

A HISTORY
OF
THE INDIAN MUTINY

REVIEWED AND ILLUSTRATED FROM ORIGINAL
DOCUMENTS

BY

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

EX-DIRECTOR OF RECORDS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

VOL. I.

SIEGE OF DELHI—DEFENCE OF THE RESIDENCY
AT LUCKNOW—THE STORY OF CAWNPORE—
HAVELOCK'S CAMPAIGN

WITH MAPS, PLANS, AND PORTRAITS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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TO
THE BELOVED MEMORY
OF
CAPTAIN GEORGE FORREST, V.C.,
ONE OF THE GALLANT NINE
WHO DEFENDED THE DELHI MAGAZINE, 11th MAY 1857 ;
AND HIS WIFE,
ANN FORREST,
WHO IN A TIME OF SPECIAL TRIAL SHOWED
HOW LOVE, GRACE, AND GENTLENESS ARE COMPATIBLE
WITH HEROIC COURAGE,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY THEIR SON.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the present book I have reprinted, with corrections and additions, the two Introductions prefixed to the three volumes octavo of "Letters, Despatches, and other State Papers preserved in the Military Department of the Government of India, 1857-58." It has been suggested and kindly urged that the Introductions, which show the bearing of the new and original materials on history, and are detailed systematic narratives of the fierce struggle which succeeded the military insurrection of 1857, should be brought within easy and convenient compass for the large number of persons who, although they have not the leisure to study official documents, take an interest in the most important fact in the history of British dominion in India. The Indian Mutiny addresses our mind through the intellect and the imagination. It is no mere memorable incident in Anglo-Indian history which conveys many grave lessons to those who labour in our Indian Empire, but it is a noble epic which speaks to every Englishman wherever he may be, and calls up past and glorious memories.

It is on the sure ground of official documents that I have mainly relied, but they have been fortified by the contemporary literature, which is both varied and abundant. A large number of private letters and diaries have been placed at my disposal, and it has been my anxious care to draw from them useful material by separating facts and just inferences from matters and opinions honestly given as testified by the senses of the writer, but in truth founded on the current statements and warped feelings of the hour. Besides the printed matter and the manuscript documents, I have had the advantage of conversation with many who witnessed the transactions.

Military operations, however, extend over so wide a field that no actor can have a personal knowledge of all the circumstances. By putting together fragments of information which I have received from several witnesses, marking where they agree and where they differ, and comparing them with the whole collection of written statements, I have endeavoured to arrive at a complete and correct conception of the combination of scenes which a battle or the storming of a fortress presents. My own conceptions have been corrected by the technical and sagacious criticisms of military experts, and the work of a civilian on the operations of war is therefore offered with less fear. In order to strengthen the text and to enable the reader to form his own judgment of the evidence, abundant citations from the original authorities have been inserted as footnotes: I have also incorporated extracts

from the despatches and letters in the text with the object of bringing the reader into touch with the actors.

The history of the siege of Delhi, a long tale of stern combats and great achievements, is mainly told by the letters and despatches of the chief actors, whose plain narrative of facts reflects the spirit which produces heroic deeds.

The story of the defence of Lucknow, one of the most dramatic incidents in the epic, is told in the contemporary narratives of the men who did the fighting and the women whose courage never faltered; and they are fertile in tragedy. I discovered that the diary of Captain George Fulton, whose cheerful bearing and noble temper inspired officers and men with his own energy and cool determination, was in Australia. In response to my appeal his sons kindly sent me a copy, and of this I have made free use. The fine and modest temper of the man to whom his comrades gave the proud title of "The Defender of Lucknow" is seen in his plain narrative of facts. Sir Joseph Fayerer has also given me leave to quote from his manuscript diary. Colonel Bonham, whose fertility of resource, consuming energy, and exalted courage, filled the garrison with admiration of the young subaltern of artillery, has not only imparted to me information of the highest value with regard to the defence, but has also placed at my disposal a clear narrative of what occurred at Chinhut, the untoward disaster which preceded the siege of

the Residency. The late General May, who was one of the gallant 39 sabres that charged 400 cavalry and two guns at Chinhut, revised shortly before his death my account of the action.

