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WESTERN INDIA.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
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WESTERN INDIA

BEFORE AND DURING THE MUTINIES :

PICTURES DRAWN FROM LIFE.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE LE GRAND JACOB

K.C.S.I., C.B.

*Late Special Political Commissioner, Southern Mahratta Country,
etc*

LONDON :

HENRY S. KING & CO., 65 CORNHILL.

1871.

V2, L: 51. M57y7443

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84

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TO

MY NIECE AND ADOPTED DAUGHTER

GERTRUDE L. JACOB,

WITHOUT WHOSE HELP

A BLIND AND INFIRM OLD MAN COULD NOT

HAVE ATTEMPTED EVEN THIS PARTIAL

RECORD OF A TRYING PUBLIC LIFE.

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APPENDIX.

(See page 226.)



Mr. Kies, a German missionary in the Southern Mahratta Country, gave Colonel, now Major-General, Sir George Malcolm the following translation of a Canarese epic, written shortly after the events related in my last chapter; it may interest as showing them from a native point of view. The poem must needs have suffered greatly from the attempt to put a literal translation into English verse, but the author has clearly intended to keep as near the truth as was consistent with his lights. The notes are not initialed by the translator.

THE WAR WITH BABA SAHIB

(THE CHIEF OF NURGOOND)

AND

THE CAPTURE OF THAT TOWN BY THE ENGLISH.

A. D. 1858.

I

The brave English, the great kings, took Nurgoond on earth ;
 The wicked chieftains were taken prisoners from their hearth ;
 The bad rebels were broken and fled in the midst of their
 mirth.

Have the English their equals ? To their power must stoop
 even Lady Earth !

II

Strife rose in the North ; searching swords, daggers, and
 diverse arms

Throughout the empire in towns, villages, and farms,
 Besieging houses and creating alarms,
 They came to Dharwar, with a great force collecting arms.

III

Many valiant lords with one mind there came,
 To overflowing with anger was filled their frame ;
 Gnashing their teeth they said, ' At which place must we aim ?
 ' We have misgivings about that Fort, Nurgoond is its name.'

IV

The brave Chief of Police mounted his horse and joined his
angry men.

They found out and brought arms from the rebel's den.
People who concealed swords, and yet denied it were beaten
then

And pulled by the arm; to describe this I want a more
powerful pen.

V

They came as victors, alighted at Nurgoond, gazed at the
fortified hill,

And sat down thoughtfully to announce their will.

Baskaraja ¹ was sent for and informed with skill

That his master must be disarmed. Hearing this, Baba fell
down ill.

VI

'Why hesitate?' Give up arms, guns, powder and balls ;
Do not conceal them in the ground nor in walls :
Give up all hope in this matter, and hear your master's call
To disarm your country ! Do not sit idle in your hall !'

VII

At this command anger rose to the brain of the Chief ; his
eyes did glare,

Pouring forth sparks. On his body was bristling his hair

¹ A minister of the Chief, through whom he communicated with the
British Government.

With horror, but he curbed his passion and promised to disarm with care,
Saying to himself, 'If I am silent I shall better fare.'

VIII

He returned without stopping to his house with a wavering mind,
Called his clever Minister, Raghopanta, and bade him with calm mind
To consider well whether the promise given did bind
Him to collect and give up arms of every kind.

IX

According to his advice an answer was returned by Baba the Lord.
'The arms are ours; we shall give neither gun nor sword.
Mark! this is a clear answer to you. We have no other word.
Be off in peace! We have sent letters to gather our horde!'

X

Hearing this answer the Chief of Police¹ twisted his moustachios and rose in a passion,
And said, 'Well done, Baba, thou art a traitor of a rare fashion!
We shall soon come again to punish thy transgression;
Then I shall pour down thy throat molten lead without compassion.

¹ The poet seems to have very misty ideas of the ruling powers.—G. L. J.

XI

'Thou art like a straw; thou provokest the fire with open eyes.
Has the country been given to thee to devour it? In no
wise!

Mark! thou hast eaten up thy measure of rice,¹
Hero! thou must not weary thyself by vainly boasting if
thou art wise.'

XII

Instantly this message was sent to the great Collector,² on
the excellent wire.

In a moment it reached the Court of the Queen, with the
velocity of fire.

