whether it was that the officers of Tytler's brigade knew earlier than the others what was coming, or having been longer on the ground were better prepared, that brigade formed up and started at the given hour. Reaching Lashora by 11 P.M., the men and animals were able to have substantial rest before morning, and started fresh at dawn for their heavy climb. The line of march lay along the base of Rotas, then up steep slopes and had the Mohmands held their former position in strength and determinedly opposed the movement it might have been long delayed or frustrated. But Mahomed Shah Khan, whether by some arrangement with Cavagnari, or seeing that any attempt to oppose the large force whose tents covered all the plain below, would be hopeless, had suddenly withdrawn his contingent from the heights, thus throwing open the entire left flank of the Afghan position, and not a shot or sound disturbed the bivouac at Lashora.

General Macpherson and staff arrived at Jamrud in the afternoon of the 20th, and orders were immediately given for the issue of rations to his brigade, but at 6 P.M. when it should have been preparing to start, an aide-de-camp reported that the rations had not yet been distributed, and small wonder. Strolling round the camp one saw the commissariat stalls just in course of erection, the scales being hurriedly adjusted, bags of flour, loaves of bread, and masses of beef lying in heaps around, and in the centre of each group, fat gomashtas, screaming, gesticulating, perspiring at every pore, and pathetically inquiring "What can do?" Seven, eight, nine o'clock passed before the aide-de-camp could report that rations had now been distributed, but another hour was required for cooking. The men were already tired with their march in the heat and dust into camp.

The General, hearing that I had been over the ground, now asked how long I thought it would take the column to cover the ground to Lashora. Seven hours, in my opinion, on a dark night, over low stony hillocks, and up the bed of a stream at times knee deep in water with a long string of baggage animals. The march from Lashora to the Rotas' heights again would, I concluded, take the column, hampered with baggage, another 12 hours, and Macpherson was supposed to be able to open fire from the crest about 2 P.M. next day! After interviewing Sir Sam Browne, and finding that the attack must be delivered next day, Macpherson



decided to try and let his men sleep now and march later on. But who could sleep under such circumstances? At 1 A.M. the men were ordered to fall in, and the brigade started shortly after. To add to other difficulties, a large portion of his supplies were loaded on bullocks! Slow on the best of roads, but up wet streams, steep hillsides, and grass-covered knolls half a mile an hour would have been quick going for these animals. About 6 A.M. Macpherson reached Lashora just as Tytler's men, refreshed by 6 hours' sleep, were marching on. I was told to accompany this brigade. Not knowing that we were about to start I had been out surveying all the morning, was with Macpherson's brigade all night, and started off with Tytler's from Lashora, sketching the route as we went along. So I had a rough two days of it. The route followed the bed of the stream for some miles northward, but the stream then became a rocky succession of waterfalls, and the path turned up the hill slopes and winding over a succession of low spurs, ascended by a rather stiff gradient to the Sapparai plateau, at times over a surface of loose shale, and scarcely two feet in width with a steep fall below. The troops went forward in single file, the Guides leading—ahead of all Colonel Jenkins' lithe and active figure, closely scrutinising every rock and bush, and scanning the opposite slope for any lurking enemy. Here, had the Mohmands remained firm they might have caused much delay, and perhaps heavy loss. But not a man appeared, and by

10 o'clock the brigade had reformed in the open space at Sapparai and pushed on more rapidly to Panaipal. Here a halt was called to wait till Macpherson appeared. And meantime Jenkins with his regiment moved southward along the crest to see if Rotas was still occupied. After proceeding some distance we could see a few men, rushing down the western slopes as fast as they could run. They had evidently discovered our movements, and evidently did not mean fighting there. So Jenkins hurriedly returned, and lest the enemy should escape, advised an immediate descent to the Khaibar.

To this Tytler agreed in so far as the Guides and Sikhs were concerned, but decided to hold Panaipal, the key to the whole position, with the 17th till Macpherson arrived. Just then the quick ears of the Colonel heard something, and, lying flat on the ground, he announced that he distinctly heard artillery, and before long all knew that the front attack had commenced. This quickened Jenkins' movements, and before many minutes we were scrambling, sliding, rolling down the rocks that formed the bed of the stream we were to descend—the slopes of Rotas on one side, and Tatara on the other, rising in successions of rocky crags hundreds of feet overhead, from which a dozen resolute men hurling rocks might have smashed most of us in half an hour. However there was no obstruction and about 5 P.M. we reached a low ridge of rocks within a couple of hundred yards of the Khaibar,

and here Jenkins decided to take up his position as it commanded the pass for several hundred yards.

The sun was already sinking, it would soon be dark, and from Ali Musjid now came the reverberating echoes of musketry rolling unceasingly, with an occasional boom, boom, of the cannon, now far, now near, telling us that Ali Musjid had not yet fallen—might not be taken to-night at all; then how about our small body of 600 men, cut off from all retreat and communication, and watched by groups of Afridis from the hills to the south, and of Mohmands from the hills to the north, all watching the game at Ali Musjid, ready at a moment's notice to join the victorious side? However it was no time for such speculations, and all eyes were watching the first turning visible on this side of the gorge that lay between us and the fighting, to catch the first glimpse of a retiring enemy.

We had scarcely settled down, when from the gloom emerged a body of red-coated cavalry, headed by an officer busily examining the hillsides with his binoculars. He soon discovered us, and hesitated, a Pathan was ordered to hail him and open a parley with the object of persuading the troop to surrender instead of running the gauntlet in face of 600 rifles. But the troop gradually continued to advance, and on coming within range suddenly took open order and setting spurs to their horses dashed past at full gallop. The rifles opened on them all along the line but scarcely six saddles had been emptied when the dust and smoke clearing showed the

rest of the troop disappearing round a corner higher up the pass. A second troop followed shortly after with somewhat similar results. Darkness was now setting in, the firing at Ali Musjid ceased, but there was nothing to indicate what the result of the fighting had been. Hammond of the Guides now proposed to occupy the Katakushtia hamlet in the pass so as to effectually prevent any body of men passing unseen during the night. But this Colonel Jenkins would not allow. It was evident that Ali Musjid had not been taken, and if the Afghan troops decided on retiring at night up the Khaibar they might be in sufficient numbers with at least some artillery, to overwhelm the company before any assistance could be given by the main body on the heights above, nor could these assist by opening fire on the pass in the night with nothing to distinguish friend from foe. The Colonel concluded that his position was such that no large body of men could pass by without being heard. So we remained where we were.

There was a small dirty tank of water close by Katakushtia and many of us would have given much to have slaked our thirst there. The last water we had come across was near Panaipal about 3 P.M., and the little obtained there had been used up. Personally I had had no rest for two days, and having nothing to do at night, fighting not being in my line, I got behind a rock and slept soundly till morning.

Before doing so I was able to congratulate myself on my habit of carrying a few medicines about with me

always—chiefly for the use of my khalasis and any sick I came across in the villages when out at work. One of the British officers was taken seriously ill here and my bottle of chlorodyne came useful. The officer promised to return it or send another bottle later on. This he did when sending out some stores for the following Christmas dinner, a month after, to the 1st Sikh mess. Among other niceties he sent a plum pudding, and all were looking out for it anxiously—after a month of Commissariat rations—when the Mess President announced that my bottle of chlorodyne had burst, and the medicine had all sunk into the pudding. However, on being put to the vote whether the pudding should be thrown away or eaten as it was, the latter proposition was carried by a large majority—and no harm resulted.

Night passed in the Khaibar without disturbance ; it was said that small bodies of men had been heard passing occasionally, but certainly not an army ; so we concluded that the enemy were still holding out, and fighting would be renewed. Then came the distant boom, boom, of guns—but no response—and shortly after the head of a column of Infantry was seen emerging from the Ali Musjid side, and marching in regular order, preceded by an officer on horseback, towards Katakushtia. Surely the Colonel's perseverance and vigilance were now to be rewarded. On came the column—not a very long one, some 300 men in all till suddenly they discovered our position and halted. Then

they turned and appeared to be intending to ascend the opposite slope, or rather steep—and to fight their way past. The Colonel had them hailed, but without effect. Shortly after the Cavalry had passed us the previous evening I was carrying a note from Colonel Jenkins to Major Ross of the Sikhs, whose regiment lay on the further side of a pathway from below when I met, on this path, a dismounted scarlet-coated trooper, holding one hand, bleeding slightly, well up in the air. Asked who he was he replied that he had served in a British Native Cavalry corps for some years, had “cut his name” and gone home, when he was promptly pressed into the Amir’s service. “Now,” said he, “my horse is killed and I am wounded, and I am in your service again—Kismet!” I directed him to the Colonel, and he remained under surveillance during the night. He now offered his services to open a parley with the retiring infantry. He was allowed to go and shortly after returned with the Afghan Major—who after the usual greetings replied, when told he must surrender, that his men would rather die fighting than be murdered in cold blood. On being assured that the lives of prisoners of war were held sacred, he smiled, well pleased and rode off. The regiment then came marching up and were ordered to “halt, front, rear rank take open order, General salaam! ground arms” all in English. After putting down rifle and accoutrements they began to strip off uniforms, &c., and on being told to keep these on as well as their havresacks containing

rations, and to go down stream a bit and cook their breakfast, all looked mightily pleased, and went off laughing and chatting merrily. General Tytler with the 17th arrived shortly after, and soon an interchange of biscuits and Indian corn cakes began between friend and foe. The Tommies asked if these sickly looking little chaps had really meant fighting? The battalion was composed chiefly of Hazaras and Kabulis, Shiah by faith, with whom and the Afridis there could have been little sympathy. They were armed with Enfield rifles and bayonets, and carried 40 rounds of ammunition per man, with 3 days' ration of flour in their havresacks. Each carried a flannel covered tin canister on one side, curved to suit the figure, and large enough to carry a quart of water. Their uniform coats were padded with cotton wool, and were blue on one side and khaki on the other, made to wear either side out, the dark at night and the khaki during the day; khaki breeches, with bandages round the legs and thick solid leather shoes with the red Kulah and dirty turban for head dress. All looked more or less ill, and subsequently were marched into Peshawur and sent to hospital. When able to travel they received a couple of rupees and a blanket each, and were started off home through the Mohmand country. At the end of the first day's march they were relieved of the money and blankets and sent back, and the greater number then worked as coolies at 8 annas a day on the new Khaibar road. This was the origin of the story that appeared

in the Russian papers stating that the garrison had been bribed not to fight.

The Major informed us that his regiment had been ordered to hold the outer pickets towards the British position when the previous day's fighting had ceased.

This they did during the night; at daybreak, finding that the fort was deserted, they had formed and marched up the Khaibar, concluding that the entire garrison had gone this way ahead of them. So the bird had flown, but where to and how?

The troops forming the two brigades destined for the front attack on the Afghan position marched from Jamrud on the morning of 21st November, proceeding leisurely up the Mackeson road to give the two flanking brigades time to reach their destination before delivering the attack. The advance into the pass and on to the Shahgai heights was unopposed, not till our 9-pounder Battery had descended into the Khaibar stream did the enemy show his hand, then his 24-pounders opened with effect, and the first shot carrying off a driver's head, induced a sergeant to express an opinion that the man was dead! To which the Irish Captain in command replied sharply that "they would all be dead if they didn't get into action damned sharp," which was accordingly done, but with little effect on the strong position of the enemy till the 40-pounders brought up by elephants opened from Shahgai about 2 P.M.

General Appleyard's Brigade moved round to the hills on the left of the stream opposite the enemy's



right front, while Colonel Browne's Brigade advanced along the rugged rocks at the base of the Rotas mountain towards the enemy's left.

The latter was brought to a halt by a deep ravine, beyond which the enemy's infantry were posted in excellent cover, and supported by mountain guns, posted on rocky ledges on both sides of the stream at various points of vantage.

Appleyard gradually working southward, and awaiting the development of the flank attack from Rotas, sent on a company of the 14th Sikhs under MacLean, supported by two companies of the 27th P. I. under Major Birch and Lieutenant Fitzgerald to feel for the enemy, MacLean, pushing through the heavy, acacia jungle, suddenly found himself under the central picket of several that crowned the curved crest of a low range lying about a mile to the east of Ali Musjid Fort, and completely covering the enemy's position there. A line of stone breastworks faced with several feet of heavy thorny bushes, capped the crest occupied by a strong body of infantry well provided, as appeared afterwards, with spare ammunition. Finding himself under a heavy fire from front and flanks MacLean decided that the safest course was to attack, and attempted to storm the position. He was shot down, severely wounded. Birch and Fitzgerald advancing in turn were killed; the advance was checked, no supports or orders came from below. The Sepoys taking cover as well as they could, held on, returning the fire of the enemy, unable

to advance, unwilling to retire. The days are short in November and as darkness closed in about 5-30 P.M. the flashes of musketry were still responding to each other on the hill slopes, while the rest of the Brigade remained quietly below.

Perhaps Appleyard was obeying instructions in not pushing the attack, but had he done so in strength, after weakening the enemy by a few shells from his mountain guns, there is little doubt there was not nearly a sufficient body of the enemy holding those heights to have successfully opposed the advance of a British regiment. Or had Appleyard moved further south, then turning, directed his attack on the picket at the outer angle of the defences, he could have carried it with a rush, and from these enfilading the entire line of pickets, the camp, and the fort, and at the same time commanding their only line of retreat, now that the guides were in the Khaibar, could have compelled the entire garrison to surrender and perhaps Sir Sam Browne would then have held his right place among our only Generals. As it was the enemy still held his position when fighting ceased. The bulk of the troops who formed the front attack bivouacked on Shahgai and round it. Tytler's Brigade, stationed as we have seen, and Macpherson's after getting their bullocks and mules up the hill with much trouble and difficulty, halted for the night at Sapparai, several weary miles from the scene of action. That the Afghan troops, small in numbers, weakened by fever, sickness and

exile, cut off from all hope of reinforcements, deserted by their only allies, British troops behind them on one line of retreat, a tribe of reckless marauders, no respecters of persons waiting to plunder them on the other, fought at all is highly creditable to them, and they cannot be blamed if under the circumstances they decided they had done enough, and leaving tents, baggage and guns behind, marched quietly away during the night. At early dawn Sir Sam Browne determined to renew the attack, but there was no reply to his Artillery, and when Colonel Lovett, R. E., pushing on entered the Fort, the enemy had disappeared.

Doubtless small parties did escape up the Khaibar despite Colonel Jenkins' vigilance, but the greater number appear to have marched away, *via* Alachi and Karamna, into the Bazar Valley to the south-west, thence, after the Afridis had relieved most of them of their rifles, they pushed on to Jellalabad, and, presumably, to their homes.

Communication was opened between the different Brigades during the 22nd, but not till the 23rd did the last of Macpherson's bullocks and rear guard reach the Khaibar, after a troublesome descent down the rugged ravine well styled the Tortang or black defile.

Tytler's Brigade bivouacked in the Khaibar on the night of the 22nd, and lying snugly behind a rock I overheard the following exhortation from a Sikh to an Afridi sentry of the Guides. "Ah! brother, it is all *ikbal*, what is the use of trying to oppose the *Sirkari*

*ikbal*. See these Sahibs have come from beyond the sea—Ah! many have fought them. The Mussulman Kings—and where are they?—Phoo! and he blew across his hand—gone. Then the Mahrattas, and Phoo! they went. Then we Sikhs fought them, fought well too, but Phoo! *Ikkal* was too great. This Amir thought he could fight, where are his troops?—Phoo, gone. You Afridis think you can fight, just try it, and you too will go—Phoo,”—Ah! The Afridi grunted an Ugh! and was silent. Perhaps he did try it later on.

The Brigade pushed on to Lundi Kotal and thence Sir Sam with the Guides cavalry pushed on to Dakka to prevent its being plundered and burnt. I was ordered to go back and survey the country round Ali Musjid. A strange sight it presented, the guns lying here and there, small tents dotted all about, baggage and clothing strewn around, books, some fine specimens of the *Shahnamah* among them, newspapers, pamphlets on trajectory—all in Persian, lying wherever there had been pickets (a dreary time they must have had of it during those hot months, waiting for they knew not what) and everywhere dirt and uncleanness. Why the garrison did not all die of cholera it is hard to say; strange that in this month of November, when the dread scourge is often very busy in the Peshawur valley, there was no outbreak among all that mass of men.

