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The Military Character of General Sir Charles J. Napier, G.C.B.

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Friday, March 30, 1860.

General H.R.H. THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF in the Chair.

THE MILITARY CHARACTER OF GENERAL SIR CHARLES J. NAPIER, G.C.B.

By Col. MACDOUGALL, Commandant, Staff College.

THE life of Sir Charles James Napier, which forms the subject of this address, was so full of strange perils and marvellous escapes, so illustrated by greatness of soul and greatness of action, that it would almost seem more properly to belong to the age of romance; and I must bespeak the indulgence of my hearers on account of the inability I feel to do justice to a subject of so much interest in the limited time at my command.

Truly is it said of Sir C. Napier by his biographer, that "His is the story of a man who never tarnished his reputation by a shameful deed; of one who subdued distant nations by his valour, and then governed them so wisely, that English rule was revered and loved where before it had been feared and execrated."

It will be my endeavour in this address to show, imperfectly it must be, that in these words there is no exaggeration.

Passing over his childhood and youth, which yet abound in strangely interesting incidents, it was not till he was a Major in the 50th, which regiment he commanded in the action, that he first saw war in earnest at

Corunna. I do not believe there exists a more graphic description of exciting and terrible events, than the record he has left of his personal share in that battle.

I can only regret that time does not admit of my reading the narrative as set down in his journal, for, although desperately wounded—his ankle broken by a bullet—stabbed in the back—and engaged in a struggle for his life against numerous enemies, during which he received another severe wound from a sabre cut on his bare head—he was yet able to observe and to record the minute events of the day with a simplicity, a force, and a self-evident accuracy, which under the circumstances are truly astonishing.

Made prisoner at Corunna and released by the generosity of Marshal Soult, for which good deed the whole Napier family during their lives cherished towards the Marshal the warmest gratitude,—Major Napier was present as a volunteer at the action of the "Coa," and, with very unaccustomed good fortune, escaped on that occasion unwounded. His remarks, made at the time, on Craufurd's errors, are well worthy of study, and show to what an extent he had already mastered his profession.

At Busaco, again a volunteer, he received a terrible wound, from the effects of which he suffered tortures during the remainder of his life; a bullet having passed through his nose, broken the left jaw, and lodged near the ear. The operation for the extraction of the ball was frightful, which however he treated as lightly, according to the testimony of his cousin who was present, as the drawing of a tooth. When it was over, he was with difficulty prevented by Sir E. Pakenham from rushing back into the fight, with his jaw broken, and blood flowing from his mouth.

His two brothers, George and William, were in the battle and had heard of his wound; but sent him word that they could not come to see him.

"How proud and happy," he says in his journal, "this message made me. I gloried in them; yet, thinking I could not live long, I was very anxious to see them, especially as I heard George had been wounded while gallantly leading a charge. William had been shot through the hip two months before, but did not go to the rear, and went into action here with the wound still open. Well, we are all three still alive, and old men: we were then young, strong, and as hardy men as any in the army, and we had fifteen or sixteen wounds between us, and being very fond of each other it made a talk among our comrades."

Again we find Major Napier with his wound still bandaged, riding ninety miles in one day to join his regiment, forming part of the force with which Wellington pursued Massena. His two brothers were in the Light Division which led the advance, and which was almost hourly engaged with the French rear-guard under Ney.

Thus advancing, he met on one occasion a litter of branches being carried to the rear; on asking the bearers what wounded officer they carried, the reply he received was "Captain Napier, 52nd, with a broken limb." A second litter followed, and he was told that its occupant was Captain Napier, 43rd, "mortally wounded," as it was supposed at the time. He only looked at them and passed on to the fight in front.

At the conclusion of the war Charles, then Lieutenant-Colonel Napier, entered the Military College at Farnham. His brother William was there at the same time. The motives which induced these men, who had served

with so much distinction in the field, to shut themselves up for two years within the walls of a college, are well set forth in a letter of advice which thirty years later the Governor of Scinde addressed to a young officer :—

“By reading, you will be distinguished; without it abilities are of little use. A man may talk and write: but he cannot learn his profession without constant study to prepare, especially for the higher ranks, because he there wants the knowledge and experience of others improved by his own. But when in a post of responsibility he has no time to read; and if he comes to such a post with an empty skull, it is then too late to fill it, and he makes no figure.

“Thus many people fail to distinguish themselves, and say they are unfortunate, which is untrue. Their own previous idleness unfitted them to profit by fortune.”

In 1822, Colonel Napier was appointed Military Resident at Cephalonia, which gave him despotic power over the island, as Lieutenant of the Lord High Commissioner. “Besides being King,” he says, “I am bishop also, and all the convents and churches are under me; the priests cannot kill a fowl without my written order.” The work was excessive. “My predecessor,” he wrote, “is going home half dead from the labour; but to me, it is health, spirit—everything. I live for some use now. I take no rest myself, and give nobody else any.” Indeed, his labours for the improvement of the Cephalonians were as incessant and as successful, as they were afterwards, on a larger scale, for the regeneration of Scinde. They were cut short in 1830, in consequence of a disagreement with the Lord High Commissioner; but the best testimony to the beneficence of his rule is to be found in the fact, that after he had quitted Cephalonia for ever apparently in disgrace with the Supreme Governor, the peasants of that island voluntarily cultivated a small piece of land, left by him uncared for, and transmitted to him yearly the value of the produce.

I shall have to relate a parallel instance which occurred twenty years later, when he was quitting India for the last time at enmity with the Indian Government.

In 1839, Major-General Sir Charles Napier was selected for the command of the Northern district, at the time when the Chartist agitation was at its highest and an outbreak seemed imminent; and the details of his proceedings in this anxious post—his sagacity—his forbearance—the tact with which he reassured the over-timid, and restrained the over-violent—are full of interest and instruction.

During his Northern command Sir C. Napier's health began to give way. He fancied himself threatened with blindness, and complains occasionally in his journal of the unendurable agonies he suffered—the consequence of his Busaco wound. He evidently believed that he was failing—that his work was well nigh done—and that his character and ability must be judged by the deeds of his past life. He little thought that the most brilliant part of his career lay in the future—that opportunity would yet be afforded him to prove that his ability both for war and for government were of the very highest order; and that he only wanted equal opportunities to become the rival in renown, as I verily believe him to have been the equal in genius, of the greatest captains of the world.

It is strange to observe how late in life the great work to which they seem

born comes to some men. Appointed Major-General on the Bombay staff in 1842, Sir C. Napier was sixty-two when his selection by Lord Ellenborough for Scinde first gave him an independent military command.

Scinde was at this time still heaving with the swell occasioned by the Cabool disaster, and agitated with hatred to British authority.

I am not here to consider the justice or policy of the conquest of Scinde. That conquest was effected by Sir C. Napier as an executive officer in the unquestioned discharge of his duty, with a rapidity, a completeness, and a clemency, almost unparalleled in history, and whose effects have been as enduring as they have been beneficial to the conquered race.

