ART. III.—LORD ROBERTS IN INDIA.

Forty-one Years in India from Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief. By FIELD-MARSHALL LORD ROBERTS, of Kandahar, V.C., G.C.B., etc., etc. 2 vols. Portraits and Maps. London: 1897.

LORD ROBERTS has written a book which will attract, and indeed has already attracted, a very considerable amount of attention. He and his father spent nearly ninety years in India. Of these almost fifty belong to his father, while the remaining forty-one have been spent there by himself, and cover the periods of the Mutiny and the Second Campaign in Afghanistan, during which he made his own celebrated march from Kabul to Kandahar. The book is essentially a soldier's book, and ought to be read by every young and ambitious soldier who wishes to understand the secret of success in the profession of arms. It is also a statesman's book. It contains the mature opinions of one of the most successful commanders and statesmen India has seen, and deserves to be read by all who desire to understand the principles on which that great dependency of the Crown can be successfully governed. Though written by a soldier, the volumes are not without their literary merits. If clear and forcible writing and brilliant descriptions go for anything, they will take a place among the best military narratives we have. Among their characteristics are frankness and generosity. Lord Roberts states his opinions with the utmost candour, whether on men or affairs. Those on the latter are, of course, open to criticism; but those upon the former are what Lord Roberts' enviable reputation in India would lead one to expect. When reading his pages there is no difficulty in understanding how that reputation has been gained, or in accounting for the enthusiasm and affection with which both he and Lady Roberts are spoken of by all ranks in the army, 'to which,' in the dedication of the volumes, he says, 'I am so deeply indebted.'

Lord Roberts was born at Cawnpore, and educated in England. He arrived at Calcutta on the 1st April, 1852, along with a number of other cadets. As with Hastings, Clive and others, his first impressions of Calcutta were not cheerful. On landing, he received a letter from his father, then a veteran in the Indian Service and in command of the Lahore Division, informing him that he had better put up at Spence's Hotel, until he had reported himself at the Head-Quarters of the Bengal Artillery at Dum-Dum.

'This was chilling news, for I was the only one of our party who had to go to a hotel on landing. . . . I was still more depressed later on by finding myself at dinner *tête-à-tête* with a first class specimen of the results of an Indian climate. He belonged to my own regiment, and was going home on medical certificate, but did not look as if he could ever reach England. He gave me the not too pleasing news that by staying in that dreary hotel, instead of proceeding direct to Dum-Dum, I had lost a day's service and pay, so I took care to join early the following morning.'

At Dum-Dum he was at once appointed to a Native Field Battery, and spent the first four months of his forty-one years in India between that place and Fort-William. Life at either of them was excessively dull. The latter place, now one of the healthiest stations in India, was then extremely insanitary.

'The men were crowded into small badly ventilated buildings, and the sanitary arrangements were as deplorable as the state of the water supply. The only efficient scavengers were the huge birds of prey called adjutants, and so great was the dependence placed upon these unclean creatures, that the young cadets were warned that any injury done to them would be treated as gross misconduct. The inevitable result of this state of affairs was endemic sickness, and a death-rate of over ten per cent. per annum.'

Left pretty much to himself, for in his case 'the vaunted hospitality of the Anglo-Indian was conspicuous by its absence,' and having little to do, he became thoroughly home-sick, and wrote to his father begging him to try and get him sent to Burma. The reply he received was 'that he hoped soon to get command of the Peshawar Division, and that he would then like me to join him;' and buoyed up by the hope that a definite limit had now been placed to his stay at Dum-Dum—'that, to me, uninteresting part of India,'—his 'restlessness and discontent disappeared as if by magic.'

Four months in India had seemed to him like four years, and when at last his marching orders arrived his joy was unbounded. 'Indeed, the idea that I was about to proceed to that grand field of soldierly activity, the North-West Frontier, and there join my father, almost reconciled me to the disappointment of losing my chance of field service in Burma.' His arrangements were quickly made, and early in August 'I bade a glad goodbye to Dum-Dum.'

The journey from Calcutta to Peshawar may now be done in three days, young Roberts was three months on the way. As far as Benares he travelled in a barge towed by a steamer. From Benares to Allahabad he went on wheels. After staying at Cawnpore a few days he went on to Meerut. There he 'came across, for the first time, the far-famed Bengal Horse Artillery, and made the acquaintance of a set of officers who more than realized my expectations regarding the wearers of the much coveted jacket, association with whom created in me a fixed resolve to leave no stone unturned in the endeavour to become a horse gunner.' The six hundred miles from Meerut to Peshawar were done in a palankin. Accidents of travel laid the foundations of a lifelong friendship with General Crawford Chamberlain and with Sir Donald and Lady Stewart; and Peshawar was reached in the beginning of November.

General Roberts was then in his sixty-ninth year. Young Roberts had seen very little of him, so that when they met at Peshawar it was 'almost as strangers.' 'We did not, however, long remain so; his affectionate greeting soon put an end to any feeling of shyness on my part, and the genial and kindly spirit which enabled him to enter into and sympathise with the feelings and aspirations of men younger than himself rendered the year I spent with him at Peshawar one of the brightest and happiest of my early life.' In one respect he particularly benefitted from the intercourse he had with his father. General Roberts had been through the first Afghan war, in which he had commanded first a brigade and afterwards Shah Shuja's contingent. After leaving Afghanistan he had kept up a correspondence with some of its leading

men, and on assuming the command of the Peshawar division, then the largest and most important in India, he found himself associated with a number of them, who had settled there. Of his experiences in Afghanistan and of its inhabitants and their ways he communicated freely to his son, who says: 'The information I in this way gathered regarding the characteristics of that peculiar country, and the best means of dealing with its still more peculiar people, was invaluable to me when I, in my turn, twenty-five years later, found myself in command of an army in Afghanistan.' One thing which General Roberts was particularly anxious to see brought about, and the desirability of which he endeavoured to impress upon the central authorities, was the establishment of kindlier relations with the border tribes, and before he left India he had the satisfaction of learning that the policy he advocated had been approved by Lord Dalhousie, then the Governor-General, and was bearing fruit.

On his arrival at Peshawar young Roberts was appointed Aide-de-camp, and attached to the 2nd Company of the 2nd Battalion of the Artillery Corps, the commandant of which took good care that his duties as A.D.C. to the general in command did not interfere with the strict and punctual discharge of his regimental duty.