The lower walls of the Fort were very ancient like all the Buddhistic ruins in these parts built of large square stones with pieces of grit fitted neatly in all the

spaces. Probably some grand Pagoda with glittering spire once stood here, gay with happy gentle worshippers. Certainly below it the remains of an ancient Vihara were subsequently laid bare, and images of Guatama discovered. One chamber was decorated all round with alternate rows of heads of tigers and busts of Guatama's worshippers in plaster.

Whether to allow of General Roberts' column forging ahead in the Kuram or because it was considered unwise to push on towards Kabul during the winter months, or that hopes were entertained that Sher Ali would now accept our mission and there would be no need to go farther—or that transport was not available for the Second Division forming under General Maude near Rawalpindi, which would be needed to hold the Khaibar when Sir Sam advanced—or for all these reasons combined, a month passed before any advance was made beyond Dakka.

So ended the first chapter of the new war, on the Khaibar line. If it taught one lesson more than another, it was the necessity for good maps. We have these now of large portions of Afghanistan, on various scales, but of that portion where the opposing armies must meet if ever they do, when Russia advances—that is all westward and northward of the line, Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul and Balkh—the only maps available are on the scale of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch to a mile, very good no doubt for geographical purposes, and to arrange for a general plan of operations, but very little use to a General attacking

some important position on which the very fortunes of the war may hang, which may occupy on the ground a space of a square mile and on the map  $\frac{1}{16}$  of a square inch. Now, that the Amir allows Englishmen of all kinds to do his work in Kabul, perhaps he would not mind allowing British officers to go along all the main routes in the country. A plane table survey on the scale of, say, 4 inches to a mile of certain strategical positions might come of incalculable use hereafter. But all survey operations are looked on with distrust and jealousy across the border, and this may not be possible. What, perhaps, could be done is that any party sent along the main routes might have with it a *practical* surveyor who could impress on his mind with a few glances all the main features and even the relative positions of the details round any important position and make a very good plan of it in his tent at night. In addition to those R. E. officers in the "senior grade" of the Survey of India who have been employed in Topographical Survey, there are many men in the "junior grade" who have been employed for years in hill surveying, men who have been with several expeditions—some like Kennedy and George who with small escorts have held their own against great masses of enemies, others like Tate and Senior, who though they have not been called on to fight personally have shown what is in them in the wild valleys and hills of Baluchistan and the snowy ranges of the Himlayas. Men who have had dealings with native races of

various tracts, and who despite their small salaries and poor prospects are ever ready to undertake the most arduous duties with zeal and energy. It has been customary of late to send native surveyors wherever men have been called for, and no doubt a few excellent men have been found amongst them, especially with Khan Bahadurs and jaghirs assured as rewards when successful. But among the men alluded to above are many who have spent years in studying the idiosyncracies and vagaries--if I may use the words in this connection--of mountain features and hill streams, and can tell at a glance whether any particular range is practicable for troops, or is broken by some deep gorge that would baffle the most carefully arranged manœuvres. It is not sufficient for this duty to be able to read a prismatic compass on horseback, and be ever ready to make a dash for a brevet or a V. C. or both. In fact the less the surveyor cares for fighting personally the more likely he will be to confine his attention to the topographical details of the ground and other matters. And in the uncovenanted members of the Survey of India the Government have at their disposal enough men to cover the whole of the future debateable land in a few seasons, without hunting for men who are much better employed with their regiments, to do duties to which they are unaccustomed, despite the training in "route surveying" and "worming" in garrison classes, and to whom Government will have to

give more substantial rewards when they have done their duty than a gold watch, or even promotion from corporal to sergeant in the Volunteers. Such were the "rewards" actually given by Government to two uncovenanted surveyors who had been attacked while on duty in Burmah.



## CHAPTER VII.

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### TRIBAL DISTURBANCES.

#### FIRST BAZAR EXPEDITION.

The fall of Ali Musjid, and advance of Sir Sam Browne's troops to Dakka, followed shortly after by General Roberts' capture of the Peiwar Kotal and occupation of the Kuram valley, left no regular forces of the Amir to oppose a farther advance. But for various reasons ahalt was called, and the Generals determined to utilisethe time, in extending our geographical knowledge of the country on either side of the line of march.

Thus far neither Afridis nor Mohmands had shown any signs of hostility, but among the former quiet did no last long. Avarice and treachery have been ascribed as the causes that started the unrest, and led to sniping at the pickets and attacks on convoys. But subsequently it appeared that the real cause was the unfair distribution of pass money to the various sections.

Khwas Khan, the wily Chief who held the first rank among the Khaibar elders, was a man of most insinuating manners. He seems to have persuaded the politicals that if the money was given to him he would see to its proper distribution.

So soon as he held the cash he gave out that he had been recognised by the British as the Badshah of the Afridis, and would only distribute pass money to those who acknowledged his suzerainty.

This caused immediate discontent, which was soon clearly demonstrated in the usual manner among Pathans. This was punished by an attack on the Afridi village of Kadam near the junction of the Khaibar and Chura streams, which again was followed by more open hostility.

Meantime in the Mohmand country all was quiet and it was decided to examine and survey the alternative routes to the Khaibar which ran through Mohmand country.

Three of these had long been in use by Kafilahs wishing to avoid the Khaibar when that was in a disturbed state.

One crossing to the north bank of the Kabul river near Goshta, between Jellalabad and Dakka, follows for about 30 miles a north-easterly course up the Silala darrah to a pass about 3,000 feet above sea, under the great Hazai mountain, where the large open valley the Bohai Dag is entered. It continues down this valley for another 30 miles or so, then by a rough ascent over the Nahakki pass enters the Gandab or dirty water valley, a circular basin in the hills about 10 miles in diameter. From this it issues by the Kharappa or rough defile into the Peshawar valley near Shabkadar.

The second route leaving Dakka follows the course of the Kabul River, over several rough rocky spurs, about 7 miles to Kam Dakka. Then ascends about 2,000 feet by a zigzag path to the pass entering the pretty Shilman valley; continues down that valley to

the Kabul river by one of two paths, the northern reaching the river at the Shinilo Gudar or ferry, the southern at the Gatta Gudar or stony ferry. Each then ascends by zigzags to the crest of the range opposite; the former to Zankhi about 2,500 feet above sea, the latter to Haidar Khan about 3,500; then they wind down the eastern slopes to Fort Michni.

At Kam Dakka the river turns northward for 4 or 5 miles, then eastward for another 10 miles or so, next southward past the two ferries till it washes the bases of the northern spurs of Tatara.

Throughout, its average width seldom exceeds 60 yards. It is hemmed in by precipitous rocks and below the Gatta Gudar twists and turns several times before it enters the Peshawur valley at Michni. During the winter months the water is not very deep and the current not too rapid for ferry boats to cross; and small rafts formed by trees tied together and even smaller ones formed of shinaz or bladders often pass down the whole length. But once the snows in the higher hills begin to melt the water deepens, and the river becomes a mighty torrent in which nothing can live.

If compelled to avoid the Khaibar in the hot weather Kafilahs used to follow another route from Shilman, which rising and falling over a succession of spurs some distance above the river on its southern bank, by rough zigzag ascents and descents each between 1,000 and 2,000 feet in height, at length descends from the little Mulagori village of Lawarimaina into the Peshawur

valley near Shahgai. This used to be the most difficult of all the routes trying severely the powers even of the hardy Afghan camels ; yet a year after a battery of horse artillery was ordered to follow this route to Dakka ! It never even reached the hills.

Since then it has been realigned and much improved, and this will probably be the line of the future railway.

Shortly after settling at Dakka Major Blair, R.E., with an escort of the Guides Cavalry, rode *viâ* Kam Dakka and Shilman to the Gatta Gudar ; every Mohmand we met was friendly, and we slept the night in Shilman after a dinner of *pillau*, stew and fruit, provided by the Khan. It was here I first met Kamran Khan, and struck up a friendship which lasted throughout the occupation, and once saved him from being shot.

Shortly after I started from Lundi Kotal accompanied by a half company of that fine regiment the 27th P. I.

First I went to the top of the peculiar block of hills called Torsappar about ten miles north of Lundi Kotal.

The southern, western and eastern sides of the block are precipitous cliffs rising abruptly more than 500 feet from their bases like walls of some great fortress.

These at the crest form three sides of a quadrilateral more than 4,000 feet above sea. Down the little glen formed between the ridges runs a little stream of clear water, between gentle slopes covered with ilex oak. From the top a splendid view of the surrounding country is obtained. The Khaibar, the Shilman, and the Kabul

river valleys lie below. A peep into the Maidan of Tirah is obtained. To the south-west the Safed Koh shuts in the view, to the north the snowy summits of Kafiristan, Dir and Swat. A small force stationed here would be in an impregnable position—if the little stream was flowing—and would command both main routes to Peshawur, the Khaibar and Shilman.

After descending to little Shilman we spent the night there without disturbance. Starting next morning I noticed a tower on a hillock, from which I hoped to get a good view of the surrounding country. Taking a few sepoys with me I started for the village, but as I approached the walls the door was half closed and several matchlock barrels were pointed at us. Walking forward alone I asked in Pushto why this had been done. The answer came “don't come into the village.” I asked why they objected to my going into the village when they made no objection to my going all over the valley. One burly fellow stepped out and said because their *Memsahibs* are in the village. I replied that had I wanted to see *Memsahibs* there were many in India. “Yes! but there are none here,” was the sharp rejoinder. I then called out that my work was in their hills (Garhuna) not in their huts (Koruna). At this there was a laugh, the matchlocks were withdrawn and the door opened. On the tower I let all that cared to have a look through my theodolite in which of course all objects appear reversed. The comments were amusing. “Ah!” said one, “no wonder they find out all about

the roads when they can turn the hills upside down and look up into the valleys." Another suggested that perhaps I could look inside their houses, and nothing would persuade any of them to look at the village. Shortly after they brought milk and chappaties for all of us, and we parted on the best terms.

For the next week I wandered round Shilman and the slopes overhanging the Kabul river without let or hindrance. Evidently the people had quite acquiesced in our occupation. The numerous ruins on the spurs running down to the river showed that at some former time the country now so thinly populated must have been well peopled and dotted with Buddhist dwellings and temples. Some ruins stood over the river and remains of long flights of stairs showed whence these obtained their water-supply, but many were far up the hillsides, and must have been supplied from springs or other sources where all is now dry and barren. The tope in the Khaibar, the ruins round Ali Musjid are also Buddhist. About three miles west of Lundi Kotal, overhanging the water supply at Lundi Khana, but several hundred feet above are the ruined walls and bastions of what must once have been a considerable fort. At the back a long flanking wall, ending in a tower, runs out to a basin, in which to judge from the stalagmites and stalactites, must once have been the receptacle of a flowing stream, where now all is dry and barren for miles.

Might not the fact that the Khaibar and surroundings were then held by a strong garrison, at the time of

Alexander's invasion, have been the cause that induced the conqueror to avoid this pass and turn north-eastwards, it being certain that he marched *via* Bajour and Swat into Yusafzai when advancing against Aornacs?

After a pleasant fortnight among the Mohmands I returned to Lundi Kotal and found that it had been determined to punish the Afridis by a raid against their villages; and I was ordered to join the force.

On reaching Jamrud I found preparations going on for an advance on the Bazar Valley, the one lying south of the Khaibar and parallel to it. Sir Sam Browne's Division was now located round Bassawal and Dakka. Its place had been taken by the 2nd Division under Sir F. Maude with headquarters at Jamrud. The transport animals of the former had been largely requisitioned for the latter. The feuds between the various sections of Afridis had increased, constant attacks had been made on our pickets, the camp at Ali Musjid was fired into every night, and camels were carried off within range of the rifles in the fort. It was decided to make a night march from Ali Musjid into the Bazar Valley so as to "surprise" the enemy and to make the attack more effectual. General Tytler was to make a simultaneous march from Dakka and enter the Bazar Valley from the west as General Maude entered from the east. "Surprise" an enemy whose representatives spent every day selling wood and grass, fowls and eggs in our camps and every night fired into them from the surrounding heights! An enemy whose only possessions were a few

towers overhanging cave dwellings and cattle and sheep that could run a dozen miles across the hills to Bara, while our troops were painfully struggling along a mile.

Sunset of the 19th December saw the 2nd Gurkhas, the Mhairwarras (a battalion from Central India who had never seen a high hill before, and were still unused to their Sniders), 300 men of the 5th Fusiliers and 200 of the 51st K. O. L. I., a couple of troops of the 13th Bengal Lancers and 3 guns of a British Mountain Battery formed up below Musjid, and shortly after wading across the stream, wetting their boots and *patties*, preparatory to a cold and weary slow march into the hills. Whoever has spent a cold wet night walking over country in sodden boots will know what this means. Why the *putti*, very useful in the snowy ranges beyond Kashmir, where it was used originally, has been adopted throughout India and Burma and elsewhere, I never could understand. When wetted at the commencement of a long dry march, especially up stony hills, it contracts and causes cramp; if worn when marching through thorny scrub, as so often is the case in Afghanistan, it is caught by every "wait a bit" along the line, and if—as on the heights of Rotas and elsewhere—the ground is covered with spear grass it soon is as well covered as a prickly pear or hedge hog. From my experience I consider the gaiter worn by our British Mountain Batteries far preferable to anything. Then, again, a Gurkha in an ammunition boot is very much handicapped among rocky hills such as those on our N.-W. border. In damp cane



brakes and among the sharp cutting undergrowth found in Assam and Burma, these boots are very good, but for skirmishing up a rocky hillside a modification of the Punjabi shoe—a cross between that and the “brown hide shooting boot”—would be the best with strong but pliable soles. However, to return to the march. Scarcely had the head of the column crossed the stream than a bonfire blazed on the hills to the west. To all who were not in touch with the tribes this was supposed to be a signal to our enemies, and the conclusion was that there would be no surprise, but our leaders knew better. The pathway was a mere cattle track winding over a succession of low acacia covered spurs intersected by numerous dry watercourses. In the beds of these were long strips of grass covered at this time with white flowers, that as the night grew darker appeared to the soldiers more like pathways than the real one, and often the leading files of companies, losing sight of those ahead, turned up these white strips till suddenly brought up against a hillside. The cry of “We’ve lost the road, Sir !” would be carried down the line, and a general hunt for the true path begun. The General with a large staff and fifty troopers passed the infantry and got ahead with the Afridi guides and Political Officers. Where the pathway was fairly easy they pushed on at a quick pace, the leading files of the infantry hurrying to keep them in sight pushed on and those in rear “lost touch”; then would come some zigzag descent, the cavalry would have to go slowly in single file, the

leading infantry would have to pull up, a general halt would occur till the cavalry pushed on again. As the night grew dark the delays became longer, the men wet and weary pulled out their pipes, the doolie kahars lit fires and sat warming their shins, and soon from every neighbouring height the line of march could easily be discerned by the matches and fires, even if the noise of boots over the stones and the low murmuring of many voices had not proclaimed it. About midnight I found myself with the 51st, led by Colonel Ball-Action. A report was brought to him that the rear files had lost touch with the battery and could not find it. The Colonel called a halt. I had a young Afridi with me and doubled back along the path. After quarter of an hour's run we found the battery about to bivouac! Having no guide, and finding no trace of the infantry the officer in command thought the best thing to do was to stay where he was. As I returned with the battery to the 51st, a Staff Officer rode up to the Colonel and asked him why he did not push on, in very sharp tones: "Can you tell me where the guns are, Sir?" the Colonel replied. The S. O. rode back without a word.

To our right the hills rose more and more abruptly covered with thorny bushes to a height of a couple of thousand feet, to our left they fell in gentle slopes broken by numerous ravines, some miles to the bed of the Khaibar. The breadth of our column was often that of a man—single file—the length at least two miles! Suppose the enemy had really meant opposition they

could have disordered the column, not at one, but many points, by rolling down rocks, hurling stones, and firing into us ; then if in determined bands of twenty or thirty they had rushed on us sword in hand—what terrible mischief they could have done. The cavalry unable to act, the Mhairwarras in a strange land and never under fire before. Even the British infantry scattered in the dark, what resistance could have been offered ? If no panic occurred doubtless these would have closed up, and in time driven off the foe, but how many valuable lives would have been thrown away ? I wonder that even our “friendly” didn’t try their rifles. They could easily have thrown the blame on the others afterwards. And what was gained ?

