

W. W. W. HUMBLEY



***JOURNAL
OF A CAVALRY
OFFICER;
INCLUDING
THE MEMORABLE
SIKH CAMPAIGN
OF 1845-1846***

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Journal of a Cavalry Officer; Including the Memorable Sikh Campaign of 1845-1846

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Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Titlepage](#)

[Text](#)

JOURNAL

OF

A CAVALRY OFFICER IN INDIA.

INTRODUCTION.

THE remark has often been made, that India is but little known to persons in England and on the continent of Europe. That there is ample ground for such a remark none can deny. For, whether we consider its vast territorial extent, covering an area of upwards of a million of square miles, with a population of more than 150 millions; its commercial wealth and enterprise, from the remotest ages of antiquity, and its immense natural resources; or, whether we regard India in a more intimate point of view, as forming an integral part of our own dominions, owing allegiance to one sovereign ruler, bound up with us by social relations and family ties, and consider what an El Dorado it has proved to the British empire for upwards of two centuries and a half; it is indeed a matter of no small surprise, that India should be so little, and so imperfectly, known by us.

We can scarcely comprehend how, until recently, the Emperor of China and his subjects should have looked upon the celestial empire as the most important in the world; but it is yet more astonishing that we, to whom the whole world lies open, should be contented to remain in ignorance of what it is so obviously our interest to understand.

Nearly six centuries have elapsed since that enterprising Venetian, Marco Polo, first visited India, and revealed to Europe the treasures of the Eastern Hemisphere; nay, they are familiar to us from the earliest records of the sacred writers; and, in later ages, Herodotus and other Greek authors dwelt upon the wonders of the East, its history, its resources, and its races. It is true that Marco Polo gained little credit for the marvels he related; but, we must bear in mind that he did not always speak from personal observation: he not only noted down what he saw, but eagerly collected all the information which he could obtain respecting those regions which he was unable to visit himself. His "Maraviglie del Mondo da lui descritte" were sneered at and discredited by many, in former times, as the visions of an enthusiast. People, indeed, believed in the existence of such cities as Agra and Delhi, because it was corroborated by the Chinese and Arabic maps which he brought home; while the fact of there being such an individual as the Great Mogul, was demonstrated by the painted representation of his Sublime Majesty on the royal court cards, which are supposed to have been then first introduced. More accurate investigations, however, have proved his veracity; and the researches of Klaproth, and other distinguished travellers, of modern times, have amply verified the truth of his statements.

The discredit at first thrown upon Marco Polo's narratives, may, in a great measure, be attributed to the Jesuit missionaries in India and China, who followed in his track, and who, while they availed themselves of the valuable information which he had supplied, scrupled not to add the most unblushing and incredible falsehoods. These Jesuits, though the most learned men of their time, composed a class of writers whose object it was to appear to surpass all other European travellers in information; and who sought to acquire an ascendancy in Asiatic countries, for the benefit of

their master, the Pope, and the sovereigns of the European States.

The maps brought home by Marco Polo, and the information which he communicated, proved invaluable to the Pope's missionaries, and to the Venetian and Portuguese traders and navigators who succeeded him, and aided the gallant Vasco di Gama in discovering the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope. The Jesuits, however, did not make full use of the advantages which they possessed; for, while employed in constructing their excellent map of the Empire of China, which gained them free access to every part, they lost an opportunity for investigating and describing its natural productions, which might never have occurred again, but for the present movement in China. In the reign of Kang-hi they obtained permission to establish a college for the promotion of Christianity; but his successor regarded the institution with different feelings; and, being jealous of the influence which it was calculated to produce, ordered it to be broken up, and thus deprived us of the means of obtaining much valuable information.

Among the few Oriental works which modern scholars have been able to obtain, the only one that has as yet been translated into English, from the Sanscrit, is, a History of the Kings of Cashmere, down to the Mahomedan conquest, entitled, "Raja Tarengini," published in 1835.

It was not till about seventy years ago, during the war with Hyder Ali, and the subsequent hostilities between the sovereigns of Mysore, from 1792 to 1799, that the English became acquainted with the state of Southern India; when (to our shame be it spoken) the capture at Seringapatam of the Sultan's library, revealed the fact of an extensive political correspondence with Napoleon Bonaparte, the Directory, and the French governor of the Isle of France; also

with the Shah of Persia, with Shah Zeman of Affghanistan, the Maharattas, and many other native princes of India.

With so many salient points of tangible danger to defend, it might have been expected that the Government of India would have employed—as Russia does, and as France has ever done—competent officers in their service to travel in Persia, Afghanistan, and, in fact, in all the countries from whence the danger of an invasion was to be apprehended: especially as it was well known that Zeman Shah of Affghanistan had, in 1796, '97, and '98, made attempts to invade India.