Here Mr. Manson was ordered to bring in the liar.
Obedient he set out; he travelled on with haste, alas! no
more to retire.

XIII

He posted in every village on his road one horse; went to
Ramdroog with great speed;
Greeted Rao Sahib kindly and advised him to heed
The present time, to disarm and mount his steed
To go to Dharwar, where he would receive for his loyalty a
becoming meed.

XIV

Rao Sahib gave to this advice a ready assent,
Mr. Manson left him smilingly and pitched his tent
Near Suriband. To go to Nurgoond was his intent.
Baba was informed of this by the spies he had sent.

¹ The tune of thy death is near.

² See note 1 on p. 242.—G. L. J.

xv

Mr. Manson in his palanquin went to sleep,
 Guarded by eighteen warriors who had to keep
 Watch on his right and left side. Of the secret wicked and
 deep
 He had no foreboding. Thinking of it we cannot but weep.

xvi

Baba came with one hundred men, foot and horse, like a
 shower;
 They fell on the guards as tigers eager to devour.
 They were killing to the right and left; there was no resist-
 ance to their power,
 When Mr. Manson awoke—rose, and stood like a strong
 tower.

xvii

He saw the storm, and without hesitating fired off his gun;
 But it was too late, there was none to help him, not one.
 Baba seeing him called angrily to his men, 'My word must
 be done!
 Cut him up quickly !' Thus the foul play was won.

xviii

They returned to Nurgoond. And going in procession they
 showed
 The head of their foe. Crowds of children and women
 cheering on followed.

Then it was fixed upon the gate. The warriors assembled
and bellowed,
'The foe has been caught !' So that with it the sides of the
Hill echoed.

XIX

The next day Baba placed watchmen round the town,
Fortified the gate, prepared for war, and went down
To his warriors, gave them betel leaf,¹ and said, 'Frown
At my foes, saw them, make them sawdust, and uphold my
crown.'

XX

Hearing this the warriors fell to the ground,
Beat the soil, and with a loud sound
Said, 'Father, take courage ! Do not doubt ; we feel bound
To defend you ! Our enemies will be soon cut up and
ground !'

XXI

To which Baba, 'Tell me, where have they won a battle ?
The coward English ! Are we afraid of their empty rattle ?
They have taken countries with idle prattle,
But we shall weary them and offer their marrow to demons
on the field of battle.'

XXII

Thus vainly boasting he was filled with gladness,
And prayed to his god to show kindness,

¹ Before beginning an important business betel leaf is distributed as a kind of inauguration.

And deliver him mercifully from the sadness
 Into which his enemies had plunged him with eagerness.

XXIII

Then he went to his Fort, his stores of ammunition examined,
 and in secret places located.
 His warriors received sugar and meal and were satisfied.
 With the discharge of guns the air reverberated,
 And the firm ground gave way and was agitated.

XXIV

He encouraged and explained all this to his wife :
 ' Be of good cheer and do not fear for your life !
 Do not stab yourself with sorrow, that sharp knife !
 God has brought this time, into his counsels you must not
 dive.'

XXV

The lady looking with sorrow on her husband's fate,
 Said, ' What will be our lot after losing our place ?
 We had better die ! 'Tis a dangerous quarrel you dared to
 raise
 With the English, this earth-conquering race.

XXVI

' But let be ! We shall not fear ; do not shrink in the fight ;
 And wage war by the mercy of God with all might !
 Hear, my husband, what I say, and prove a valiant knight
 In vanquishing our enemies to our hearts' delight.'

XXVII

That foul deed perpetrated in the dark night-time
Was like a stain that cannot be effaced by white-washing
lime.

It was a deed that could be pardoned in no time.
It was impossible that fortune should follow such a crime.

XXVIII

When our Masters in Dharwar heard of this murder it was
as if a dart
Had been flung at them and fire poured into their heart.
They sent a message on the wire with art
And asked the Queen how the traitor ought to smart.

XXIX

This news flew with the swiftness of lightning to the far far
West.
The Queen sat in Council, on the right and left to Her
Ministers giving behest.
They heard it, beat the ground, bit their fingers, and smote
on their breast,
Their eyes sparkling with rage, and roaring like thunder,
'Burn us! We can have no rest,

XXX

'Mother Queen! We must have revenge! But God will
extricate us; do not speak words of grief.
Make haste! Give order, and distribute to our warriors
betel leaf,
That they go and lay waste the country of that Chief
Who is your subject, and holds that country only as a fief!'