The story of Cawnpore, a tale of disaster and unutterable woe illumined by gallantry and patient, heroic courage, is told in part from the narratives of Captain Thomson and Lieutenant Delafosse, the two male survivors from the Cawnpore garrison, and from an account written for me by one of the two women who escaped the massacre at the bank of the river. Her name, for the sake of her family, cannot be disclosed. Since the publication of the Selections from the Military State Papers, I have had the privilege of a long conversation with General Mowbray Thomson, and got from him important information of a negative and positive kind. The narrative of Mr Shepherd furnishes us with trustworthy evidence of what took place before he left the intrenchment on the 24th of June, but, as he himself writes, his account of what happened at Cawnpore after that date was gathered "from different sources," and it must be received with considerable reserve. His sensational account of the massacre of the women and children does not bear the test of facts which have been carefully gleaned. The story of the woman has been minutely compared with the voluminous evidence before me, and of its substantial accuracy there is no doubt. The depositions of sixty-three witnesses, natives and

half-castes, taken under the directions of Colonel Williams, Commissioner of Police in the North-Western Provinces, have been consulted, but their evidence is full of discrepancies and must be treated with extreme caution. The confidential reports from officials, petitions from private persons, depositions of witnesses, and unofficial examinations, have been studied with care. They show that although the darkest tints predominate, the picture is not so black as it has been painted. As Colonel Williams states, "The most searching and earnest inquiries totally disprove the unfounded assertion that at first was so frequently made and so currently believed, that personal indignity and dishonour were offered to our poor suffering countrywomen." The evidence also proves that the sepoy guard placed over the prisoners refused to murder them. The foul crime was perpetrated by five ruffians of the Nana's guard at the instigation of a courtesan. It is as ungenerous as it is untrue to charge upon a nation that cruel deed.

The sketch of Sir Colin Campbell's relief of Lucknow in November 1857 is drawn from Sir Colin's own despatch and other primary sources. The journal kept in his official capacity by Captain George Allgood, C.B., who accompanied Sir Colin as Assistant Quartermaster-General with headquarters, has been of great use to me. Sir David Baird, who was one of Sir Colin's aides-de-camp, at my urgent request sent me a short narrative of what occurred when he, Lieutenant

Roberts, and Captain Hopkins planted under a shower of bullets a regimental colour on one of the turrets of the mess-house.

The narrative of Major-General Windham's operations at Cawnpore has been written with an anxious regard to state facts without unduly raking the ashes of an old controversy. The draft of the narrative was read by the late Sir John Adye, who was Windham's Brigade-Major, and pronounced by him to be accurate and impartial. I pointed out to Sir John that his semi-official defence of General Windham's strategy printed in 1858 is mainly based on the word "outside," which is not in the original manuscript of the "Memorandum by the Chief of the Staff for the guidance of Major-General Windham." Colonel Lewis Jones (88th Regiment), who captured the enemy's guns on the 26th November, has conferred upon me a favour by sending to me a brief account of what took place on that day. General Chamier, who commanded with so much distinction the Madras guns on the 28th of November, when Brigadier Carthew was forced back into the intrenchments, has, by imparting to me much valuable information, helped me to understand the true nature of that conflict. But of all the materials on which I formed my account none has been of more value to me than the original draft of Brigadier Carthew's "Detailed Report of the operations of the Forces placed under my command on the 26th, 27th, and 28th ultimo." As the report came into my private possession from a private source, and

is not to be found in the Military Records, I was precluded from treating it as an official document which ought to be printed in a selection of State Papers. General Chamier vouches for its accuracy.

The account of the march of the three columns from the eastern frontier of Oudh to Lucknow has been mainly constructed from the despatches of their respective commanders. Much useful information relating to the march of General Franks' force has been supplied to me by General M'Leod Innes, V.C., who accompanied it as Engineer Officer, and showed how great professional skill and calm judgment can be combined with valour of no ordinary kind.