Foreigners have asked the question: "How is it that you English, who have so long possessed a considerable portion of India, know so little of that country, that, in our day, Baron Humboldt, a foreigner, should contemplate a visit to India, to explore the Himalaya mountains?" It is true, that nearly forty years ago, Lieutenant Webb and others had ascertained that the highest peak was about 27,000 feet above the level of the sea, and that it was the loftiest in the world; but doubts were expressed as to the amount of scientific knowledge possessed by a Bengal subaltern. Captain Fraser and other Englishmen have since visited those snowy regions; but it still remains to be seen what enterprising nation will equip an expedition to explore the character and resources of India.

That the English, as a commercial nation, have not as yet ascertained all the products of India, is a matter of yet greater astonishment to all foreign travellers. It is a fact, that the existence of that useful article, coal, has only been known within the last few years; and the same may be said in regard to other natural productions. The truth is, that, till the year 1814, the East India Company, who possessed the exclusive right of trade within the limits prescribed by their Charter of 1660, were the chief merchants of India; and

their investments were almost wholly confined to the exportation of silk, and the usual cargoes of tea from China. It is to private enterprise that we are indebted for the commerce in indigo, sugar, and other articles of modern exportation; till the free trade with China, since the year 1834, opened up a more extended commerce.

Since that period, both India and China have become better known to us; and the wars in the latter country have naturally made us acquainted with the eastern portions of its vast dominions.

It cannot, however, be expected that persons pursuing commercial speculations should have leisure or inclination to write on Indian subjects, beyond the facts relating to their own traffic. Some men will not even take the pains to learn the language of the people, but trust to such natives as speak English. Though some of these gentlemen have certainly acquired a colloquial knowledge of the language, and made themselves acquainted with the localities in their immediate vicinity—yet, as they have never travelled much in India, their statements are of course imperfect and superficial. It is from the pen of the civil, military, and other servants of the East India Company, and from officers in Her Majesty's service, that we must look for accounts descriptive of different parts of India, and of the various tribes and races of its inhabitants.

The removal of the army from place to place, affords an observant officer not only an opportunity of investigating the geological formation, natural history, and productions of the country, but also gives him great facilities for studying the history, religion, and civilization of the people, from the various monuments and inscriptions, both ancient and modern, which lie on his route.

The rapid extension of our Eastern empire since our first occupation of Hindoostan may, in some measure, account

for our imperfect acquaintance with the productions and natural resources of the several great Presidencies under our jurisdiction at the present day. Great Britain, in self-defence, rather than from choice, or from a policy of self-aggrandizement, such as she might reasonably be excused in adopting, has been forced to extend her sway, and to annex numerous native territories; for a long time, indeed, she only assumed a passive military tenure of dominions thus acquired, while her natural reluctance to obtrude or infringe upon the rights and prerogatives of others has not only influenced her general policy, but even led her subjects invariably to observe the same caution in indulging their natural bent for investigation and discovery. This, coupled with an apprehension for personal safety, and a want of confidence in native integrity and honour, has greatly impeded a free and frequent intercourse, and damped the ardour of enterprising and scientific enquiry.

The well-known faithlessness of the native character, and the internal disaffection existing among various tribes, have also tended to interrupt or preclude the possibility of travelling about among the people, for the purpose of investigating their manners and customs, and the general state of the country.

The wars with the Sikhs afforded many opportunities of becoming practically acquainted with the perfidy and duplicity of the natives. The treachery of Tej Singh at the battle of Ferozeshah, the artful and wily conduct of Goolab Singh, in his negotiations with the Maharannee and the British, and the subsequent perfidy of our professed friend and ally, Shere Singh, at the siege of Mooltan, where he caused the defection of the Sikh army from the British to Moolraj, and thereby prevented our taking the fortress, are indisputable proofs of this trait. It is a painful peculiarity in the Oriental character, which will ever stamp it in the eyes of a European with an indelible stigma. This inherent vice,

and our cognizance of it, have hitherto checked, and will continue to check, the ardour of all enquiry and enterprise, even where pecuniary gain, and still more, scientific information, are the objects in view.

We may also refer to the history of Moolraj, his confederates, and their diabolical schemes; but, thanks to an over-ruling Providence, the arch-traitor and his base accomplices were defeated; their designs were marred, and fell upon themselves. Truly it is said, "Man proposes, but God disposes." Who could have foreseen or anticipated the results of the deliberations within the walls of Mooltan? Who could have foretold that Moolraj would be dethroned and immured in a British prison, and his rich and extensive territories revert to a British Queen? His treachery, however, led to the wanton murder of two of our officers, and to an immense sacrifice of the lives, both of natives and Europeans.

Our unwillingness to invade, or to annex to the British dominions, even partial portions of frontier countries, virtually in our possession before, has proved, as we have seen, a great barrier to enterprising researches; and our officers, generally speaking, had more work upon their hands, than allowed of much leisure or inclination for scientific expeditions into adjacent, and still less into more distant localities. We feel justified in offering this explanation, in order to do away with the reproaches to which the civil and military officers in India, have been subjected in regard to this question.

With respect to the Punjaub, our Government was perfectly justified in its annexation; and the act was quite consistent with wise policy, and compatible with our previous and general mode of dealing with Indian rulers. No other power except Great Britain would so long have abstained from punishing a local authority, which had so shamefully and

recklessly disregarded and violated its own solemn pledges and engagements, upon the faith of which, and which only, the rule of the Sikhs rested and eventually depended. Great Britain ought to have annexed this country long before, even as early as 1845. She relied on the gratitude and fidelity of the Sikh rulers, and was betrayed and disappointed.