As day dawned the leading files reached the bank of the Chura or Bazar Darrah, the stream that drains the Bazar Valley and joins the Khaibar some miles lower down. The “friendly” village of Chura was about a mile ahead, but Walai, the first Bazar village of the malcontents, was still ten miles away. On the hill tops might be seen small parties of Afridis signalling to their friends further up. It was evident the “surprise” was a failure. The order for “no fires” had not yet been cancelled when the General’s cook lighted a blaze in a cosy nook to warm the *sahib’s* coffee. In a minute a hundred fires were blazing on every side, and the Gurkhas’ happy faces and cheery voices showed how pleased all were that the wretched night march was over.

My Poonch khidmatgar was not behind the others, and I was helping him with the kettle, when two weary-looking officers appeared from the opposite side to that from which we had come. These proved to be the principal Commissariat and Transport officers, who gladly joined me in finishing "chota hazri" and told me they had followed the column, as they thought, but found that they had followed quite a different route—without escort—and had just turned up here all right somehow!

"All's well that ends well," however, and orders were given to have breakfast while a troop of cavalry went on to reconnoitre.

The valleys of the Himalayas are generally widest where they open out on the plains, gradually narrowing as they ascend, till on, nearing the watersheds from whence they start, they become narrow glens. Even Hazara, the last valley Cis-Indus, is like this.

But across the Indus from the Barando which drains Boner, to the Peshin plateau, almost invariably, the upper portions of the valleys are circular, more or less level basins, the drainage flowing inward from opposite sides, gradually concentrates, and, after combining forms one deep watercourse hemmed in by steep hills and ending in rugged defiles before entering the open country. Thus the Swat river, which for several miles above Abazai is confined between steep hills, opens out into the broad valleys of Swat, Bajawar and Dir.

The waters of the open Mohmand valley of Bohai and the Bajawar valley of Nawagai, run through a rugged

gorge after passing Danishkul before joining the Swat opposite Abazai. The Jellalabad valley ends in the thirty miles of defile above Michni. The Gandab and Shilman valleys also end in defiles. The Loargai, which is 10 miles across at Landi Kotal, becomes the Khaibar. The Tirah Maidan becomes the Bara defile. Kuram is closed in by the rough hills of the Zaimukhts.

The so-called Suliman range is really formed of a succession of narrow defiles closing in the Gomal, the Zhob and Thal Chutiali valleys. This peculiar formation was the main cause of the difficulties that frontier expeditions met with in the old days. Everywhere the advance was faced by these precipitous gorges. Only now, when they have been entered from the northern side from Quetta, has it been discovered that if the columns had surmounted the difficulties of the first twenty or thirty miles, they would have found no formidable enemy beyond, open valleys in place of continuous masses of rugged mountains. The Suliman range is the final abrupt fall from the higher valleys ; the outskirts of several plateaux much elevated above the Indian plain. For an invading army from the north and west there are no such obstacles. Well is it that we have discovered this in time.

Of course no enemy to speak of could be seen by the reconnoitring party, and after a halt the march of the column recommenced. An occasional long shot was fired accompanied by shrill "allahis," but there was no real opposition. The main

watercourse wandered along the bases of the hills, the water having disappeared under the surface; the route continued up the bed with occasional short cuts from bend to bend. About sundown we reached Walai a solitary tower overlooking a lot of caves, under an isolated hill in the middle of the valley. Here all were glad to settle down and make arrangements for the night. Meanwhile the Dakka column, under Tytler, had made a corresponding march through far more difficult country, and the Brigadier, up to time, rode forward and met General Maude near Walai, much to the astonishment of the Afridis. Shortly before dark Khwas Khan announced that the Bazar Jirgah had come in for terms. Tucker, the Political Officer, worn out with his troublesome duties, was too ill to see them and the duty of dictating terms fell on his Assistant Cunninghame. A long conversation ensued between Cunninghame, Khwas Khan and Afridi Khan—the latter a great burly cheery old fellow from British territory who had been most useful as a guide. &c., from the commencement of hostilities. The terms offered were Rs. 1,000 in cash, six hostages, and Khwas Khan to be acknowledged Chief of all the Zaka Khels: the alternative—the tower at Walai would be destroyed at nine next morning. As to the first term the tower was not worth Rs. 1,000; but as in case of submission the Chiefs would have been paid for wood and grass used by the troops, by which they would have more than cleared that amount, there should have been

no difficulty about that. Hostages were provided with good food and lodging while enjoying a life-secure holiday in Peshawur. So there could be little objection to that. As to acknowledging Khwas Khan as Chief of the whole tribe, that was certainly against the grain ; but once rid of our troops, what would a broken promise more or less matter. So the Political Officer could sleep in peace feeling sure that all was arranged. The General slept that night in a hospital doolie, so did the great war correspondent who had accompanied the expedition. To the latter some one was expounding the Government Frontier policy. He first spoke of our unopposed advance,—to which the reply was “Bringing a heap of guns, cavalry and infantry to drive out a few wretched half armed savages, and burn their poor homesteads.” “Oh ! but we offer them fair terms.” “Terms ! Terms !—to men whose bodies ye cannot shoot and who have no souls to damn !” Evidently the amiable war correspondent was tired and sleepy. So the exponent retired discomfited. My *kit* had made a comfortable lair for me just over the mouth of the cave where the repentant Jirgah was assembled. After the conference with the Political Officer, Khwas and Afridi Khan walked down close by me to the cave. Half way they stopped, and Khwas said : “For three months I have been doing everything to get these Bazar scoundrels punished and this tower blown up. Until this is destroyed these fellows can prevent my going from the Khaibar to Tirah. I have

brought the troops here, and now they are to be forgiven for 1,000 rupees—never!” Proceeding to the cave’s mouth he shouted out: “The sahib says you are such a lot of brutes he will have nothing to say to you; clear out of this.” Half a dozen ragged ruffians here emerged from the cave, and went off at a sharp trot. Next morning the tower was blown up. The “object of the expedition was successfully accomplished” and we had nothing more to do but clear out again, as we had no spare rations with us. What the General felt after the anxieties and weariness of a march, with so small a result, it is not difficult to conjecture.

The return march was in reverse order, the baggage and sick and wounded went ahead. A detachment of infantry was sent to destroy some towers from which a party of marauders had raided on our baggage going up, and had carried off some great coats. I was busy sketching near a British company held in reserve while the destruction was going on. It was near a place where the stream swept round in a semicircle, the interior being a bush-covered plateau. Suddenly several musket shots were heard in the far bend of the stream, about 1,000 yards from the company. Guessing that the enemy were firing on our wounded and sick, I told the young officer in charge of the company what I thought. He immediately ordered his company to advance towards the firing in skirmishing order. I ventured to remark that the wounded would all be cut up before he reached the point at that rate of advance.



“I know my duty, Sir !” he replied, with great dignity. Leaving him to do it, I ran off with my own escort of 20 Mhairwarras, and crossing the stream climbed up the opposite bank, and found we were well placed to fire into the bushes whence the Afridis were firing without chance of sending our bullets into the stream where the doolies were. “Open fire, Havildar,” I said, “give them a volley.” “Are bhai,” one sepoy said, loading his rifle, “how far is it ?” “Perhaps 1,000 yards said another.” “Three hundred yards,” I said, “fire sharp.” A volley silenced the enemy, about a dozen of whom we saw run from the knoll they had occupied. Suddenly I noticed a party of British infantry double, in front of the doolies, and looking straight at us began to kneel behind rocks to open on us ! “Lie down,” I shouted, and waved my hat frantically towards the skirmishers, ready to jump behind a rock at the first puff. Fortunately there seemed some doubt about who we were, and presently an officer, who had been watching us through his binoculars, rode forward and put his hand up. Meanwhile a solitary Afridi in the bushes overhead tried his rifle three times in our direction without effect. Altogether the experience was not pleasant, and when we got down I got a bullying for surveying on the enemy’s side of the valley. After all was over the skirmishing company, under the dignified Lieutenant, came up in fine review order. Only a wounded Gurkha in a doolie had been killed by the enemy’s fire, but had it depended on the drill book officer, the

whole detachment might have been cut up before he arrived.

Tytler's brigade returned to Dakka by a still more difficult route than the one he had followed in the advance. He was followed for several miles by Afridi skirmishers, but though obliged to pass his column through very narrow and difficult defiles he marched leisurely through with very little loss, owing to the care and skill with which he occupied the heights commanding the line of march. He discontinued a custom which had been much followed in previous expeditions—that is, instead of his flanking parties on either side steadily advancing parallel to the line of march and either falling back or delaying the column while they struggled painfully over each stream bed and spur on either hand, he sent successive parties from the head of the column to clear and occupy advantageous points ahead. Once in possession each party remained stationary till the column passed and joined the rear guard. Thus each party had but one hill to attack and occupy, and then had a long rest, instead of whole lines of skirmishers being worn out by constant marching, climbing and firing from morning till evening.

This ended the first Bazar expedition.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### SECOND BAZAR VALLEY EXPEDITION.

The return of the first Bazar expedition after so hurried and useless a raid only encouraged the malcontents and natural freebooters among the Afridis to continue their depredations. These they found not only amusing but profitable; night attacks on an outpost often led to an increase in the number of "Levies" paid for by Political Officers, and now that they were debarred from the usual pastime of petty social squabbles and fights, camel thefts and the murder of wandering camp followers and similar diversions provided them with agreeable recreation. It was soon evident that something on a large scale must be done if our outposts were to be left in peace, and our line of communications secured from attack, so preparations were begun for an expedition on a larger scale. Heavy snow covered the passes between Jellalabad and Kabul, and no farther advance in that direction was contemplated for the present. The 1st Division held undisputed sway of the Jelalabad Valley. The 2nd was lying inactive and spoiling for a fight in Jamrud. As, however, some time would elapse before any movement could be made I was at liberty personally to continue

survey work. With a few Afridis of the Levy—the nucleus of our present “Khaibar Rifles” – I wandered unhindered all over the country, a solitary sentinel sufficing for night guard, and he, so confident of being unmolested, usually crooned over a fire throughout the night. The havildar for the sake of discipline occasionally shouted to the sentinel to “order arms” when the singing became too loud.

One trip was to the Tatara or Laka Sar, the highest peak to the north of the Khaibar, so marked a feature of the view from Peshawar, on whose crest was a sacred shrine and near by a few stunted pines. Here before the days of ice machines, the Afridis dug little pits in December and collected such snow as fell, which they carried to Peshawar on guest nights and dances in the summer. On approaching the little enclosure, stuck with many small flags that marked the shrine, I was warned of its extreme sanctity, and informed that the saint was a most powerful and successful intercessor with Allah, especially in the case of those who wanted sons. The petitioner had only to visit three particular shrines in the course of 24 hours, on foot, and his request would be granted. These were one near Omar, some 12 miles south-east of Peshawar, one near Michni, 14 miles north-west of Peshawar, and lastly this one 6,000 feet above sea level, 4,000 above the plain, and quite 20 miles in direct distance west of Peshawar! I ventured to remark that a man who could manage that would hardly need the help of a saint in

anything, but "this is most firmly believed amongst us" was the reply.

From the peak a grand view of all the surrounding country is obtained, from the hills of Hazara to the east, round by the snowy summits of Swat to Kafiristan. Due north may be seen portions of the plateaux of Bajawar with the large village of Nawagai, and nearer the valleys of the Mohmands. To the west the view extends across the Jellalabad Valley to the hills round Lataband and the Shutar Gardan, then follows the range of the Safed Koh southwards to the Maidan of Tirah, and the hills of the Afridi and Urakzai. From the summit northwards falls a succession of long rugged spurs to the windings of the Kabul river 5,000 feet below. After finishing work here the survey of the routes to the north was taken up where they had been left unfinished on the previous trip. While surveying the Tatara route some Mohmand chiefs proposed that a survey should be made of another route, the Shinilo, which crosses the Kabul river from Shilman, and descends through low hills to Michni. They put their reasons very plainly. "If it is favourably reported on Government will make a fine road and perhaps bridge the river. While it is in progress our tribesmen will make a lot of money on it as labourers. When your troops return to India we shall have the benefit of it as the Kafilahs would use it in preference to any route in the Afridi country, where they are never safe, and we should secure the dues in future."

They stipulated, however, that we were to have no military escort with us, as the sight of arms would excite the cupidity of the numerous outlaws that had taken refuge in the hills of the border, from the long arm of the *Sirkar*. Instead of our military escort we were to have 25 of the young chief's clansmen. With these and our Punch and Potwari khalasis carrying the instruments an early start was made from Shilman over the hills to the north-east which rise about a thousand feet above the valley, then down the opposite slope by a fairly easy descent to the river bank.

It was still early in the day when we reached this, and could we have gone on at once we should probably have reached Michni, a British outpost fort, by sunset. But on shouting across the river to the boatmen on the opposite bank who worked the ferry boat, usually stationed here, they called back that the boat had been swept away during a storm a few days previously and that there was no possibility of crossing here. The young chief Jung Khan proposed that we should go down stream to the Gatta Gudar, or rocky ferry, some ten miles down. Now I had always found that any change in a programme usually ended in the failure of any proposed expedition. It was quite impossible to find out whether the boat had really been lost or not. If it had, the chiefs at least must have been informed of it before we started in the morning. I concluded there must be some other reason for the proposed change, but what it was I could not discover. I there-

fore told Jung Khan that he must make some other arrangements for crossing, and sat down while breakfast was being prepared. After breakfast I amused myself by taking the breadth of the river, here only 60 yards across, then lay down and began reading. At intervals Jung Khan came and asked when we were to start. My invariable answer was "when you have arranged for our crossing here. You proposed this trip and must carry it through." All day long we waited. Not till 4 p. m. did Jung's patience wear out; then we were told that a raft was coming down the river. This shortly appeared, a raft of small poles lashed together and supported on several inflated *massaks* (goatskins) or *shinaz*—and brought up close to where we were sitting. Jung Khan and I got on this, and, fortunately, I took my rifle and plane table with me. Six of the followers jumped into the water and guiding the raft we soon found ourselves on the other side. We then told the raftsmen to go over for the rest of our men. They started off, but when in midstream shouted back that they could not cross, and away they went downstream with the full force of the current. The Khan asked what the next move was to be. "We must go on." I replied. "Yes, but with six men we shall probably be attacked on the way and cut up." "Well, I said, you promised me safe conduct; if I don't go out alive neither will you." He ordered the six boatmen to get their arms and join us. This added a bit to our party, but it

was still a small one. Then came a discussion as to who was to carry the plane table. The clansmen said they were not coolies and all declined to do so. I had my heavy rifle, ammunition, three day's rations, and some instruments on my person, but there seemed no help for it but to carry the table also. Just then there appeared from behind some rocks two wild looking fellows. They came forward and *salaamed*. I asked who they were. "We are *khunis*" (murderers) one said, "outlaws from Peshawar. I killed a man who ran away with my sister, and this man killed another who had seduced his wife. We have been several years in exile and were told that if we behaved ourselves during the war we should be forgiven. Hearing you were at work here we came to offer our services in the hope of getting certificates from you of our good behaviour." "All right, pick up this table;" they did so and we got off. The pathway wound gently up the slope to the pass. Rocks and little knolls overlooked it from all sides; to force it in face of a determined enemy would be extremely difficult, though it is not so formidable as the ascent from the Gatta Gudar lower down, where the path attains a height of about 3,000 feet, while here the crest of the pass is only a little over 2,000 feet. We had got up about half the distance when we were challenged from above. "Get behind the rocks every one," shouted Jung Khan; "your rifle loaded sahib?" Then he shouted back. The answer came "I am so-and-so." Taking my bino-



culars Jung had a good look and then said "It's all right sahib, that's my brother, come along." On reaching the crest we found a gathering of about 40 of Jung's clansmen all armed to the teeth. The younger brother explained that the raft in passing their father, Yakubi's village, had shouted out that we were going up the pass, so signal shots had been fired, and the men collecting in the village above the pass to the south came along just in time to drive out a band of some 30 outlaws, who had been waiting for us. This may or may not have been true, any way there were no strangers visible now. So after a drink of milk I pushed on to Michni accompanied only by the outlaws, the rest remaining to arrange for my return next day. At Michni I found orders directing me to rejoin the force at Jamrud as the expedition was about to start, so the portion of the route between the Zankhai pass and Michni remained to complete at some other time.