It seems to have been Sir C. Napier's destiny to be placed continually amid scenes of terror and suffering, and to experience marvellous escapes from deadly peril. No sooner did the steamer, in which he now embarked at Bombay for Kurrachee, gain the open sea, than cholera broke out on board in its most frightful form.

In the six "bitter days and nights," as he calls them in his journal, during which the voyage lasted, fifty-four dead bodies were cast into the sea, just one-fourth of the whole living freight; eighty more were seized, of whom ten died after landing. To crown all, the steamer nearly went ashore on a dark night, when making the land, owing to the drunkenness of the two mates.

Escaped from these dangers, the ill-timed explosion of a rocket, four days after he landed, tore the calf of his leg open to the bone and inflicted what might have been a very dangerous injury; but the wound healed, as doctors say, "by the first intention," owing probably to his remarkable temperance both in eating and drinking, and five days afterwards he was travelling towards Hyderabad.

Scinde was at this time in a very disturbed political state. It was inhabited by three distinct races, Beloochees, Hindoos, and Scindians proper. The Ameers, princes of the land, were chieftains over the Beloochees, tyrants over the other two.

A treaty, concluded by Lord Auckland three years before, gave to the British control as a paramount power over the Ameers, and the right of military occupation of certain places in Scinde; but when Sir C. Napier arrived, the Ameers, encouraged by the recent Cabool disaster, were exciting the mountain tribes to war and preparing for it themselves.

It was precisely at the time when, to re-establish British prestige, General Nott advanced from Candahar to join General Pollock at Cabool, with orders afterwards to retire to India by the Khyber pass, while Colonel England with a part of Nott's force fell back into Scinde by the Bolan pass. While the troops were thus dispersed, the safety of England's column, and British supremacy in Scinde, evidently depended on the capacity of Sir C. Napier as a politician and a commander.

The places occupied by the British under the treaty, were Sukkur, Roree, Shikarpore, and Kurrachee.

The possession of Sukkur and Roree afforded a secure passage of the Indus from either bank, and was of great strategical importance; not only because it enabled the General to operate by either bank of the river at will, but because those places constituted a base of operations for the British force, which could thence communicate with the British North-west pro-

vinces and the Bengal army, through the friendly territory of the ruler of Bhawalpore.

When Sir C. Napier assumed the command, the force in Scinde did not exceed 4,000 men, and was about equally divided between Sukkur and Kurrachee; that is to say, 400 miles asunder, with insecure communication. The remainder of the troops intended to form his army were with Colonel England, approaching Sukkur by the Bolan pass; when these joined, as they did shortly after, his force amounted to about 9,000 men of all arms.

All the Ameers both of Upper and Lower Scinde, with the exception of Ali Moorad, had entered into a league against the British; but it was their great object to postpone a rupture for two reasons.

1st. To gain time for the assembly of their troops; and they could bring together, if time were given them, between 70,000 and 80,000 men.

2nd. To defer military operations to the approaching hot season, when the sun would prove their most powerful ally.

Every artifice was therefore employed to deceive the English General as to their intentions.

Sir C. Napier was thought fortunate in having, at this crisis, the assistance of an experienced Indian officer as political agent, who had spent his life in unravelling the threads of Indian intrigue, and was generally supposed to be a master of the art.

But repeated infractions of the treaty by the Ameers, and the certain information that they were secretly assembling their troops, convinced Sir C. Napier, although these facts failed to convince Major Outram, the political agent referred to, that those princes only waited their opportunity to attack him. He wrote this opinion to Lord Ellenborough as early as the 30th November, and on the 26th December, before his enemies' plans were ripe, he took advantage of a fresh violation of the treaty to march suddenly on Khypore, the capital of Upper Scinde, with 3,000 men and 18 guns.

Dismayed by this act of vigour, the Ameers of Upper Scinde went off to join their friends in the south with their fighting men, their families, and their treasures.

Thus Upper Scinde was cleared of enemies, but the task which remained to the English General was by no means easy. It was now the beginning of January. The hot season began in March, after which military operations was only another term for death to European troops. Sir C. Napier's intelligence department, in the organization of which he has never been surpassed, gave him certain information that the Belooch tribes were mustering about Hyderabad; and that place, which must be his object, was 150 miles distant. He had at his disposal in all Scinde only 9,000 men, of whom at least three-fourths were Sepoys. 3,000 was the largest number he could bring into the field, after providing for the garrisons of Sukkur, Roree, and Kurrachee, on account of the impossibility of procuring transport; the dread of the Ameers being over the contractors, so much so that the principal contractor forfeited his deposit rather than incur their vengeance.

Sir C. Napier now learned that the Ameers had thrown a garrison of 2,000 men into Emaum-Ghur, a strong fort situated in the heart of the desert, on the flank of his line of march towards Hyderabad.

If he marched on Hyderabad, he would encounter the principal Belooch army supported on that fortress, and having Meerpore and Omercote, for-

tified places in the desert, to retire upon, while the troops from Emaum-Ghur, in all probability strongly reinforced by fresh tribes, acted on his rear and cut off all communication with Roree. And there was every reason to believe that if the Ameers gained an advantage however slight, the Affghans and Sikhs, who were watching the progress of events, would take part in the war.

Weighing all the chances, Sir C. Napier resolved to reduce Emaum-Ghur. This fort, armed and provisioned by the Ameers to serve as a base for the Belooch army of Upper Scinde, was supposed, from its position, inaccessible to European troops, and from its strength impregnable. Situated in the very heart of the waste, eight long marches from the edge of the desert, its exact position was unknown. The tracks by which the troops must move to reach it, and the wells on which their existence depended during the march, must be pointed out by native guides, and these men might be traitors. Several thousands of wild horsemen, too, hovered about the edge of the desert, able to fill up the wells or poison the waters, and watching to fall on the fainting soldiers.

These were the difficulties. But both the moral and physical advantages of success promised to be so great that the General determined on the enterprise.

Reports of the depth of sand and scarcity of water along the route he must take having convinced him of the impossibility of operating with a large force, he selected 200 irregular cavalry, picked 350 of the hardest and most active men of the 22d regiment, and put them on camels, loaded ten camels with provisions, eighty with water—and with this handful of men and two breaching howitzers, he marched on the evening of the 5th January.

Next day forage failed, and water became scarce. He sent back three-fourths of his cavalry, retaining only fifty, and resolute to proceed so long as he could keep a hundred men together.

On the eighth day, having during their anxious march lived from hand to mouth, uncertain each morning whether water would be found in the evening—and several times it was not found—the little force reached Emaum-Ghur, where the justness of the General's calculations was at once apparent, for the Belooch commandant, with a strong fort well armed and provisioned, and having a garrison six times as numerous as the force moving against him, was yet so panic-struck by the audacity of the English general, that he had evacuated the place two days before, leaving all his stores of grain and powder behind him.

Sir C. Napier destroyed this fortress, retraced his steps through the desert, and joined his main body at Peer-Abu-Bekr, where it had been ordered to await him, on the 23rd January, without the loss of a man—without even a sick soldier—having completely effected his object, having destroyed once and for ever the confidence of his enemies in their desert as a protection, and baffled their plan of campaign.