Peshawar was not a pleasant place to be stationed at. The cantonment was greatly overcrowded, the water supply was bad, and for years 'Peshawar was a name of terror to the English soldier from its proverbial unhealthiness.' Owing to the activity and daring of the Afridis and other robber tribes the country around was exceedingly dangerous. No one was allowed to venture beyond the line of sentries after sunset, and even in broad daylight it was not safe to go any distance from the station. In addition to the cordon of sentries round the cantonment, strong piquets had to be posted on all the main roads leading to the hills, and every house had to be guarded by a *chokidar*, or watchman, belonging to one of the robber tribes. Alarms were incessant; and often dangerous. Young Roberts, however, was happy. He enjoyed the society of his father, there was plenty of excitement and adventure, and the

mess was good. 'I remember,' he says, 'a curious circumstance in connexion with that mess which, unless the exception proves the rule, is strong evidence against the superstition that thirteen is an unlucky number to sit down at dinner. On the 1st January, 1853, thirteen of us dined together; eleven years after we were all alive, nearly the whole party having taken part in the suppression of the Mutiny, and five or six having been wounded.' The Commissioner at Peshawar was Colonel Mackeson, an officer who had distinguished himself during the first Afghan war by his work among the Afridis and border tribes, by whom he was liked and respected as much as he was feared. On the 10th September, 1853, the whole camp was horrified with the news that he had been murdered by a religious fanatic.

'He was sitting in the verandah of his house listening to appeals from the decisions of his subordinates, when, towards evening, a man—who had been remarked by many during the day earnestly engaged in his devotions, his prayer-carpet being spread within sight of the house—came up and, making a low salaam to Mackeson, presented him with a paper. The Commissioner, supposing it to be a petition, stretched out his hand to take it, when the man instantly plunged a dagger into his breast. The noise consequent on the struggle attracted the attention of some of the domestic servants and one of the native officials. The latter threw himself between Mackeson and the fanatic, and was himself slightly wounded in his efforts to rescue his chief. Mackeson lingered until the 14th September.'

The culprit was hanged and his body burned. This mode of punishment was deliberately determined upon, and when carried out, caused considerable excitement. It was adopted, however, in the hope that it would have a deterrent effect upon other fanatical Mahomedans, who loathe the idea of being burned, as it is supposed to deprive the dead man of every chance of paradise, and effectually prevents him from being raised to the dignity of a martyr and revered as a saint.

Shortly after this General Roberts was compelled, in consequence of ill health, to leave India. But before he left a curious incident occurred which Lord Roberts relates for its psychological interest, and in the hope that some student of the subject may be able to explain it.

'My father had some time before issued invitations for a dance which was to take place in two days time—on Monday, the 17th October, 1853. On the Saturday morning he appeared disturbed and unhappy, and during breakfast he was silent and despondent—very different from his usual bright and cheery self. On my questioning him as to the cause, he told me he had had an unpleasant dream—one which he had dreamt several times before, and which had always been followed by the death of a near relation. As the day advanced, in spite of my efforts to cheer him, he became more and more depressed, and even said he should like to put off the dance. I dissuaded him from taking this step for the time being; but that night he had the same dream again, and the next morning he insisted on the dance being postponed. It seemed to me rather absurd to have to disappoint our friends because of a dream; there was, however, nothing for it but to carry out my father's wishes, and intimation was accordingly sent to the invited guests. The following morning the post brought news of the sudden death of the half-sister at Lahore with whom I had stayed on my way to Peshawar.'

It was soon after his father's departure for England that young Roberts received the 'much coveted jacket.' His pleasure at receiving it was, at first, greatly damped by the fact that the troop to which he was posted was stationed at Umballa. He had no desire to leave Peshawar or the frontier.

'Life on the frontier in these days had a great charm for most young men; there was always something of interest going on; military expeditions were constantly taking place or being speculated upon, and one lived in hope of being amongst those chosen for service. Peshawar, too, notwithstanding its unhealthiness, was a favourite station with officers. To me it was particularly pleasant, for it had the largest force of Artillery of any station in India, except Meerut; the mess was a good one, and was composed of as nice a set of fellows as were to be found in the army. In addition to the officers of the regiments, there was a certain number of honorary members; all the staff and civilians belonged to the Artillery mess, and on guest nights we sat down as many as sixty to dinner. Another attraction was the "coffee shop," an institution which has now almost ceased to exist, at which we all congregated after morning parade and freely discussed the home and local news.'

Fortunately he had not to leave Peshawar. A vacancy opportunely occurred in one of the troops of Horse Artillery there and it was given to him. The troop to which he was appointed

'Was composed of a magnificent body of men, nearly all Irishmen, most of whom could have lifted me up with one hand. They were fine riders,

and needed to be so, for the stud horses used for Artillery purposes at that time were not the quiet, well-broken animals of the present day. I used to try my hand at riding them all in turns, and thus learnt to understand and appreciate the amount of nerve, patience, and skill necessary to the making of a good Horse Artillery "driver," with the additional advantage that I was brought into constant contact with the men. It also qualified me to ride in the officers' team for the regimental brake. The brake, it must be understood, was drawn by six horses, each ridden postilion fashion by an officer.'

In the spring of 1855 fever drove him to Kashmir to recruit, and in August of the same year he set out across the Himalayas with a couple of brother officers for Simla, then by no means the important place it is now. He stayed there a month and records the fact that he lunched with Colonel Arthur Becher, the Quartermaster-General, and remarks:—

'I think I hear my reader say, "Not a very remarkable event to chronicle." But that lunch was a memorable one to me; indeed, it was the turning-point in my career, for my host was good enough to say he should like to have me in his department some day, and this meant a great deal to me. Joining a department at that time generally resulted in remaining in it for the greater part of one's service. There was then no limit to the tenure of staff appointments, and the object of every ambitious young officer was to get into one department or another—political, civil or the army staff. My father had always impressed upon me that the political department was *the* one to aspire to, and failing that the Quartermaster-General's, as in the latter there was the best chance of seeing service. I had cherished a sort of vague hope that I might some day be lucky enough to become a Deputy Assistant-Quartermaster-General, for although I fully recognised the advantages of a political career, I preferred being more closely associated with the army, and I had seen enough of staff work to satisfy myself that it would suit me; so the few words spoken to me by Colonel Becher made me supremely happy.

'It never entered into my head that I should get an early appointment; the fact of the Quartermaster-General thinking of me as a possible recruit was quite enough for me. I was in no hurry to leave the Horse Artillery, to which I was proud of belonging, and in which I hoped to see service while still on the frontier. I left Simla very pleased with the result of my visit, and very grateful to Colonel Becher, who proved a good friend to me ever after, and I made my way to Mian Mir, where I went through the riding-school course, and then returned to Peshawar.'

His first appointment to the Quartermaster-General's department—to which, contrary to his expectation, he was nomin-

ated the following year—the Governor-General refused to sign, on the ground that he had not passed the requisite examination. With characteristic energy, he shut himself up with the best *munshi* he could secure in Peshawar, and 'studied Indian literature from morning till night,' and when the post, to which he had originally been appointed, again fell vacant, having in the meantime passed the examination, he was appointed to it, and entered the department, in which he remained continuously, with the exception of one or two short intervals, till 1878, when he quitted it as Quartermaster-General.

Roberts was present at the meeting between Sir John Lawrence and Dost Mahomed on 1st January, 1857, and dwells at some length on the treaty which was then made as an outcome of the policy advocated by his father, and because of the important results it had.