A direct road runs from Michni along the base of the Tatara range to Jamrud, and as we were not at feud with the Mohmands it was still considered the boundary, though our troops were many marches ahead. On the British side of the road the country was bare of trees, all having been cut away for fuel, but there was no cultivation, as no one dared settle so close to the border. The whole was a bare, dry, sandy waste, and here stood thousands of camels belonging to the Jamrud force, supposed to be grazing, but really standing about looking longingly across the road to the

dense masses of acacia forest that clothed the whole country on the independent side. Cavalry videttes were posted along the road, preventing the starving camels from crossing ! On arrival at Jamrud I found an enquiry in progress as to the causes of the great and ever-increasing mortality among these patient beasts of burden. Some that had died lately had been dissected, and in their stomachs was found nothing but mud ! Hundreds had perished here and in Kurram ; thousands in the Bolan, partly the result of the manner in which they had been collected and sent in with or without their real keepers, partly owing to the widespread idea, taken from natural history books, that a camel can live and work without drinking for a week or so. The poor beasts can live for a few days without water, but if worked during the time are almost certain to die from the effects of it shortly after. The way in which they were treated on the Khaibar line during the early months of the war is a sample of what was required of them on the other lines also, and explains the dreadful mortality. Camels were, perhaps still are, reared in large numbers at certain central points in the Punjab. One great camel proprietor was located near Pind Dadan Khan, others in the Derajat, Jhang, and elsewhere. Here thousands of females roamed at large among the acacia and other thorn jungles, being driven in herds to the nearest watering places at intervals of three or four days. A certain number of males accompanied them in the breeding seasons

and when the young were born these roamed about with their mothers and added to the volume of sound round the drinking places to which the herds were driven. As the young grew up the males were set aside for sale.

Intending purchasers came from various districts and bought two year olds, sometimes for cash, more often on credit, the average price being about Rs 80 to Rs. 90. When taken on credit the money was paid by instalments, and though the creditors' homes were often hundreds of miles away, and no written documents were used, very seldom was a debt unpaid. When a driver had collected enough money to pay for his first camels, he either went in person or sent a relative to pay the money due, and got other animals on credit, thus gradually adding to his stock without resorting to the village banker. Either the owner or one of his impecunious relatives drove the camels and cared for them.

During the six cooler months, camel drivers are willing to serve in almost any part of India, however distant, and have no very strong objections to accompanying an expedition across the border, so long as there is a prospect of getting home again by May, after which no camels are loaded if it can be avoided till the close of the rains. In the interval they are shaved, oiled, dosed and treated like delicate children, to prepare them for the next cold season. A war in Afghanistan was quite a different matter. It was

certain that once across the border there would be no return for a year, if at all. No camel owner would voluntarily accompany an army beyond the outer passes. From time immemorial the exigencies of the service had overruled all other considerations. The march of an army meant the seizure of every beast of burden that could be found. The only difference between the present and past rulers of the country was that the British paid for the animals, previous rulers did not. But Lord Lytton was determined to make his omelette without breaking eggs ; orders were issued that so many thousand camels, mules, etc., must be collected before 1st November, but there should be no compulsion. The monthly hire was raised from Rs. 8 to Rs. 15 for each animal ; there was to be one driver for every three animals, and the hire was to cover cost of feed and keep. The drivers were to provide sufficient forage.

The orders filtered down from Governors to Tahsildars ; the last were to find the animals, through contractors, but no compulsion to be resorted to. The Tahsildars found or appointed contractors, generally city bankers, who had never owned a camel. all tahsili peons, and a good many local policemen and chaukidars were ordered to assist the contractors. Every camel route was searched, every animal found was relieved of its load ; if the owner or driver remained with his animals so much the better if not, the first coolie who offered was placed in charge of three animals,

received a few rupees in advance and was hurried off to the nearest transport centre. There so many hundreds were told off for the regiments advancing to the front, and somehow these reached their several rendezvous.

Then the mortality commenced. The Government paid the contractors, who far from the scene of action "forgot" to send on the money. When in January enquiries regarding the awful death rate were being made, most of the drivers asserted that they had only received from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 each per month with which they were supposed to feed their three animals and themselves.

Free grazing was as a rule impossible owing to the constant presence of marauders in the acacia jungles; a load of *bhoosa*, if there was no fighting in the neighbourhood, cost from 4 to 8 annas, and when there was fighting could not be obtained at all.

The Commissariat Department found it difficult enough to feed the regular troops and could not possibly provide grain for thousands of transport animals, so the poor brutes had to starve. This was not all. Suppose a convoy was to start from Peshawar the rouse sounded at 4 or 5 A.M. and the camels were saddled. The loading began shortly after and perhaps a start was made about 8 A.M. From Peshawar to Jamrud was a long march over flat country; if the convoy was in before dark the camels got a drink and perhaps some *bhoosa*. At 5 next morning the loading began again, but convoys

were not permitted to start before 9 when pickets had been placed above the road. About 10 the convoys entered the Khaibar and commenced the ascent of the Mackeson road. Here usually several halts occurred, owing to careless or improper loading, or by meeting return convoys. The consequence was that Ali Musjid was seldom reached till dark. Here while the stream was full of water they were perhaps allowed to drink, though as often as not it was concluded that they did not need a drink yet. It was too late to let the camels graze in the acacia woods, and *bhoosa* was seldom obtainable. The loading began again at 5, the convoy started at 9, reaching Lundi Kotal at or near dusk ; here there was no water for the camels nearer than Lundi Khana, two miles down a steep road. So there was no drink, seldom any food. On again next day to Dakka, reaching at dark. Then, if there was no urgent necessity for a return, they got a day off, a drink in the river, and perhaps a few thorny shrubs to eat. But too often there was urgent necessity for their immediate return and they started back on their weary journey with a drink only. This went on till Sir Charles MacGregor was made Director of Communications, and till regular Transport Officers independent of the Commissariat, were appointed whose special duty it was to look after the animals. Then much was done to remedy this state of things ; but long before this the transport had been crippled by the loss of thousands of valuable animals

for which the Government had subsequently to pay a heavy indemnity to *the contractors*. Whether the real owners ever saw a pice of it is doubtful.

By a simple arrangement with the Mulagoris, a small tribe who live on the border along the road from Michni to Jamrud, these were only too pleased for Rs. 50 a month, not only to let the camels graze in their lands, but to guard them while so grazing. But how strange are the ways of our Politicals. We had invaded Afghanistan, seized the Amir's guns, shot his sepoy, burnt the villages of the clansmen here and there, and ended by hunting the Amir from his capital ; while here on our own border we were allowing our camels to starve by hundreds, because the acacia jungles were outside our nominal border, and the tribesmen might be annoyed, this particular "tribe" numbering some 500 souls all told ! Very sensitive was our conscience on this side.

Meantime the troops were mustering for a second advance into Bazar. On the 24th January General Maude with about 600 British infantry, 400 native infantry, a couple of troops of cavalry, too heavy and two mountain guns, started from Jamrud. In addition to the General there were an Infantry Brigadier, a Cavalry Brigadier, and an Artillery Brigadier, a Chief of the Staff and a host of Staff Officers. A second column started from Ali Musjid consisting of about 200 British infantry, 600 native infantry and two guns. One Brigadier, Appleyard, sufficed here. A third column, some 300 men of the 6th N. I. started under Colonel

Thompson from Lundi Kotal to co-operate with No. 2. A fourth under Tytler marched as before from Dakka and Bassawal, consisting of about 600 British infantry, 600 native infantry, a few cavalymen of the Guide Corps and two guns. One Brigadier sufficed here, with Colonel Armstrong of the 45th Sikhs as Assistant Brigadier.

The object of all these movements was, according to orders, to bring the Afridi malcontents to order by occupying the Bazar Valley; according to popular opinion it was intended to have a good Afridi war, to suppress the tribe once for all, annex the highlands of Tirah as a summer resort or the Peshawar garrison, and to give the 2nd Division something to do whereby honours and promotions would accrue to all who had interest or special luck. What the Afridis thought of it at first it is difficult to say. All the columns marched unresisted to the rendezvous in the Bazar Valley. The Jamrud column went along quietly. The Ali Musjid column marched first to Alachi and Karamna. The people of both villages either came to meet us or sat quietly on the rocks above. Alachi was spared. The Karamna towers were blown up to the evident satisfaction of the Brigadier, who apparently tried his best to get blown up also, by careering about on his pony close to the undermined towers, within reach of the *débris* flying about.

Thompson sent on a young Afridi chief to hold the crest ahead overnight. This being faithfully done, a difficult march up a ravine, in places only four feet wide



with rocks overhanging several hundreds of feet above, was accomplished quickly. So also was a march by the whole brigade down a very narrow dark defile under Karamna, where, if the men whose towers had been destroyed had cared to do it, they might have crushed us by dozens by rolling rocks down.

For some strange reason the force encamped at the base of a long rocky ridge of hills within rifle range of the crest, and darkness had scarcely closed in on us when from this ridge a shower of bullets fell among us and more than one poor fellow was killed. Sometimes it is impossible to occupy a position not commanded from the heights, and the greatest care cannot prevent stray shots reaching camp, but on this occasion all would have been safe had we moved out a couple of miles as we did next day. During the Jowaki Expedition of 1877 it was almost impossible to find a safe camping ground, and as the men bivouacked after long tiring marches, these night alarms were peculiarly harassing. One night I remember particularly when after a long march the men of the 9th Foot had settled down, the enemy opened on us as usual. The bullets fell pretty thickly round the mess camp fire, and the officers ordered their men to get under cover. One old soldier had made quite a comfortable bed for himself with grass and a square of stones, and seemed disinclined to move. On being shouted at he growlingly replied, "They can get another blooming fellow like me for a shilling—what the——does it matter."

While the camp in Bazar was moving to more open ground a party was sent to search the hills, but till evening not a sign of any enemy was found, when the search parties were withdrawn. The signalling party that had been on the crest all day were quietly going towards camp, and were within a few hundred yards of it when the soldiers of the escort stopped to light their pipes. The officer and an Afridi orderly of the 24th went on, and had got a few paces ahead, when three shots were fired at them from a clump of grass close by. The Afridi orderly went straight for the place, shot two of the men in the grass, and following the third into a cave killed him also. On returning smiling to his officer he turned over one of the dead, and, on seeing his face, begged the officer not to mention what he had done, as one of the men was a cousin of his, and his own life would not be safe if it became known. So the brave fellow had to wait till the close of the campaign for his reward.

Although we had placed no pickets on the west of the ridge the previous night some had been placed on knolls half way up. Small parties of the enemy tried to pass these and rush the camp; and one young well-dressed chief fell a victim to his temerity. It had become a byword that while the enemy picked some one off every night, our men never succeeded in hitting them.

In a picket of the Borderers was a young Scotch soldier on sentry who shot the young chief above

referred to, *after* he had passed the picket. He was asked why he let the man pass him. "Well, Sir," he replied, "when we shoot a man advancing towards us his friends carry him off, and we are laughed at for wasting ammunition. So when I saw this one coming on I just sat behind a rock and let him pass before shooting, so that I would be sure of keeping him." As it was he secured a prize.

The camp was now formed in the open valley and pickets protected by *sangars* (stone breastworks) were thrown out at fifty yard intervals all round. At least a dozen times that night we were roused by volleys from six or eight rifles fired into camp, followed in some cases by fusillades from the pickets; but no one seems to have been hurt on either side. The increased firing, however, indicated that a march onward would probably not be so quietly managed as the Political Officer appears to have hoped at first. A reconnaissance next day up the Bazar valley, to examine the route into the farther Afridi Valley of Rajgal while it demonstrated that the pass was fairly easy for our infantry and mountain guns, showed also that at length the whole of the Afridi clans had taken the alarm. After passing up the open portion of the valley, the route wound over a succession of spurs thrown down from the main range—spurs with crests of jagged rocks and huge boulders, and sides dotted with numerous wild olive and ilex trees. As the column entered these hills puffs of smoke arose,

followed by wild yells and the flashing of swords in every direction ; and though there was no determined opposition so far, it was evident the clans were gathering and the numbers of the enemy increasing rapidly.

After an examination of the Bokar Pass Tytler withdrew slowly and carefully, and immediately the enemy's skirmishers opened fire on the retreating column, following the rear guard so closely that many of the bullets fell far ahead.

The reconnaissances was under General Tytler, but General Maude with a group of Staff Officers and sowars accompanied the column. The General had been heard to remark in his own peculiar way that when we were fighting Russians or French we went in scarlet and blue, but here against a broken lot of savages we dressed in khaki, so as to conceal ourselves as much possible ! He was always in his dark blue uniform, and the cavalry group soon attracted the attention of the Afridi sharpshooters. Bullets began to whistle round, and presently the General's syce was shot through the leg. One of the staff officers called out to the General who was always somewhat deaf—on this occasion unusually so—"They are firing at you, Sir !" "What did you say ?" replied "old Maude." "They are firing at you, Sir !" "I didn't hear you." "They are firing at you, Sir !"—very loud. "Oh ! are they ?" was his only remark. At last the rear of the column arrived, then he moved on quietly as usual. By evening we were all

in camp again; and that night our pickets and the enemy were specially lively and noisy.

Next morning it was evident that contingents of the enemy were coming in in large numbers, and the hillsides were covered with them, though they made no attempt to attack the camp in the open. For some occult reason known only at headquarters, Simla, a limit of ten days had been fixed for the expedition, and only ten days' rations had been brought. Five days had passed and the real advance had not begun. It was evident that at least a month would now be required to occupy thoroughly the Afridi country, and quite as likely that a much longer period would elapse before the satisfactory termination of what was now certain to be an Afridi war if an advance was made from Bazar. The seriousness of the position induced the General to refer the question to Simla before deciding to advance. At the same time he stated plainly that he considered the force under his orders quite capable of carrying out the operations to a successful conclusion. Meantime our stores of rations ran short, a fresh supply was ordered up escorted by some companies of the 24th P. I. under Captain Stedman. The convoy was annoyed by a fire from the hills on either side for several miles, but reached camp without any actual collision.

As, however, the rear guard of the convoy commenced the last ascent from the stream bed towards camp, firing was heard in the rear, and some sowars

galloping up reported that a comrade had been shot and was being knifed by the Afridis. Stedman doubled back with his rear guard and opened fire on the Afridis who had rushed like hawks on the fallen sowar and were hacking him to pieces. An R. E. officer who was with Stedman rushed ahead and brought the poor fellow on to the road, but too late to save him. This officer obtained a V. C. Daily four sowars rode down that long defile under the fire of the enemy, and four others rode up it quite as an ordinary act of duty. Their advent with the post bags was eagerly looked for ; but till this poor fellow was shot down no one seemed to think of the calm courage of the troopers. The day after the occurrence four men were as calmly ready at the appointed hour as usual and rode off as if on cantonment patrol duty, no one (but their Colonel) seeming to think that if decorations were going every man, who thus calmly taking his life in his hand rode down the long miles of the rocky defile, absolutely helpless, from a sense of duty only, deserved one.

Everything for a forward movement was now ready, and the entire force was eager for a change. One of three courses was open—1st, an advance to the Maidan and its occupation till the Afridis submitted unconditionally ; 2nd, a march straight across through the Maidan to the Kurram ; 3rd, a march to the Maidan and a return thence to Bazar.

The first might take months, more convoys of provisions would have to come from Peshawar ; where

were the troops who would have to provide the escorts. Or should the Mohmands and other tribes determine to rise against us, the now weakened line of communications between Jamrud and Jellalabad would probably be cut across at several points and our weak outposts destroyed. Either a third Division from India must come up and replace the second, or the first must fall back to Dakka and the Khaibar. The second would have been suicidal, the first the Government was not prepared for. A march through Maidan to Kurram, or an attack on the Maidan followed by an immediate return to Bazar, meant that our troops would be harassed and worried on every step of the return journey, and the Afridis would simply have been still more embittered, and less inclined to submit than ever. It was soon whispered in camp that orders had been received that the force was to return to the Khaibar so soon as some kind of arrangement could be made with the tribal chiefs to *allow* us to fall back without molestation.

General Maude in bitterness of spirit had the troops paraded and informed that though he was confident that if an advance was ordered it would be successfully carried through, orders had been received to fall back and he must obey.

The tribesmen were now in an excited state, keen to fight, eager to loot, but orders must be obeyed. For a time the chiefs refused to listen to the voice of the Political charmers. In vain the Political

Officer, unarmed, sat solitary on a rock some miles from camp scanning the pathways to catch the first glimpse of the expected Jirgah. At length a young Afridi Jemadar of the 24th P. I., Yassin Khan, volunteered his services as mediator, and finally induced the tribal elders to come in. After much talk these agreed to let our troops march away unmolested, probably for a heavy consideration. The chiefs kept their word under exceptional temptations, the several columns returned to the Khaibar unmolested, and the expedition was over, and well it was so.

