

## CHAPTER VIII

### WINSTON THE OUTSPOKEN

**T**HE first attempt to raise a second battalion to the 3rd Gurkhas at Almora having resulted in a wash-out, as I have explained, we eventually got one of pure Gurkhas, and I was the first officer to be appointed to it and as adjutant.

In those days it was the custom when raising a new battalion (and Lord Roberts raised a great many) to do so *ab initio*, with just a small nucleus from the sister battalion or one of a similar composition. Lord Kitchener, in his time, conceived the much better idea of dividing the old battalion into two halves and completing each to strength. The advantage of this was that the new unit was ready for the field much sooner, and although the old one was incapacitated for a time, yet both in a great emergency could be utilised, on account of the large number of old soldiers each contained.

I was most fortunate in having as my C.O., Major H. D. Hutchinson. He was commonly called "The Teacher" and known to the whole army, not only for his books, especially *Sketching Made Easy*, but also for his marvellous capacity for imparting knowledge to others. For years he had been a garrison instructor, and was the one selected to conduct the celebrated course held in Simla itself during Lord Lansdowne's viceroyalty. The reason for this was that, to qualify for promotion, Bill Beresford, the Governor-General's military secretary, had to pass the usual obligatory examination. But it was considered impossible for so important a person to be entirely absent from his official duties for three or four months! Hence the Simla class.

No one could wish for a better C.O. than I had in Major

H. D. Hutchinson, now Lieutenant-General and Companion of the Star of India. I shall always look upon it as a special dispensation of Providence to have had the enormous advantage of serving for four very interesting years under so brilliant a mentor. I notice the present Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Field-Marshal Sir H. Wilson) gave a touching tribute to General Hutchinson at the last prize-giving of the Bath School for Officers' daughters. After a feeling reference to his present affliction of semi-blindness, the field-marshal alluded to the immense amount he had himself learnt when serving under him at the War Office, just after the South African War.

This struck a very sympathetic chord in my heart, for the little knowledge I possess that I did not learn from him or from the late Major-General William Hill or my last divisional commander is not worth having. He was the first man to really make me work, and the first to encourage me to use my pen. I had never done either before. But with him I was always on my mettle, and I firmly believe that those four years were the turning point in my life, by changing me from a slackster into one possessed of some kind of high endeavour.

Lansdowne is not a bad little hill station, the highest part being just 6,000 feet above sea-level and the air very fine. The hills are too much on the big side for training, so it is most difficult to find ground to work over near cantonments. There is capital fishing within a day's march, good big-game shooting (tiger, etc.) close to, if you make proper arrangements, some pheasants and plenty of chakor (red-legged partridge) within twenty miles; also snipe and duck shooting in the plains below.

• Here, in 1892, my wife and I had the novel experience of building a house, and very fascinating it was. Four good rooms with dressing and bath to each of the two bedrooms, wooden ceilings, papered walls, English doors and windows. This, with a cookhouse, servants' quarters and two stalls, cost us just Rs. 6,000, or say £450. It could not be done for three times that amount now.

At the end of my tenure as adjutant I was offered the post of inspector of musketry at Meerut. This was in February, but the telegram said the appointment would

not be vacant until May. Accepting this offer, I went off into the jungle to shoot.

Three days later a runner came into my camp at midnight with an "immediate" letter from the adjutant to say the battalion had been mobilised and was very shortly railing to Nowshera to join the Chitral Expedition. This was on a Sunday, and between Monday morning and Friday night I had cancelled my acceptance of the staff appointment, sold my house for seven thousand rupees, packed my things, started my wife and boy for England, and joined the battalion entraining for the front, at the nearest railway station. Quick and never-ceasing work, all day and most of the night, but so great was my joy at the chance of active service at last, after so many bitter disappointments during twelve long years, that no fatigue whatever was felt, and all the preparations for departure were a labour of love.