'Not only,' he says, 'did it heal the wounds left open from the first Afghan war, but it relieved England of great anxiety at a time when, throughout the length and breadth of India, there was distress, revolt, bloodshed, and bitter distrust of our Native troops. Dost Mahomed loyally held to his engagements during the troublous days of the Mutiny, which so quickly followed this alliance, when, had he turned against us, we should assuredly have lost the Punjab; Delhi could never have been taken; in fact, I do not see how any part of the country north of Bengal could have been saved. Dost Mahomed's own people could not understand his attitude. They frequently came to him during the Mutiny, throwing their turbans at his feet, and praying him as a Mahomedan to seize that opportunity for destroying "the infidels." "Hear the news from Delhi," they urged; "see the difficulties the Feringhis are in. Why don't you lead us on to take advantage of their weakness, and win back Peshawar?"'

At Rawal Pindi, when attending the General on a tour of inspection, Sir John Lawrence offered Roberts an appointment in the Public Works Department. He was too fond of soldiering, however, and contrary to the advice of his friends, respectfully declined it. A surveying expedition at Cherat brought him for the first time into personal relations with John Nicholson, of whom he writes:—

'John Nicholson was a name to conjure with in the Punjab. I had heard it mentioned with an amount of respect—indeed, awe—which no

other name could excite, and I was all curiosity to see the man whose influence on the frontier was so great that his word was law to the refractory tribes amongst whom he lived. He had only lately arrived in Peshawar, having been transferred from Bannu, a difficult and troublesome district, ruled by him as it had never been ruled before, and where he made such a reputation for himself that, while he was styled "a pillar of strength frontier" by Lord Dalhousie, he was looked up to as a god by the Natives, who loved as much as they feared him. By some of them he was actually worshipped as a saint; they formed themselves into a sect, and called themselves "Nicholseyns." Nicholson impressed me more profoundly than any man I had ever met before, or have ever met since. I have never seen anyone like him. He was the beau-ideal of a soldier and a gentleman. His appearance was distinguished and commanding, with a sense of power about him, which to my mind was the result of his having passed so much of his life amongst the wild and lawless tribesmen, with whom his authority was supreme. Intercourse with this man amongst men made me more eager than ever to remain on the frontier, and I was seized with ambition to follow in his footsteps. Had I never seen Nicholson again, I might have thought that the feelings with which he inspired me were to some extent the result of my imagination, excited by the astonishing stories of his power and influence; my admiration, however, for him was immeasurably strengthened when, a few weeks later, I served as his staff-officer, and had opportunities of observing more closely his splendid soldierly qualities, and the workings of his grand, simple mind.'

When the Mutiny broke out, Roberts was still at Peshawar. The principal officers there at the time were General Reed, the Commander of the district; Sydney Cotton, the Brigadier; Herbert Edwardes, the Commissioner; John Nicholson, Deputy-Commissioner; and Brigadier Neville Chamberlain. They were all men of ability, and by the prompt and wise measures they took, prevented the native troops under their control from working mischief, and kept the Punjab in hand. It was agreed that General Reed should join the Chief Commissioner at Rawal Pindi, leaving Brigadier Cotton in command at Peshawar, and that a movable column, composed of reliable troops, should be organised at some convenient place in the Punjab, prepared to move wherever its services might be required. Edwardes and Nicholson undertook to raise levies and fresh troops along the border. Roberts was attached to the movable column, the command of which was entrusted to Neville Chamberlain. It was organised at Wazi-

rabad, and began to move about from place to place as rapidly as possible, disarming native regiments, and rendering assistance wherever it could, especially at Multan, which 'would certainly have gone,' but for a timely act of heroism on the part of Chamberlain. When Chamberlain left for Delhi to take up the Adjutant-Generalship of the Army, in succession to Colonel Chester, who had been killed at Badli-ki-Serai, he was succeeded by Nicholson, who joined it at Jullundur, to which place the column had moved from Umritsar. At Jullundur everything was in confusion. Nicholson soon put things in order:—

'On taking over command, his first care was to establish an effective system of intelligence, by means of which he was kept informed of what was going on in the neighbouring districts; and, fully recognising the necessity for rapid movement in the event of any sudden emergency, he organised a part of his force into a small flying column, the Infantry portion of which was to be carried in *ekkas* [light carts]. I was greatly impressed by Nicholson's knowledge of military affairs. He seemed always to know exactly what to do and the best way to do it. This was the more remarkable because, though a soldier by profession, his training had been chiefly that of a civilian—a civilian of the frontier, however, where his soldierly instincts had been fostered in his dealings with a lawless and unruly people, and where he had received a training which was now to stand him in good stead. Nicholson was a born commander, and this was felt by every officer and man with the column before he had been amongst them many days.'

While the column was at Jullundur, an amusing incident occurred, illustrative alike of Nicholson and of native character. The town was full of Kapurthala people, the friendly Raja's offer to garrison the place with his own troops having been accepted by Major Edward Lake, the Commissioner. Believing that the British troops had gone to return no more, the demeanour of the Raja's men was not altogether the best or the least offensive, but in order to keep on good terms with them, and to pay a compliment to their officers and principal men, Lake asked Nicholson to meet the latter at his house. Nicholson consented, and a durbar was arranged for.

'At the close of the ceremony, General Mehtab Sing, a near relative of the Raja's, took his leave, and, as the senior in rank at the durbar, was walking out of the room first, when I observed Nicholson stalk to the door,

put himself in front of Mehtab Sing, and, waving him back with an authoritative air, prevent him from leaving the room. The rest of the company then passed out, and when they had gone, Nicholson said to Lake, "Do you see that General Mehtab Sing has his shoes on?" Lake replied that he had noticed the fact, but tried to excuse it. Nicholson, however, speaking in Hindustani, said: "There is no possible excuse for such an act of gross impertinence. Mehtab Sing knows perfectly well that he would not venture to step on his own father's carpet save barefooted, and he has only committed this breach of etiquette to-day because he thinks we are not in a position to resent the insult, and that he can treat us as he would not have dared to do a month ago." Mehtáb Sing looked extremely foolish, and stammered some kind of apology, but Nicholson was not to be appeased, and continued, "If I were the last Englishman left in Jullundur, you" (addressing Mehtab Sing) "should not come into my room with your shoes on;" then, politely turning to Lake, he added, "I hope the Commissioner will allow me to order you to take your shoes off and carry them out in your own hands, so that your followers may witness your discomfiture." Mehtab Sing, completely cowed, meekly did as he was told.'

Some five or six years after, Roberts was pig-sticking at Kapurthala, and on telling the Raja that he had known Nicholson, and was present at the durbar in Lake Sahib's house, the Raja laughed heartily, and said: 'Oh! then you saw Mehtab Sing made to walk out of the room with his shoes in his hand? We often chaff him about that little affair, and tell him that he richly deserved the treatment he received from the great Nicholson Sahib.'