XXXI

At this advice of Her Ministers, the Queen cast a gracious
glance

On the august assembly, and ordered Her army with swords
and lance

To go to the war, at which the soldiers began to dance
For joy, and asked, 'Where is Nurgoond? We shall cast
that people into an awful trance.'

XXXII

The brave Colonel at their head was so full of ire
As to appear like a mountain ignited with fire,
From his eyes poured forth sparks of dire
Wrath, enough to consume such straw men as were in Baba's
hire.

XXXIII

The first day they halted some miles distant from Nurgoond
and alighted

To encamp. At dawn the officers rose, prepared for an at-
tack, and were delighted

At the proposal of having their honour soon righted,
Mounted their horses and went on, at which Baba was sorely
affrighted.

XXXIV

He prayed to Venkatramana, his god, to deliver,
Exhorted his men to attack, and not to shiver.

'They sallied out gnashing their teeth like a rushing river,
At the sound of their drums the ground began to quiver.

XXXV

When the English saw them coming, they turned back their
horse
Saying, 'Let them come forth!' And ordered their force
To retreat, and instructed them what course
They had to take, and put in readiness every resource.

XXXVI

Baba's men thought the English were flying
From fear. 'See how they run like horses shying!
They are broken! Let us catch them!' the enemy was
crying,
And followed to the brook, where the brave warriors in am-
bush were lying.

XXXVII

Out rushed the soldiers, like a thunderstorm in an angry
mood,
Their business to slay was well understood.
They surrounded and cut up this infernal brood
As a man with an axe is cutting a wood.

XXXVIII

As lions attack cattle and sheep, eager to eat,
The soldiers did not tire to cut, to stab, and to beat
These beggars who had no food, but were full of conceit;
They became now to the demons and fowls delicious meat,

XXXIX

Some were hiding behind trees, trembling ;
 Others fled in disguise, dissembling,
 Stumbled, fell, and with blades of grass in their mouths ¹
 were heard mumbling,
 ‘O Englishmen, our Lords, do not kill us ! We are already
 like corpses tumbling.’

XL

Some threw away their arms with which they had fought ;
 Others with much grief of their helpless wives and children
 thought;
 Some unable to bear the heavy blows of the enemy were
 caught ;
 All their arrogance and pride had come to nought.

XLI

When Baba saw his force shattered and broken,
 He was confounded, and is said to have thus spoken,—
 ‘O Bheemrao, O Chief of Dumbul ! ² You have broken
 The words which with an oath you had spoken.

XLII

‘Perhaps my dull warriors did not well direct their guns and
 balls.
 Alàs ! they have deceived me ! They showed courage only
 as long as they were within my walls,

¹ As a sign of surrender.

² The Insurgent Leader who fell at Copaldroog.—G. L. J.

These wily hypocrites ! They betrayed me ; that galls
My soul ! They themselves are lost ; to me they were false.

XLIII

'O Krishna ! Am I not to thee devoted ?
Was not thy worship always by me promoted ?
What is my sin ? On thee I have doted,
That I should lose my life can the Gods have voted ?'

XLIV

Then he turned his horse and rode quickly to the Fort,
To which he thought his men would resort.
'Open the gate !' he cried, 'O God, the time is short !'
But none answered from within. He sighed and fled, that
was no sport.

XLV

His wife hearing that her husband had been routed and put
to flight,
Rolled on the ground, sighing and weeping from anguish
and fright.
'What shall we do ?' She asked her mother-in-law, 'how
might
We have made our troubles and burden light ?'

XLVI

Her virtuous mother-in-law wept when she heard this word,
And said, 'Before going he ought to have cut our throats
with his sword.

Thus to leave and deceive us does not with his fine words
accord;
We must go likewise, after we have been deprived of our
Lord.'

XLVII

Both went and wandered about in the nearest wood,
Took each other by the hand, and went on without tasting
food.
After seeing their efforts to find their Lord fruitless, they
thought it best
To seek in the depths of the near river an eternal rest.

XLVIII

In the mean time the English, impatient to wait,
Rushed in through the unguarded gate,
And advanced to the Palace, moving on with fierce gait,
Crying, 'Seize, beat, stab, cut, let the foe feel our hate!'

