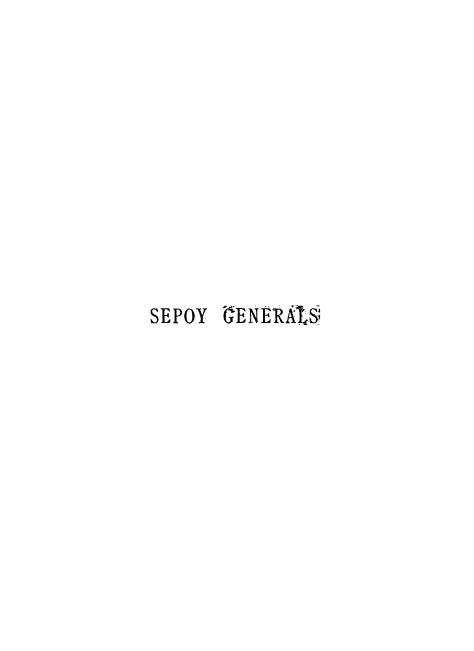


Wellington
Baird
Edwardes
Napier
Munro
Lockhart
Stewart
Jacob
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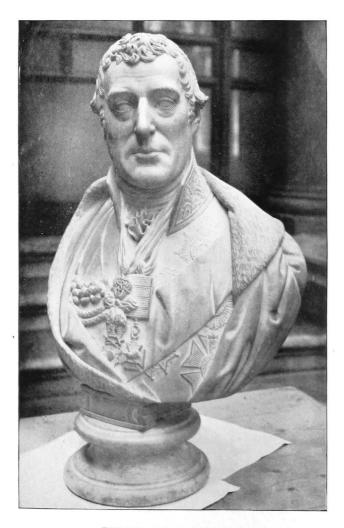
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THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA, 1888-94.



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

SEPOY GENERALS

WELLINGTON TO ROBERTS

ВY

G. W. FORREST, C.I.E.

EX-DIRECTOR OF RECORDS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

WITH PORTRAITS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS EDINBURGH AND LONDON MCMI

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO

THE BRITISH SOLDIER

BY THE SON

OF

A BRITISH SOLDIER.

PREFACE:

This book contains some of the biographical studies which were written while their author was employed in examining the ancient records in the archives at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, and each essay is in a measure the result of his work as Director of Records to the Government of India. They are now, after many years, recast and republished in trust that they will have their use in reminding Englishmen by what thoughts and actions our empire is made and held together. The Peninsular war and Waterloo campaign have cast into the shade the Mahratta campaign and the victory of Assaye; but the knowledge Wellington acquired in the Mahratta campaign of the details of the business of war, and the experience he gained in the fine art of reconciling conflicting interests among his subordinates and allies, carried the "Sepoy General," as he was contemptuously called by his great antagonist, through the toils and difficulties which beset his path in the Peninsula. He did not display a cooler and more indomitable resolution during the crowning

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action of his life than he did at Assaye. His hardly won victories entitle him to a foremost rank among the great captains who established the military supremacy of England throughout India, and a study of the authoritative records of his administration shows that he was almost the first of the race of soldier-statesmen who by their wisdom, their sympathy, and their sense of an inviolable justice have bestowed permanence and stability on our great and illustrious dependency.

The story of Wellington's Indian career is told mainly from his despatches and letters published in the first two volumes of Colonel Gurwood's work, and the 'Supplementary Despatches,' edited by his son. These have been collated with the letters and State Papers preserved in the Bombay Record Office. When the Indian despatches were in the course of publication, thirty years after Assaye, the Duke said to Lady Salisbury: "I have just been reading them over, and was surprised to find them so good—they are as good as I could write now. They show the same attention to details—to the pursuit of all the means, however small, that could promote success." The despatches of a general, however, cannot tell the whole tale, and materials for it have also been collected from Jackson and Scott's 'Military Life of Field - Marshal Duke of Wellington.' Lushington's 'Life and Services of General Lord Harris': 'Notes Relative to the late Transactions in the Mahratta Empire': 'The Despatches, Minutes, and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley, during his Administration in India,' by Montgomery Martin; Wilks's 'Historical Sketches of the South of India'; Beatson's 'View of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun'; 'The Military Reminiscences of Colonel James Welsh'; and Major David Price's 'Memoirs of the Early Life and Services of a Field Officer,' present us with many dramatic incidents of which the writers were eyewitnesses.

Sir Thomas Munro, like Wellington, took as a soldier-statesman an important part in the settlement of Southern India. The sketch of his career is mainly based on his Life by G. R. Gleig, and the selections from his Minutes edited by Sir A. T. Arbuthnot. In his diary, February 15, 1830, the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, no mean judge, writes: "I have begun Sir T. Munro's Life, and am quite enchanted with it. It cannot fail to delight even those who had previously no interest in the subject. It is almost all made up of his own letters, which have fortunately been preserved, and which show that his iudgment and sagacity at nineteen were as superior to those of ordinary people as they were to those of his contemporaries when his reputation was more extensive. They also most fortunately disclose the many accomplishments which were concealed by his modesty. and that delicacy of taste and tenderness of feeling which lay hid under his plain and somewhat stern demeanour." It was that delicacy of taste and tenderness of feeling which won the hearts of the natives.