Meantime the Government, fully alive to the tremendous nature of the catastrophe which had befallen the country, was straining every nerve to remedy the mistakes which had been made, and was anxious above all things to effect the recapture of Delhi at the earliest possible moment. The Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, then at Umballa, was urged to march upon it at once, but was unable, and when at last he had gathered together such forces as were available and was on the point of starting, he was struck down by cholera, and died at Kurnal on the 26th of May. Anson has been blamed for his dilatoriness, but Lord Roberts on reviewing all the circumstances observes:—

'It is grievous to feel that, in estimating his work and the difficulties he had to encounter, full justice has not been done him. Anson has been

undeservedly blamed for vacillation and want of promptitude. He was told to "make short work of Delhi," but before Delhi could be taken more men had perished than his whole force at the time amounted to. The advice to march upon Delhi was sound, but had it been rashly followed disaster would have been the inevitable result. Had the Commander-in-Chief been goaded into advancing without spare ammunition and siege artillery, or with an insufficient force, he must have been annihilated by the overwhelming masses of the mutineers—those mutineers, who, we shall see later, stoutly opposed Barnard's greatly augmented force at Badli-ki-Serai, would almost certainly have repulsed, if not destroyed, a smaller body of troops.'

The column with which Roberts was serving was continually in expectation of being called to take part in the siege of Delhi, and while at Philour fort on the same day that orders had been received directing the column to return to Umritsar, a telegraph-signaller handed a copy of a message from Sir Henry Barnard, the commander of the force before Delhi, to the authorities in the Punjab, begging that all artillery officers not doing regimental duty might be sent to Delhi where their services were urgently required. Roberts at once felt that the message applied to him, and was not sorry that it did. 'I had a longing to find myself at Delhi, and lived in perpetual dread lest it should be taken before I could get there.' He had some scruples about leaving Nicholson; but Nicholson, whose splendid soldierly qualities he admired the more he saw of him, agreed that his duty was with his regiment, and having found an officer to take his place on Nicholson's staff, he was off at dawn the next morning for Delhi, and managed to reach it after a narrow escape from falling into the hands of the enemy, on the 28th of June.

It was dark when he arrived, and he spent the night in the tent of his father's old staff-officer, Henry Norman. The following morning the first person he called upon was Edwin Johnson, Assistant-Adjutant-General of the Bengal Artillery, in order to find out with which troop or battery he was to serve. Johnson told him that the Quartermaster-General wished to keep him in his department. He next went to General Chamberlain to acquaint him with the doings of the movable column, and then to Colonel Becher, whom he found

on the sick list in consequence of a severe wound. From Becher he learned that the question had been raised of appointing an officer to help the Assistant-Adjutant-General of the Delhi Field Force, and that Chamberlain had thought of him for the post.

'I was waiting outside Sir Henry Barnard's tent, anxious to hear what decision had been come to, when two men rode up, both looking greatly fatigued and half starved; one of them being Stewart. He told me they had had a most adventurous ride,* but before waiting to hear his story, I asked Norman to suggest Stewart for the new appointment—a case of one word for Stewart and two for myself, I am afraid, for I had set my heart on returning to the Quartermaster-General's department. And so it was settled, to our mutual satisfaction, Stewart becoming the D.A.A.G. of the Delhi Field Force, and I the D.A.Q.M.G. with the Artillery.'

The next day Roberts found himself under fire for the first time, and in the sharp encounter on the 14th of July, while helping the drivers to keep the horses quiet as they were retiring two guns under a heavy fire, he received

'A tremendous blow on my back which made me faint and sick, and I was afraid I should not be able to remain on my horse. The powerless feeling, however, passed off, and I managed to stick on until I got back to camp. I had been hit close to the spine by a bullet, and the wound would probably have been fatal but for the fact that a leather pouch for caps, which I usually wore in front near my pistol, had somehow slipped round to the back; the bullet passed through this before entering my body, and was thus prevented from penetrating very deep.'

Comparatively slight as the wound was, it kept him on the sick-list for a fortnight, and for more than a month he was unable to mount a horse or to put on a sword-belt. By the 11th September, however, he was sufficiently recovered to serve in the left half of No. 2 battery, which had been erected in front of Ludlow Castle, about 500 yards from the Kashmir Gate. Here he had a narrow escape. 'The enemy had got our range with wonderful accuracy, and immediately on the screen in front of the right gun being removed, a round shot came through the embrasure, knocking two or three of us over.' On the morning of the assault, he was ordered to resume

* An account of this hazardous ride, one of the most gallant feats performed during the Mutiny, is given in an Appendix, and should be read.

his staff duties, and joined the General at Ludlow Castle, where he watched the assault upon the Kashmir Gate from the top of the house. He then rode with the General through the Gate to the Church. Discouraging reports coming in as to the progress of the assault, he was sent out to ascertain their truth, when

'Just after starting on my errand, while riding through the Kashmir Gate, I observed by the side of the road a doolie, without bearers, and with evidently a wounded man inside. I dismounted to see if I could be of any use to the occupant, when I found, to my grief and consternation, that it was John Nicholson, with death written on his face. He told me that the bearers had put the doolie down and gone off to plunder; that he was in great pain, and wished to be taken to the hospital. He was lying on his back, no wound was visible, and but for the pallor of his face, always colourless, there was no sign of the agony he must have been enduring. On my expressing a hope that he was not seriously wounded, he said, "I am dying; there is no chance for me." The sight of that great man lying helpless, and on the point of death, was almost more than than I could bear. Other men had daily died around me, friends and comrades had been killed beside me, but I never felt as I felt then—to lose Nicholson seemed to me at that moment to lose everything.

'I searched about for the doolie bearers, who with other camp followers were busy ransacking the houses and shops in the neighbourhood, and carrying off everything of the slightest value they could lay their hands on. Having with difficulty collected four men, I put them in charge of a sergeant of the 61st Foot. Taking down his name, I told him who the wounded officer was, and ordered him to go direct to the field hospital.

'That was the last I saw of Nicholson. I found time to ride several times to the hospital to inquire after him, but I was never allowed to see him again.'

Lord Roberts' narrative covers the whole of the siege of Delhi, and, though comparatively brief, is, as it is almost unnecessary to remark, exceedingly graphic. In the course of it he relates many deeds of bravery and heroism. The scene at the Kashmir Gate is, of course, described. Here is one of a quieter, but not less daring a character, which occurred on the night before the assault:—

'Taylor had to make certain that the breaches were practicable, and for this purpose he detached four subaltern officers of Engineers to go to the walls as soon as it was dark, and report upon the condition they were in. Greathed and Horne were told off for the Water bastion breach, and Medley and Lang for that of the Kashmir bastion. Lang asked to be allowed

to go while it was yet daylight ; Taylor agreed, and with an escort of four men of the 60th Rifles, he crept to the edge of the cover in the Kudsiabagh, and then, running up the glacis, sat on the top of the counterscarp for a few seconds studying the ditch and the two breaches. On his return, Lang reported the breaches to be practicable ; as it was desirable to ascertain whether ladders would be necessary, he was sent again after dark, in company with Medley. They took a ladder and a measuring-rod with them, and were escorted by an officer and twenty-four riflemen, of whom all but six were left under cover in the Kudsiabagh. Lang slipped into the ditch, which he found to be sixteen feet deep. Medley handed him the ladder and rod, and followed him with two riflemen, the other four remaining on the crest of the glacis to cover their retreat. With the help of the ladder they ascended the berm, and measured the height of the wall. Two minutes more, and they would have reached the top of the breach, but quiet as they had been, their movements had attracted attention, and several of the enemy were heard running towards the breach. The whole re-ascended as rapidly as possible, and, throwing themselves on the grass, waited in breathless silence, hoping the sepoys would go away, and that they might be able to make another attempt to reach the top of the breach. The rebels, however, gave no sign of retiring, and as all needful information had been obtained, they determined to run for it. A volley was fired at the party as they dashed across the open, but no one had been hit.'