A detailed account is given of the operations on the plain of Alum Bagh, by which Outram held the armed hosts of Lucknow in check until the Commander-in-Chief was in a position to undertake the capture of the city. It has been mainly based on Outram's own reports, which bear in every line the stamp of the man who impressed himself upon all the events with which he was connected and shaped them by the force of his individual character. He lives in the hearts of those who knew him, and from his comrades I have received many striking reminiscences of his courage and chivalry.

The sketch of the siege and capture of Lucknow, an operation which will always be considered a striking illustration of the art of war, is drawn from Sir Colin Campbell's despatch and Outram's memorandum of the operations carried on under his command. The

“Reports on the Engineering Operations at the Siege of Lucknow in March 1858,” by Major-General Sir R. Napier, K.C.B., Colonel Harness, C.B., and Lieutenant-Colonel Lennox, Royal Engineers, have enabled me to trace the daily progress of the siege. General Sir J. J. H. Gordon, who was present at the capture of the Kaiser Bagh, which again made us masters of Lucknow, has assisted me to reconcile many discrepancies in the contemporary narratives.

Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, V.C., K.G., who took part in the stern conflict, and whose name is in the list of the wounded, kindly described to me on the theatre of their enactment the principal operations of the siege of Delhi. To his Lordship I am further indebted for having found time amidst his multifarious and responsible duties to read these volumes in their original form and furnish many important suggestions and corrections. I have also to express my deep thanks to General Sir Henry Norman, G.C.B., who has repeated the good offices he had before rendered me in revising the State Papers for the press, and has given me by his notes an opportunity of availing myself of his complete knowledge of the subject. Some of the official papers were written by him, and in most of the scenes he played an important and gallant part. At the attack on the Shah Nujjeef he displayed the same coolness and presence of mind as he showed when he rescued three wounded men under the eye of Charles Napier in a campaign against the Afreedees.

I have enjoyed the further advantage of a number of important literary criticisms sent me by a personal friend before this book took its final shape.

Mr F. G. Stokes, besides assisting me in the correction of the whole of the proofs, has collated with extreme care the narrative text with the official documents, and the exhaustive Index which he has constructed will not only be a guide to the contents of the book, but will also enable the student of history to trace my statements to their sources in the volumes of Selections from the Military State Papers.

But although the sources of the narrative are State documents, and the book has benefited by the criticism of military officials, it has no official character or authority. For any statements or expressions of opinion I am personally and exclusively responsible. My earnest endeavour has been to state salient authentic facts in a spirit that will not revive the virulent race animosities which were aroused by bloodshed and carnage and perverted the history and criticism of the hour. There have been tongues and pens enough to narrate the excesses which have raised the Indian Mutiny to the rank of a world-wide tragedy. It is useful that these crimes should be remembered and freshly pondered, but it is equally wise to study the opposite picture. The brave and turbulent population of Oudh with a few exceptions treated the fugitives of the ruling race with a marked kindness. Not only the loyalty and the courage but also the calm heroic spirit with which the sepoys in

the Lucknow Residency endured dangers and trials are worthy of all honour. The devotion and fidelity of humble native attendants and loyal sepoys, the patient endurance and calm courage of our countrymen and countrywomen, the high energy and valour of the British soldier, afford some relief to the most terrible features of a tale of wrath and fury.

GEORGE WILLIAM FORREST.

IFFLEY TURN, OXFORD,
October 1904.

NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Illustrations for these volumes have been selected with special reference to their importance as historical documents illuminative of the text.

The portrait of John Nicholson is from a daguerreotype taken in 1851. When he was in England on furlough Lady Edwardes, the wife of his dearest and oldest friend, informed me that he had it done to please his mother, who had often asked him to give her a portrait of himself. Lady Edwardes also said that she considered it a better likeness than the portrait with dark brown beard and moustache in the East India United Service Club. The daguerreotype gives the smooth frank face of a youth, but of a youth with a massive brow, bright and confiding eyes, firm mouth, which indicate the penetrating insight, the iron will, and the imperious temper which made the lad a born leader of men.

The portrait of Henry Lawrence with cap and beard, so commonly reproduced from a photograph done at Lucknow at a period of life when sorrow and sickness had hollowed the cheeks and the toil of Empire had wasted the wiry form, is not characteristic of the man. The portrait in this book, from a daguerreotype taken at an earlier period of life, presents in a very noble form the combination of administrative energy and a soldier's clear courage with charity, high culture, and a grave and religious temper. It would adorn well the text of Clarendon's great History.