and gained for Munro the proud title of "the father of the people." His administration in Baramahal is a vivid exemplification of the personal rule which created our Indian Empire. Munro, Metcalfe, Elphinstone, Jonathan Duncan, Thomason, knew the people, and by their sympathy and frankness gained their confidence. At this time, when there is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of material progress, it is well to remember the wise words of Mountstuart Elphinstone: "It is not enough to give new laws or even good courts. You must take the people along with you, and give them a share in your feelings, which can only be done by sharing theirs." Munro's success as an administrator has overshadowed his fame as a soldier. But as a commander in the field he showed in the subjugation of the Southern Mahratta country both spirit and fertility of resource. To Munro Wellington wrote: "As you are a judge of a military operation, and as I am desirous of having your opinion on my side, I am about to give you an account of the battle of Assye" (Assaye), .

The sketch of Sir David Baird, one of the most thorough soldiers that ever devoted their lives to the service of their country, was written at the time when a fresh Indian expedition to Egypt led to an examination of the records relating to the last expedition, which had long been forgotten. A cautious use has been made of Theodore Hook's 'Life of Sir David Baird,' a book of considerable literary merit marred by the unfair spirit in which it is written.

How the body of Tippoo Sultan was found hidden beneath a heap of slain is told in a letter which has never before been printed.

The career of Herbert Edwardes is recorded in 'A Year on the Punjab Frontier,' one of the most fascinating books in our English, and in the Memoirs written by his widow. Englishmen, however, cannot too often wander with Edwardes through the fair and fertile valley of Bunnu which he subjugated without firing a shot, or keep pace with him in his brilliant march to Multan. Lady Edwardes kindly sent the author some important letters relating to the originating and negotiating of the two treaties with Afghanistan.

The story of Napier's various campaigns, from Corunna to Meeanee, is told in his own words. History has endorsed Sir William Napier's fine summary of his brother's rule over Sind: "He left a united regenerated people rejoicing in a rising civilisation, the work of his beneficent genius." Sufficient justice, however, has never been done to the hard and splendid work he did as Commander-in-Chief in India. The details of his administration are now given from the old warrior's impetuous speeches, his general orders, and his caustic criticisms on the verdicts of the courts-martial which came before him for final judgment. His disquisitions display the qualities of his administrative talent, and must always prove invaluable to the military reader.

The example set by Charles Napier of carrying

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out inspections with thoroughness, of minutely inspecting barracks to see that the soldier was lodged in comfort, of striving to the utmost to increase the welfare of the soldier and the sepoy, has been followed by his illustrious successors—Napier of Magdala, Sir Donald Stewart, Earl Roberts, and Sir William Lockhart.

The memoirs of Donald Stewart and Lockhart were printed in 'Blackwood's Magazine' under the title of "Two Great Soldiers."

The sketch of Lord Roberts' career was written before he left India, and printed on the day of his departure, which was generally supposed to mark the date of the close of his active military life. now been entirely recast. The account of his services in the Indian Mutiny is based on official records and contemporary literature. The story of the Afghan campaign is mainly told from his own despatches, which the author has examined more closely than is common, as he was at one time asked to edit the official history of the war. The scheme had to be relinquished, as the editing of the State Papers relating to the Mutiny was considered to be a work of a more pressing nature. The account of Lord Roberts' South African campaign is also mainly based on his own despatches, and what the Duke of Wellington said of his Indian despatches is applicable to them: "They show the same attention to details—to the pursuit of all the means, however small, that could promote success."

The earnest endeavour of the author has been to record not only the heroism of the British soldier but also the gallantry of the Sepoy. To the courage shown in brilliant attack, the patience and coolness in danger, of the British soldier we owe our victories from Plassey to Assaye. Of them it was well said, "They may be private, but they never are common soldiers"—a phrase worthy of the gallant Napiers. But it must be remembered that a handful of Englishmen could never have conquered India if we had not been assisted by the bravery and devotion of the native armies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras. It was the first battalion of the light regiment of Madras infantry which was the favourite corps of the Duke of Wellington. They were with him on every service, and the men of the regiment used to call themselves "Wellesley ka Pultan" (Wellesley's Regiment); and at Assaye, which made us masters of India, they proved themselves worthy of the proud title. A staff officer after the battle saw some Muhammadans engaged in a funeral and inquired who they were burying. "We are going to put three brothers into one grave," said one of the party. The officer began to express his regret and offer some consolation to the survivors, when he was interrupted by one of the men. "There is no occasion," he said, "for such feelings or expressions; these men" (pointing to the dead bodies) "were sepoys; they have died in the performance of their duties; the Government they have served will protect their children, who will soon

fill the ranks they have occupied." Buried in the old records and memoirs of the day are to be found many examples of the patient endurance of privation and fatigue and the splendid valour of our native troops. The noble fall of such men as Hussain Khan (p. 70) and Subahdar Ally Khan (p. 88) shows the undaunted courage of "those glorious sepoys, who have so often fought side by side with their European officers, striving with them even unto their death."

GEORGE W. FORREST.

THE KNOWLE, BRENCHLEY, KENT, October 1901.

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