What is applicable in one case, as in that of the Punjaub, may apply equally to all or any of our Indian acquisitions, and account, in a great measure, for our still imperfect knowledge of the products and vast resources of India.

We will not conceal from ourselves, nor leave the public in ignorance of the fact, that while all classes at home are unanimous as to the benefit and vast importance of steam communication, the case is far otherwise in India. The imperative necessity for improvement in facilitating the means of communication in the interior of India, by means of roads, bridges, canals, railways and river navigation, has not obtained that fair share of attention and support which the past and future wants of India, her products, resources, and trade demand. These reforms are only in their infancy. India, strange to say, is still as backward as Turkey in these respects. It is extraordinary that in a country like India, and under such a rule as the British, no line of railway should have been laid down till the year 1851, when the attempt was made in the short line from Bombay.

Any contributions, however scanty, respecting India will be better appreciated now that a more judicious system has been adopted with regard to the qualification of candidates for Indian affairs. There are few families who have not friends and relations in some part of India, and these are now beginning to give their attention to subjects bearing upon its history, its people, products, institutions, and religion.

If we have been remiss in the past, and of this there is no question, we must endeavour, in the future, to regain our credit as a nation by progressive reform, and the promotion of civilization. India and her riches, her mountains of light and her hills of gold, must not blind us to our duties, nor cause us to forget the true though trite saying, that, "Property and its possession have their duties as well as their rights." We must not lose sight of the well-being of the country and her people, in the pursuit of personal aggrandizement, and thus expose ourselves to the world's obloquy, our children's detriment, and our disgrace as a nation whose glorious destiny it was to elevate India to a high and proud position, compared with that state in which we found her.

It must not be supposed, from the foregoing remarks, that the author of these pages intends to write a history of India; all he presumes to do is to give information respecting that part of the country in which his regiment was on active service, and which is perhaps the most imperfectly known, namely, the vast district in the north west of India, where the Sikh battles were fought. Moreover they are not written for the scrutinizing eye of the public, but only for the amusement of his friends, and of those who have a personal interest in the war.

The author left England in the year 1836, and served with H.M.'s 4th (Queen's own) Light Dragoons for seven years. He studied both the Oordoo and Maharatta languages, passed his examination, and became Interpreter to the regiment, and was therefore able to converse with the natives. Returning to England in 1842, he joined the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, and was engaged in the Sikh campaign in 1845-46, which prostrated the power of that people, and exhibits a series of the most triumphant successes ever recorded in the military history of India.

The author has endeavoured to delineate scenes presented in a time of war, which could not be familiar to the general traveller, because the presence of two hostile armies exhibits the people in their native character, calling forth their hopes and fears as to the issue of the combat. In times of peace, the minds of the inhabitants repose upon the prospects of a good harvest and a fruitful season. The grand features of an Indian life are comprehended in the expressive phrase: "āb aur hawa humaree bustee kee achchha huen; mi khoob khata aur khoob sota hon:" *i.e.*; "The climate (air and water) of our village is good; I eat well and sleep well." If the Indian has plenty of good water and food, his family share it with him, and he is content; he is no politician, but when war rages between hostile parties close to his own door, he can be no longer indifferent, and all his energies are aroused in estimating the issue. In losing his old masters, the English, he would fall under the iron rule of the Sikhs; or should the Sikhs suddenly attack his village and carry off his grain, he would have reason to apprehend that this act might be construed into "aiding the enemy," while a refusal to give up his corn to the Sikhs would involve the burning of his village.

In this way I shall, therefore, endeavour to represent the character of these people as I myself observed them in peace and in war, that the reader may judge whether there exists among the natives of her north-western provinces any peculiarity of character, or whether we have any reason to conclude that the actions of human nature there are much the same as in similar countries in the East; for we must not judge them by those of the West.

It is to be hoped that better days are in store for the East; and, in that comprehensive term, I would include China, and countries nearer home, Asiatic Turkey, Persia, etc. I am sanguine that the bright dawning of a happy future is awaiting these interesting countries. If the British people

have conquered India, it is their imperative obligation to promote the welfare of their possessions; and we are glad to notice a laudable spirit in recent legislative measures to promote many desirable improvements. India, under an improved system, and with greater facilities of intercourse, will more than recompense any effort, or application of capital, on our part. Its internal resources are beyond our conception, and its people will unquestionably advance and improve in proportion to its elevation as an empire. Schools, industry, and commerce, if based on a solid foundation, will be the quick harbingers of peace, good-will, and prosperity to the people and their rulers, both native and European.

May this happy era be expedited in the good Providence of God!

*Eynesbury, St. Neots,
Huntingdonshire,
May, 1, 1854.*

CHAPTER I.