Hodson's conduct in shooting the three Mogul princes at Humayun's tomb outside Delhi has been variously commented upon. After narrating the circumstances, respecting which he made special inquiries on the spot immediately after the tragedy had occurred, Lord Roberts entirely acquits Hodson of the charge which was in some quarters brought against him and observes :—

'My own feeling on the subject is one of sorrow that such a brilliant soldier should have laid himself open to so much adverse criticism. Moreover, I do not think that, under any circumstances, he should have done the deed himself, or ordered it to be done in that summary manner, unless there had been evident signs of an attempt at rescue.

'But it must be understood that there was no breach of faith on Hodson's part, for he steadily refused to give any promise to the princes that their lives should be spared : he did, however, undoubtedly by this act give colour to the accusations of blood-thirstiness which his detractors were not slow to make.'

Of the conduct of the native servants during the siege Lord Roberts speaksin the highest terms. His own attendants, he tells us, served him admirably. 'The *khidmatgar* (table attendant)

never failed to bring me my food under the hottest fire, and the *saices* (grooms) were always present with the horses whenever they were required, apparently quite indifferent to the risks they often ran.' Other officers had the same experience. The followers of the European regiments were animated by a similar spirit. As a rule they 'behaved in the most praiseworthy manner,' and were 'faithful and brave to a degree.' Their conduct won the admiration of all ranks. So much was this the case that afterwards, when the 9th Lancers were called upon to name the man who, in their opinion, was most worthy of the Victoria Cross, which Sir Colin Campbell purposed to confer upon the regiment, to mark his appreciation of the gallantry which all ranks had displayed, they unanimously chose the head water-carrier.

As to the behaviour of the troops engaged in the siege, Lord Roberts says, it was 'beyond all praise, their constancy was unwearied, their gallantry most conspicuous; in thirty-two different fights they were victorious over long odds, being often exposed to an enemy ten times their number, who, moreover, had the advantage of ground and Artillery; they fought and worked as if each one felt that on his individual exertions alone depended the issues of the day; they willingly, nay, cheerfully endured such trials as few armies have ever been exposed to for so long a time.'

'They beheld their enemies reinforced while their own numbers rapidly decreased. Yet they never lost heart, and at last, when it became evident that no hope of further reinforcements could be entertained, and that if Delhi were to be taken at all it must be taken at once; they advanced to the assault with as high a courage and as complete a confidence in the result, as if they were attacking in the first flush and exultation of troops at the commencement of a campaign, instead of being the remnant of a force worn out by twelve long weeks of privation and suffering, by hope deferred (which truly "maketh the heart sick,") and by weary waiting for the help which never came. Batteries were thrown up within easy range of the walls, than which a more heroic piece of work was never performed; and finally, these gallant few, of whom England should in very truth be everlastingly proud, stormed in the face of day a strong fortress defended by 30,000 desperate men, provided with every necessary to defy assault.'

Immediately after the fall of Delhi Roberts joined the column formed for the relief of Cawnpore, under the command of

Greathed. As the column marched out of the city at daybreak on the morning of the 24th September the funeral of Nicholson was taking place, but to his regret Roberts was unable to join it. After a sharp engagement at Bulanshahr, and after losing Home, the hero of the Kashmir gate, who was killed while superintending the blowing up of the Malagash Fort, the column reached Agra early on the morning of the 10th October.

Here, according to all the rules of the game of war, it ought to have met with a very serious reverse. Trusting to the information of the civil and military heads at Agra, and neglecting to reconoitre the surrounding country, it was thought unnecessary to post the usual piquets until evening. The camp was marked out, and as the tents could not arrive for some hours, Roberts received permission along with Norman, Watson and a few others to breakfast in the fort. They had scarcely sat down when they were startled by the report of a gun, then another and another, and were immediately informed by their host who had gone to a point from which he could get a view of the surrounding country, that an action was taking place. Hurrying down stairs they jumped upon their horses and galloped in the direction of the firing. Before they had got half-way to the camp they were met by an enormous crowd, consisting of men, women, and children, animals and baggage all mixed up in inextricable confusion, and rushing back to the fort and city, struggling and yelling as if pursued by demons. By dint of blows, threats, and shouts Roberts and his companions managed to force their way through, and on reaching the scene of action they came upon a strange sight. 'Independent fights were going on all over the parade ground. Here, a couple of cavalry soldiers were charging each other. There, the game of bayonet *versus* sword was being carried on in real earnest.' Further on, a party of the enemy's cavalry was attacking one of Blount's guns. Just in front the 75th Foot, many of the men in their shirt sleeves, were forming squares, and to the left of them Remington's troop of Horse Artillery and Bourchier's battery had opened fire without waiting to put on their accoutrements,

and while the horses were being hastily harnessed by the native drivers and grooms. Watson galloped off to take command of the Punjab Cavalry. Roberts and Norman rode in different directions in search of the Brigadier. While thus employed the former was stopped by a *sirdar*,

'Who danced about in front of me, waving his *pagri* before the eyes of my horse with one hand, and brandishing his sword with the other. I could not get the frightened animal near enough to use my sword, and my pistol (a Deane and Adams revolver), with which I tried to shoot my opponent, refused to go off, so I felt myself pretty well at his mercy, when, to my relief, I saw him fall, having been run through the body by a man of the 9th Lancers who had come to my rescue.'

After a fierce struggle the rebels were beaten off, our men formed themselves up and were soon off in hot pursuit. For three days the column rested at Agra, and reached Mainpuri on the 15th October. While on its way there it was overtaken by Hope Grant, who superseded Greathed. Cawnpore was reached on the 26th, when for the first time Roberts heard the story of the terrible tragedy that had been enacted there.