The return of the several columns to the Khaibar line was only just in time to prevent, as had been feared at Jellalabad, the rising against us of the Mohmands and Shinwarris, and perhaps other tribes. Already zealous mullahs had begun preaching *Jehad*, and had Maude's force been compelled to halt in the Maidan for even a fortnight, every post between Ali Musjid and Jellalabad would have been attacked. There was no 3rd Division at hand to replace the 2nd, and if the 1st, Sir Sam Browne's, had been compelled to fall back from Jellalabad to succour these posts, it is quite possible that every tribe from Kabul to Peshawar would have been up in arms.

As it was several months elapsed before the unrest then started calmed down, if indeed it ever did, till the peace of Gundamak was concluded.



## CHAPTER IX.

### AMONG THE MOHMANDS.

It was my misfortune to be one of the first to feel the effects of the change in the spirit of the tribes.

I have already related how that within a week of the occupation of the Khaibar I had wandered among the Mohmands with a small escort unmolested. Just before the Bazar Expedition I had surveyed a portion of the Shinilo route to Dakka from Michni with the consent of the local chiefs and under their escort. Only seven miles of this route remained unsurveyed ; I asked to be allowed to complete this bit of work, and then, if possible, to attempt the survey of the next kafilah route to the north, that passing through the Gandab Valley from Shabkadr.

This is certainly the easiest kafilah route between Jellalabad and the Peshawar Valley, but it is much longer than any of the Khaibar routes. It had been traversed by small parties of Europeans during the first Afghan war, but little was known of it. I had obtained a glimpse into the Pandiali and Gandab Valleys in 1869 from the east. I wished now to get a look into them from the south ; even if it was impossible to work through them.

After some demur leave was granted, but it was decided that it would not be safe for me to have an

escort of less than a full company of regulars. I still believe that if I had been permitted to arrange for an escort of Mohmauds only with the chiefs, I might have managed to get through. But it was known that the authority of the chiefs was often set at naught by zealous mullahs, and might be so on the present occasion, especially as I had no intention of assuming a disguise, to which I have strong objections especially in war time, for obvious reasons.

At length I found myself at Michni, the guest of the then Commandant Colonel Elton of the 7th B. I. who had been saved by his own sepoys, from slaughter, at Delhi on the first night of the great Mutiny.

As I had only seven miles to survey and that within hail almost of a British fort, I hoped to get done and be back before dark, and so little expected any opposition going over ground that I had previously traversed with an escort of two outlaws only, that I considered it sufficient to take 20 men of my escort with me intending to leave these as baggage guard next day when I had a longer climb before me. With me were also Jung Khan and some other Mohmands, and the Tahsildar of Michni, and I was joined later on in some mysterious manner by my old friend Kamran Khan from Shilman. Some months previously Kamran Khan had been arrested for conniving at the theft of some camels from the camp at Lundi Kotal, and sentenced to be shot, if the camels

were not forthcoming next morning. After pleading his cause with the Commandant I had agreed to stand security for Kamran to the amount of Rs. 300, so he was released and brought back the camels on the third evening according to promise. He had purchased them from the thieves. He now appeared on the scene, and stood by me all day, though unarmed, he having been aware apparently of danger threatening and being determined to ransom me if made prisoner. Anyhow the morning passed without any sign of disturbance. I completed the survey of the route just under a conical peak from which I was certain I could obtain a good view of the Gandab Valley and perhaps farther country. Leaving all but four of my escort below I climbed the peak and was rewarded by a fine view of all the Mohmand country to north and west and was soon busy sketching and getting names of villages from some Mohmand herdsmen who were there grazing their cattle. I had been about half an hour at work when some one called out "Look out, here they come," and looking down I saw a long line of blue-coated Pathans hurrying towards the base of the hill up a ravine to the north. I shut up work sharp and began a hurried descent to the south. I had only gone a few paces when the cow-herds I had been speaking to opened fire on us, and on my asking them why they did so when I had done them no harm they replied that they had got orders from below. We all got down safely and with the whole escort were

soon marching towards Michni at a good pace hoping to get away without fighting. But it was no use, some 30 of the Mohmands got ahead of us and opened fire from a ridge we had to cross. We charged these and they let us pass, but soon heavy firing began from all sides, puffs of smoke appeared behind every rock and bush, but no one was hit. Then we noticed the flashing of swords and saw it was time to do some firing ourselves, so dividing the escort into two sections, I gave one to the Havildar Sergeant and took the other myself and retired by alternate sections still unharmed for about a couple of miles. Then a nasty rocky descent was reached. I sent the Havildar below with ten men to hold a low ridge of rocks from which he could cover the descent, and after seeing his party settled I ordered five more men to descend, and a few moments later seeing no enemy near I told the remaining men to retire. Scarcely had they turned to do so when there was a yell of *Allahi Allah* and in a moment swords were flashing about us. One of my men was killed and two wounded, but we managed to retaliate with interest, especially as my second five came dashing up hill again and used their butt ends to some purpose. When all was quiet again, we again started down helping our wounded men along. Suddenly a volley came unto us and the brave Naick was shot through the body and one arm, and dropped. Two of us ran back to pick him up, and as we did so he said "Go away Sahib, Amritsar is a long way off. I'm

done for." However we managed to get him along somehow a few paces when I tripped over a stone and fell down some paces. The wounded man fell where he was, and before I could help him a Pathan cut him across the neck and came on to me. Once more we had a short scrimmage and then all was quiet again. Fortunately I had both sword and revolver. We now reached the Havildar, and for the next mile putting our wounded, now increased to three, behind us, we fell back step by step with bayonets fixed and rifles loaded half facing the enemy, of whom some were firing while individuals were creeping after us from bush to bush sword in hand. At length we reached open country and met a party of cavalry coming out to help us, and so got in by dark to Michni. We had been under fire for about four hours, and the men were very tired.

A court of enquiry on the conduct of the sepoy was held subsequently. A "Queen's officer" on the Board decided that the men had only done what was expected of them, so they received no rewards. Many men, European and Native, have received "orders" for less.

This attack was the first result of the unrest caused by the second Bazar Expedition. Within a few days the disturbances spread, and shortly after it was known that large parties of Mohmands were crossing the Kabul River opposite Kam Dakka.

The people of Kam Dakka had often received British officers and detachments of troops in a friendly manner, and provided fuel and food for them. The Political

Officer feared that on them would fall the vengeance of the mullahs, and arranged for the despatch of two companies of the Mhairwara Battalion under Captain O'Moore Creagh to assist the threatened villagers. On arrival before the walls, however, the people begged the British officer not to come into the village as this would certainly result in their punishment by their clansmen as soon as the troops were recalled, whereas at present they were in no danger. Creagh decided to remain in the neighbourhood for the night and took up his position in the only defensible position in the neighbourhood outside the fort, a small graveyard surrounded by a low wall, enclosing a clump of trees. Here at dawn Creagh found himself surrounded by Mohmands who soon opened fire on his party and gradually closed in on them. The Mhairwaras had only lately been provided with Snider rifles which they had hardly learned to use properly; they had never been in action to speak of before, and seeing the large numbers of the enemy were somewhat cowed. The Mohmands crept closer and closer and at last Creagh ordered a charge. Being the only British officer present he could hardly lead and without a leader his men would not move. He dropped a Native officer over the wall and with a kick urged him on, but it was useless, the man slunk back. In this emergency the company *bhisty* (a Musalman) suddenly drew an old *talwar*, and waving this in one hand and his *massuck* in the other started forward and the sepoy

then followed and drove back their assailants. Several charges succeeded and the Mohmands were kept at bay till about 2 P. M., when a party of Bengal Lancers from Dakka appeared on the scene and drove the enemy before them into the ravines and the river.

Later on a couple of guns of a mountain battery and some companies of British infantry arrived on the scene. A co-operating force had been ordered from Lundi Kotal, and had this arrived that evening the Mohmands might have been severely punished. But orders were received late, the road or path down the slopes of Torsappar was steep and narrow, the column had not reached the pass above Kam Dakka when evening was closing in. The senior British officer with the Dakka force knew little of the country or the people; he had received no positive orders, and in an ill moment decided to return to Dakka before night set in. The road or path lay over a succession of low rocky spurs with ravines between for several miles. The retreat at first was slow, the Mohmands following well-known tactics immediately came in pursuit and harried the tired troops almost to the walls of Dakka causing some losses and not a little panic, and returned to their homes exultant, bragging of their prowess in driving a British force of all arms before them for several miles almost without loss to themselves. Had the officer in command been one experienced in frontier warfare he would certainly not have attempted a retiring movement in the dark.

## CHAPTER X.

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### DISTURBANCES AMONG THE SHINWARRIS.

#### ACTION AT DEH SARAK.

Shortly after these occurrences the Commander-in-Chief Sir Frederick Haines and Staff arrived, and inspected all the troops from Peshawar to Jellalabad.

One consequence of his visit was a decision to extend survey operations as far as practicable on either side of the line occupied by the troops. This was the result of an interview between His Excellency and Lieutenant Leach, R.E., who had replaced Captain Samuels, the Survey Officer who died of fever in December. Leach had accompanied General Tytler's column into the Bazar Valley and had since been chafing under the restraints that had prevented him from filling up portions of the blanks on our maps.

The great range of the Safed Koh or white mountain which divides the Kurram Valley from the Jellalabad or Kabul River Valley runs in an unbroken ridge for over 100 miles at an elevation of 13,000 to 15,000 feet from the neighbourhood of Kabul City to the valleys of Tirah. From the main range great bold forest-covered spurs with steep sides are thrown north and south, the descent along the crests being gradual for the first four or five miles then very steep falls succeed, down to an elevation



of 4,000 to 5,000 feet, after which each spur opens out into a fanlike plateau, covered with rocks and stones—moraines of a bygone age—till they disappear in the valley itself. The watercourses between the several spurs bring down large volumes of water from the melting snow, but the water sinks under the surface before the valley is reached, but is tapped to supply the karez or irrigation channels that spread for miles over the low country. These lesser lateral valleys widen out considerably near the bases of the steep spurs, and are dotted with numerous villages and towers, embedded in fruit trees and surrounded by terraced fields of wheat, barley, rice and other crops. The grape vine and mulberry, apricots, peaches and other fruits abound. The whole tract is known as Ningrahar. During the months of June and July the temperature sometimes is high and snow lies heavy in January and February, but for the greater part of the year no better climate could be found. The tribes that inhabit these villages are, from the Khaibar westward, first Shinwarris, then Khugianis and lastly Ghilzais, all brave stalwart people, very proud of their independence and resenting all intrusion even of the Amir's troops whom they have often defeated and driven back to the lower country.

The more open country lying near the Kabul River is also occupied by numerous villages and has wide stretches of cultivation. The inhabitants are chiefly Tajiks, of Persian descent, speaking Persian, industrious, peace-loving and in constant dread of their unruly

neighbours. These would have gladly accepted our rule. The others, especially the Shinwarris, resented our occupation. The Khugianis are as a rule less warlike than the Shinwarris, and for a time were more friendly disposed towards us.

From the time that our troops, having driven away those of the Amir, had occupied Dakka and Bassawal and subsequently Jellalabad all had been quiet in the valley. The Amir had started across the Hindu Kush to claim the fulfilment of Russia's promises of help, and, having found that he had been leaning on a broken reed, died broken-hearted at Mazar-i-Sharif. His son, Yakub, brought from a ten years captivity had yet made no sign either of friendship or hostility to us. The passes ahead were still buried in snow. Throughout the valley all was peace and quiet. Savants, headed by Mr. Simpson, the veteran artist of the "Illustrated London News," were searching among the mounds and ruins of Hada for the foundations of the Buddhist monasteries mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims, and previously examined by Masson; it was hoped that shortly excursions could be made into the farther portions of Ningrahar. Meantime Lt. E. Leach, R.E., got permission to start mapping. Escorted by a company of the 45th Sikhs and a troop of Guides Cavalry, and securing the services of some native officers who could speak the language, he started into the valleys to the south of Jellalabad. As he ascended the first he entered, he was told by the native Political Agent attached that the

Khugianis who occupied it were averse to the survey and would probably attack the party. Making use of his native officers he entered into negotiations with the chiefs of the valley, and at length got them to agree to the survey being made on payment of Rs. 50. This done he continued work eastwards and completed the survey of the next section for Rs. 25. A third valley cost Rs. 10 only. Naturally he concluded that all the talk about possible opposition, attacks, etc., was either baseless or exaggerated, and determined to continue his survey without consulting the chiefs.

He was not aware, or ignored the fact, that he had now completed the survey of the Khugiani valleys in this direction and that the next valley belonged to the Shinwarris. The valley known as Maidanak was thickly peopled and richly cultivated. The main villages lie in a small open plain hidden from the north by some low-lying hills which rose gently from the plain to a ridge about 500 feet higher and immediately overlooking Maidanak. By the merest accident the very day that Leach started to do the survey had been chosen by the tribal elders to meet at Maidanak to discuss the question of submitting to the British, or fighting them by attacking the nearest outposts. The discussion was at its height when suddenly a party of sepoys were seen by the ever-watchful clansmen looking down on them from the ridge. This ridge was the most elevated spot in the neighbourhood naturally the surveyor wanted to see what was beyond. The approaches were rugged and unfit for

Cavalry movements so the Guides remained below. Barclay with the company of the 45th went up some way with Leach, then, as the ominous roll of drums was heard, objected to going farther. But Leach as senior officer insisted, and taking only 20 men with him went on to the crest. Instantly the drums beat in every tower the young men snatched up their arms and were soon swarming up the hill towards the intruders. Firing commenced on both sides but the Shinwarris reached the crest. Barclay who hurried up to support Leach was mortally wounded. Leach while fiercely defending himself with his clubbed carbine received a severe sword cut in the left arm and some of the sepoy were killed. The numbers of the enemy were increasing every minute and Leach determined to fall back fighting taking Barclay along with him. In spite of their courageous resistance the sepoy were being hard pressed when fortunately their line of retreat took them across the ravine that formed the boundary between Shinwarri and Khugiani, and the latter called on the Shinwarris to desist ; so Leach was able to fall back into the plain. For his courage on this occasion Leach obtained a V.C. Barclay died the same night.

Provoked or unprovoked such an attack could not be passed in silence ; if measures were not taken at once to punish the clan serious disturbances along the entire line of march might be expected.

General Tytler was now in command at Bassawal, and was ordered to attack Maidanak. The force placed

at his disposal for the purpose was one that the whole strength of the Shinwarris could not hope to cope with successfully. There was no attempt made to hide our advance or its objective. The column started from Bassawal at dawn, and by noon we were in Maidanak. Not a shot was fired. The Shinwarris, knowing their weakness, quietly retired to the hill tops to the south and calmly watched our proceedings while their towers were being blown up. After an hour or two the tribal elders came down and submitted to Tytler. He insisted on a survey of the valley being made, and I was able to fill in the blank left here in Leach's map. This might have closed the incident, and the Shinwarris might have been induced to settle down without troubling us again, but unfortunately on the very day we were in Maidanak, a convoy of camels escorted by 20 sepoy of the 27th Punjabis had gone out towards another Shinwarri village called Deh Sarak to bring in some loads of *bhoosa* that had been purchased for us by the *bunyas* of the large neighbouring village of Pesh Bolak. With the convoy was a Bengali Gomashta swollen with pride of place, and this gentleman calmly walked on ahead of the convoy to make purchases on his own account. In the course of negotiations he appears to have forgotten whom he was dealing with, and used abusive language to the son of one of the chiefs. Immediately after he was seen flying for all he was worth towards the convoy yelling murder, and behind with drawn knife was the

young chief. The havildar drew up his small body at once and opening fire the young chief was killed. Immediately the drum beat, the havildar hurrying the camels away, fell back slowly and carefully, repulsed by volleys the ever-increasing numbers of his enemy and brought back his party safely. Tytler received orders to blow up the towers of the offending chiefs. This time he hoped to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion, and decided to take a small force with him. Some 400 infantry composed of companies of the 5th Fusiliers (Northumberlands), 27th Punjabis, and 2nd Gurkhas, one troop each of the 11th and 13th Lancers, and 2 mountain guns left Bussawal at midnight, hoping to reach Deh Sarak before dawn.