It was now Sir C. Napier's business to persuade or to force the Ameers formally to sign a new treaty, which had been imposed upon them by Lord Ellenborough as a penalty for their repeated violation of the first, and which new treaty they had signified their readiness to accept with many protestations of loyalty.

The Ameers temporised; Sir C. Napier threatened to march against them instantly if they did not sign; but deferred the execution of this threat at the urgent entreaty of Major Outram, who expressed the fullest confidence in the peaceful intentions of the Ameers, and in their submission to his demands.

But the hot season was drawing on, and it became necessary to put an end to all uncertainty. The 25th January was fixed as the last day for the signing of the treaty, and, that day having passed, the General marched towards Hydrabad.

His military position was now secure and commanding. His field force was about 3,000 strong, based on Sukkur and Roree, with a division of the Bengal army in reserve at Bhawulpore, forming a link between him and the British North-west provinces. His right rested on the Indus, on whose broad waters floated his armed steamers and supplies. His left rested on the desert, which was swept by Jacob with his Scinde horse-men, and where the enemy no longer possessed a strong place whence they might threaten his flank and his communications.

Sir C. Napier halted sixty miles north of Hydrabad, and, anxious to avoid bloodshed, he gave the Ameers to the 6th February to ratify the treaty. He even extended the time six days beyond that date, viz. to the 12th February, to enable Major Outram to proceed to Hydrabad to try the effect of his personal influence with the Ameers, which that officer was convinced would be successfully exerted.

Let me here pause in my narrative to recall the scene in the House of Commons, where a noble Lord opposed the vote of thanks to Sir C. Napier, on the ground that he had needlessly and wickedly pushed on hostilities for the sake of military glory. Now what was the fact? Here at the most critical period—when the General had certain information that the fiery cross had passed through the land, and that the Belooch clans had gathered, and were still gathering, round Hydrabad—when the foemen actually assembled outnumbered him by eight to one—so earnestly desirous was he to avoid bloodshed, that he risked the safety of his army, the prestige of the British name, and in all probability British supremacy in the East, by according a delay of seventeen days to the Ameers, which he felt morally certain would be employed against him by the assembly of thousands of additional enemies.

What should we not have heard of Sir C. Napier's facile credulity and weakness in granting this delay, if he had been beaten at Meanee?

These things are of the past, and the English nation unmistakably pronounced its verdict at the time; but I cannot refrain from here saying, that the accusation solemnly made on the occasion I have referred to, against an absent general, who was literally wearing out his life in his country's service, was as shameful to the accuser as it was false in fact.

The most convincing disproof of this accusation is supplied by this fragment of a newspaper which I hold in my hand.

By the adverse statements of his enemies, the thanks of the Houses of Parliament to Sir C. Napier and his army for the victories of Meanee and Hydrabad were delayed for a whole year, in order to give time for the most searching inquiry; that inquiry having been made, Sir Robert Peel, in February, 1844, in moving a vote of thanks, used the following language:—

"In his opinion there was conclusive proof, that if Sir C. Napier had passed one day inactively, or if he had attempted to retreat, or if he had not taken that course which his own wisdom combined with his military skill had pointed out, not one day could have elapsed without the army being cut off; and a disaster would have occurred of which, following so closely on that of Cabool, the consequences it would be difficult to surmise. But estimating the conduct of Sir C. Napier, he must say he did not think his chief praise was his military knowledge or his personal valour: he thought his chief praise was this, that, seeing the position in which he was placed, he well and deliberately considered all the consequences likely to ensue;—that, knowing the shock to the British Empire in the east, the danger that was incurred, the injury to its reputation from the disaster of Cabool, he, on his own responsibility, with less of local knowledge, with less of local experience, than those by whom he was surrounded, had the moral courage to act in opposition to their advice, and to that the army owed its safety."

On the 13th, in answer to Major Outram's renewed entreaties for further delay, written from Hyderabad, the General declared he would wait no longer, saying—"I have delayed at risk of the lives of my men, and of my own character as an officer, not to the eleventh but to the twelfth hour. If men die in consequence of my delay, their blood may be justly charged to my account."

On the 15th, the dream of Major Outram was rudely broken by an attack made upon his Residency at Hyderabad, by 8,000 Belooch warriors. His little escort, formed of the light company of the 22nd, after holding the post successfully for several hours, was drawn off on board steamers which the foresight of the General had despatched to Hyderabad, and steaming up the river, joined Sir C. Napier on the 16th at Nuttaree, at which place he had arrived on his southward march.

Sir C. Napier knew that an overwhelming Belooch force was at Meanee, and its numbers were being hourly increased. He resolved to attack them at once. He had read the Duke of Wellington's remarks on Colonel Monson's disastrous retreat before the Mahrattas, and drew from them the conclusion never to give way before barbarians. "Let the Beloochees be sixty or one hundred thousand," he said, "I will fight."

Before daybreak on the 17th he marched. At eight o'clock in the morning his line was formed in front of the Belooch position, which was very strong and defended by 30,000 men, 5,000 being cavalry.

The Ameers' front extended 1,200 yards along the dry bed of the Fulailee River, the banks of which, sloping gradually down towards the plain in front like a glacis, afforded the infantry which lined them all the defence of a parapet.

The Ameers' left rested on a shikargah, or hunting forest, which was inclosed by a high wall having only one opening, a gateway, about midway between the Belooch and the British lines, that is to say, about 500 yards from each; and in this shikargah 5,000 of the enemy's matchlock men were posted to sally out on the right rear of the British, so soon as they should be engaged with the Belooch main body in front.

The Ameers' right was also protected by a shikargah, which was intersected by deep nullahs running at right angles to the Fulailee.

Their guns, fifteen in number, were in two masses on the flanks, and their

J.R. Jobbins.

camp and cavalry were placed in a loop, formed by a sudden bend of the river to the rear.

At nine o'clock the British line advanced to the attack in echelon of battalions; the right, composed of two batteries and Her Majesty's 22nd regiment, being in front. The General's quick eye instantly detected the danger to which his right flank was exposed from the 5,000 matchlock men in the inclosed shikargah.

He rode near the wall, found it about ten feet high, not loopholed, and then, riding through the opening under a play of matchlocks, he observed there was no scaffolding to enable the enemy to fire over the top.

"Then," in the words of the historian, "the inspiration of genius came to the aid of heroism. Taking the grenadiers of the 22nd, he thrust them at once into the opening, telling their brave Captain Tew, that he was to block up that entrance; to die there if it must be, never to give way! And well did the gallant fellow obey his orders; he died there, but the opening was defended."

As the British closed to within 100 yards of the enemy, the voice of the General was heard along the line commanding the charge.

The guns on the right were run up into a position, whence they swept the dense masses of Beloochees diagonally.

The 22nd were on the top of the bank in a moment, thinking to bear down all before them; but they paused in amazement at the forest of swords waving in their front, which had been up to that moment concealed from their view by the elevated river bank.