Imagine then my pain, grief and mortification when shortly after arrival at Hoti Mardan, near the frontier, a reply came to my letter about the staff appointment, addressed to the C.O. as follows:

"Chief sympathises with application, but cannot accept any resignation. Stop. Captain Woodyatt must join at Meerut immediately as appointment unexpectedly become vacant now."

It was well known that the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George White, held very strong views about staff officers relinquishing their appointments simply to rejoin their regiments ordered on active service. Undoubtedly this was a sound principle, but I held that mine was an entirely different case, for no advantage whatever had accrued to me from the appointment, which, moreover, I had declined three months before it was vacant. Colonel Hutchinson was kindness itself, sending many official and private telegrams, begging that I might be allowed to remain, even if only for two or three months. None, however, were of any avail, the last reply being:

"If Captain Woodyatt does not join his appointment at Meerut immediately he will incur the severe displeasure of the C.-in-C."

Just another case of slavish adoption of a rule combined with a large slice of injustice! Bringing me this wire himself the C.O. said: "I'm dreadfully sorry, but you'll

have to go, my boy. You can't fight the Chief!" The very next day, as the battalion marched on to Dargai and over the frontier, I was returning disconsolate in a tonga to Nowshera railway station and, as we sped along, I rather think it was a case of bitter tears.

Hoti Mardan is the head-quarters of the famous "Guides," the infantry portion of which corps I was to have the honour of including in my war brigade twenty years later. Our brigadier was the late General Channer, V.C., with Horace Smith-Dorrien as his staff officer. The general was most particular about being saluted at all times, and came to the C.O.'s tent very angry one day to say one of our stick sentries on the boundary of the camp had failed to do so. I was sent for, as it was my wing, and told to get hold of the man and bring him up at once. Turning to go I noticed the G.O.C. remained on, and was wearing a black mourning band on his left arm.

The sentry turned out to be a nice little Gurkha I knew well, a good football player, but very stolid and rather thick-headed. The colonel, being vexed, was somewhat rough with him. After some questions, without any intelligent answer, the general chipped in, saying, in the vernacular: "If you don't know your own general you ought to, and who indeed did you suppose I was?" Looking hard at his arm band the boy replied, "Bomb police!" That is to say, one of the military provost establishment called that by the men, and wearing a broad badge on the arm, though it is usually red.

Another curious episode at Mardan was the behaviour of a senior officer sent to us for Colonel Hutchinson to report on, after a fixed period, as his conduct had been very peculiar in his last unit. We had one tree in camp, on the southern edge, and, it being very hot, this officer, building an arbour in the branches, insisted on living, sleeping and feeding there. The colonel told the adjutant to warn this arboreous person that he must live like the other officers, but no notice whatever was taken.

On the evening of the third day, Colonel Hutchinson came and asked me to use my influence, pointing out that, although the major's action could hardly be called insubordinate or against rule, it was highly ridiculous, nor had he any business to be living out of the mess. I could see

the colonel was much averse to drastic action, but was very hipped at being made a fool of.

I explained to him that everything possible had already been done, but arguments were quite useless; that the tree was full of tinned tongues, *pâté de foie gras*, bottled beer and all sorts of luxuries, obtained by parcel post; and that the incumbent absolutely refused to come down, except to go to parades, etc.

Waxing wroth, the C.O. said, "Come along, we'll soon settle the matter," and off we went to the foot of the tree.

What followed was so funny that I was in real pain trying to suppress the laughter I couldn't very well indulge in. The colonel began in rather cajoling accents, looking up into the branches from the ground, and begging our friend to stop that kind of thing and come down. Then he tried to point out what a ridiculous ass the man was making of himself; next he talked about discipline, and finally, getting very angry, declared his report would be exceedingly bad, leading to a very serious situation.