Dawn broke while we were still two miles from the doomed towers. Tytler decided to push on with the cavalry ordering the infantry and guns to follow as rapidly as possible. I was with the infantry. We had not gone far when the crack of rifles and the louder reports of matchlocks broke the silence. A sowar came dashing back to order the infantry to push on. The line of march lay over terraced rice fields, ankle deep in mud. The British soldiers who had been growling audibly at being so often made fools of, and dragging their feet along, brushed up, and in a moment were pushing forward over mud and water as if they had not marched a mile. The sight before us as we reached the scene of action was at once grand and curious. For

above our front rose the giant slopes of the Safed Koh, the snowy tops pink in the rays of the rising sun ; below, the sombre forests of pines still in darkness ; ahead of us a smiling valley dotted with towers and small forts. Round one of these sat on their horses one troop of cavalry, the other troop dismounted—half on the top of a low hillock in the bed of a stream, the other half holding the horses at the foot—were firing volleys with their carbines at a strong body of Shinwarris, who, with drawn knives and flying robes, were rushing on them from all sides. From every fort muskets were flashing, the reports reverberating among the surrounding hills. Suddenly the Martinis of the 5th rattled out, the advancing Shinwarris halted in astonishment. The dismounted troopers, hearing the loud “mount” of Major Thompson, rushed to their horses and were soon forming line to charge. Three or four rapid volleys from the infantry told on the Shinwarris who now rushed away in groups across the bed of the broad nullah below, and were soon clambering up the banks on the off side. The troopers trotted down the bed of the nullah till a break in the bank enabled them to ride up and re-form on the plateau. About 100 yards from them making for the hills was a group of some 60 Shinwarris. Headed by their British officers—Thompson, Heath and Gerard—the cavalry charged, their horses’ hoofs rattling loud among the rocks and stones. The Shinwarris turned to meet them, and

fired as the troopers neared, but what could matchlocks and knives do against lances? In less than a minute every man of the group was dead. Again the Lancers charged straight for a second group of Shinwarris, but ere these were reached shouts of "halt, halt" rang out. A deep ravine lay between the troopers and their prey, these fired and hurried off. In a few minutes no living Shinwarri was visible. Except those whose bodies lay scattered about every man was hidden in ravines, behind bushes, or in the forts and a dead silence reigned.

The troops now settled down to a light breakfast, after throwing out strong pickets, while the Sappers commenced undermining the offending forts.

The guns had taken up a position on a commanding knoll, when suddenly several matchlock bullets struck round them fired from a neighbouring fort. The guns were turned on the tower and infantry ordered to rush the place as soon as the doors had been blown in. Thus a desultory action recommenced all along the line. Every picket was soon engaged, and for several hours firing continued. I had a strange little adventure while mapping the battlefield and surroundings. I was passing what seemed two corpses; as I approached one sprang up and tried to rush me with his knife; fortunately he was unable to reach me and dropped near my feet. I had drawn my revolver, and the man hearing me speak to him in his own language asked me not to kill him I made him throw away his knife and then asked one.



of my escorts to get a dandy—"dandy, Sir, let us put a bayonet into him." "Surely you would not kill a wounded man," I said. "If we were wounded he'd soon knife us like those poor chaps of ours the other day." "Just so," I said, "but I hope we know better than they what is right." "I believe you there Sir," he said, and went for the dandy. Before he returned the others had bandaged the wounded leg very gently, and finally punched the head of one of the bearers for raising the wounded man so roughly as to hurt him.

From one of the towers a persistent fire was kept up on the guns. Shell after shell burst over the tower each shell was followed by a shot from the tower. At length the infantry forced open the gate and got in as they did so all but one Pathan bolted. He held on, refused to surrender and told the sepoy he had no bullets left or they would not come so close. When told the tower was about to be blown up, he replied "blow away, I stay here." At last a Pathan native officer advised him to come down and save his life. The man asked if there was a British officer near. When the officer came to the front the Shinwarri came down. He was, however, shot by a Sikh sepoy who had some special grudge to pay off.

The taking of several forts in succession took several hours. Evening was approaching and we had 14 miles to march back. About 4 P.M. orders were issued for the transport animals, hospital and guns to fall back, and the cavalry to cross over to the other bank of a

large nallah which the force must cross on retirement. Then the pickets were recalled. As the bugles sounded the "retire" the guns fired their last shots; the two forts that had been undermined were blown up. And at this moment a yell of "Allahi Allah" ran round the whole front; and from every ravine, every rock, every bush sprang Shinwarris with drawn knives and led by mullahs waving flags, a swarm of about 2,000 men rushed forward. The moment was critical. The detached pickets, soldiers and sepoy had to run for their lives with yelling Shinwarris in pursuit. The General was as calm as a rock. Seated on his horse he looked along his main line of some three companies of the 5th and 27th and in a quiet voice said "take it easy men, when I give the order fire low." The leaders of the enemy were within 50 yards when the General cried "fire;" down went the advancing Shinwarris in dozens, but still they came on till their bodies lay in heaps before the line. Some few rushed on, jumped over the bodies of the men lying in a trench firing, and dashing into a fort behind us recommenced firing from there. The main charge was however broken. The 27th Punjabi company sprang to its feet and led by Lieutenant Thruston charged with the bayonet across the front. Then doubling round reformed behind the tower. The 5th also wheeled round and once more a line faced the foe. Between the enemy and ourselves, calmly seated along the foot of the wall were the Shinwarri women and children who had been gathered in from the various forts for protection.

Our line then retired slowly facing the foe. Meantime the two flanks of the Shinwarri line curved round, and hurrying down the nullahs on either side endeavoured to close in on our rear. The General had, however, foreseen this and had left a strong party of Gurkhas to hold the point where the stream beds met and our route lay. As the Shinwarris rushed madly forward they were met by a steady fire and were thrown back. Our line then crossed the nullahs and reformed on the opposite bank. The Shinwarris faced us. Night was closing in, our ammunition was running short, and at this moment a crowd of banyas from Pesh Bolak came and threw themselves at the feet of the General, begging him to occupy that village, otherwise the excited Shinwarris would destroy them all. The General decided to occupy Pesh Bolak, which was surrounded by a strong wall; and meantime sent for reinforcements. I started off with a letter to Colonel Battye and met the Gurkhas hurrying out, the long continued firing having convinced Battye that reinforcements would be welcome. The Gurkhas now occupied Pesh Bolak and the troops who had been engaged all day returned to Bussawal unmolested. For some hours the Shinwarri yelled round Pesh Bolak, but gradually the shouting ceased. Next morning we were told that the tribal elders wished to parley. On collecting their dead and wounded they found that their losses numbered some hundreds, and they had had enough of fighting. Pesh Bolak is a large village in which several hundred families of Hindu (Kathri) traders had

lived for many years. During the disastrous retreat of our troops from Kabul in 1840 these had steadily supplied our armies in Jellalabad and along the line of march from the Khaibar with provisions. Here Ferris with his Afridi levies found shelter and food, till having received orders to disband the company the men escorted him in safety through the Bazar valley back to Peshawar. As soon as our troops re-entered the valley in 1878 the Kathris again came forward and arranged for supplies of food, forage and fuel at Bussawal, Dakka and other posts occupied by the troops. Ordinarily the Hindu traders in this and other cities live on the best terms with the Musalmans around them but on an occasion like the present, their blood being up, it was quite possible that the clansmen might have started slaughtering and looting the Hindus. Tytlers arrangements prevented this at the time, and after a day or two the danger had passed. The Shinwarris did not molest us again during the 1878-79 campaign.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### KHUGIANI RISING.

#### ACTION AT FATTEHABAD.

Scarcely had the Shinwarris settled down after Deh Sarak than rumour spread that Khugianis and Ghilzais were disturbed, and contemplated attacks on outposts. The chief of the Ghilzais who occupied the country between Jagdallak and Gandamak along the valley of the Surkhab was one Azmatullah Khan, who had shot Sir Alexander Burnes in the former war. Nothing could persuade him to "come in." He stood proof against all allurements, and now that the snows in the lower valleys had melted, the "gathering of the clans" began. The Khugiani chief of Gandamak had as a youth assisted in the destruction of the last remnant of the Kabul Army of Occupation, at the "red hill" overlooking the bridge over the Surkhab between Jagdallak and Gandamak. I met this chief later; he described how that Akbar Khan had sent down orders to the Khugianis to close the road to Jellalabad, towards which the harassed British troops were forcing their way. The drums beat, and a strong force was soon collected on and round the bridge. Heavy firing was heard towards Jagdallak, and shortly after the

Khugianis saw a small compact body of red coats marching stolidly down the narrow path towards the bridge all round them were large numbers of Ghilzais firing into the devoted band. When the British saw the mass of Khugianis crowning the heights in front, the small column turned sharp to the left, ascended a little red hill, and formed square there. Eight officers on horseback charged straight for the bridge under a heavy fire, four crossed it alive, the other four were cut down. Khugianis and Ghilzais now closed round the small body of British, some 50 or 60 in all, and under cover of a heavy fire crept closer and closer till some 30 yards only remained between the combatants. The British had ceased firing, and the Pathans concluded that they had no more ammunition. Suddenly the whole body fired a volley and charged straight into their assailants, a fearful struggle ensued. Every Englishman was killed, but, concluded the chief, "for every Englishman at least two Pathans died. I then vowed never again to fight against Englishmen and I have not done so."

The four officers after crossing the bridge rode on and reached Fattehabad, a Tajik village, in safety. Three decided to go into the village and try to get a drink, the fourth, Dr. Brydone, saw his horse was failing so went on. The villagers brought out milk for the three officers, but in a few minutes a party of Khugianis who had ridden in pursuit of them arrived and killed them. The Army of Occupation in the person

of Dr. Brydone reached Jellalabad the same day. Had the "Illustrious Sale" been bold enough to follow the advice of Major Broadfoot and sent out even portion of his troops, the little band that died on the red hill might have been saved.

The Gandamak Chief refused to join the malcontents, but the other chiefs of the tribe determined to assist the Ghilzais. Azmatullah with a strong following took up his position on the crest of the Siah Koh, a rocky range of hills lying along the south bank of the Kabul River, the near base of which is about six miles west of Jellalabad. The principal places held throughout the winter months by the 1st Division of the Khaibar force under Sir Sam Browne were Dakka and Bussawal where Tytler commanded, and Jellalabad where Macpherson was Brigadier. Here, too, were Sir Sam Browne's headquarters and Cavagnari with his Assistant Jenkyns. Tytler's Brigade had taken part in the Bazar expeditions and the skirmishes and fights with Mohmands and Shinwarris. Macpherson's Brigade had sat idle in Jellalabad waiting for the snows to clear ahead, hoping then to advance perhaps on Kabul itself, if not farther. The Gurkhas and Rifles had fraternised and exchanges of rum and fat sheep had been made by each to other on their respective holidays, while General Macpherson's Irish stews had become famous in the force. The horses of the 10th Hussars had become tired of flicking off the flies and they and their riders were for once longing for the warm weather to set in.

On this peaceful scene, the advent of Azmatullah was hailed with delight. At length the time for action had arrived.

The following disposition of troops was ordered,— Macpherson with the Rifle Brigade, 4th Gurkhas and a mountain battery was to advance directly on the Siah Koh to assault the heights where Azmatullah had placed his flag. In anticipation of the defeat of that chief, some squadrons of the 10th Hussars, and 11th Bengal Cavalry were to cross the Kabul River at Jellalabad, and riding up the opposite (northern) bank of the river were to intercept the flight across the river if attempted. Some companies of the 27th Punjabis and 45th Sikhs were moved up from Bussawal, and there with the 17th Foot, the remaining troops of the Hussars, the Guides Cavalry and a Horse Artillery Battery the whole under Colonel Charles Gough were to advance along the Gandamak-Kabul road to Fattehabad to overawe the Khugianis, prevent them from joining Azmatullah on the Siah Koh and prevent Azmatullah from retiring into the Khugiani country.

Gough marched first to Fattehabad and settled there ; at dusk Macpherson's Brigade marched out to surprise Azmatullah at dawn. Bonfires and rockets on the Siah Koh showed that the Ghilzais knew what was being done, but the march was continued. At midnight the Bengal Cavalry followed by the Hussars filed over a little bridge near camp. Joyously chatting and laughing, it was a brilliant moonlit night, no fear of surprise



possible. Yet ere an hour had passed, a charger wildly neighing came thundering over the little bridge back into camp, followed by another and another, till it seemed as if the whole body of cavalry had come flying back in panic; but there were no riders! What had happened; had the cavalry fallen into an ambush there would have been heavy firing, all the horses would not have been riderless. The ford—what had happened there.

There were two or three fords across the river near Jellalabad; across these while the river is low women and even children might be seen wading across. The easiest one, and that most in use, was directly opposite the city. This would perhaps be watched by spies of Azmatullah. It was decided therefore to cross at another somewhat lower down. The question of marking it out with flags was discussed, but to have done this would have at once informed our nimble enemy of our plans. Surely on a bright night with a full moon above, no mistake could be made. The stampede had roused the camp, and several of us went off towards the river to see what had happened. A trooper walking back with bleeding face. When asked what had occurred. "Don't know, Sir"; we were walking towards the river two and two when the orders came "close up." We closed up at a trot, suddenly we were on the river bank; I saw the horse in front of me go in, I urged my animal forward, down he went head first, and I was thrown into the water. As I rose a horse's hoof struck

me on the face and drove me down again ; it struck me that if I rose again I might be killed, so I dived and came out on the bank lower down. When I recovered somewhat I could see no one and hear no one, so I determined to make for camp, that is all I know."

It appears that the ford was in Z shape, the water above being very shallow, but below the Z was a sudden fall of four or five feet. When the Hussars reached the tail end of the Native Cavalry these were well across; the Hussars had no special guide. The two officers leading made straight for the other cavalry, their men following ; as they did so all the right hand men fell into the deep portion, the left hand men crossed safely. Trooper after trooper went down, but no one seems to have seen his danger till he was dragged helplessly down.

When the roll was called 47 men and one officer had been drowned. One officer and a few men were rescued from sand banks down stream, but only 19 bodies were recovered and buried next day with military honours.

The gloom that fell on the camp was, however, shortly after dispelled by the news that Gough had defeated the Khugianis with loss at Fattehabad.

General Macpherson's Brigade ascended the Siah Koh only to find it bare. The cavalry reconnaissance along the north bank discovered nothing ; Azmatullah and his Ghilzais had disappeared.

On arrival at Fattehabad Gough saw no signs of disturbance, and decided on sending a party along the road

to Gandamak to reconnoitre. A small body of Hussars went as an escort with Major Blair, R.E. They passed the beautiful gardens of Nimlibagh, and seeing no signs of an enemy, went on and on till they reached Gandamak. Here the chief met them cordially, and inviting them to his *hujra* gave them refreshments, and quietly warned Blair that he had better not linger long, as he, the chief, had received intimation that the drums had begun beating all down the line. Blair was an experienced frontier officer, and at once determined on hurrying back. As he started he heard the roll of the war drums, and knew he must make haste. As he trotted down the hill to Nimlibagh two troopers were unhorsed, but the Nimlibagh people caught the animals and meeting Blair told him to hurry on. He was just in time; while still some distance from Fattehabad occasional shots were fired at the troop. Fortunately General Gough had placed pickets on the heights near Fattehabad; one of these noticed the puffs of smoke and sent word to camp. Gough immediately collected his cavalry, about 400 of the Hussars and Guides, and with these and four Horse Artillery guns started up the road to meet Blair, ordering the infantry to follow up as fast as possible. Some two miles from Fattehabad the road ascends the side of one of those plateaux I have mentioned previously; as the troops rode up one side of this Blair's party rode up the opposite side and was safe. But on a ridge about half a mile to his right, from which the stony plateau

fell gently to the road, now appeared numerous standards, and shortly large parties of Khugianis appeared on the heights and sent detachments streaming down in long lines towards our troops. Shortly after the enemy opened fire on the guns, and taking advantage of cover were pushing straight for them. The guns now opened, but without stopping the Khugiani advance. These were now at close range, some of the artillery horses were hit, the guns fell back a few hundred yards, only to be closely followed by the enemy who were advancing in considerable strength. Commanding the Guide's Cavalry was Major Wigram Battye, one of the well-known heroic brotherhood of that name; he had been already wounded, but remained at the head of his men. At the critical moment he gave the order to charge and led his men straight for the foe. These broke and scattered, one large body rushing down the steep side of the plateau.