It would be a desecration to attempt to convey the scene in any other than the language of Sir William Napier:—

"Thick as standing corn, and gorgeous as a field of flowers, stood the Beloochees in their many-coloured garments and turbans; they filled the broad deep bed of the Fulailee, they clustered on both banks, and covered the plain beyond. Guarding their heads with their large dark shields, they shook their sharp swords beaming in the sun; their shouts rolled like a peal of thunder, as with frantic gestures they rushed forward, and full against the front of the 22nd dashed with demoniac strength and ferocity. But with shouts as loud and shrieks as wild and fierce as theirs, and hearts as big and arms as strong, the Irish soldiers met them with that queen of weapons, the musket, and sent their foremost masses rolling back in blood."

The battle lasted for three hours, and there was danger of the British becoming physically exhausted by the efforts necessary to repel the constant rushes of fresh opponents.

Under their repeated attacks even the 22nd were forced several times to give ground, but always their General was there to cheer and rally them. He remained during the whole of this conflict on horseback between the opposing lines, which were often not more than fifteen feet apart, and running nearly as much risk from the muskets of his own soldiers as from the matchlocks of the enemy. He exposed himself to greater danger than any man in his ranks, because he saw that it was a necessity; the 22nd were young soldiers, and if they had given way the battle would have been lost, and with it perhaps the British rule in India. But at his voice and demeanour their strength returned and they recovered their ground, though nearly deprived of regimental leaders, for those leaders had gone down fast, falling as British officers should, and always will do, when they cannot advance.

Milton's grand lines are so applicable to the English leader on this occasion that I cannot refrain from quoting them :

" If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers ; heard so oft
In worst extremes and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it raged ; in all assaults
Their surest signal ; they will soon resume
New courage and revive."

In every battle there is a critical period which offers victory to that commander who first perceives it, and most promptly seizes the occasion. That crisis had now arrived. Jacob's horse having vainly attempted to penetrate the shikargah on the Belooch right, with the view of turning that flank, Sir C. Napier sent orders to the whole of the cavalry to charge in one mass full on the enemy's right. Dashing through the Belooch guns, the troopers crossed the bed of the river, charged with irresistible fury on the dense masses of the enemy drawn up in the plain beyond, and spread confusion along the rear of the Belooch line engaged in the Fulailee.

Then at last the Eastern swordsmen wavered, and, pressed by the British, began slowly to retreat, not in panic or confusion, but in such large masses and with so determined a bearing, that the General did not deem it prudent with his exhausted troops to push the pursuit far.

Such was the battle of Meance; and if we consider the individual bravery and strength of the Belooch warriors, and their numbers—for certainly not less than 28,000 were present on the field—as well as the strength of their position; when we remember that Sir C. Napier's force engaged did not actually number more than 2,000 men, and the remarkable fact, that of these only 800 were Europeans, we must conclude that this was one of the most extraordinary battles that ever was fought.

Next morning, in answer to a summons from the General, so astounding was the moral effect of the victory, that six sovereign princes gave themselves up as his prisoners, and yielded the strong fortress of Hyderabad with its large treasure.

In Sir C. Napier's despatch, the names of private soldiers who distinguished themselves in battle were for the first time published to their countrymen; and for this cause, if for no other, his memory ought always to be dear to the heart of the private soldier.

The battle had been won, and Hyderabad occupied, yet the situation of the victor was one of no small difficulty.

His force was considerably reduced, yet he was obliged to detach 500 men to garrison Hyderabad; for that place was too far from the Indus, by which alone he could receive his supplies, to serve as a base or even as a dépôt, because he had not carriage sufficient to transport his stores over the four miles of road which separated the fortress from the river.

A fresh Belooch army was gathering at Meerpore under Shere Mahomed; and the hot season was coming on apace, the mercury already indicating 112° in the shade.

The British General, hitherto so daring, suddenly became the most cautious of commanders. He judged that if he marched at once against Meerpore, the Ameer would retire to Omercote, to entice the small British

force to its destruction from heat and sickness in the desert. But an appearance of timidity on his part would encourage Shere Mahomed to come to attack him, the very thing the General desired. Meanwhile he would gain time for the arrival of reinforcements from Kurrachee and Sukkur.

He accordingly entrenched a camp on the Indus to protect the steamer station, and to serve as his base; and in it he placed his hospitals and stores. But while thus presenting an appearance of timidity to his enemies, he was careful to guard against its affecting the minds of his own soldiers, by neglecting to avail himself of the protection of his camp, and obliging the troops to pitch their tents outside on the open plain; by this, and by other means, leading them to believe that he held the Ameer's army in contempt.

The weak British force now shewed like a small rock in the midst of a rising flood, which threatened to submerge it.

Shere Mahomed, at the head of a force whose numbers were variously reported between twenty-five and forty thousand men, advanced to within ten miles of Hyderabad, loudly boasting that he would "Cabul" the British.

All the hill tribes, encouraged by the confident bearing of the Ameer and by the apparent timidity of the British General, were preparing to descend into the plains.

Dawks were stopped and stations plundered. The reinforcements which the General expected from Sukkur ran great danger of being cut off and destroyed by the Ameer, whose position commanded the line of march of those reinforcements, at the same time that it threatened Hyderabad and the British camp on the Indus.

The situation of the English General was now full of anxiety.

His field force, reduced by battle and sickness to 2,000 men, had to perform a duty beyond its capacity; that is to say, it was required to garrison Hyderabad, to defend the camp on the Indus, four miles distant from that fortress, and to guard a large pleasure garden, half a mile from the camp, where the captive Ameers were confined; while a hostile army of 25,000 men occupied a central position only ten miles off whence it threatened at once these three fractions into which the British force was of necessity divided, and the reinforcements which were marching to join it.

It was not alone necessary to ensure the safe arrival of the reinforcements; but they must arrive, and Shere Mahomed's army must be beaten and dispersed, by the 25th March; because between that date and the commencement of the unendurable heat, barely time enough would remain for the reduction of the Ameer's fortresses of Meerpore and Omercote, without which he would be able to renew the war at any moment.

Without entering into details, which are however well worthy being studied, it must suffice to say, that, by a series of arrangements and operations which present a combination of great skill and sagacity, with that good fortune which all great commanders appear to share in common, the reinforcements were brought safely into Sir C. Napier's camp on the 22d.

On the morning of the 24th, with 5,000 men and nineteen guns, he marched against Shere Mahomed, who was strongly entrenched at Dubba with 25,000 men, defeated him with the loss of 5,000 men, seventeen standards, and fifteen guns, and completely dispersed his army.

The British loss was 270, of which number 147 were of the 22nd regiment alone, thus shewing, even in this favourable instance where the 22nd were unusually well-supported by the Sepoy battalions, how immense is the proportion of the fighting and the loss which Europeans always have to sustain when joined with Eastern troops.

This also was a wonderful battle. The ease with which it was won, and the disproportionate loss between the victors and vanquished, furnish the highest testimony to the skill of the General. But for that skill the loss of his troops would have been far greater; and if the slaughter of the Beloochees had been less, and their defeat less crushing, the war would have been prolonged, and a greatly increased loss of life would have been the result.

Sir C. Napier's opinion was, that the best method to save bloodshed for a soldier is to be master of his profession.