Voyage to India—Advantages of Sailing with Troops on Board—Regulations at Sea—March from Cawnpore to Meerut—Return from Nougawa Ghât to Meerut—March to Ferozepore—Cantonments at Kurnaul—Colonel Campbell's Force—Number of Cattle required on a March—Sunday—Rev. W.J. Whiting, M.A.—Distribution of Prize-Money—Advanced Guard—Governor-General—Major Broadfoot and Captain Nicolson—Suspensions of the Sikhs—Sir David Ochterlony—The Sikh Army—The Battle of Moodkee—Tej Singh.

THE circumstances of a voyage to or from India are so well known, from their frequent occurrence, that I will not even allude to them. Our voyage, however, offered some variety to the usual monotony of a mere passenger ship, from our having troops on board. This naturally gave rise to numerous incidents which afford topics of interest, especially to military men. We, of course, had regular parades both for the sake of discipline, and to ascertain that the men were sober and clean. The men had, too, specific duties assigned to them—keeping watch, etc.

The object of placing the troops in watches, in time of peace, is, that they may assist in pulling and easing the ropes. They are confined to duties on deck only. If there should be an old sailor among them he may, of course, occasionally reef and unfurl sail. It is obvious that the addition of some fifty or sixty men to the crew of a merchant vessel of 600 or 700 tons burthen, is a great advantage in bad weather, as it enables almost the whole of the ship's crew to be employed aloft. In case of necessity a soldier or two will also assist the man at the wheel, or those at the pumps, by order of the quarter-master, or of the officer on duty, or of the captain himself.

Another advantage from having soldiers on board is in the case where the crew might be inclined to mutiny; when they would be restrained by the military. The troops being told off in watches, those on the morning watch assist in cleaning, or, what is called *swabbing*, the quarter-deck; but the rules for merchant ships are very imperfect in this respect.

Having troops on board necessarily adds much to the safety of the vessel.

It will probably be in the recollection of many of my readers, that two ships taken up in Australia as transports, were wrecked on the Great Andamans, islands on the east side of the Bay of Bengal, in the year 1844. These vessels would

have been totally lost, but for the assistance rendered by the officers and men of the 80th Foot, the regiment which so nobly distinguished itself, the following year, at the battle of Ferozeshah, where many of those brave fellows who helped to save these vessels, yielded up their lives for their country.

To ensure regularity and a perfect understanding between the commanding officers of troops and captains of ships, a copy of rules for the guidance of the commanders of merchant-ships, should be given to the officer commanding the troops; and a copy of the regulations for troops of Her Majesty's forces, and the East India Company's service, given to the commander of the ship. The captain of a free-trader is not allowed to flog his men; but he may stop a sailor's grog and his pay for any crime of which he has been guilty. He may also put a culprit in irons, and lose the man's services.

Without stopping to describe my first impressions of India, or the countries which I traversed, after landing upon its far-famed shores, I will proceed at once to Cawnpore, where I found that my regiment was quartered, and where I first joined it.

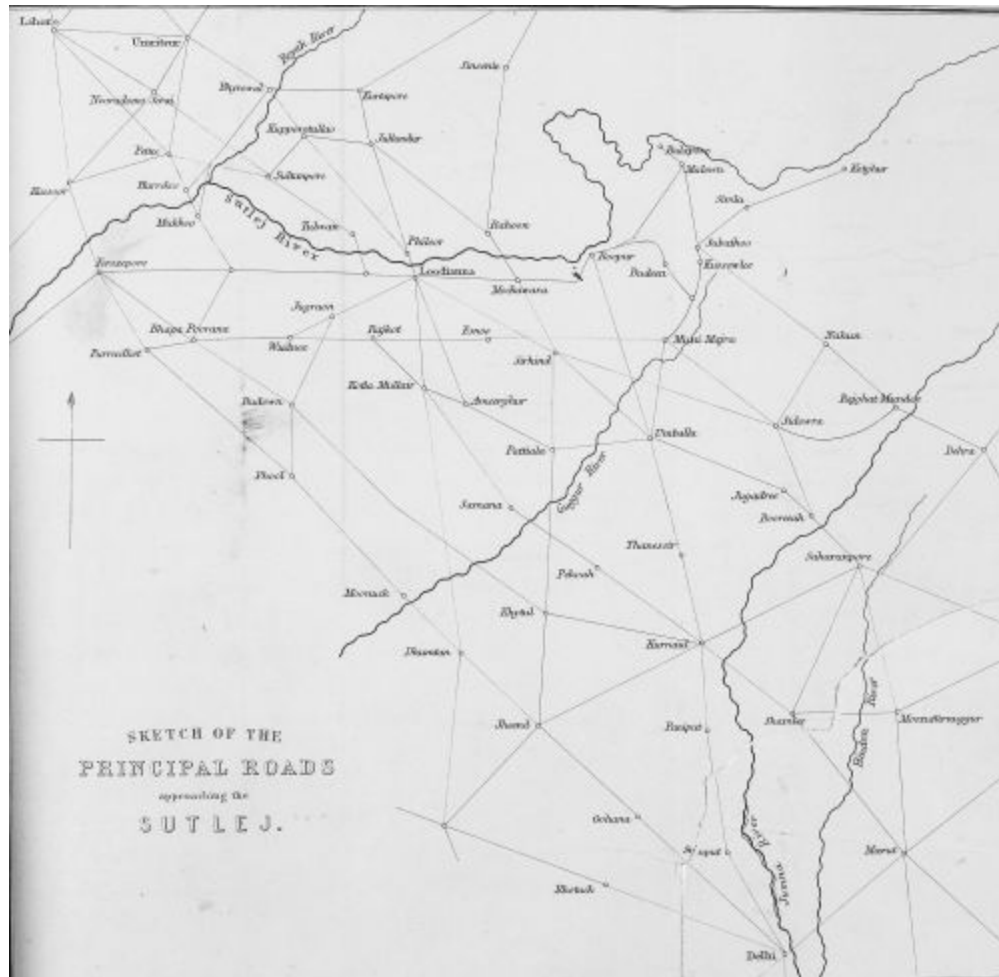
On the 17th of October, 1845, my regiment, the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, set out on its march from Cawnpore to Meerut, a distance of 266 miles. The Artillery received orders, at the same time, to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to the north-west. We reached Meerut on the 12th of November, and encamped near the lines of the 16th Lancers, to await further orders. We stayed only a few days in this place, which is situated in the province of Delhi. It is a very large town, of some antiquity, lying about forty miles to the north-east of the city of Delhi, and is one of our principal civil and military stations.