XLIX

At not finding Baba they gnashed their teeth and researched
the whole place,
But nowhere could they discover and recognise his face.
'Where can he be?' they exclaimed and began to gaze
At the Fort. Hither was now directed the chase.

L

But they did not find him, and full of disappointment and
rage
They said, 'Go where thou mayest thou wilt soon go off the
stage!

That thou wilt escape destruction thou needest not believe !
At their shouts of victory the hidden fugitives trembled like
a withering leaf.

LI

The following day the Chief of Police permitted the soldiers
to plunder!
The inhabitants were frightened and fled—no wonder !
The earth from the weight of the warrior's wrath cleft
asunder ;
They shouted and roared like rolling thunder.

LII

Ten and ten went together, and thus through the town they
were dispersed.
To deliver their swords, daggers, spears, and matchlocks,
men were coerced,
Poor men were driven from their homes, and greatly dis-
tressed :
But this is the lot of a hostile town, to be by victors
oppressed.

LIII

In the houses of the bankers they took jewels, silver and
gold,
Brazen vessels, iron, ivory, all was taken and sold.
In the huts of the farmers they took milk, butter and curds,
All kinds of grain, like preying birds.

LIV

They took and tied up in bundles clothes that had in boxes
been kept ;

The women when seeing their garments taken, bitterly wept.
Braids, quilted garments, blankets and mats,—away all was
swept.

There were many who in that night on the bare ground
slept.

LV

But listen ! There was not left even to infants their cradle.
Yea they were denuded of their very swaddle.

From the kitchen was taken the ladle ;

Oxen, cows, buffaloes, asses, sheep, were seized, and horses
without saddle.

LVI

The butchers had to deplore the loss of their knives.
'Where are our cooking pots?' lamented their wives.
Many wished that the warriors had taken their lives,
And sent them to that world where no sinner thrives.

LVII

Then the shops where cloth was sold were sacked,
The shops of spices were emptied. None lacked
Food that day. The bags of sugar and dates were unpacked ;
They put dates one into the mouth of another, tasted and
smacked.

LVIII

What they could not eat and could not carry was spilled,
After they had got their pockets completely filled,
Thereupon an old prophecy about the temple of Venkalestra
was fulfilled,
That its idol would be broken and on its holy floor cattle
killed.

LIX

Meanwhile the English searched all places where Baba
might hide,
A fugitive he wandered near Torgall—gone was his pride,
A fire of anguish burned within him. No guide
Had he in whom he could safely confide.

LX

When the soldiers came, and with skill surrounded
The place where Baba was concealed, he was confounded.
He tried to run, but a shower of balls fell on him; the charge
was sounded;
The officers advanced; he was taken, and with their accla-
mations the air resounded.

LXI

The great chiefs of the Army were filled with delight,
Saying, 'Our enemy has been caught !' Many a traitorous
wight
Was found there and ordered to be bound tight.
To bring them to Belgaum the officers exerted all might.

LXII

The people hearing that Baba Sahib had been caught,
 Began to lament, saying, ' Fortune is fickle, power is fraught
 With danger, empire is uncertain, woe to him by whom it
 is sought !

A noble chief has after a short reign come to nought.'

LXIII

Most virtuous kings, like Chola,¹ by Lady Earth² were
 deserted.

How often has she from powerful and mighty princes
 averted

Her face ! God only knows what she has secretly concerted !

Alas ! Baba desired such an unsteady spouse and was dis-
 concerted !

LXIV

He was virtuous, a man of renown, to little children a
 warden.

He was of a quiet temper. When seeing the poor he did
 not harden

His heart. He protected the brothers of science, the
 learned.

On festivals a rich harvest of presents by Brahmins was
 earned.

¹ A race of kings who ruled the Eastern coast of India about 800 years ago. From their name that coast was called Coromandel, i.e. Circle of Chola.

² Lady Earth is a personification of universal empire. She is courted by princes.

LXV

What times of trouble have come over such a great king !
 How shall we forget such an awful thing !
 With it our ears will always ring ;
 We feel pain as if we were touched by a sting.

LXVI

Men and women looked pale, and desired to see
 Their Chief. Strong men were shedding a sea
 Of tears, and rushed out of the town
 With women's bowels and hearts as soft as down.