Just before the Delhi column reached Cawnpore four companies of the 93rd Highlanders had arrived. 'It was the first time I had seen a Highland regiment, and I was duly impressed with their fine physique, and not a little also by their fine dress. They certainly looked splendid in their bonnets and kilts—a striking contrast to my war-worn, travel-stained comrades of the movable column.' An *avant courier* of the naval brigade had also come in. Other troops were being rapidly pushed up, and officers on leave to England were daily arriving. Some men had also come in who had fought their way from Allahabad with Havelock's force, from whom they learned the difficulties they had encountered on their way, and the hardships the gallant little force had subsequently to endure in its attempts to reach Lucknow. The day after the movable column reached Cawnpore they heard that Sir Colin Campbell was to leave Calcutta that evening to take command of the force with which he hoped to effect the relief of Lucknow, and with the news came an order to Hope Grant to open up communication with the Alambagh, a small garden-house outside Lucknow, which had been turned into a hospital and

depot and left in charge of a small detachment, when Outram and Havelock advanced towards the Residency on the 25th September. Accordingly the Delhi column left Cawnpore on the 30th October, and crossed the Ganges into Oudh. On the following day, when more than half way to the Alambagh, a telegram was received from Sir Colin ordering the column to halt until he should arrive, and on the 9th November he arrived, accompanied by the Chief of the Staff, Brigadier-General Mansfield. Next morning came Kavanagh, the brave Irishman, who, disguised as a native, had passed the enemy's lines and brought a dispatch from Outram, suggesting the best line for the advance to be made. That day and the following were spent in making preparations, and on the evening of the latter orders were issued for a march to the Alambagh next morning. On the 13th Roberts got his first command. He was accompanying the Commander-in-Chief in a reconnaisance towards Charbagh bridge and the left front of the Alambagh.

'When riding along he told me, to my infinite pride and delight, that I was to have the honour of conducting the force to the Dilkusha. The first thing I did on returning to camp was to find a good guide. We had only about five miles to go; but it was necessary to make sure that the direction taken avoided obstacles which might impede the passage of Artillery. I was fortunate in finding a fairly intelligent native, who, after a great deal of persuasion, agreed, for a reward, to take me by a track over which guns could travel. I never let this man out of my sight, and made him show me enough of the road to convince me he knew the way and meant fair dealing.'

By noon on the 14th, Roberts, after a sharp fight, had got possession of the Dilkusha. The Martinière, a neighbouring house, was also occupied. Here a curious incident occurred. A blind shell from the enemy's howitzer came into Watson's squadron, which was drawn up under a bank, struck a trooper's saddle in front, and actually appears to have lifted the man partly out of it, for it passed between his thighs and the horse, tearing the saddle, a native one made of felt without a tree, to shreds, and sending one piece high in the air. The horse was knocked down, but not hurt; the man's thigh was only badly bruised, and he was able to ride again in a few days. 'One of Watson's officers, Captain Cosserat, having

examined the man and horse, came up and reported their condition to Watson, who, of course, was expecting to be told they were both dead, and added: "I think we had better not tell this story in England, for no one would believe it." I myself,' adds Lord Roberts, 'was close to the squadron, and distinctly saw what happened.'

On the evening of the 15th Roberts was unexpectedly sent for by the Commander-in-Chief. Sir Colin was not satisfied that the reserve of small-arm ammunition with the force was sufficient and was anxious that an additional supply should be procured during the night from the Alambagh. When asked whether he could find his way back to the Alambagh in the dark, Roberts at once replied 'I am sure I can.' The duty was difficult and dangerous but Roberts at once set off with an escort, and after a night of adventure returned with the required ammunition just after dawn.

'As I rode up to the Martinière I could see old Sir Colin, only partially dressed, standing on the steps in evident anxiety at my non-arrival. He was delighted when at last I appeared, expressed himself very pleased to see me, and having made many kind and complimentary remarks as to the success of the little expedition, he told me to go off and get something to eat as quickly as possible, for we were to start directly the men had breakfasted. That was a very happy moment for me, feeling that I had earned my Chief's approbation and justified his selection of me. I went off to the Artillery camp, and refreshed the inner man with a steak cut off a gun bullock which had been killed by a round shot on the 14th.'

The advance began at 8 a.m. Roberts was ordered to join the advance guard, behind which rode Sir Colin accompanied by Kavanagh, whose knowledge of the locality proved of great service. For a time our troops were allowed to proceed unmolested, but after passing through the narrow street of a small village, they were suddenly met with a fierce fire poured directly upon them from the Sikandarbagh. Confusion followed and for a time there was a complete block. At length the way was cleared; Hope's brigade came up to the assistance of the advance guard; in half an hour an opening, three feet square and three feet from the ground, was made in the wall of the Sikandarbagh, and the order was then given for the assault:—

'It was a magnificent sight, a sight never to be forgotten—that glorious struggle to be the first to enter the deadly breach, the prize to the winner of the race being certain death! Highlanders and Sikhs, Punjabi Mahommedans, Dogras and Pathans, all vied with each other in the generous competition. A Highlander was the first to reach the goal, and was shot dead as he jumped into the enclosure; a man of the 4th Punjab Infantry came next, and met the same fate. Then followed Lieutenant Cooper, of the 93rd, and immediately behind him his Colonel (Ewart), Captain Lumsden, of the 30th Bengal Infantry, and a number of Sikhs and Highlanders as fast as they could scramble through the opening. A drummer-boy of the 93rd must have been one of the first to pass that grim boundary line between life and death, for when I got in I found him just inside the breach, lying on his back quite dead—a pretty, innocent-looking, fair-haired lad, not more than fourteen years of age.'

As the heavy doors of the gateway behind the earthwork were in the act of being closed, a Mahommedan, Mukarrab Khan by name, thrust his left arm in between them, thus preventing them from being shut.

'On his hand being badly wounded by a sword cut, he drew it out, instantly thrusting in the other arm, when the right hand was all but severed from the wrist. But he gained his object—the doors could not be closed, and were soon forced open altogether, upon which the 4th Punjab Infantry, the 53rd, 93rd, and some of the Detachments swarmed in.'

Roberts entered immediately after the storming party, and remarks that the scene that followed 'requires the pen of a Zola to depict it.' The Sikandarbagh taken, the fighting proceeded. Every wall, and square, and building, and inch of ground, was fiercely contested, but point after point was taken, until darkness set in, and the men had to rest where they were. Next morning the fighting was resumed. Outram and Havelock cautiously worked their way out from the Residency till they met Sir Colin, and by sunset on the 19th, all the women and children, the sick and the wounded who still survived, had been brought away and collected in the Sikandarbagh. 'It was a sad little assemblage; all were more or less broken down and out of health, while many were widows or orphans, having left their nearest and dearest in the Residency burial-ground. Officers and men accorded them a respectful welcome, and by their efforts to help them showed how deeply they felt for their forlorn condition, while our old Chief had a comfort-

able tea prepared for them.' The troops were not withdrawn from the Residency until midnight on the 22nd, and Roberts had several opportunities of going over the position and renewing his acquaintance with those of the garrison he had known before.

During the operations which immediately followed, Roberts accompanied the headquarters staff. On the return march to Cawnpore, great anxiety was felt as to what had happened there, and he was sent forward to ascertain the exact state of affairs. His orders were to return at once if he found the bridge broken, but if not, to push on, try and see the General, and bring back all the information he could obtain. Taking a couple of *sowars* with him, he found the bridge still intact, and crossing over, got into the entrenchments. He was about to start back, when a cheer announced the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief himself, who, having grown impatient, had pushed on immediately after him, accompanied by General Mansfield and some other staff-officers. The fight at Cawnpore was watched by Roberts as one of the Commander-in-Chief's staff.