Peering down from his leafy arbour, this funny old bird took it all with the greatest good-humour, saying his head would not stand the heat below, that he was paying for his messing as usual, and wouldn't the colonel and I come up and dine with him! As an inducement he told us he had just received, by post, fresh butter from Aligarh, potatoes from Kumaon, a ham from Green & Reade, Bombay, and pastry from Peliti at Simla—all of which was quite true. Absolutely defeated, the C.O. stumped off, white with rage, and a few hours later came the order for the battalion to cross the frontier in two days' time. A year or two later this poor tree-dwelling major had to be confined as a dangerous lunatic.

My new appointment brought me into close touch with Colonel W. Hill,<sup>1</sup> the A.A.G. musketry army headquarters. There are probably more anecdotes about "old Hill," as he was affectionately called, than any other soldier in India. Possessing great humour, much facility of expression, a somewhat pugnacious nature, and a nimble and virile pen, his noting on files at A.H.Q., and his quaint and humorous

<sup>1</sup> The late Major-General W. Hill, C.B., who died in 1903 while G.O.C. Mhow Division.

letters and sayings, were a perfect joy to the recipients. At the same time his sound judgment, irregular and rugged features, twinkling grey eyes and charming manner—when he liked—made him very popular and his company much sought after.

It was the custom for the Commander-in-Chief to fit the Meerut Rifle Meeting (the Bisley of India) into his cold-weather tour, and, after making an address, give away the prizes. I was present at the visits of Lord Roberts, Sir G. White, Sir W. Lockhart, Lord Kitchener, etc. When Lord Kitchener came he was most fussy about where he was to stand to speak, and made me pile huge palms round his lectern; so much so that he was almost hidden away. He also ordered me to produce a shorthand writer who was to be close to him, but quite invisible. I asked FitzGerald what his use was, as I knew there were lots of copies of the Chief's words. FitzGerald said heaven only knew what was often in Kitchener's mind, but it didn't do to argue about it! So I got one with much difficulty, an army schoolmaster, but the poor devil had to sit on a brick between two large palms, and sit there for the dickens of a long time.

Apropos Colonel Hill, when he was commanding the 1st battalion 2nd Gurkhas at Dehra Dun, many amusing anecdotes can be told. His divisional commander was Sir George Greaves and the two had many a tussle, for although they much respected each other at heart, their natures were rather antagonistic.

One year Sir George gave a big money prize for a collective musketry competition open to all units in the division, both British and Indian, and which the general was very anxious a certain British unit should win. Hill gave out openly that he intended to win it with his Gurkhas from Dehra Dun, and this much annoyed the divisional commander. The competition took place at Meerut and the Gurkhas won, to Sir George's intense disgust. To prevent the Gurkhas perpetuating their victory in the shape of a mess trophy, he personally directed that the money was to be given to the members of the team, and on no account expended on the purchase of a memento of the occasion.

At the next inspection dinner at Dehra Dun, Colonel Hill led in the general, and straight in front of the latter, on the

table, was a handsome silver cigarette box. Sir George could see there was some engraving on top, but all he could read without taking out his glasses was the title of the match, the date and his own name. Fidgeting a good deal all through dinner and drinking much more wine than he needed, the general waited impatiently for the cloth to be removed. Then turning to his left he said :

"Look here, Hill, I told you distinctly that the prize for my musketry competition was a money one, to be given to the team, and now I see this box ? "

"Quite all right," said Hill, "the money was paid to the men in the acquittance roll for the month of March, and I got this box out of regimental funds as a memento of the occasion, for the men were very pleased at beating all the British teams. If you look at the inscription you will see it only says it is a regimental memento of a competition for a money prize given by you, and won by the men of the 2nd Gurkhas ! " There was no more to be said.

On another occasion, trouble having occurred in a certain unit's canteen accounts, the Meerut staff, by the general's orders, issued some instructions for guidance, "to be strictly adhered to and a report submitted before such and such a date." Now certain Indian units, but very few, maintain a canteen, and it was known the 2nd Gurkhas had one, in order to sell rum and beer to the men. The fund, however, was entirely a private one and in no way official. Failing to get any reply from Dehra Dun, a somewhat rude reminder was issued by the staff, in reply to which Colonel Hill wrote at the bottom in red ink :

"The Divisional Commander has no more to do with my canteen than the Czar of Russia."