Battye charged down the slope with his subahdar and orderly, but the bulk of the troopers pulled up; it was not riding ground. As Battye neared the base a volley from the Khugianis killed horse and rider and both fell; instantly the Khugianis rushed forward to knife him, but his orderly threw himself on the dead body. The troopers rushed on foot sword in hand down the slope and a fierce hand-to-hand fight raged over the fallen officer till another troop of the Guides, led by Hamilton, came charging down on the scene of strife. The Khugianis fled. Nine dead bodies lay round

Battye's horse, but not a knife had reached his body.

Meantime the infantry had arrived on the extreme left of the position and their leading files, led by Lieutenant Wiseman of the 17th Foot, met the head of the right flank of the enemy which was marching to encircle the cavalry and guns. Wiseman, without waiting for his men to close up after their long run, with five or six soldiers charged the enemy and slew the standard bearer, but was cut down, and showers of stones compelled his followers to halt. For some time the heads of the two opposing columns halted and then both began to fall back. An order arrived from Gough for the infantry to advance ; this was done at once, and soon the Khugianis were being forced back to the ridge. Then the guns re-opened with grape, and Hussars and Guides charged. The enemy broke and fled down the opposite slopes towards their fortified villages, hard pressed by the cavalry. By evening Gough returned unmolested to Fattehabad ; the Khugianis lost about 600 in killed and wounded. Had our troopers been armed with lances, the enemy would have lost more heavily. Numbers escaped by throwing themselves on the ground when unable to escape and cut at the horses feet and stomachs as they passed, thereby some 40 animals were injured or killed. As it was they had had enough of fighting, and remained passive spectators when a few days after Tytler with a strong force advanced into their upper valley and blew up several towers.

From one of these towers, after the mine had been set alight, came calmly playing a little girl of three or four years of age who had somehow been left behind when the women and children were told to get out of the way. The R. E. officer in charge, I regret I cannot remember his name, a young Lieutenant, rushed back, and getting between the girl and the fort carried her out of danger just as the mine blew up and the walls came down with a thundering crash within a few feet of them.

The action at Fattehabad was the last fight on the Khaibar line during the campaign of 1878-79.

Some days after the action a Khugiani Chief sent in Lt. Wiseman's sword and watch as he "had heard that his mother was living."

## CHAPTER XII.

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### CLOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

#### VISIT TO THE SAFED KOH.

The heat in Jellalabad was now increasing daily. Gandamak at an elevation of 4,000 feet offered a more healthy site for headquarters, so the bulk of the 1st Division marched there and settled down shortly after Gough's action. It was decided to hut the troops as possibly it would be necessary to remain here throughout the summer. The Khugianis offered their services, and supplied timber from the slopes of the Safed Koh. Stores in large quantities were brought up from India. Parties were sent out to look for sanatoria in the neighbouring hills, and one Brigade under Appleyard had actually moved on to the heights at an elevation of 8,000 feet, when it was announced that the Amir Yakub Khan was coming down from Kabul to Gandamak to meet Cavagnari and arrange terms of peace.

About this time endeavours were being made to open communications across the Safed Koh with General Roberts, who held the Kurram Valley to the base of the Shutar Gardan pass, which pass he could occupy by a rapid march from Ali Khel, his advanced post, whenever so inclined.

Facing Gandamak, rising to a height of 15,600 feet, is the Sikaram peak, the highest point of the Safed Koh. Naturally many of us wished to reach its summit. Colonel Tanmer who had been the senior survey officer with the force was at this time making a futile attempt to enter Kafiristan. Captain Strahan, R.E., had replaced Leach and taken charge of survey work, but was still new to the country. Sir Charles Macgregor arranged that I should try to reach Sikaram and examine the roads into the Kurram.

It was decided that it would be best not to send any regular military escort with me, and no other European was allowed to go. Accordingly I started on the 26th May when Yakub Khan had already arrived at Gandamak with 25 Khugianis and my Punjabi khalasis and servant. That evening we halted at the last inhabited hamlet at the face of hills, and next day began the ascent by a mule track through the edible pine forests. By evening we had reached a height of about 12,000 feet where snow still lay under the forest shades. Clearing a space, we made our beds on the terraces. I had purchased a sheep during the day, and it was soon killed, cut up, spitted piecemeal on the iron ramrods of the matchlocks or on pine skewers, and all had a hearty meal. Pickets were now placed round some paces out and gradually, except some few still round the bonfires, we all fell asleep. I took care of course to have my rifle and revolver handy, though these would have been of little use had treachery been intended.



About midnight I woke with an uneasy feeling, and looking up saw a man levelling his matchlock over my head. I asked what he was doing and was told he was about to fire at a jackal. I told him I should punch his head if he did so, rousing everybody needlessly; so after some grumbling he put his gun away and laid down again. About three in the morning I was again roused, this time by musket shots. I at first expected an attack of some kind, but accidentally noticed that some of the Khugianis were calmly seated by the fire while the pickets were shouting and firing. I then noticed also that I could not hear the ping of bullets. Presently the young Khugianian chief in charge of the escort came rushing up to me, with sword and revolver in hand shouting excitedly "Don't fear, don't fear. I'll defend you." "Oh! go to sleep," I said, "and don't make a row." "But the Ghilzais are attacking us." "Why don't they fire bullets then?" This calmed him and he went off to see what the pickets were firing at. Shortly after he returned and said it was a false alarm. One of the party had fired at a jackal and startled everybody. All were now fully roused, and after the noise ceased I told them that as they had woke me up and I could not sleep again, I should have some coffee and start onward. We did so as dawn broke, and I kept them steadily on the move up one ridge, down another mostly over snow till late in the evening, when all were glad to rest.

Once during the day another attempt was made to alarm me. We were painfully scrambling up a steep

ascent when suddenly an armed party appeared over some rocks about 300 yards ahead. The young chief asked me to hide or go back till he had reconnited ahead as possibly these were hostile Ghilzais. I did not like the look of things ; using my binoculars, however, I recognised one or two of the "enemy" as belonging to my escort. So I told the chief he could go ahead 50 yards or so ; but if he attempted to get away or if any shots were fired I would shoot him.

Covered by my rifle he went ahead a bit and hailed the others. After some shouting he called to me to come on. Some of his men had gone ahead to make sure no Ghilzais were lurking round. Some of the men suggested that we should occupy some caves in the face of a neighbouring cliff, the only approaches to which were steep narrow steps cut in the face of the rock, up or down which few men would venture at night, and we should be safe from alarms. The cave we occupied was very roomy and at the elevation not too close or stuffy. So I took possession of the cleanest corner, and my escort made themselves comfortable. A huge fire was lit near the entrance, and soon the Khugianis were having their evening meal of *bhuta* (Indian corn) cakes somewhat stale, and such pieces of mutton as had been reserved from the previous evening, washed down by water from the stream below. I was just about to turn in when one of the men came across from the fire and starting a good shiver in imitation of ague asked if I had any brandy *sharab*. What, I said, a Musalman

asking for brandy. Oh ! he said, I am the *mirasi* (bard) of the party, it does not matter what I do. So I gave him a small drink. As he finished the dose with evident satisfaction an old greybeard came up and asked what he was drinking; *dawai* (medicine), said the *mirasi*. " Oh ! I have such a pain," said greybeard, " cannot you give me some *dawai* too." I offered him the flask, but he shrunk back and said he dare not drink brandy ; had I nothing else. Yes, I have some stuff made from ginger (ginger wine), would that do ? He tasted it and approving swallowed the dose. Then another and another came all suffering from " such pains " and in a short time the bottle was empty. Our *mirasi* now struck up a tune on his *sitara*, the rest joined in and for a couple of hours they sang and danced, with drawn swords, round the fire in evident enjoyment. It was only when I growled out that we had a long climb before us next day that they reluctantly closed their games and curled up leaving a sentry at the entrance. Next morning we started early, and after a long steady climb reached a pass over which the mule track to Ali Khel crossed a watershed. Here we halted for the night after looking down on a small tarn or lake, the source of the Mangal Darrah that flowed down the valley westwards. Next day we clambered through heavy snow and over a small glacier to the foot of the highest peak. Here several of the Khugianis declared they could go no further. As I was seated on a rock admiring the scenery, my greybeard friend of over-

night came and asked how much further I was going. "To the top," I said. "What for," he replied, "its a steep ascent. Can't you say you have been there without all this climbing, there it is before you." I told him I must place my theodolite on the top and fix the distance of other peaks and General Roberts' camps. He then told me there was a very sacred shrine near the top, and anyone not a Musalman going near it was sure to get fever. I told him I had been to many shrines. He then said that a small plant grew in the snow the smell of which gave people severe headaches and made them senseless (he was of course referring to the drowsiness caused to people unaccustomed to it by the rarified air). I said I should like to find some as it would be most useful, putting wounded people to sleep while their limbs were being attended to. "Ah! but when you fall senseless *Gins* carry you off to the Fairies' halls. On his assuring me that the Fairies were very beautiful I assured him I had no objection to such visits. Losing all patience he said "fools, idiots, *sahibs* might want to go to such places, no one in his senses would." I told him to tell his people when he got home again that when a *sahib* had made up his mind to go anywhere the best thing to do was to let him go.

About noon on the 29th May about six of us reached the summit, most of the others were lying about on the snow below or part of the way up. I had soon fixed my instrument and assured myself that I was really on the highest peak of the range.

The Jellalabad Valley lay to the north, and most of Sir Sam Browne's positions were visible. There are two peaks ; the northern, just a little lower than the southern, hid Gandamak from the higher peak, but from the last the entire valley of the Kurram lay open to view below from the Zaimukht country on the east to Ali Khel and Shutar Gardau. The Peiwar Kotal was so near, though 6.000 feet below, that with the glasses I could see the horses' tails waving to and fro. Beyond Ali Khel, but well elevated above it, an open valley stretched away in the direction of Ghazni. But the grandest view was that to the north, where the long lines of the snow summits of the Hindu Kush were visible from the north of Swat to the peaks north of Kabul. One great black mass stood head and shoulders above its fellows, which at first I took to be a black cloud, but as it was unchanged while I took several observations I decided that it must be a mountain top.

After spending some hours on the summit we descended to our previous night's bivouac, intending to make for Ali Khel next day. But during the night the chief said he had just received orders to return as, first, the British troops were leaving Gandamak at once, and, second, that the Ghilzais had refused to let them go through ; so reluctantly I returned to camp.

## CHAPTER XIII.

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### AFTER EVENTS.

#### THE CAVAGNARI MISSION.

The return to India, the awful "death march" with cholera raging all down the line, had just commenced. Yakub Khan had agreed to cede Kurram and the Khaibar as far as Lundi Kotal, to assign to the British the Peshin plateau and, finally, to allow a British mission to reside in Kabul. This last he agreed to most reluctantly. He explained that he had had no time to collect his friends and murder or exile his enemies, a disorganised army, an empty treasury.

If the British Government would agree to postpone the arrival of the mission in Kabul till the following spring he would be able by that time to welcome and protect them; otherwise he could not guarantee their safety. His protestations were unheeded. British prestige needed that where a Russian mission had been there a British mission must be located. In a couple of months Cavagnari with Jenkyns as his Assistant, Dr. Kelly of the Guides as Medical Officer, Captain Hamilton in command of the escort of some 200 Sikhs of the Guide Corps, were quietly settled in Kabul, the Amir occupying his palace, and the Afghan troops

cantonment in Sherpur. For a time all went well. The British officers, unlike the Russians, were free to come and go as they pleased; men's minds in India were calming down; the winter was coming on; possibly when the passes were closed by snow some attack might be made on the Residency, but perhaps the mission would be back in Ali Khel before that.

Suddenly the wires flashed to all parts of the world the terrible news that the entire British mission had been destroyed. Roberts was at Simla, his column still held the Kurram from the advanced post at Ali Khel; the Shutar Gardan pass could be occupied at once, and the Logar route to Kabul open to an advance, and if this was made rapidly our troops might be in Kabul before the tribes could muster their strength.

The history of the advance has been well told by the hero of the occasion and others. The Amir and his principal officers came into the General's camp. The leaderless Afghan malcontents made but a poor stand on the Charasiab heights. Sherpur, where over 200 guns were in position, was occupied without a shot being fired against it. A court of three members, one a native of India tried and condemned to death several of the leaders of the riot that ended in the death of Cavagnari and his brave escort, and the question of annexation loomed large.

General Roberts decided that Yakub Khan was guilty of complicity in the murder, and deported him. Then came the rising of the clans. The siege of

Sherpur, the defeat of the tribal armies, the march of Sir Donald Stewart from Kandahar to Kabul which cleared the way for Roberts' subsequent march from Kabul to Kandahar. The defeat of the Beaconsfield Ministry and the return to India under Gladstone's orders after Abdul Rahman had been placed on the gaddi.—by General Stuart—or by God himself according to Abdul Rahman, and the defeat of Ayub Khan by Roberts in return for our defeat at Maiwand, and the siege of Kandahar.

: Was Yakub Khan guilty in the matter of Cavagnari's death? I met one day in the streets of Kabul a venerable mullah, whom I saluted in Musalman style. He returned the greeting cordially, asked if I could speak Persian, or Pushto, then asked me to accompany him to his hujra, where after tea he solemnly drew from his breast pocket a "Mavor's spelling book" and asked me to write the pronunciations of the English letters in Persian characters as he wished to learn English.

Some days after, when we had become friendly he told me the following story of the massacre, and from all I heard then and after I believe his version was true. The Amir Sahib had ever a friendly feeling for the British; when he was in prison he ever hoped that some time or other the Viceroy would secure his freedom and meantime knew that dread of the British alone prevented his father from depriving him of eyesight. He would have gladly welcomed Cavagnari, but he feared that any day some fanatic might murder one or other



of the British officers and he would be deposed in consequence. He never anticipated what really did happen. No one in Kabul did. Six Kabuli regiments in Herat mutinied because they had received no pay for a year, shot some of their officers, and marching to Kabul demanded an interview with the Amir ; meantime they settled down in Sherpur.

The Amir ordered them to come to the parade ground below the palace next day and they would be paid. Next morning these troops formed up below the palace, *without their rifles*, wearing only side-arms, and received three months' pay. They clamoured for arrears and tumultuously approached the palace. The Amir and Daud Shah, Commander-in-Chief, tried to quiet them ; the former told them he had no more money at present but would see that all arrears were paid when the next instalment of the British subsidy was received. " No money," they yelled, " the Sahib up there will give you all you require." " Go then and ask him," said the Amir, and the whole mob hurried up to the Residency. Meantime excitement grew in the city. All the bud-mashes and all who hated the Amir or the English collected and hurried up yelling towards the palace and Residency. Meantime Cavagnari Sahib had come out on the roof of his rooms and was trying to explain to the clamorous soldiers that he could not interfere between them and their sovereign ; while shouting at him the mob thronged the weak wicket gate of the enclosure in which the mission was quartered and

it burst open. The Sikh sentries fired into the mob, and immediately there was an uproar; the Sikhs formed up and drove out what were now a mad mass of rioters; the Kabuli soldiers marched off two miles to Sherpur, took up their rifles and ammunition, and dragging six guns with them returned to the attack. All this time the Kabul artillery stood to their guns, loyal to the Amir, or the palace itself might have been sacked and the Amir murdered. A deputation of mullahs from the musjids hurried up to the palace and begged the Amir to order his guns to open fire on the mob and save the disgrace that would fall on Islam by the murder of an ambassador.

The Amir tore his hair and his garments, cried that kismet was against him, and gave no orders. What could a few artillerymen do he said if the infantry and the mob turned against him.

Behind, to the south of the Kabul City stands a rocky range of hills the Shershahi heights, with spurs thrown out encompassing the City. About half way down from the crest on the eastern spur stands the Bala Hissar, a great fort, the magazine at this time containing many tons of gunpowder. Immediately under the north wall of the fort was the mud-built enclosure with towers at the corners, within which were the rooms occupied by the mission and its escort. Lower down the spur is the Beni Hissar or lesser fort; next the palace and its surroundings till the plain below is reached. Clusters of mud huts filled the spaces inter-

vening between the forts, &c. To the right looking north the spur falls rapidly to the plain, to the left or west lies the city, stretching away to the Kizilbas quarter. Fields and small forts succeed, the Kabul River is crossed and beyond lies the Sherpur fort about two miles from the city, an oblong mud fort a mile and a half in length from south to north, and three-fourths of a mile east and west, the western end resting on the Bemaru heights.