On the 23rd, our corps received orders to march the next day to Umballa, a large military station, a distance of 126

miles. We accordingly set out on the morning of the 25th, and marched to Sirdhana, eleven miles. On the 26th we encamped on the right bank of the river Hindon, at Nougawa Ghât, nineteen miles from Meerut. On the 27th, just as the corps was about to proceed onwards—for the trumpet to boot and saddle had already been sounded—we received a sudden order, by an express camel, to return and encamp on our old ground at Meerut. On the 28th, the regiment halted; the following day it re-crossed the river, and encamped at Sirdhana; and on the 30th returned to Meerut.

Here we were quartered till the 10th of December, when the Queen's Royal Lancers received an unexpected and peremptory order, at half-past eight P.M., to march immediately to Umballa. We accordingly again set out for Sirdhana, which we reached the next morning; and whilst at Shamlee, four marches from Meerut, and twenty-eight miles from Kurnaul, we received, between three and four o'clock P.M., an express direct from the Commander-in-Chief, with the following important intelligence:—

"That the 9th Lancers were to proceed at once to Ferozepore, agreeably to an enclosed route; and that the 43rd and 59th regiments of Native Infantry, which were to leave Meerut the same day as the Lancers, were to proceed thither also: the whole to be under the command of Colonel Campbell, of the latter corps."



**SKETCH OF THE
PRINCIPAL ROADS
approaching the SUTLEJ.**

On reaching Kurnaul, we halted on the 18th, in order to make preparations for forming a depôt at Umballa; to which place all the superfluous heavy baggage, and the young horses, were immediately sent, under the charge of Cornet R.W. King, with instructions to rejoin head-quarters as soon as he had reported himself to the officer commanding at Umballa.

At this time, it was not yet known at Kurnaul that the Sikhs had crossed the Sutlej—an event which took place as early as the 13th of this month.

I may here remark, that the extensive cantonments of Kurnaul had been abandoned about three years before, by order of Lord Ellenborough, then Governor-General. The officers' bungalows were now nearly all roofless, and the neat little church going to decay. In 1852 it was entirely dismantled, and the materials conveyed to Umballa, to assist in building a station-church there. The immense parade-ground, large enough to allow for the exercise of 12,000 men, is about the best in India.

The route of the 9th here changed; for instead of proceeding to Umballa, we marched as follows:—

On the 19th of December to Suggah, 10 miles.

" 20th " Khol, 14½ "

" 21st " Pehoah 14 "

These three villages were in the protected Sikh states: the two former are small and insignificant; the latter is larger, and of more importance.

The whole tract of country, on either side of our line of march, was one continued jungle, and as level as a bowling-green.

The force under the personal command of Colonel Campbell, exclusive of officers, amounted at this time to 2,833 men, with twelve iron twelve-pounders, each drawn by an elephant. Brass guns of this description are usually drawn by ten, or even twelve, bullocks; brass eighteen-pounders by fourteen bullocks; and brass twenty-four-pounders by eighteen bullocks. An iron twenty-four-pounder is drawn by twenty-six bullocks; an iron eighteen-pounder by twenty-two bullocks; and an iron twelve-pounder by eighteen bullocks. Singly, therefore, that noble animal, the elephant, will draw a gun for which ten or even more bullocks are allowed.

These and the following remarks regarding cattle, are given for the purpose of showing the number used in dragging

guns and carrying loads. By the regulations of the service in Bengal, it is directed that no elephant shall be taken into the service under twelve years of age, nor under seven feet in height. A committee is appointed to examine and report whether the animals are fit for service; but it not unfrequently happens that infantry or cavalry officers, or both, are put upon these committees, who know nothing at all of the matter. Sometimes, however, the animals are so palpably inefficient and diseased, that, as one of the committee-officers exclaimed, "This camel speaks for itself." No elephant is employed unless the committee can report that he is capable of carrying at least 20 maunds of 80 sicca weight, or 1,600 pounds = 14 cwt. 32 lbs.