For this he got a rap over the knuckles.

The Meerut Divisional headquarters always moved to Mussoorie for the summer, which is a hill station in the United Provinces, consisting of a main ridge—with various offshoots—some 6,500 feet above sea-level. It runs roughly east and west and overlooks Dehra Dun on its southern side. At the eastern end is the small military cantonment of Landour, some 7,200 feet high. In the centre, two miles lower down, is the main station, and at the western end, up to two miles or so from the centre, are hotels, residential

houses, etc., on wooded slopes and spurs. Dehra Dun by road is fourteen miles from Mussoorie, and about half-way is the hamlet of Rajpore, the changing station from motors, tongas, etc., to hill pony or dandy.

At the end of one season, Sir George Greaves decided to give everyone a treat by having a sham fight in which he would defend Mussoorie with the volunteers, cadets of three or four schools, and the few British details at Landour, against a force of mountain artillery and Gurkhas from Dehra Dun under the command of Colonel Hill. At the conclusion there would be a big luncheon given by Sir George.

As the approaches from the south were much the shortest and fairly easy, though wooded, and those towards Landour led up steep precipices, the general considered this flank secure and, practically ignoring it, disposed his forces on or about the centre of the main ridge. On the appointed day, Colonel Hill, moving to Rajpore the evening before, left again long before dawn, with half his strength, to tackle the eastern part of the Landour end. This had always been considered absolutely impracticable, but Hill had ascertained, by secret reconnaissance, that it was dangerously possible.

Meanwhile, at the decent hour of 8 a.m., the remainder of his force feinted in front and slowly pushed in Sir George's advanced posts. There was no real attempt, however, to force an attack on the main ridge, and as the luncheon hour drew nigh the general got more and more contemptuous of Hill's futile efforts and slow movements, whilst he drew in closer and closer his extended flanks. At last an adjournment was made for lunch, and in the middle of it a flag of truce was received from Hill with the message:

"Arrived Landour 1 p.m. with one section mountain artillery and 400 Gurkhas. Garrison overpowered and guns now in action entirely dominating your defensive position."

• In a towering rage the general dictated the following reply:

"Have been strengthened by two battalions of British infantry from Chakrata [thirty miles off, and therefore quite impossible]. Shall attack you on a wide front. What do you intend to do?"



To which the answer came in about an hour :

“Have been reinforced by the angel Gabriel and a company of cherubims and intend to remain where I am !”

And he was left alone, to rest there for the night after his arduous feat, which very few would have dared to attempt. None of the British officers, even the strongest and boldest, had been able to climb up without assistance from the men. As for the guns, it is a marvel how they were got there, even with the amount of rope provided.

As A.A.G. musketry, Colonel Hill had a considerable amount of touring. The regulations permitted him to take one horse always, or two, “if the second one was absolutely necessary.” Having continuous trouble over his travelling bills with pettifogging baboos of the Military Accounts department, he was much exasperated when his claim for two horses to Rawalpindi was cut down half. Asking for a refund as two horses had actually been taken there, he was told it was contrary to the regulations and could not be admitted. Pointing out, in a still further letter, the words in the book as put in inverted commas above, the pay people replied that it was essential for the adjutant-general to certify that two horses were *absolutely necessary*. This was too much for old Hill, and getting out his red ink he wrote across this :

“Am I really to understand that the officers of the Pay Department can possibly imagine I take these two horses about for the benefit of their health ?” !

The money was refunded at once, but we all got a confidential circular shortly afterwards, saying it had come to the notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief that officers were in the habit of writing most improper remarks in military accounts departmental correspondence, which must cease immediately, etc., etc.