"How else," he said, "could I command with honour? How answer for the lives of those entrusted to my charge? An ignorant general is a murderer: all brave men confide in the knowledge he pretends to possess, and when the death trial comes their generous blood flows in vain! Merciful God! how can an ignorant man charge himself with so much blood? I have studied war long, earnestly, and deeply, yet tremble at my own deficiencies."

After the battle, the Ameer, with the discouraged remnant of his army, had retired on Meerpore, Sir C. Napier, one of the commanders who thought nothing was done so long as anything remained to do, prepared to follow up his stroke while the effect of the battle was fresh.

The troops had fought for three hours in the battle, with the thermometer at 110° in the shade. Their General gave them but eight hours' rest, and marched on Meerpore. His wisdom in pressing on was proved by the fact, that the troops in this march passed through two strongly entrenched positions which the Lion had prepared, and had intended to dispute, but which, in the panic immediately succeeding the action, he could not get sufficient men to defend. This, however, would not have been the case a few days later.

The day after the battle Sir C. Napier's cavalry was at the gates of Meerpore, forty miles from the field. The consequence of this vigour was that Shere Mahomed abandoned his capital, and fled with his family and treasure to Omercote.

Even while taking possession of Meerpore the General sent the Scinde horse, a camel battery, and a regiment of infantry in pursuit of the flying Ameer, who, thus pressed, abandoned Omercote as he had done Meerpore; and Omercote, the desert fortress, Shere Mahomed's last resource, 60 miles from the edge of the desert and 100 from the field of Dubba, opened its gates and was garrisoned by a British detachment just ten days after the battle. Shere Mahomed now became a wanderer over the face of the country, with few followers and without a resting place.

Meerpore and Omercote were both strong places, well armed and provisioned, and, if defended by a resolute enemy, might have detained the General in the field far into the hot season; thus enabling Shere Mahomed to gather a new force and to prolong the war.

The army had marched from its camp on the Indus to attack Shere

Mahomed on the 24th March. On the 8th of April it was back at Hyderabad, and Sir C. Napier slept in the palace of the Ameers, master of Scinde, having in sixteen days defeated 25,000 enemies in battle, captured two fortified places, and marched 200 miles under a Scindian sun.

Shere Mahomed however was still at large, and to complete the tranquillity of Scinde it was necessary to capture him. For this purpose Sir C. Napier again took the field towards the end of May, when the mercury stood at 130° in the tents. The Ameer had in the interval collected about 10,000 men; and the General drew a circle of troops round him to prevent his escape. On the 14th June Shere Mahomed made a dash at the weakest part of the circle, was beaten, and his force utterly dispersed by Major Jacob. The General heard the cannonade, knew that Jacob must be engaged, and feared he might be overwhelmed. On the 15th, while still in anxious suspense as to the result, he was struck down by sun-stroke at the same time with several other Europeans; he alone of all who were thus attacked was left alive at the end of three hours. He attributed his own recovery on this occasion partly to the reviving effect of the news of Jacob's victory, partly to his remarkable abstinence in eating and drinking.

Scinde was now conquered. "We have taught the Beloochee," said the General, "that neither his sun, nor his desert, nor his jungles, nor his nullahs, can stop us, and he will never face us more."

Most of the great feudal chieftains came in and took the oath of fidelity to the British Governor, and what is more they kept it. And the just and beneficent rule of Sir C. Napier conciliated to such a degree the respect and attachment of these wild warriors, on whom he had laid so heavy a hand, that long afterwards, when he was leaving India for the last time, at enmity with the East Indian Government, and when they had no longer anything to hope or fear from his favour or his anger, the Belooch Sirdars flocked in hundreds to pay their respects to him at Hyderabad, and asked leave to present him with a sword of honour. That sword is now an heirloom in his family.

The scene on this occasion has been described to me by an eye-witness, as having been as affecting as it was remarkable. All the avenues into Hyderabad were crowded by the great Belooch Chieftains and Sirdars of Scinde, the shaggy mountain ponies on which many of them rode shewing they had come from the distant hills. Many of them led their sons by the hand, entreating Sir C. Napier that he would lay his conquering hand on their young heads, in the belief that his touch would confer fortune and blessing.

Surely in the face of a fact like this, all detraction of his policy and humanity as an administrator—no less than of his skill and energy as a soldier—must be altogether vain. His was essentially the glove of velvet covering the hand of iron; and his touch was so light, that its force, exerted with crushing effect on evil-doers, was to the well-disposed and the loyal known only from memory or from its action upon the robber and the oppressor.

In reviewing the operations of which I have been able to give only a very imperfect summary, the first thought that suggests itself is the marvellous activity and endurance, both of mind and body, of the English General. During operations in the field; though in the saddle all day, he alone of all his force was habitually debarred from rest at night, and compelled to devote the hours nature has designed for the restoration of the exhausted body

to wearisome correspondence, of which the vindication of his fame from calumnious attack formed no small portion.

I do not believe either ancient or modern history furnishes a parallel instance of a man being called on for the first time in his life at the advanced age of sixty-two to command an army in the field under circumstances of so much complication and responsibility.

Thrown suddenly in the midst of the, to him, altogether novel field of Eastern intrigue, he yet unravelled all its threads with far more than the skill and tact of the oldest Indian diplomatist; and while his political *attaché*, a man who had been bred to the business, was so blinded and cajoled by the Amceers that he incessantly urged the General to take no offensive measures, thus throwing upon him an awful responsibility which few men would have been bold enough to face, — Sir C. Napier alone among his army, clearly perceiving the danger, disregarded the responsibility, and out of the "nettle danger" plucked "the flower safety," by attacking and defeating a force fifteen times his strength.

If it is seldom that we see consummate prudence tempering the ardour and confidence of a youthful general, it is rarer still to find the fire and vigour of youth animating the sagacity of the veteran. Sir C. Napier possessed in the highest degree the combination of these generally opposing qualities.

Sir C. Napier has been censured by self-constituted judges for undertaking important operations with an inadequate force — such, for example, as his march through the desert to Emaum-Ghur, and his attack on the enemy's position at Meanee. No man knew better than he the danger of despising an enemy, or the propriety of bringing to the decisive point every man, horse, and gun, that could by any possible foresight and combination be arrayed there. But in the course he actually pursued, he was governed by necessity — choice he had none.

There are some countries where the want of supplies and natural obstacles render it impossible to operate with a large force. Notably in Scinde, the scarcity of water at certain seasons, and the want of carriage at all times, formed two of these controlling causes. On account of the first, during the march to Emaum-Ghur, the General was obliged to keep with him only 400 men and to send the rest back.

The enterprise for difficulty would seem in prudence to have demanded 4,000 men; yet if he had taken with him only 1,000, he must have failed for want of water. He supplied the want of numbers by courage, hardihood, and perseverance, trusting to the moral effect of these qualities rather than to his apparent force.