Camels admitted into the service by a committee, must never be under five, nor more than nine, years old; and capable of carrying a load of at least 6 maunds, or 480 lbs. Bullocks are admitted into the service not under five, nor above eight, years of age. Draught-bullocks must be fifty inches in height; those for carriage, not under forty-eight inches. The former must be capable of carrying 210 lbs. avoirdupoise weight, besides the gear. The comparative value of these animals will be seen by the following scale:—

An elephant carries 1,600 lbs.
A camel " 480 "
A bullock " 210 "

In wet weather a camel, which, in dry weather, carries six maunds of tents, etc., will carry only four maunds, one-third being allowed for the difficulty which the camel finds of keeping on his legs in wet ground.

A six-pounder gun is drawn by six horses, and when bullocks are used, by six of these animals. This shows the relative value as to draught. Now a single elephant pulled along by himself one of the iron twelve-pounder guns, or, as they were more properly styled, "nine-pounders *reamed* up to

twelves," which may be thus explained. Knowing that the Sikhs used guns of large calibre, the Government had ordered that these guns should be sent to the Delhi magazine, to be re-cast and reamed up for the occasion; and they did good service. They were a fraction lighter by this process than the nine-pounders were before.

On the 21st of December our troops halted at Pehoah. It is a large town, containing a succession of brick-built houses, the high walls of which, without any apertures, face the back streets, being evidently intended as a defence against marauders.

It will be seen, by reference to the map, that the original route by which the troops were ordered to march to Umballa, would have caused us to make a considerable *détour*, indeed, one of about thirty or thirty-five miles, for Umballa is nearly direct north of Kurnaul, while Ferozepore is north-west.

The Sunday at Pehoah was not kept as is customary on the Lord's-day in cantonments. We had no chaplain with us; and hence divine service was not performed. It would appear proper that, in the absence of the chaplain, some officer should take his place. This is the case in several European regiments, where the commanding or some superior officer reads the service to the troops. As on board of ship, when there is no chaplain, the purser reads the service, so I think, in the army, the paymaster should discharge this duty. A graduate of either University, if there be one in the corps, would be, from his education and training, the most desirable person to read a selection of prayers from the church service. A chaplain accompanied the Bengal and Bombay columns, which went to Afghanistan in 1838-39.

We have a noble instance of voluntary dedication to the duties of chaplain to an army on active service, in the case of the Rev. W.J. Whiting, M.A., during the second Sikh

campaign. The arduous and invaluable services which this excellent clergyman rendered during that campaign called forth the grateful thanks of the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, the Bishop of Calcutta, and the Court of Directors. He has left an indelible impression, on all engaged in that war, of the importance of his benevolent, as well as spiritual ministrations.

By the warrant for prize-money for the navy, dated 1846, naval chaplains share in the prize money. There appears to be no positive regulation for army chaplains; but the analogy between the two services will point out the propriety of its existing in the latter case; and the warrant being by royal authority, no doubt ought to exist on the subject. It is pleasing to hear that the Rev. George Robert Gleig, M.A., Chaplain-General to the Forces, formerly a subaltern during the Peninsular war, and author of several entertaining and instructive military works, has not only received his medal, with two bars, but has worn it at Court over his canonicals, and does wear it at all times in the pulpit.

By the navy warrant, passengers on board a man-of-war, if they desire to join in an action, receive a share of the prize money. The navy prize rules are fairer than those of the army. The army rules were made—I am speaking of India—by the Prize Committees, assembled at Seringapatam, Agra, etc., in 1799 and 1803; and, being composed of senior officers, they took good care of their own grade, while the juniors got a very disproportionate share.

I return from this digression to the bellicose signs of the times. Colonel Campbell's detachment marched, on the 22nd December, to Goelah, sixteen miles distant. Here, in consequence of rumours that the Sikhs had crossed the Sutlej, and having heard, in the afternoon, a distant noise resembling the sound of cannon (which subsequently turned

out to be the explosion of mines), Colonel Campbell ordered all the troops under his immediate command to join and march together.

On the following morning the advanced guard consisted of a troop of the Royal Lancers—the light companies of the 43rd and 59th regiments of Native Infantry—some sappers and miners—and four 12-pounders. The main body consisted of the 9th Lancers—43rd and 59th regiments of Native Infantry—and six 12-pounders. The rear-guard consisted of a troop of the 9th—one company from each of the Infantry regiments—and two 12-pounders: Captain Spottiswoode, 9th Lancers, an able and most intelligent officer, acting as major of brigade. Here was a respectable force of nearly 3,000 men and twelve guns, or four to each thousand men, being above Napoleon's proportion, which was only three to 1,000.