During one of his tours Colonel Hill attended a concentration held in my musketry circle, the occasion being an attack by an infantry brigade, with ball, on an enemy in position, represented by targets. In those days the order was that, at any pause in an attack, infantry would “kneel” ! The commander having omitted to make any personal reconnaissance, the attack failed, but the supports and reserves had been brought close up, and on a huge frontage was a long extended line, with other lines behind, but no strength

anywhere. Failing to see any objective the first line halted, and then the lines in rear did the same. Colonel Hill was standing near me with a very red face, on which was a most humorous look accentuated by the fact that, to ease his eyes, he had turned his old-fashioned helmet back to front. Then he spoke :

“ Wherever I look I see lines upon lines of men in a devotional attitude. It seems to me about time to offer up prayers for those at sea ! ” The infantry colonel commanding the brigade for the day, certainly was very much at sea.

† Like so many good soldiers, Colonel Hill had a horror of red tape and often told me how he found himself simply tied up in it at Simla. “ I’m a pretty good fighter,” he would say, “ but neither abuse, sarcasm, satire, sneers, nor even concrete facts have a dog’s chance when the methods of babooism rule the roost.” After fighting for a long period to get the Volunteers in India better armed and equipped and their Martini-Henry rifles exchanged for the ‘303, he was given to understand that the matter was settled. Then a sudden hitch called an indefinite postponement. Unable to restrain his indignation, he put up a long note to the Ordnance department, from which I quote the following amusing passages :

“ . . .—As regards the Volunteers, the question of their being re-armed can be dropped for at least eight or nine years.

“ I am very, very greatly relieved at this, for, having done a good deal of writing and talking on the subject, I have been much exercised in my mind about the Volunteer question, and it has been a terrible anxiety and responsibility to me.

“ It was soon borne in upon me that I had made a huge blunder. I was interfering in a matter that in no way concerned the technicalities of musketry instruction. I felt as a man would feel who had picked up a bundle in the street and found it contained a baby, and no one would believe that he was altogether innocent, and refused to relieve him of the responsibility.

“ This infernal foundling has been as a millstone round my neck, and, as a lot of Volunteers have managed to persuade themselves that the responsibility for the maintenance and education of this cuckoo in my nest, is

rightly placed on me, I have had frequently to deny my responsibility in unmeasured terms, when heckled on the subject.

“ My long-suffering patience and sincere penitence for my indiscretion in mixing myself up in matters that do not concern me, have at last been rewarded, and I go forth a free man, free of the shame, pain and humiliation (as Mr. Thorburn<sup>1</sup> would say) connected with the responsibility for this unclaimed and abandoned brat—the Indian Volunteer.

“ If I ever hear of the subject again, it will perhaps be when I am killing time, in the smoking-room of a Pall Mall club, by reading some weekly Indian newspaper, in which mention is made of the proposal to re-arm the Volunteers in India as being ‘ under consideration.’

“ I shall be able to look back on the time when I destroyed many quires of good foolscap on the subject and be able joyfully to exclaim, ‘ Vive la bagatelle ! ’ ”

When the late General Hill was inspector-general of Volunteers in India, he was suddenly taken extremely ill at Meerut in February, 1903. Partially recovering, he was promoted to the command of the Mhow Division, but in September went to England for medical advice. An operation revealed a malignant growth too far gone for the surgeon's knife. The verdict was six months in agony. Fortunately a clot of blood intervened, and he died the same evening. This was a truly cruel fate, for he had then gained the entire confidence of Lord Kitchener, who consulted him on the weightiest matters, and especially on the delicate question of the renumbering of the Indian Army. Had he lived and kept his health, there was nothing but age to stop him.

My first divisional commander at Meerut was General Sanford, referred to before as the young field engineer at the time of the 10th Hussar catastrophe crossing the Kabul River.

General Sanford was succeeded by that well-known soldier and great *shikāri*, Sir Bindon Blood, later to pass on to the command of the Northern Army at Rawalpindi. Handsome, debonair, imperturbable, always well mounted

<sup>1</sup> A Punjab civilian who publicly censured the Viceroy (Lord Elgin) in 1898 for his pusillanimous policy on the N.W. Frontier, and used the above words in his speech.

and ever the picture of health, Bindon was a popular commander, and Lady Bindon and he were a great social success.