It must be remembered that the British forces in Scinde were a mere handful, and could be outnumbered at any point, by ten times the number of enemies. In such a case, dependence on physical force alone, and a pedantic adherence to rules and maxims, would have only been to prolong the war, thereby encouraging the Amceers by an appearance of timidity, and probably calling to their aid the wild mountain tribes who were only waiting, to use a homely but expressive phrase, to see which way the cat jumped.

Both as regarded the prestige of the British name, and the character of his opponents, the moral was more to be considered than the physical effect.

It is one of Napoleon's sayings, that moral force in war is to physical force as four to one. If this be true in European warfare, where the

composition and courage of opposing armies is nearly equal, we must decide that in the case under consideration moral force was almost everything.

Although therefore Sir C. Napier occasionally disregarded mere technical rules, and placed himself in situations which to men of less transcendent ability would have been ruin, he did so because he measured correctly the capacity of his adversaries and his own; and that which in another might have been the extreme of rashness, was in him only the fruit of the most deliberate and just calculation.

The sun-stroke and the extreme labour he had endured so seriously affected his health at this time, that the medical men told him he must go to Kurrachee and quit work, or else he must prepare to give up life and work together. He went to Kurrachee; but would by no means consent to give up work. "If I take rest one day," he said, "the work doubles the next."

In October, before he had got over the effect of the sun-stroke, he was attacked by a terrible fever, which swept over the land, and carried off multitudes alike of natives and Europeans. Although the sickness was of a very depressing nature, the clearness of his mind never failed, and he was still emphatically the Governor of Scinde; and when his friends, who thought he was killing himself, urged him to resign and go to England, he answered, "No, not to save a thousand lives. The horses here are wild; but they know my hand; with another, they would start off as he was gathering up the reins."

For some months to come Sir C. Napier's labours were devoted to peaceful objects, to the improvement of the condition of the cultivator by altering the tenure of land, by abolishing slavery, promoting irrigation, &c.; and his memoirs on these and other great administrative reforms, drew from Sir Robert Peel the following remark: "No one," he said, "ever doubted Sir C. Napier's military powers; but in his other character he *does* surprise me. He is possessed of extraordinary talent for civil administration."

His efforts were however much interfered with at this time by descents made on the north-west frontier of Scinde by bands of desperate robbers, who from their numbers formed a small-army. A wide desert interposed between their mountain strongholds and the frontiers of Scinde. But in the summer of 1844, having committed in some of their incursions acts of great atrocity, Sir C. Napier resolved to undertake their reduction. For this purpose however it was necessary to cross the desert, to track them to their strongholds, to hem them up in a corner where there should be no escape, and afterwards to transport them bodily to the plains, and compel them to labour instead of robbing for their bread.

At some future time, perhaps, it may be my privilege to describe in this theatre, clearly and in detail, this hill campaign, which was, in my belief, as remarkable and as difficult an operation as was ever undertaken by a military commander. I must now content myself with saying, that after a campaign of fifty-four days, commenced on the 16th January, 1845, he returned, after having completely succeeded in all his objects.

He had crossed the desert, tracked the freebooters, 16,000 men, under their chief Beja Khan, a man of Herculean strength and courage, through mountains which for defiles and hidden caves were like a rabbit warren, and shut them up finally in their famous stronghold of Trukkee with their wives

and families, where he induced them to surrender with the loss of only a few lives. Thenceforth such was the terror of his name that so long as Sir C. Napier remained Governor of Scinde, life and property were almost as secure as in England.

During this campaign he had to bear with the despondency of his own officers, he alone perhaps among the officers (for the men having less knowledge had more faith) feeling any confidence in the success of an enterprise which to others appeared hopeless.

He had to overcome the enormous difficulties of feeding his force, by organizing supplies from the rear; to circumvent the proverbial hill craft of his mountaineer enemies, the duplicity of his guides, and the uncertain fidelity of his allies. With a master hand, and a master spirit, he converted all these disadvantages to his own favour, thus illustrating a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Philopœmen*, where he says that great man, "adopting the Cretan customs, and using their artifices and sleights, their stratagems and ambushes against themselves, soon shewed that their devices were like the short-sighted schemes of children when compared with the long reach of an experienced general."

The robber tribes captured were removed to the plains on the frontier, where they became cultivators of the soil, and received land from the government on the tenure of military service against the incursions of their kindred robbers; and the measure has proved in fact to be completely successful.

Sir C. Napier now returned to his works of peace, but they were not long destined to be undisturbed. So early as February 1844 he had predicted that a war with the Sikhs was inevitable. He now, with his remarkable forecast of mind, matured the plans which he foresaw he would be called upon to execute with the army of Scinde as an auxiliary to the principal British force on the Sutlege; and it was during this interval, and in preparation for that contingency, that he organized his famous camel baggage corps.

In June 1845, perceiving that the storm was about to burst, he wrote to the Governor-General begging to be allowed to organize an auxiliary force. But Sir H. Hardinge, who still thought at that time the war might be averted, would not allow of any preparation being made, for fear of alarming the jealousy of the Sikhs, promising however that Sir C. Napier should have six weeks' notice for the organization of his field force before the commencement of hostilities.

The Sikhs however gave no notice, and the news of the battle of Moodkee, fought on the 18th December, was the first intimation he received.

Then indeed he was ordered to assemble at Roree with all possible speed a field force of 15,000 men, 10,000 of whom must come from Bombay, as the resources of Scinde were unequal to this demand.

Sir C. Napier had been forbidden to purchase even a camel in anticipation. Thus, when the sudden order arrived, he had carriage for only 3,000 persons, when carriage for nearly 50,000 was required, that being the gross total represented by an Indian army of 15,000 fighting men; and though the Bombay complement of this force numbered 30,000 and had to be marched, after landing at Kurrachee, nearly 400 miles, yet on the forty-second day after the receipt of the order, the whole force required was concentrated at Roree in a perfect state of equipment and discipline; provided with a siege train of thirty-two pieces with 1,000 rounds a gun; eight field

batteries; engineer park and provisions for three months; as well as a pontoon train bearing 300 yards of bridge.

Only officers who have been called on to organise a force hastily under circumstances of similar difficulty can at all appreciate such a result.

Sir C. Napier's general plan was to create a diversion by marching on Mooltan.

The details were :—

To form his principal magazines at Ooch, situated at the confluence of the Chenaub with the Sutlege.

To divide his force between Ooch and Bhawulpore; to bridge the river at those places, and to make a concentric movement with those two columns on Shoojuabad, which place must be taken. The siege train to ascend the Chenaub in steamers, protected by the Ooch column, which would move along the left bank of that river.

To provide for retreat in case of necessity, a double bridge head was to be constructed at Ooch, and armed with the steamer guns. The defence of this *tête de pont* to be entrusted to the Bhawulpore levies, on which he could rely, so that he should be free to march on Shoojuabad with his whole force.

Shoojuabad being taken, to form an expense magazine at that place, which would then become his base of supply, for the siege of Mooltan.

If he succeeded in taking Mooltan, of which he felt little doubt, as he was in correspondence with parties within the walls, that town would be his pivot for further operations. A powerful diversion would already be effected, which would be certain to relieve the British army on the Sutlege of a great deal of pressure; and the advance which Sir C. Napier then contemplated on Lahore, would draw off the Sikhs altogether from the Sutlege to protect their capital.