It will be seen that we began the campaign with an artillery very inferior to that of the Sikhs. In fact, if calibres are reckoned, we, probably, were in the minority as one to three. I shall, in the sequel, prove these facts. But to proceed:

It will appear strange to the European reader when he hears that the whole tract of country between the Sutlej and the Jumna, including the protected Sikh states, which were under our control, as well as our protection, had been in the possession of the East India Company since the year 1809, or for thirty-six years before this period; and that, nevertheless, troops marching to join the army, in a direct line, sixty miles off, were not even aware that the Sikhs had crossed the Sutlej; and that, moreover, two battles had been fought, that of Moodkee, on the 18th, and that of Ferozeshah on the 21st and 22nd of December, the latter being one of the most deadly contested actions ever fought in India. I have before stated that the 9th Lancers had been

ordered from Meerut, and did march on the 25th of November; that this line corps, being unfortunately ordered back, did not leave Meerut the second time until the 11th of December. Here was a loss of sixteen days: hence it is clear, that, as the regiment heard firing, or sounds arising from the explosion of powder mines on the 21st of December, it would have been present in the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah, had not its march been countermanded.

Now the order to return to Meerut was received on the 27th of November. To what circumstance was this to be attributed? The Sikhs did not cross the Sutlej until the 13th of December, or sixteen days after the 27th of November; and, allowing the order for the return to be dated the 25th of November, there certainly was not any crossing of the Sikhs at that time. It is positively stated, by a staff officer, that Lord Hardinge did not send the order. Although a Governor-General can send such an order direct, yet all military men here know that the Commander-in-chief is the channel for transmitting such orders. At the same time it is an established rule in the Indian army that a Commander-in-chief cannot order any troops on service without the sanction of the Governor-General, or of the government. Even in the common biennial or triennial relief the order is prefaced with the words: "With the sanction of government." The Governor-General being, in the present instance, on the field, was, *de facto*, the government. As Louis XIV. said: *L'état? C'est moi.*

Great uncertainty if not mystery prevailed in our army as to the probability of the Sikhs crossing the Sutlej. The Blue Book comes to our aid in deciding upon such a probability. It was argued that in 1843 the Sikhs did threaten to cross, but thought better of it and forebore; and therefore they might do the same now. But all the politicals knew well enough that the Puntis and Puncchees were no longer under the

control of the Durbar as they were in 1843, but were more likely than not, to act in open defiance of it.

There were two officers, however, of great political talent, whose official position enabled them to know more of the feelings of the Sikhs, and of the probability of such a step than most others; one was Major G. Broadfoot of the 34th Madras Native Infantry, who had held the office of British Agent for Sikh affairs since November 1844, and who had acted as engineer in the celebrated defence of Jellalabad, the heroes of which obtained the well merited Roman distinction of a mural crown; the other was Captain P. Nicolson, 28th Bengal Native Infantry who had been appointed his assistant. Captain Nicolson was in Affghanistan in 1838-39, and was deputed to conduct the traitor Dost Mahomed Khan to Calcutta, and afterwards to Saharunpore. This officer had had seven years' experience of the politics of the Affghans and the Sikhs. At this juncture he was with Major General Sir John H. Littler at Ferozepore. He was in the daily receipt of intelligence from Lahore, and knew that the Sikhs would cross, for he wrote to Calcutta on the 9th of October, 1845, that "he believed the Sikhs would cross." What! because Major Broadfoot knew that the Sikhs had made an empty threat to cross in 1843, was it therefore improbable, that, being encamped for a long time, on the right bank of the Sutlej, menacing the Durbar at Lahore, from whence they marched in defiance of their government and of their chief, whom they compelled to join them, they would execute their threat under these circumstances?

Major Broadfoot was the Governor-General's agent, and as such was the officer to whom he looked for intelligence, Captain Nicolson was his subordinate; the Major doubted the Captain's intelligence, because he had received no other information to induce him to believe that the rebellious and infatuated Khalsa (or royal) troops would dare to cross. If they threatened to cross in 1843 without carrying that

threat into execution, why might they not do the same in 1845? But this was not good logic; the inference was against him; because in 1843 they were obedient to the Durbar, and in 1845 they acted in defiance of it.

It would be useless at this distant period to enter into the discussion which arose in India, and was afterwards taken up with much warmth in England, as to the correctness of the views entertained by these officers on the crossing of the Sutlej by the Sikhs. The relative views of those two officers were then and are still sustained by their respective friends; but as far as we can individually offer an opinion, and as it seemed to many at the time, there is great difficulty in arriving at a decision as to the rights of the question at issue. It is true that Major Broadfoot, as the superior officer, might be presumed to be in a position for obtaining access to sources of information from which his subordinate was debarred. In a military point of view, this position must always carry its due weight in the scale of probable authentic intelligence, and should have a preponderating influence in ultimate proceedings, especially in such a country as India, and among such a people as we were then dealing with.

On the other hand, it is by no means uncommon for a subordinate in an important position, to have access directly, and indirectly, to authentic intelligence from which his superior may be shut out, and such a subordinate, knowing his duties and his means of intelligence, can constantly elicit facts in a variety of ways, especially from a hostile source, from which his superior is excluded.