It was at their house in Meerut I first met the Misses Lieter (now Mrs. Colin Campbell and Lady Suffolk), on a visit to India at the invitation of their sister, Lady Curzon. Their enjoyment of life, keenness to see and do everything, and their quaint American sayings, fairly astonished the place. Nothing was too trivial for their notice and nothing too small for their curiosity.

Daisy was very good-looking and very vivacious. One night at the Bloods the late Maharajah of Patiala was teaching her after dinner how to balance a rupee on her elbow, and catch it by a downward flick of the arm, at which she was shaping very badly. At last Patiala almost lost patience, for he had been doing a lot of groping about on the floor for her fallen rupees. Again placing the coin on his elbow, he said: "It's dreadfully easy; all you have to do is this (catching it deftly)-and say 'Lawks a daisy'!" Which was rather smart.

Another visitor to the Bloods was Winston Churchill, then a subaltern in the 4th Hussars, and chiefly remarkable for his extreme precociousness and a never-ending tendency to make absurd assertions on purpose to create discussion. This didn't make him too popular, but at the same time everyone recognised his brain power and general ability. It was common knowledge that, although only a junior subaltern, he practically "ran" the 4th Hussars. He used to come out on field days with Sir Bindon, freely criticising all movements, and the fact that he was very often right, and that the general frequently followed his advice and suggestions, did not make his intrusion any more welcome!

During the polo week in Meerut, Sir Baker Russell, the general of the command, gave a large dinner party. One of Sir Baker's idiosyncrasies was to march straight into the dining-room with the senior lady, the moment the clock struck eight. He would wait for no one. If a man was late, Baker, who had an enormous voice, would shout at him from where he sat, and whatever his rank, somewhat as follows: "There you are, Jones, there you are, left hand of Lady Russell; if the ladies can be in time I don't know why you can't."

The poor devil would then slink to his seat. At Naini Tal one night, Lomax, commanding the Cameronians, was a bit late, and above is exactly what happened. But in his case it was much worse because, having ridden, he had tucked his coat-tails into his trousers' pockets, and in his haste to get into the dining-room had forgotten to take them out! So he walked round the long table looking rather ridiculous, though quite unaware of it.

On this particular evening Winston was late, and though Sir Baker, at eight o'clock, walked into the dining-room as usual, he went half round the table to greet young Churchill when he came in, a thing I had never seen him do before. When the ladies had gone I sat next to Baker, and "Boy" Maclaren of the 13th Hussars, his A.D.C., came and sat on the other side of me. Presently we heard a hubbub at the bottom of the table. It appears Reggie Hoare, of the 4th Hussars, had been out pigsticking for the first time that day and, having got into a pig, was describing his glorious sensation as the spear went home after so hard a gallop. "Yes," said Winston, in a loud voice, "that's a weak spot about fox hunting; I've always said the field should carry spears to jab into the fox at the finish." At this, of course, there were shouts of satirical laughter and, Baker asking the reason, Winston told him what he had said. "What about the hounds, my boy, what about the hounds?" remarked Sir Baker.

Shortly afterwards there was another uproar, with angry voices, and "Boy" Maclaren, nudging me, said: "That's young Churchill raising another discussion." Now all the men at the table except myself belonged to British cavalry, and Churchill had been getting their backs up by saying that no commander would think of taking British cavalry on service if he could get Indian instead! Appealing to Sir Baker, he asked what he'd prefer himself: "Oh well," said the general, rather flustered, "it all depends on the transport. If I had plenty I would always take British Cavalry, but otherwise Indian, because they require so little," which seemed a very good answer.