The bulk of the mutinous Kabuli troops occupied the Bala Hissar spur, then poured down a tremendous fire with their sniders on the Residency. Others dragged guns into positions opposite the gate and fired on the defenders from there, while hundreds of city men dug their way through the mud walls of the surrounding huts and then worked their way under cover to the Residency walls.

In vain Hamilton charged the guns; he was killed in a last charge; the Sikhs driven into the towers fought from floor to floor, digging holes with their bayonets in the successive floors through which to fire down on their foes. When their ammunition was expended the mob filled the basements with firewood and smoked to death the few brave Sikhs still surviving. All the British officers had been killed before the consummation.

Had Yakub Khan, Daud Shah and the Mustafi placed themselves at the head of the troops and mob to oppose Roberts' advance, his small force might have been

overwhelmed, or at least held at bay till reinforcements arrived or till the tribes had risen *en masse*.

Instead all came into the British camp, declared the malcontents rebels, and decided to throw in their lot with the British. All were subsequently deported to India.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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### CAN RUSSIA INVADE INDIA.

Four times have British troops invaded Afghanistan, three times has its capital Kabul City been occupied by our troops, once involuntarily, twice voluntarily it has been evacuated. Millions of money have been spent, thousands of lives of men and animals lost and nothing has been gained. Assuredly in the near future once again our armies must occupy Kabul as friends or foes of the people. Which is it to be ?

Before 1837, many British officers had passed through Afghanistan without rousing any hostile feelings. They were received rather as friends, and hospitably entertained. The frontier of British India was several hundred miles from the borders of Afghanistan. Between the two lay the aggressive, and in the eyes of the Moslem, idolatrous Sikh Kingdom, in open or covert hostility with both Moslem and Christian. Until the British troops actually marched for Kandahar, who could have believed for a moment that the troops of a Government professedly peace-loving, and above all just, would be sent to war against an unoffending prince and people who had never even come into contact with them. And the ostensible object of the expedition was the replacing on his throne of an imbecile

tyrant whom his own people despised, and driving from that throne the chosen of the people, a brave high-spirited chief whose only fault was that he would not sacrifice the interests of his country to the whims of a vacillating foreign ruler of a different faith and race. Even if the bulk of the people had accepted our rule, the drain on the resources of India to supply the wants of a large Army of Occupation, hundreds of miles from its base, and separated from it by deserts, broad rivers, and rugged mountains, would have compelled us to withdraw ; and had that withdrawal been delayed till after the death of Dhyani Singh, the return journey might have been even more disastrous than it was. Had the retreat occurred when anarchy reigned in the Punjab, it is quite possible that the whole army would have been destroyed. Thus often in the past have apparent disasters been blessings in disguise, and our nation been most favoured by fortune or Providence, when least deserving it.

The second war that of 1878-79 had superficially at least some justification. Contrary to his agreement with the Government of India the Amir had entertained a mission from a powerful country whose openly avowed object was the extension of its boundary to the sea, in one direction or another, through India if not elsewhere. He had entered into communication with the officers of that nation, with the object of forming a defensive and offensive alliance hostile to the interests of England and India. He had strengthened his garrisons in proximity

to our frontiers, placed a garrison and heavy guns in Ali Musjid, hitherto a deserted fort, within ten miles of our frontier and within a long day's march of Peshawar, thereby causing excitement among the border tribesmen, who if the garrison was permitted to remain would consider it a safe harbour of refuge after raiding British villages in the neighbourhood.

In 1837 Dost Mahomed Khan did absolutely nothing to provoke an invasion. His son might be excused if he thought that at any moment an ambitious Viceroy might again determine to invade the country with or without provocation and decided on taking such precautions as might at least delay an invading army. Really he appears to have thought that he might avert evil, and succeed in securing more decided promises of active assistance from the south should his country be invaded from the north. On the other side the Indian Government appears to have concluded that a show of force would bring Sher Ali to his knees. Both sides were disappointed. The Amir resenting dictation determined to oppose the invasion, and when his troops were easily driven from their position, instead of submitting, drew his eldest son from prison, deserted his throne and went off northward to appeal to Europe against England. His death shortly after opened the way for a peaceful solution of difficulties. Despite Viceregal proclamations, the tribes along the lines of advance resented our intrusion, and though unable to rope successfully with our troops as a rule held sullenly

aloof. Annexation to them meant interference with tribal customs, heavy taxation of land, police interference with personal liberty, and the closing of their forests to cattle grazing. The Tajiks of the lower cultivated valleys were ready to accept our rule, but every Pathan tribe inhabiting the mountains determined to oppose us to the best of its ability.

Yakub Khan at Gandamak agreed to all our terms, and had we attended to his wishes, kept our mission out of Kabul till Yakub had strengthened his position, then openly agreed to assist him against any invasion from the west and north, the massacre of Cavaguari, the Kabul executions, the siege of Sherpur, all causing an increase of bitterness among the tribes, and the placing of Abdul Rahman on the throne. would have been avoided. Yakub Khan might, when the effects of long imprisonment had worn off, have made a good ruler looking to the British for support in every emergency. Ere now British officers would in all probability have been free to wander all over Afghanistan, perhaps have held joint command of the Afghan troops in Herat, Kandahar and even Balkh. All these probable advantages were thrown aside for a sentimental display.

Abdul Rahman proved a strong ruler, so strong that even when he made away with all those who had been prominent in the late war, whether for or against us, even those whom we had promised to protect, we dared not even remonstrate. Neither from north nor south would he brook interference. Now he has passed away, his



son, Habibullah, has permitted a British mission to remain in Kabul for months, and has shown every desire to be on friendly terms with us, provided no attempt is made at curtailing his independence. Is England really prepared to protect his independence and the integrity of his kingdom against all-comers? If certain of English support on emergency, Habibullah will doubtless do his best to keep his frontiers intact. But should Russia baffled in the Far East decide to seek an outlet to the sea through Herat, can Habibullah bar the way?

The "meddling and muddling," mismanagement and vacillation, that characterised our dealings with Afghanistan from 1837 to 1880, has caused a world-wide impression that the country is one difficult to conquer, still more to hold. What are the plain facts?

During the first invasion, our troops, hundreds of miles from the base, seldom if ever able to put 5,000 men in the fighting line, advanced through the formidable and then unknown defile of the Bolan, thence on to Kandahar and Ghazni, stormed and took that fortress in spite of the whole combined strength of the surrounding tribes led by their popular brave, high-spirited Amir "The Dost," occupied Kabul and the surrounding valleys and held them without trouble till the bungling of the leaders drove the tribes into fresh opposition, just when the Army of Occupation was being largely reduced. From the first there had been no

intention of keeping our troops in the country longer than was considered necessary to place Shah Sujah firmly on the throne subservient to the British Government, for the invasion alone had overburdened the revenues of India. Had we replaced Dost Mahomed Khan on his throne, and treated him with the courtesy and generosity he deserved, we might have withdrawn our troops without opposition. The people would not have Shah Sujah to rule over them. The sons of the Dost went from tribe to tribe rousing opposition, the conduct of many officers of the garrison added insult to injury, and just when the whole country was in arms, the Kabul army was reduced by the departure of Sale's Brigade, leaving half the 44th British regiment, a few batteries of artillery and some 4,000 native troops to bear the brunt of the storm under incompetent officers. Then instead of occupying a strong position and defying the efforts of the clansmen to dislodge them they first took up an indefensible position, then marched in a snow storm into a most difficult defile. Even this small force might have cut its way through had it not been overtaken by night in the defile, when the native troops, hungry and frozen and hampered by their families and camp followers, became disheartened and disorganised and fell an easy prey to their now blood-thirsty enemies.

In spite of the enemy's elation over the destruction of this force, and the disheartening of our native troops, Sale and his assistants with a tenth of their force kept

the Afghans at bay for months before Jellalabad and finally drove them in disorder across the river. Pollock and Nott traversed the country from the Khaibar to Kabul and Kandahar sweeping aside all opposition with ease.

In 1878-79 twenty-four hours sufficed to drive the Afghan regulars from their strongest positions. Tribal gatherings were dispersed by handfuls of British troops after a few hours' fighting. In 1879-80, Roberts with a force hardly strong enough for a reconnoitring party in Europe drove the excited troops and populace of Kabul from the Charasiah heights in a few hours and occupied the entrenched cantonment of Sherpur. The siege of Sherpur, the march of General Stewart from Kandahar to Kabul, and of Roberts from Kabul to Kandahar, and the subsequent battle near the last city all show that against disciplined troops, well led, neither Afghan regulars nor tribal gatherings have any chance of success. A few well equipped and firmly led armies of 10,000 men each could conquer the whole of Afghanistan in a year. Its permanent occupation, if considered desirable, would not be much more difficult if properly managed. The mountain masses are to a large extent separated into groups by the valleys of Jellalabad, the Kurram, Kabul, Logar, Argandab and others. The main routes running from one of these to the next in succession, generally rise to a narrow watershed from either side. If each of these passes such as the Lataband, Shutar Gardan,

Ghazni, &c., was crowned by an entrenched position well provisioned, and each of the larger valleys occupied by a movable column of horse artillery and cavalry with a substantial support of infantry in some central position, the hill tribes might be left severely alone till the succeeding winter. Then those who refused to submit and to be disarmed could be debarred from bringing their families, flocks and herds into the lower valleys when the higher ravines and valleys are buried in snow and prevented throughout the year from purchasing corn, salt, tobacco, &c., from all the richer valleys. These drastic measures if severely and firmly carried out would soon bring the most turbulent to their knees. Such severity may not be consistent with British methods and traditions, but no humane considerations would prevent Russian commanders from adopting these or even still more severe measures should their troops be permitted by England to enter the country.

If our small armies were always more than a match for the combined strength of the Afghans how can the Afghans hope to cope successfully against the enormous masses Russia can bring against them. For the capture of Herat and the conquest of Balkh and the whole country north of the Hindu Kush, no great Russian army would be necessary. With better rifles, superior artillery, well disciplined troops and unlimited supplies of ammunition a force of 50,000 Russians could conquer the whole of that portion of Afghanistan in a month long before our troops could reach the

scene of action. Their railways could then be pushed on as far as their troops advanced ; any further movement could be delayed till all was ready for another forward march. The most sanguine of Russian generals would hardly dare to march straight on end to India. If this was contemplated no doubt our best line of defence would be the line of the Indus, where, fully prepared, our armies could attack the Russian columns as they debouched from the mountains and destroy or drive them back to starve.

That is not the Russian method. Once in Herat and Balkh she would do as she did in Central Asia, advance step by step, take line upon line, here a little and there a little, promising everything, giving liberally when needful, punishing with ruthless severity any opposition. Biding her time, collecting supplies, perfecting her line of communications, knowing that every step forward would prepare the way for the final leap by lessening our prestige, wasting our money, disheartening our troops and keeping them massed in sickly stations in boiling heat or severe cold and sowing sedition in our rear. Granted that we cannot prevent Russia from taking Balkh and Herat, what if within the next few years, baffled in the Far East, Russia seeks an outlet in the Persian Gulf and as a first step occupies Herat and Northern Afghanistan what will England do. Are we certain that the Ministry in power at the time will consider itself bound to order an advance to meet them.

If not then sooner or later all Afghanistan and Persia will be absorbed, and the advance on India, a mere matter of time and opportunity. With this ever present danger of invasion the army in India must be increased by at least 100,000 men to be strong enough to meet any sudden advance from the front, and to keep down disorder in rear.

Should the advance of Russia into Afghanistan not be met by an immediate declaration of war, by land and sea, assuredly all Asia will ascribe it to weakness or cowardice or both.

Every Native Chief, every ambitious or discontented Indian—and there are thousands of the last—will conclude that the sun of England's glory has set, her *ikbal* gone for ever, and they will seek to propitiate the rising sun of our enemy.

Even the peasantry of the Punjab, and other loyal provinces, if there are any such, will conclude that the time has come for throwing off all legal restraints, and wiping out old scores. Every *Kutchery* would probably be burnt, if only to destroy all record of past monetary transactions, debts, mortgages, transfers of landed rights. If in that day we trusted to the loyalty of the Native Princes and their "Imperial Service armies" we should pay dearly for our confidence. The Oriental worships might.

The Native Chiefs are at present confident that so long as the British power is paramount their rights and prerogatives will be respected, all aggression by neigh-

bours, all rebellions of relatives or others sternly repressed. But on the day they believe England can no longer defend them, and they know they cannot defend themselves. they may regret but they will do nothing to support our rule even if they can. If Russia is in a fair way to become the ruler of their destinies, to her they will look for such favours as she may promise to grant in exchange for their neutrality or active assistance.

If England would retain India, she must keep the Russian, and every other European nation, out of Afghanistan. Go boldly forward to meet her armies if they advance, and never rest till they have re-crossed the Oxus.

Japan has shown us what to do and how to do it ; let us profit by the lesson. Too long have we submitted to her brag and bluster and pretended to believe her promises and submitted to her insults, as at Panjdeh.

On the day the Russians cross the Northern Frontier, British troops should cross the Eastern, with or without the consent of the ruler and people, and occupy the line Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar, the true gates of India. The march to Kabul and Kandahar would probably be unmolested. The march to Ghazni might lead to some fighting with the Wazirs, but it could easily be occupied from Kabul or Kandahar.

Once strongly posted along this line, with our railways following, and outposts guarding the approaches across the Hindu Kush, the Hari Rud and the Helmund,

*we* could then play the waiting game till ready to advance on Herat.

It would need a larger army than Russia could feed to drive us back by frontal attacks through the Hazarajat. The snowy masses of the Hindu Kush would guard our right flank. and the sandy waterless wastes south of the Helmund our left. Gradually increasing our strength we could then press slowly and surely on Herat. So long as we held this line India would remain quiet in expectation of the result.

But what about the Afghan army and the tribes. I have said that the Afghan armies have only defeated our troops twice, and that under exceptional circumstances, in the Khurd Kabul Pass and at Maiwand. The very strength of the armies we would need to face the Russians would deter the tribal gatherings from openly attacking us; the Afghan regular army should be either in the front line of ourselves or of our enemies, according to whether the Amir had decided to throw in his lot with or against us.

This would probably depend on the attitude of our Government as soon as the first news of the Russian advance was received.

If our Government declared war immediately, attacked the Russian fleets, destroyed their seaborne trade, blocked their ports, ordered large reinforcements from England and other Colonies, cordially invited the Amir to co-operate, supplied him with arms and ammunition, solemnly assured him *publicly that his independence*



*would be guaranteed and our troops withdrawn after the war,* and commenced immediately our advance on Kabul and Kandahar, proved in fact that we were really in earnest, there can be little doubt that his 50,000 fighting men placed under British guidance would form an excellent vanguard for us. A hesitating policy would assuredly range his troops on the other side sooner or later. The Afghan above all things is avaricious. The Russians can offer him the loot of India, England only the assurance that the independence of his country would be secured.

But after all, in the great struggle that assuredly lies before us, the Afghan prince and people will be but secondary factors.

No doubt they will be of use to one side or the other, it would be better to have them on our side than against us, but the final result will not depend on the Afghans. England must put forth her full strength without hesitation or vacillation.

Mistakes in the past have been many—alarms, excursions, retreats—temporary loss of prestige, waste of lives and money. But hitherto there has been no great rival at our doors ready to take advantage of every false step. We have had time to retrieve the blunders of one year in the years following.

The stake hitherto has been a few thousand square miles; in the coming struggle the stake will be the British Empire.

Russia at present has fallen low, but it is a great country, a country of vast resources and recuperative power.

Even while carrying on the great struggle with Japan she has pushed on her Central Asian Railways to the Afghan frontier and made no secret of her future intentions.

Her losses in this war may be 200,000 men, only a fifth of her regular army; 50,000 would suffice to capture Herat and Balkh; 100,000 could add the line Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar to their Empire, unless a British Army were on the ground to prevent it. Let us hope that when the struggle commences, and it may be near at hand, it will find a Government at Home and in India ready and willing to protect the Empire that has taken so much of the best blood of England to raise to pre-eminence in the world.

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NOTE.—Since the above was written the Anglo-Japanese alliance has been strengthened and its scope enlarged. So long as this makes for peace it may be a blessing, provided our navies and armies are not reduced, and their discipline kept unimpaired. But "Good Night" to the Empire if a day is allowed to dawn when England will need the help of foreign soldiers of any nation to fight her battles for her within her own borders.