The General's plan was to move up the Indus from Rorce in two columns, one on each bank, with the steam flotilla between them; to pass his whole force to the right bank at Mittenkoke, where he first expected to meet with resistance, and to crush that town under the concentrated fire of his eighty guns. This, he observed, was rather like "killing a gnat with a sledge-hammer;" but, besides the value of time, he knew what dangerous opponents the Sikhs would be behind stone walls, and his object was to terrify Shoojuabad and Mooltan by the example of the sudden destruction of Mittenkoke.

He had laid his plans for raising the population, which was unfriendly to the Sikhs, as far as Deyrah Gazee: and if he had been permitted to assemble his army as early as he had desired, he would, in all probability, judging from his past successes, have burst on Lahore with 25,000 fighting men long before the battle of Sobraon.

But it was otherwise ordained; for the battle of Ferozeshah had been fought, and the Governor-General suddenly ordered Sir C. Napier to quit his army, and come in person to the head-quarter camp on the Sutlege.

Arrived at the Governor-General's camp on the 3rd March, he found the victory of Sobraon had been won, that a treaty was in progress, and that his projected campaign must remain only a project for ever.

Of the treaty then concluded he altogether disapproved, believing that the only way to avert a second struggle was to annex the Punjab at once; whereas, he said, "if a puppet king like Duleep Singh was established, the

battle would have to be fought again, rivers of blood would flow, and the result might be doubtful."

In two years from that time, Mooltan, Ramnuggar, Chillianwallah, and Goojerat, bore testimony to the truth of the prediction.

Sir C. Napier quitted Scinde in January 1848. When he first set foot in that country he found society without the protection of law; slavery was widely spread; murder, especially of women, of almost daily occurrence; robbery universal; the only law was that of the strongest.

When he quitted Scinde he left it without a slave. The turbulent Beloochees whom he had found with sword and matchlock, the licensed robbers and oppressors of the poor, had been compelled by him to shoulder the spade and mattock, and were submissive to a constable's staff.

He had in short found a divided population; misery and servitude on the one hand—on the other, a barbarous tyranny. He left an united regenerated people, rejoicing in a rising civilization, the work of his beneficent genius.

The second Sikh war broke out, and in March 1849, just a year after his return, Sir C. Napier again quitted England for India; his appointment to the supreme military command in that country having been most unwillingly forced on the East India Company, by an unanimity of public feeling rarely witnessed.

And so, at the age of sixty-seven, suffering most painfully from old wounds and labouring under a mortal internal disease, he gave up the honourable and honoured repose he had so hardly earned, quitted his wife and children, and, in the words of the facetious philosopher *Punch*, "he took his two towels and his piece of soap, and his scimitar, and he went away to the ship which was to carry him to the sea."

Arrived in India, he found that Lord Gough had in the interval completely broken the power of the Sikhs, and the war was at an end.

Henceforward he had to perform the ordinary duties of Commander-in-Chief. At the end of a year of hard labour, his public career was suddenly brought to a close by a circumstance which is of sufficient importance to be detailed, since it has been misrepresented to Sir C. Napier's disadvantage.

By a regulation of the Indian Government, Sepoy as well as European regiments were entitled to increased pay when serving beyond the frontier of the British dominions. Under this regulation the troops stationed in the Punjaub received that increased pay up to the period when the Punjaub was annexed. When that country was declared an integral part of the British Eastern Empire, the extra pay was suddenly stopped.

And how was it stopped?

No account was taken of the feelings of human nature in general, which are accustomed to view with decided disrelish any diminution of creature-comforts once enjoyed.

No account was taken of the susceptibilities of the Sepoy soldier in particular, which had already on more than one occasion, within Sir C. Napier's own experience, manifested themselves in open mutiny on this very question of reduction of pay.

The extra pay was simply stopped by a dry official order, without explanation, without reflecting on the danger of tampering with the pay of mercenaries, who, while they were bound by no tie of fidelity *but* their pay, had

many grounds of estrangement in differing religion, colour, and race; mercenaries too of such power, that once aroused nothing could control them.

Although Sir C. Napier disapproved, as any man of common sense must do, of this "*modus operandi*," he set himself to enforce the order and to suppress the mischief he feared would result from it. The discontent, as he foresaw, spread widely.

Two regiments in the Punjaub refused to receive the reduced pay, and an active correspondence was discovered to exist between them and other corps, some of them already in the Punjaub, others under orders to proceed thither.

The 41st Native Infantry at Delhi, 400 miles from the other malcontents, refused to enter the Punjaub without the higher pay; and it was well known that many other regiments were prepared to follow their example. Sir C. Napier by dexterous management checked the disaffection in the 41st, and the regiment marched.

But another regiment, the 66th, just arrived from Lucknow, broke out into open mutiny, and actually attempted to seize Govind-Ghur, one of the great fortresses of the Punjaub, which was in the midst of the most disaffected portion of the Sikh population.

The danger was very menacing, yet by tact and firmness it was averted. The severest punishment which the Government could inflict on a whole regiment was to disband it; but the disaffected felt sure this measure would not be resorted to, as the discharged soldiers must be replaced, according to immemorial usage, by men of the same race and religion, their brothers and cousins. Indeed the Brahmins openly boasted that the Government could get no soldiers if they chose to stop recruiting.

Sir C. Napier however broke through the trammels of Indian routine, disbanded the 66th, and gave its colours and number to a Ghoorkah battalion, which henceforth became the 66th Native Infantry.

By this move he check-mated the mutineers. To have disbanded the regiment as a solitary measure would only have been productive of mischief; the Sepoys felt sure the Government could not go on playing that game; they could not disband a whole army; but when they found Government was prepared to replace them by men of a different race, they trembled to incur the same penalty as the 66th had suffered, and murmuring was at an end. I should here mention that the Ghoorkahs make far better and braver soldiers than the Bengal Sepoys generally.

The Governor-General approved of Sir C. Napier's action of disbanding the 66th, but disapproved of his adoption of the Ghoorkas in their place, the only thing that could give point or efficacy to the measure.

Now comes the point to which I desire particularly to direct attention :

Twelve days before the mutiny of the 66th at Govind-Ghur, a new commissariat regulation of the supreme Government, unimportant in itself, came into operation. This regulation caused the usual allowance made to the Sepoys for purchasing their food to vary with the market prices of the places where they were stationed. It happened that its operation in the Punjaub itself would be to diminish—to a very trifling extent indeed—but still to diminish, the pay of the Sepoy in that province. Sir C. Napier judged that to promulgate and enforce this ordinance, at a time when, as was proved twelve days later by the Govind-Ghur mutiny, very serious dis

affection existed on account of the reduction of pay already enforced—I say the General judged that to enforce this new ordinance, further reducing pay, would make the smouldering embers of sedition blaze forth, and would be in fact an act of judicial madness.