LXVII

Our Lords in Belgaum received soon an answer from the
 Queen with glee,
 That the traitor should be hanged on a tree,
 When they saw Baba brought before them, with anger their
 hearts were filled,
 'He is unworthy to live !' they said. 'He must be killed !'

LXVIII

While hanging him the rope broke ;
 He fell to the ground and addressing his judges thus spoke :
 'You are my refuge ; spare my life ; put the cloak
 Of mercy over me ; humbly I will bear your yoke.'

LXIX

It was of no avail that he suppliantly prayed and knelt.
 At his words the hearts of our Lords did not melt.
They smiled, great was the anguish *he* felt ;
 But he was a murderer with whom they justly dealt.

LXX

Then other prisoners were tried and found
 Guilty of death. To the mouth of a cannon they were
 bound,

And in a moment you saw in the air the fiery flashes—
 Away to the eight points of the compass flew their ashes.

LXXI

Some prisoners had by a natural death been released.
 After thus all rebels had been punished and justice appeased,
 The heat of passion in our rulers' hearts cooled down and
 decreased
 Till all angry emotions wholly ceased.

LXXII

The Ryots had been with fear of death excited
 To leave the town ; they were now invited
 To return. ' Remain ! Fear not ; we have plighted
 Our faith to rule you so mildly that you will be delighted.

LXXIII

' It is Baba whom you have to thank
 For this happy change. Your town will now take the first
 rank
 Among the places of the District ; we shall repair tank
 And roads, and make you free and frank.'

LXXIV

Then our valiant masters united to give praise
 To the LORD of the Universe for His goodness and grace,

That He had extricated them out of a maze
Of troubles, and guided them with the light of His face.

LXXV

‘We fall down at Thy feet and worship Thee, O LORD;
Thou hast given victory to our sword.
We are Thy children, obedient to Thy Word.
Save us and protect us for ever, O LORD.’

LXXVI

The next day the grand army marched away
With smiling faces in battle array.
The drums were beaten, the pipers did play;
Arriving at the gate of the Queen’s city they made a stay.

LXXVII

There met them the Mistress of the Earth who directs all
powers,
And headed the martial procession. The soldiers looked
firm as towers,
The grand Army marched through a triumphal Arch as
through bowers
Into the Capital that was decorated with garlands of flowers.

LXXVIII

As long as Sun and Moon are shining in the sky
No enemy will stand these heroes’ battle-cry.
As wind and storm do chase the crazy butterfly,
So will an English host make all their enemies fly.

Appendix.

LXXIX

Thus the wicked rebels broke ;
 Riches vanished just like smoke.
 Of this turbulent haughty race
 Is not seen a single trace.

LXXX

Could the earth bear such great pride
 Without gaping open wide ?
 Down they went with hearts right sore
 Whence do men return no more.

LXXXI

Now has gone the powder smell ;
 On the ground lie ball and shell,
 Tired of flying through the air.
 People dwell contented there.

The Author clearly writes as one disapproving the outbreak, yet feeling sympathy for his countrymen ; and this is what might naturally be expected from a Christian convert, or one *en rapport* with the Missionary. The general feeling of the population in the interior may be gathered from the following anecdote, told me by a gentleman high in the Civil Service, one well calculated, from the confidence he inspires,

to ascertain the real sentiments of the native community, often very different from what they profess whenever they imagine a *couleur de rose* view agreeable to the enquirer.

‘You ask me,’ said a native to this gentleman, ‘what the people really feel regarding the change of rule from the “Kumpany Bahadoor” to that of the Queen. As I know you wish me to speak the truth, whatever it may be, I will tell you by relating a story.

‘Once upon a time a Dhobee (washerman) was washing his clothes in a lake, leaving his donkey as usual to browse by the side, when a thief came and took the animal away. By great exertion the Dhobee at last regained the creature, and having done so thus expostulated with it :—“Why, O ass, did’st you go away so quietly with that thief? If you had resisted, or only brayed to alarm me, I could have got to you in time to prevent it.”

“Master,” replied the ass, “why should you expect me to care about it? As to food, I get what I can find. You load me as much as you think I can carry.

I should not be worse off in any change of masters, and I might perhaps be better.”

This satire seems inconsistent with the enthusiasm mentioned in p. 237, but it has reference to the masses of the interior, who must never be judged of by the populations of the Presidency towns; and the story was told after the first flush of the change had passed away and things were found to jog on pretty much as before.

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