Now, in reference to the position of Captain Nicolson at this juncture, and for a long period antecedent, we are decidedly of opinion that his information and impressions were correct: at the same time we do not consider that the admission of this circumstance can warrant any one to seek,

or in justice desire, to disparage the opinions of Major Broadfoot. He, no doubt, had strong grounds for arriving at the conclusion that he did, as the information upon which he acted coincided with his own predilections, and for persisting in these views, even in the face of equally strong opinions on the part of Captain Nicolson.

Officers will, and must, differ on points like the one at issue; but we do not hesitate to say, that Major Broadfoot's views have subjected him to no small share of obloquy and censure. It is, however, important to bear in mind, that in no country, and among no class of people in the world, is there so much cause for a difference of opinion as among military men in India, especially on such a question as that under consideration. The character of the Sikhs, their former empty and vacillating tactics, made the crossing of the Sutlej a matter of uncertainty, even up to a few days of their actual transit; and, to the very last moment, some of their own people were doubtful on the point. This has always been a piece of oriental policy.

It cannot be denied, that the Sikhs had considerable cause for provocation. The sequestration of the two Sikh villages near Loodianna, by the British government, early in November, was the culminating point, and left no doubt of our aggressive intentions on the minds of the Sikhs. Their suspicions had long been awakened by our proceedings—by the rumours of boats preparing at Bombay, to form pontoons across the Sutlej—of our equipping troops in Scinde, for a march on Mooltan—and reinforcing our frontier stations with men and ammunition. They persuaded themselves that the policy of our government was territorial aggrandizement, and that war was inevitable. This feeling was shared by the mass of the Sikh population. The Durbar sitting at Lahore, however, knew well enough that the British government would not take the initiative; but it had completely lost the confidence and allegiance of the army by its internal dissensions, and the supine weakness and luxurious indolence of the chiefs of the Punjaub. The Sikh soldiery used to assemble in groups round the tomb of Runjeet Singh, vowing to defend with their lives all that belonged to the commonwealth of Govind—that they would never suffer the kingdom of Lahore to be occupied by the

British strangers, but stand ready to march, or give the invaders battle on their own ground.

Thus, led on from one step to another, the Sikhs declared war on the 17th of November, and by an overt act broke the solemn treaty of alliance with our government; they crossed the Sutlej on the 13th of December, and on the 14th took up a position in the immediate vicinity of Ferozepore.

This treaty of alliance between the British government and the Maharajah had been concluded in April, 1809; being occasioned by the aggressions of Runjeet Singh upon the territories of the chiefs of the Cis-Sutlej provinces, who claimed the British protection.^[1]

In Sir David Ochterlony's proclamation,^[2] which was issued at the same time, it was especially stated, "That the force of cavalry and infantry which may have crossed to this side of the river Sutlej, must be recalled to the other side, to the country of the Maharajah. This communication is made solely with the view of publishing the sentiments of the British, and of ascertaining those of the Maharajah. The British are confident that the Maharajah will consider the contents of this precept as redounding to his real advantage, and as affording a conspicuous proof of their friendship; that with their capacity for war, they are also intent on peace."

There can be no question, that so long as Runjeet Singh held the government, this and subsequent treaties would have remained inviolate. He knew the power and influence of the English well enough to desire their friendship, rather than their enmity. But this was not the case with his successors, whose policy was guided by views of self-aggrandizement, rather than by the weal of their people, by which they lost their hold over them.

Up to this time, the British had adopted only precautionary measures for the protection of their frontier states. The Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, had joined the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, at Umballa, early in December; and as soon as the rumour gained ground, that the Sikh forces were marching towards the Sutlej, the troops in the upper provinces received marching orders, and all were speedily on the move. The corps stationed at Umballa, Loodianna, and Ferozepore, amounted to about 30,000 men, with 70 field-guns; and as Ferozepore, which was then occupied by Sir John Littler, was the most exposed, the troops from Umballa were sent to his support, and only a small garrison was left at Loodianna, in order that as large a body of available men as possible, should be placed at the disposal of Sir H. Gough to give battle to the Sikhs, should they carry out their threat of crossing the Sutlej.

This, as we have seen, they actually did on the 13th; but so great was the influence which Captain Nicolson exercised over some of their chiefs, that he prevailed upon Lall Singh to divide his forces; and it was only a division of the Sikhs which fought at Moodkee on the 18th of December.

The Sikh army numbered from 35,000 to 40,000 men, with 50 pieces of heavy artillery, besides a reserve force stationed near Loodianna, to act according to circumstances. The army of invasion consequently more than doubled that of the British. Notwithstanding the jealousy, mistrust, and treachery which prevailed in the Sikh army, in one thing they were agreed, that they would rid the commonwealth of Govind, of their hated British allies; and that in order to accomplish this, it behoved every individual to act as if the result depended upon himself alone. The Sikhs were commanded by Tej Singh, an officer of considerable talent. They took up an entrenched position at Ferozeshah, an inconsiderable village about 10 miles from Ferozepore and the same distance from Moodkee.