It was not the amount, for that was trifling; it was the fact that it was a *further reduction*, in the state in which the Sepoys' minds were at the time, that constituted the danger. Sir C. Napier took it on himself—in entire accordance with the opinions of Sir Patrick Grant, Sir Walter Gilbert, and General Hearsay, officers of great Indian experience—to suspend—not to annul, but to suspend—the operation of this as yet unknown measure, until its impolicy could be represented to the supreme Government. The whole sum thus withheld from Government only amounted to a few pounds, although that does not of course affect the principle.

For thus overstepping his legal powers Sir C. Napier was, by the Governor in Council, publicly and offensively reprimanded, the general order conveying the reprimand being signed by a major in the Indian army under his command. He was forbidden ever to exercise his discretion in such matters, or under any circumstances, again; and the Commander-in-Chief immediately tendered his resignation of a post which he could no longer occupy with advantage to the public, or with honour to himself.

Any one who will take the trouble to go into this matter will find that I have simply stated facts, and no ingenuity can pervert them.

I will not trust myself to remark on this treatment—a treatment which Sir C. Napier's position, age, and great services ought to have rendered impossible. I will only say that I cannot conceive the possibility of any impartial mind, endowed with the commonest powers of reasoning, which should investigate all the circumstances connected with this suspension by the General of the regulation referred to, without arriving at the conviction that Sir C. Napier was wholly and absolutely in the right; and I will say further, that an officer in his situation would be unworthy to be trusted with any command who would not act in the same manner in like circumstances.

Sir C. Napier landed in England in March, 1851. In August, 1853, he died, after the most acute sufferings, borne with the utmost fortitude and even cheerfulness.

The following quotation from a memoir drawn up by Colonel Rathborne, an able and experienced Indian officer who had served under Sir C. Napier in the field as well as in the posts of magistrate and collector of Scinde, shews how that great man was considered by his subordinates:—

“It is not merely because I have eaten his salt that I am faithful to Sir Charles Napier's memory and to Sir Charles Napier's cause—I am faithful to it from the knowledge that he was really and truly one of the noblest and most admirable of England's sons, and would, had he lived and had he possessed the power, have been the regenerator of England, and the saviour of our empire in the East. He would have fixed the foundations of that empire on the surest basis, justice to the people, securing the people's love. He would have made India a country to be a help to England in its necessities, instead of a sink to absorb alike its treasures and its men. He would have covered its surface with roads and canals, instead of devoting its

resources to the maintenance in luxury of the drones who now overspread it."

Posterity will not fail to note that the warrior, who, when feasting and rejoicing were the order of the day, was laid aside and forgotten like a rusted tool, was called from his retirement by the unanimous cry of a nation, as the only man who could save the Indian Empire when supposed to be in utmost peril. It will note well,—that this man who was forgotten at the feast, was the first to be remembered in the fray.

To the judgment of that posterity we may safely leave the heroic character and great actions of Charles James Napier, on the one hand: and on the other, the conduct of the ministers of the day, who failed to do honour to themselves by honouring him.

His deeds have been imperishably recorded by the great writer, whose eloquence in this theme was animated and warmed by the most devoted brotherly affection.

He also has passed away from among us, the last of that noble band of soldier brothers, whose bravery, whose wounds, and romantic mutual affection, were as household words in the camp of the great Peninsular army.

Few episodes in history are so elevating, and at the same time so touching, as the record of the early military life of Charles, George, and William Napier.

I again quote from the speech of Sir Robert Peel, made on the occasion already referred to. Speaking of the critical state of affairs when Sir C. Napier took the command in Scinde, he says:—

"It was most fortunate that at such a crisis, and under such circumstances, the command of the British army was upon those days committed to one of three brothers, who, engrafted upon an ancient stem, graced the brigade to which they belonged, by that perfect nobility which derived its brightest lustre from an unblemished private character, and the highest sense of the purest honour, and whose fame, won by repeated proofs of valour in the field of battle, had made their name conspicuous in the annals of history. They had learned—each of the brothers had learned—the art of war under an illustrious commander. During the whole of his military campaigns—of which one of them was the faithful, the impartial, and the eloquent historian; during the whole of those campaigns the exploits of these three brothers were such as to entitle them to the gratitude of their country. In almost every action in the Peninsula they had given proof of their military skill and valour; but in the actions of Corunna, of Busaco, and Ciudad Rodrigo, and during the operations of the Pyrenees, none of the gallant British officers or men were more prodigal of their blood in the cause of their country, than each of the officers to whom he alluded."

England, whose vines bear such clusters, whose mothers bring forth such sons, will never call in vain for men worthy to uphold her honour abroad or to defend her sacred soil; and, though their names are as yet concealed behind the veil of the future, let us hope and confidently believe, that, when the emergency shall arise, the mantle borne by those noble soldiers, transmitted to them, his most illustrious pupils, by their great master, will be found to have devolved on shoulders worthy to bear it.

There was a remarkable similarity in the characters and dispositions of Charles and William Napier. To say that they had faults is only to admit that they were human. But their most ardent opponents, enemies now no longer, could never accuse them of anything mean or little. Their faults were those of noble and generous natures.

They seem to have adopted from their childhood as their rule of action, the motto "*parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*," and none ever acted up to it more consistently. The readiness with which any story of oppression or wrong was received—sometimes perhaps on insufficient grounds—and the fierceness with which it was denounced; all resulted from a tenderness of nature, which, towards the weak and the helpless, and remarkably towards women, children, and animals, was absolutely womanly.

Ever since his return from active service under Wellington, Sir William Napier's was a life of almost constant suffering, caused principally by a bullet which, having lodged near the backbone, could never be removed.

During the last two years his sufferings were unremitting and intolerable, and I shall ever remember, as one of the most impressive lessons of my life, that I was permitted to witness the fortitude, patience, cheerfulness, and consideration for those about him, with which those sufferings were borne.

None who read the clear and vigorous letters which from time to time, up to a few weeks of his end, appeared in the newspapers, could at all guess the state of torture in which the writer lay; or could appreciate the sublime victory obtained by the indomitable soul over the weak and suffering body.

To him the British army owes more than to any man who has ever lived—for has he not *immortalized* its achievements?

To his pen the great Duke himself is more indebted for the completeness and permanence of his fame, than he is to his own great deeds.

To him finally—and this would have been his proudest boast—the private soldier owes more than to any other man, for his was the first voice to advocate the right of the private soldier to share individually in the honour, as he has always done in the dangers, of the battle-field; and it is remarkable that this right was first practically admitted and stamped as inalienable by his brother in the despatch of his first victory of Meancee.

To the last Sir William Napier delighted in the society of young men, particularly officers. He was always pleased to impart information and to discuss with them the subjects of the day; and the patience, even deference, with which he listened to their opinions in return, shewed a humbleness of mind, which those perhaps who did not know him intimately would have been slow to attribute to him.

The love and the reverence with which he inspired those who thus came in contact with him, partook of the feelings with which a clansman regarded his chief. For the numerous officers who used to repair to his bedside to hear words of wisdom, clothed, as they involuntarily were, with marvellous force and eloquence, his removal has created a gap that can never be filled. But his words and his memory will live in their hearts, and his name will never be forgotten so long as and wherever the English language shall be read.