About this time Churchill gave out that he was leaving the service and going in for politics, but was very reserved as regards his views. Sir Bindon was reported to have begged him to make up his mind, and then stick to his

party through thick and thin, so as to gain and retain the confidence of the British public. This advice Winston received in stony silence. Sir Bindon, not to be beaten, went on to dilate on the respective careers of Gladstone and Beaconsfield and the esteem in which they were both held by the British public. He instanced the fact that the former, though sometimes lacking in judgment, was considered straight and trusted accordingly; whereas a feeling that Beaconsfield's policy was apt to be Machiavellian militated against this same feeling of confidence.

The following story gives a good insight into the impulsive character, pluck and good-nature of Mr. Churchill, as a boy. It was at the time when ragging was much in vogue, and subalterns' courts-martial of frequent occurrence. The 4th Hussars at Mhow had occasion to hold several, and unjustly put on the mat a young officer who had lately joined for the purpose of going to the Indian Army. Having been asked what his allowance was, and then how he expected to live on that sum in the 4th, he replied that he had no intention of doing so; but, having been offered cavalry by the War Office, he had taken it to gain his commission early, and as soon as possible was transferring to an Indian corps.

Being bullied by Churchill and told that the 4th were not accustomed to be turned into a *dāk bungalow*,<sup>1</sup> this officer waxed wrath, telling him that, as he seemed the most aggressive spirit present, perhaps he would like to come outside, and see which was the better man. Churchill consented at once and a scrap took place. Now the young prisoner under trial happened to have been the public schools middle-weight champion the year before, and he soon knocked spots out of his opponent. In spite of this, he maintains that Churchill bore him no ill-will whatever, but during the remainder of his time in the 4th was particularly nice to him.

The fact of having the lieutenant-general sitting on his head in Meerut, because he had no proper cold weather head-quarters, was extremely obnoxious to Sir Bindon Blood, and he took no trouble to hide it. I had much touring to do and, one day, while some distance away, I received an urgent wire from Sir Baker's chief staff officer, to return immediately. Wondering what it meant, I reported

<sup>1</sup> Staging house.

myself at once to Colonel Henry on arrival, who explained the situation as follows :

"There's to be a big divisional field firing to-morrow, which is, of course, directly under the divisional commander's (Sir Bindon Blood) orders. Baker intends to be present, and as there is some friction between the two, it is quite likely Baker will interfere, and there will be a row. This would be a great pity, for, between ourselves, Bindon is as big a man as Baker. I've therefore sent for you to go with the latter and keep him quiet. Keep him amused and moving about and, whatever you do, keep him away from Bindon. I'm chief umpire, and I've got the rest of the staff disposed of on purpose, so you'll be all alone."

All went well at first and I got Baker ahead with the cavalry, but when the infantry came into action, he began looking round at them and got fidgety. I tried to persuade him to come over to the guns to see how they were supporting the infantry attack. We cantered that way, when some infantry volleys from an unexpected quarter attracted his attention and, turning off, he galloped in that direction.

Like the old war horse he was, the sound of heavy firing was too much for him, and, pushing his mount right into the firing line, he took charge of battalions, companies, and even sections! I still hoped it might be all right, as there was no sign of Bindon, but when the situation became critical and the reserves were much too far behind, Baker, to my horror, bawled to his trumpeter to sound the "Cease fire," followed by the "Officers' call."

This was, of course, a great breach of etiquette, and the fat was in the fire. Bindon came up with the rest, looking extremely annoyed, and a wordy war commenced by Baker asking who was the officer commanding the reserves.

"I consider," he said, "that he entirely failed to grasp the situation and kept his troops much too far behind. For that reason I sounded the 'Cease fire.'"

Bindon told him he begged to differ; that the officer had acted quite judiciously under his orders, and had the attack not been stopped prematurely it would have been quite all right.

So it went on, until Baker, leaning over his holsters, said, with a very red face: "Well, well, Sir Bindon, all I

can say is that this, this, this field day would never have passed the Duke of Cambridge at Aldershot."

