

CHAPTER IX

KITCHENER AND CURZON

WHEN I was at Peshawar in 1884, on first arrival in India, one of the Cheshires, at the club, pointed out to me a captain named Faithful, who had not been home for fifteen years. I remember still, my feeling of astonishment that anyone could possibly stay out so long, and walked round him to get a better view of so interesting a phenomenon. He looked very much the same as the others and extraordinarily fit, but to a new-comer, just out, it did appear weird that he could, in any circumstances, willingly consent to so long a separation from relations and friends in England. Yet, what with desirable appointments, and one thing and another, here I was in very much the same plight; for it was nearly twelve and a half years before I put foot on English soil after my first departure in December, 1883.

Naturally I thought that everything would be very strange, that my friends would have all forgotten me, that my people would have acquired other and closer interests—in fact, that I was bound to feel completely out of it. Exactly the opposite was the case. After a few hours in England I felt as if I had never left it; my people were delighted to welcome me, and old friendships seemed only strengthened by the long absence. My boy friends had come into their properties, or otherwise settled down. Many of them had married. The girl friends had mostly taken to themselves husbands, so that the circle of friendship was soon to be largely increased.

One of the first functions we attended was an "At Home," in London, given by my old friend, Mabel Cornwallis, whom I had known from her cradle. The occasion marked the presentation by her at Court of her sister, Isobel Wood-

house. It was a very warm, sultry afternoon in June, but a frock-coat was absolutely essential. Entering a crowded and very long drawing-room, I felt extremely hot in this kit. Much movement and a babel of voices prevented our names being heard, and blocked every avenue of approach to our hostess. Fortunately, being very tall herself, she spotted me, and calling out, "There's dear old Nigel, I always said I should kiss him," ran towards me and did so.

Now, being unexpectedly kissed by a tall and beautiful woman in a drawing-room filled with people, half of whom appeared strangers, was a novelty I had never experienced in India, and was too much for me. Losing my head, I felt so rattled that I immediately kissed her sister, and any other lady I was introduced to, if there seemed the slightest tendency on her part to treat me as an old friend. It was quite delightful, but very fatiguing; so much so that, at the first opportunity, I slipped away to try and get cool in the open air. I had an engagement with my tailor and, being in Knightsbridge, got on top of the first 'bus I saw, to take me to Piccadilly. My head was in such a whirl that I took no notice of the direction I was going, and was only brought down to earth when the red-faced old coachman, turning from his box-seat towards me, said: "We don't go no furdur." I was in Hammersmith and not Piccadilly!

Looking back on these delightful, careless days, as we lived and moved in our atmosphere of happiness, how little did we know what was to come. Small troubles and disappointments of course occurred, but catastrophes were rare and tragedies uncommon.

Take the chief actors in this little incident alone. Mrs. Cornwallis lost her eldest son in the 17th Lancers this summer. Ruthlessly murdered in Ireland after going through the whole war unscathed, and gaining the Military Cross and *Croix de Guerre* for continual gallantry with his machine guns.

Mrs. Woodhouse was visited with even greater affliction, losing first her second, and then her oldest son in aerial combat in France. An intrepid and accomplished airman, the last-named gained both the Distinguished Flying and Military Crosses for repeated acts of bravery and resource.

We ourselves mourn for our only boy, Nigel, killed whilst leading his men in the attack on Fort Dujela in Mesopotamia, 8th March, 1916. We like to think he died just ahead of his Gurkhas, as he would wish to die. He had "one crowded hour of glorious life," and who would deny him that? It is not those that go like this for whom we feel sorrow, but for those who are left behind. Truly "a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

In all such affliction we have the great solace of old friendship. It is well not to forget this. One of my oldest friends, who has had her deep sorrow too, in the loss of her only son in the war, gave me the following lines, *years ago*, and I have always treasured them :

" There are no friends like the old friends,
 Live as long as you may ;
 The new friends fail and change you,
 But the old are the old alway ;
 And oh ! when around life's pathway
 The shades of the evening grow,
 God spare me but one of the old friends
 To grasp my hand as I go."

Shortly after return to India from my first leave home, I was promoted to the command head-quarters and stationed at Naini Tal, the summer capital of the United Provinces. When the Tirah force was mobilised in August, 1897, the first battalion of my regiment was ordered off at once. Sir Baker Russell, my general, and at my earnest request, put me into a vacancy which existed in the unit. Great was my joy and hasty my preparations to meet the battalion at railhead. Alas ! just as I was starting, a wire from Simla notified that, as I was a *seconded* officer, I could not go, and someone else must be sent in my place. Words fail me for any comment on this.