The Gwalior troops disposed of, the army marched towards Fatehgarh, and on the way Roberts won the Victoria Cross. The rebels were found occupying the village of Khudaganj in strong force. As our troops neared the village, they hastily limbered up their guns and retired. Such an opportunity for mounted troops does not often occur, and it was instantly seized. Hope Grant rode up to the cavalry, drawn up behind some sandhills, gave the word of command, and they were off at once.

'The chase continued for nearly five miles, until daylight began to fail, and we appeared to have got to the end of the fugitives, when the order was given to wheel to the right and form up on the road. Before, however, this movement could be carried out, we overtook a batch of mutineers, who faced about and fired into the squadron at close quarters. I saw Younghusband fall, but I could not go to his assistance, as at that moment one of his *sowars* was in dire peril from a sepoy, who was attacking him with his fixed bayonet, and had I not helped the man and disposed of his opponent, he must have been killed. The next moment I descried in the distance two sepoys making off with a standard, which I

determined must be captured, so I rode after the rebels and overtook them, and while wrenching the staff out of the hands of one of them, whom I cut down, the other put his musket close to my body and fired; fortunately for me it missed fire, and I carried off the standard.'

When it was at last decided to reduce Lucknow, Roberts returned thither with Hope Grant, as his D.A.Q.M.G. On the march Watson and he had a curious experience. They were out some miles from camp in pursuit of a *nilghai*, when all at once they beheld moving towards them from their right front a body of the enemy's cavalry. They pulled up and trotted back, at first very quietly, that their horses, which were already dead beat, might recover their wind. Every now and then they looked back to see whether their pursuers were gaining upon them, and at last distinctly saw them open out and make as if to charge down upon them. They gave themselves up for lost, and bade each other good-bye, agreeing that neither must wait for the other, when lo! the horsemen suddenly vanished, as if the ground had opened and swallowed them; there was nothing to be seen but the open plain, where a second before there had been a crowd of mounted men. Their phantom enemy taught them a salutary lesson, and they resolved not to allow themselves to be tempted so far from the camp without an escort again.

Lucknow was reached on the 2nd March, and within little more than three weeks it was in complete possession of the British troops. Its reduction had been effected with remarkably slight loss on our side. This result Lord Roberts attributes chiefly to the scientific manner in which the siege operations had been carried out under the direction of Robert Napier, the Chief Engineer, and also to the good use made by Sir Colin Campbell of his powerful force of artillery. He fin
fault, however, with the latter for refusing to allow Out
cross the iron bridge on the 13th, a movement wl
opinion, would have cut off the enemy's retreat,
Frank's victory more complete.

With the fall of Lucknow, Lord Roberts' c
the suppression of the Mutiny ceased. The d
on his taking a trip to England, and the two

follow in his autobiography are taken up with a discussion of the causes which led to the Mutiny, and the question, Is there any chance of a similar rising occurring again? The two points are discussed in great detail; but for the opinions held by Lord Roberts, we must refer the reader to the chapters themselves.

At the end of July, 1859, Lord Roberts was back in India, and was appointed to organise and take charge of the large camp to be formed for Lord Canning's triumphal progress through Oudh, the North-West Province, and the Punjab. His wish to be sent to China was disappointed. His wife—for while at home he had married—shared his disappointment.

Roberts took part in the Umbeyla Expedition, and served as Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the Bengal Brigade with the Abyssinian Force. All through the latter he remained at Zula as Senior Staff Officer, but when the war was ended he was sent home with the General's dispatches. He returned to India to take up the appointment of First Assistant-Quartermaster-General, and in 1871 accompanied the Lushai Expedition as Senior Staff Officer, when he gained his C.B., 'although at the time,' he says, 'a brevet would have been a more useful reward, as want of rank was the reason Lord Napier had given for not allowing me to act as Quartermaster-General, on Lumsden being temporarily appointed Resident at Hyderabad.' The post came to him, however, in 1874, when Johnson, was made Adjutant-General. Want of rank was still in the way, but it was easily got over.

In April 1876 Roberts was at Bombay seeing Lord Napier off, and while there the *Orontes* steamed into the harbour with Lord Lytton on board.

'Little did I imagine when making Lord Lytton's acquaintance how much he would have to say to my future career. His Excellency received me very kindly, telling me he felt that I was not altogether a stranger, as he had been reading during the voyage a paper I had written for Lord Napier, a year or two before, on our military position in India, and the arrangements that would be necessary in the event of Russia attempting to continue her advance south of the Oxus. Lord Napier had sent a copy of this memorandum to Lord Beaconsfield, by whom it had been given to Lord Lytton.'

Like many others, Lord Roberts approves of the policy adopted by Lord Lytton towards Afghanistan, though it was adversely criticised at the time, and, in order to justify it, narrates with considerable detail the progress made by Russia in Asia from the time of the Crimean war, as well as the history of our own relations with Afghanistan. When the second Afghan war was decided upon, he was given the command of the Kuram Field Force. 'It was a proud, albeit a most anxious, moment for me,' he says, 'when I assumed command of the Kuram Field Force; though a local Major-General, I was only Major in my regiment, and save for a short experience on one occasion in Lushai, I had never had an opportunity of commanding troops in the field.' His earnest longing for success made him intensely interested in ascertaining the character of those who were to be associated with him, and he lost no time in taking stock of both the officers and men under him, and in endeavouring to satisfy himself as to their qualifications and fitness for their several posts. The force was assembled at Kohat, but much needed to be done before the column was ready to advance. By the 15th November all the troops were concentrated at Thal, and on the morning of the 21st the advance began. The Afghans were found posted on the Peiwar Kotal, 18,000 strong, with eleven guns. The position was much more formidable than Roberts expected. It was

'On the summit of a mountain, rising 2,000 feet above us, and only approachable by a narrow, steep, and rugged path, flanked on either side by precipitous spurs jutting out like huge bastions, from which an overwhelming fire could be brought to bear on the assailants. . . . I confess to a feeling very nearly akin to despair when I gazed at the apparently impregnable position towering above us, occupied, as I could discern through my telescope, by crowds of soldiers and a large number of guns.'

Fortunately a route was discovered over the Spingawi, by which it was hoped the enemy's left might be turned. Until this was thoroughly ascertained everybody was made to believe that an attack was to be delivered in front. Major Collet, who had discovered the route, at last reported it practical, and the flank movement began at 10 p.m. on Sunday, the 1st December. The position was severely contested, but

by sunset on the following day the Afghans were in full retreat, having left their guns, with quantities of ammunition and stores behind them in their hurry to escape. The engagement was not without its critical moments. There was treachery among the Pathan companies of the 29th Punjab Infantry. During the midnight march first one shot was fired from one of them as a signal, and then another. Later on, when owing to the darkness our troops had lost their way, things were still more critical and served to bring out the strong feelings of personal attachment to himself which Roberts had awakened in his native orderlies.