Of a very different type, but singularly interesting, is the portrait of James Outram. Many of his comrades prefer it to the well-known painting by Thomas Brighstocke. The portrait of Havelock is disappointing, but it is the best that can be got, and it grows into favour upon better acquaintance. The forehead, wide and high, explains that Havelock was not only a successful commander, but also a scholar and a man of letters. The portrait of Sir John Inglis is a good representation of a typical regimental officer. A brave soldier and a strict disciplinarian, he was generally and justly beloved on account of his unassuming demeanour and warmth of heart. Lady Inglis informed me it was a good likeness of her husband. The portrait of Neill does not represent the popular conception of the man, but the firm posture and the face express a virile and masterful will, and the square brow indicates capacity equal to the greatest emergency. The portrait of Sir Colin Campbell in his simple Mutiny dress is well known. The artist has given us the wiry

frame, the firm mouth, the shrewd honest face, of "the war-bred Sir Colin," as Charles Napier called him.

The drawings made on the spot, from which a large number of the Illustrations have been reproduced, preserve and transmit places of inextricable sorrow and heroic valour which Englishmen would not willingly let die. The sketch of the Well at Cawnpore is singularly impressive, and conveys its lesson. The view of the Bibigarh, where the women and children were confined, is important, because it shows that some of the brutal pictures of the scene of slaughter published at the time represent the result of a base imagination. The fatal well is now covered with a Gothic memorial, the accursed house of captivity and death has been levelled to the ground, and all the part around is a fair garden. The sketch of the Residency Church at Lucknow is a sad and sublime record of the siege: the Gothic edifice battered by shot and shell; the oppressively desolate churchyard raked with grave-heap after grave-heap. On one can be traced the letters "Sir H. L." They mark the resting-place of Henry Lawrence. When life was fast ebbing away he expressed a wish to be buried in the same grave as the British soldier. A plain tomb has now been erected over his soldier's grave. Where the little church stood is a trim and green lawn: the sacred enclosure is as neat and peaceful as a quiet country churchyard in England; the multitude of graves are bright with flowers, and the paths are radiant with roses.

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GLOSSARY.

THE words given below have not been explained in footnotes :—

Havildar.—A sepoy non-commissioned officer corresponding to a sergeant.

Jemadar.—The title of the second rank of native officer in a company of sepoy.

Khalási.—A Mahomedan labourer of a superior order, employed chiefly about ships or in the army.

Khareta (Ar., a bag).—The ornamental bag used as an envelope for a letter from or to a person of high rank. Hence the letter itself.

Subadar.—The chief native officer of a company of sepoy.

Pandy.—The surname Pāndē (Skt., Panditā) was a very common one among the high-caste sepoy of the Bengal army, being the title of a subdivisional branch of the Brahmins of the Upper Provinces, which furnished many men to the ranks.

THE SPELLING OF WORDS AND NAMES.

The orthography of the writers of the time has been followed as far as possible. Not about Lakhnáo and Kánhpúr, but Lucknow and Cawnpore, there is a sacred halo. It is true "Swami House" is correct and orthodox, but "Sammy House" was what the soldiers who so stoutly defended the temple called it, and to alter it would be an act of repulsive pedantry. The corruption of the name is characteristic of the British soldier, and about "Sammy House" dwells the memory of many a hard-fought and many a signal deed of valour.

In revising this book for the press instances have occurred in which the spelling of the names of soldiers and officers in the State Papers, and in the literature of the period, did not coincide with the orthography of the Army List. This no doubt rose from the difficulties of the situation. It has been a matter of anxious care to adjust these differences, but the following have been discovered too late for alteration in the text.

CORRIGENDA—VOL. I.

P. 426, l. 7, <i>For</i> Empland	<i>read</i> Kempland.
P. 453, l. 11, " Masters	" Master.
P. 458, l. 22, " 13th Native Cavalry	" 13th Irregular Native Cavalry.
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