Bindon's only answer was a loud guffaw! I had a very poor ride of seven miles home with Sir Baker, my dejection enhanced by the thought that I had completely failed in my somewhat impossible task!

Sir Baker and Lady Russell, with their niece, Miss Long, dispensed lavish hospitality at Naini Tal, where they were greatly liked. At "Hawksdale" everyone was assured of a warm welcome, and each felt that the hosts were devoting themselves entirely to the care, comfort and amusement of their guests.

Dining one night in the R.A. mess at Meerut, I had pointed out to me two very handsome glass jugs used for champagne. They were wonderfully cut, with beautiful guns and gun carriages. They were the very last of the glass belonging to the old Bengal Artillery, priceless and irreplaceable. I duly admired the first one that appeared, and we then discussed duck shooting, the pace the birds went, etc.

By this time the wine had come round again. After moving on a heavy marsala decanter to my next-door neighbour, I passed one of the wonderful glass jugs after it. At the same time I was answering a query by suggesting that someone was omitting to *swing* sufficiently at the duck. This gave my hand an unconscious whirl, and bang went the jug into the marsala decanter and broke to bits. The man on my left had gone to sleep, and had failed to pass on the marsala! Never have I felt so miserable, and I spent the rest of the evening in gloomy silence.

A few weeks afterwards I was dining in the R.A. mess again. When the wine came round there was the one solitary jug, which I dare hardly look at. To my confusion, my host began expatiating on its beauty, adding: "We had two until quite lately, when some swine broke one." I then had to admit I was that swine!

Many years afterwards I dined in the same mess on a Sunday evening with L. A. Smith, a horse gunner, the only officer in Meerut who had been there in the old days. We dined at round tables, and after dinner Smith asked me if I remembered breaking the jug. Begging him not to talk about it as it was so painful, he told me, to my



joy, that it had been nicely mended, and sent for it. I took it in my hands with the utmost care, and noted how beautifully the work had been done. Then I handed it back to the mess sergeant; but a captain at the next table, wondering why the jug had been produced, called for it. He had not heard our conversation, but turning the jug over and over, and noting the tiny black marks, he looked towards Smith and said: "What swine broke it?" I thought Smith would never stop laughing, and I felt that penance for my untimely mishap was paid in full.

In the early part of the South African War, we were at Mussoorie. As news travelled slowly to outlying stations like Chakrata (thirty miles away by a hill road, and occupied by one British infantry battalion and British details), we used to send on daily, by helio, any interesting information received. The officer in charge of signals, named Mackenzie, was a lively young man with a marked predilection for practical joking. One day, having transmitted some perfectly authentic intelligence, he added on his own: "Sir George White and staff were captured by the Boers yesterday when engaged on reconnaissance duty, and having luncheon outside the defences of Ladysmith."

As it happened, Sir Bindon Blood was marching over to inspect Chakrata, and due there the following day. The O.C., on getting this important piece of news, immediately rode out ten miles to Sir Bindon's resting-place for that night to tell him about it. The General expressed no astonishment, saying it was just the sort of thing that might have happened. During his stay at Chakrata Sir Bindon could talk of little else, adding, that it also meant he was bound now to be sent out there himself. Cutting his tour down considerably, he hurriedly returned to Mussoorie, only to find the whole thing was a hoax! All the same, he was sent out to South Africa shortly afterwards.

One would have expected Mackenzie to get badly hotted, but all the general directed was that he must be had up and wiggled officially by his C.O., and that in future no messages whatever were to be sent by signal until signed by the O.C. Station personally.

Gallant Sir George White, what a brave heart he had. It was bad enough to be shut up in Ladysmith without suffering the indignity of being a prisoner in the hands of the Boers. All soldiers loved him for the prompt way in

which he made himself entirely responsible for Carleton's disaster in South Africa at Nicholson Nek in 1899, although he had nothing at all to do with it. So different from many more recent happenings, when the cry has too often been, "Where's the scapegoat?" One instinctively knows what would have been Sir George White's action in the Dyer Case.