'My orderlies during this little episode displayed such touching devotion that it is with feelings of the most profound admiration and gratitude I call to mind their self-sacrificing courage. On this (as on many other occasions) they kept close round me, determined that no shot should reach me if they could prevent it; and on my being hit in the hand by a spent bullet, and turning to look round in the direction it came from, I beheld one of the Sikhs standing with his arms stretched out trying to screen me from the enemy, which he could easily do, for he was a grand specimen of a man, a head and shoulders taller than myself. To my great relief, on my return to the edge of the hollow, Adams met me with the good tidings that he had found not only the lost troops, but the Native Infantry of the rear portion of the column, and had ascertained that the elephants with the guns were close at hand.'

Having taken possession of the Shutargardan, little more resistance was met with, and Roberts set himself to explore and settle the country round about, as far as he was able. Soon after the Gandamak treaty was signed and he left Kuram for Simla to join the Army Commission. He had not been engaged on this long when the news arrived of the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his escort at Kabul, and he was at once ordered to proceed to Kuram and resume his command. As a preliminary measure, General Massey, who had been left in temporary command, was directed to entrench himself at the Shutargardan. General Roberts arrived in Kuram on the 12th September, and on 28th had his first interview with the Yakub Khan, who, on the death of Shere Ali, had been set up as Amir. The impression he produced upon General Roberts was not favourable.

'He was an insignificant looking man, about thirty-two years of age, with a receding forehead, a conical-shaped head, and no chin to speak of, and he gave me the idea of being entirely wanting in that force of character without which no one could hope to govern or hold in check the warlike and turbulent people of Afghanistan. He was possessed, moreover, of a very shifty eye, he could not look one straight in the face, and from the first I felt that his appearance tallied exactly with the double-dealing that had been imputed to him.'

The object of his visit was, if possible, to delay the advance on Kabul, with which place he remained in constant communication, and seems to have kept the leaders there accurately informed as to the strength and movements of General Roberts' command. 'That he felt pretty sure of our discomfiture was apparent from his change of manner, which, from being at first a mixture of extreme civility and cringing servility, became, as we neared Kabul, distant and haughty.' During the stirring fight at Charasia, on the 6th October

'My friend (!) the Amir, surrounded by his Sirdars, remained seated on a knoll in the centre of the camp watching the progress of the fight with intense eagerness, and questioning every one who appeared as to his interpretation of what he had observed. So soon as I felt absolutely assured of our victory, I sent an aide-de-camp to His Highness to convey the joyful intelligence of our success. It was, without doubt, a trying moment for him, and a terrible disappointment after the plans which I subsequently ascertained he and his adherents at Kabul had carefully laid for our annihilation. But he received the news with Asiatic calmness and without the smallest sign of mortification, merely requesting my aide-de-camp to assure me that, as my enemies were his enemies, he rejoiced at my victory.'

The victory at Charasia, in which, as in all other battles of the campaign, feats of individual bravery were done, opened the way to Kabul. Attempts were made to intercept the flight of the enemy, but without success. The Afghans drew off under cover of night and left their camp standing. Kabul was found completely Russianized :—

'The Afghan Sirdars and officers were arrayed in Russian pattern uniforms, Russian money was found in the Treasury, Russian wares were sold in the bazaars, and although the roads leading to Central Asia were certainly no better than those leading to India, Russia had taken more advantage of them than we had to carry on commercial dealings with Afghanistan.'

Kabul taken and the Afghans dispersed, no apprehension seems to have been entertained of any further organised resistance to our occupation of the country, but early in December symptoms of discontent appeared. The mullas composed their private quarrels, and a movement began which soon assumed the aspect of a religious war. On the 9th the tribesmen had gathered in from all quarters in overwhelming numbers. For some time the British General was hard pressed, and, after a three days' fight against enormous odds, was forced to retire to his cantonments at Sherpur, two miles north of the city where with seven thousand men he had to defend a position nearly five miles long, two of which were unprotected, except by a shallow trench hastily constructed. Fortunately it was not until the morning of the 23rd that any serious attempt was made by the enemy to assault the place. The intervening days were occupied in strengthening the entrenchments, and mounting the heavy guns which had been found in the Kabul arsenal. The assault began just before daylight on the morning of the 22nd, and was delivered with great determination. Again and again the ladders were placed against the south-eastern wall, but the defence was entirely successful; and by one o'clock in the afternoon the enemy, who are said to have mustered as many as 100,000 fighting men, were in full flight. The arrival of General Gough's force on the following day put an end to all anxiety.

General Roberts' subsequent march to the relief of Kandahar is usually regarded as his greatest performance, and has been declared by no less an authority than Von Moltke, 'the greatest feat in British military history since Waterloo.' General Roberts does not share this opinion. To his mind the advance on Kabul was 'in every particular more difficult, more dangerous, and placed upon me as the Commander infinitely more responsibility.' He attributes the greater amount of interest displayed in the march to Kandahar and the greater amount of credit given to him for that undertaking to 'the glamour of romance thrown around an army of 10,000 men lost to view, as it were, for nearly a month, about the fate of which uninformed speculation was

rife, and pessimistic rumours were spread, until the tension became extreme, and the corresponding relief proportionably great when that army re-appeared to dispose at once of Ayub and his hitherto victorious troops.'

When the affairs of Afghanistan were settled, General Roberts returned to England, where he was 'fêted and feasted to an alarming extent,' and did not return to India until the end of 1881.

'Six weeks of these precious months,' he says, 'were spent in a wild-goose chase to the Cape of Good Hope and back, upon my being nominated, by Mr. Gladstone's Government, Governor of Natal and Commander of the Forces in South Africa, on the death of Sir George Colley, and the receipt of the news of the disaster of Majuba Hill.

'While I was on my way out to take up my command, peace was made with the Boers in the most marvellously rapid and unexpected manner. A peace, alas! "without honour," to which may be attributed the recent regrettable state of affairs in the Transvaal—a state of affairs which was foreseen and predicted by many at the time. My stay at Cape Town was limited to twenty-four hours, the Government being apparently as anxious to get me away from Africa as they had been to hurry me out there.'

While in England the appointment of Quartermaster-General at the Horse Guards was offered to him; but having already made his arrangements, he returned to India to take up his appointment there as Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army. Two years later he succeeded Sir Donald Stewart as Commander-in-Chief in India, and held that responsible post eight years, during which he devoted himself to the task of rendering the army he commanded as perfect a fighting body as possible, and of improving the condition of the private soldier, whether British or native.

His splendid career of forty-one years in India came to a close in 1893, when he left the country carrying with him the esteem and affection of all who had served under him. While his own name will continue to be associated with wise administrative reforms and the brilliant successes he achieved as a General, that of Lady Roberts will be associated with the admirable work she initiated and directed in connection with the Army Nursing Service and the Homes in the Hills.