The Tirah campaign was badly handled. Sir William Lockhart, in chief command, was a very sick man, and General (afterwards Lord) Nicholson, his chief staff officer, was so incompetent for such a task, and had such an offensive manner with all the commanders, that everything was at sixes and sevens. He actually ran the whole show, which was remarkable for an entire absence of any kind of plan, even a bad one. With such an utter lack of imagination, and no endeavour whatever to forestall the

enemy on any occasion, the campaign could hardly end, except as it did, in a rather ignominious retreat down the Bara Valley. One might indeed say the best bit of work was that done by the improvised corps of hill scouts.

I heard of one amusing incident. A friend of mine was commanding a contingent of Imperial Service troops, i.e. detachment of troops maintained by native states and lent for the campaign. He got up a dinner for Christmas with the best means at his disposal. That is to say, the pudding was tinned, and port was drunk out of egg cups.

A Mohammedan chief, who had come up to see his troops, was invited. Paying a ceremonial visit to my friend on Christmas day, he was shown the arrangements for the dinner, and noticed there was no tablecloth. On enquiring why, he was told one could not be procured in the field, or brought on field service scale.

"But that will never do," said this gentleman, "it will not be like a real dinner without a white tablecloth. Now I am a guest, and it will be my privilege to provide one."

In the late afternoon a very nice, white cloth arrived. At dinner my friend said: "But how is it, Nawab Sahib, that on field service scale you have managed to bring such a beautiful white cloth?" "Well, major," said the Nawab, "to tell you the truth, I thought I might be killed in this war and so I brought my *shroud* with me, as my religion demands. As it now appears to me I am safe, I thought I might lend it you for to-night!"

Liver trouble in 1900 resulted in eight months' sick leave home, eventually extended by dribbles to a total period of two years. As during that time I saw twenty-three doctors, it is somewhat surprising I am still alive! What exactly was wrong was never satisfactorily ascertained. It seemed to me, however, that the well-considered opinion, not of Harley Street, but of two local practitioners (one in Kent and one in Dundee), hit the nail on the head. They both diagnosed the case as an abscess that had dried up of itself. Sir Lauder Brunton sent me to Carlsbad, where I drank a great deal of water, and had many "mud baths," but felt little benefit. Anyhow, as soon as I got back to India, I entirely recovered at once.

The next event worthy of record is King Edward's Coronation Durbar of January, 1903. The majority of those then present will agree with me that nothing during the last many decades has equalled in magnificence of display, genius of construction, and masterly detail, this wonderful celebration, commonly called the "Curzon Durbar." Emanating, as all the details did, from the imaginative brain of one man (Lord Curzon), and pushed on from beginning to end by his tireless energy, this durbar will always rank as perhaps the most remarkable series of wonderful pageants and ceremonies the world has ever seen.

In the elephant state entry Lord Kitchener was a very fine and conspicuous figure, mounted on his thoroughbred, "Democrat," a runner in the Derby of 1902. As the horse insisted on doing the whole processional route sideways, it must have been very uncomfortable for K. Nor can one blame the horse much, for Derby runners do not often see elephants.

This state procession of elephants, with Lord and Lady Curzon leading, followed by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, was a splendid sight, with all the Princes and Ruling Chiefs behind them in due order on the most richly caparisoned animals.

I think the next finest thing was the State ball held in the Dewan-i-Am (Hall of Public Audience of the Emperor Shah Jehan) at the Fort. The brilliant full-dress uniforms, wonderful robes and jewels of the Indian nobles, dresses and diamonds of the ladies, and the surroundings of the hall itself, combined to create a scene never to be forgotten.

I remember very well going to have a look at Mrs. Leiter, who had a string of diamonds round her neck worth a king's ransom. Each one was the size of a pea, and outshone even those of the ruling chiefs. Her daughter, Lady Curzon, in her peacock gown, looked very beautiful indeed, and moved about with the grace of a queen.

The supper, served in the Dewan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience), was excellently arranged and served. The white marble of the chamber, glittering table appointments, snowy damask, and dazzling electric light, combined to produce an effect such as I had never seen before. The number of guests being very large, it was a question of many

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LORD CURZON, WHEN VICEROY OF INDIA, ON HIS SHOOT IN THE
DISTRICT OF GARHWAL, SEPT. 1903.

relays, but no one of a fresh relay was allowed to enter until the whole of the tables had been completely re-arranged.

There was no such thing as going into a room with the remains of the last supper being hastily cleared away, or sitting down at a table with the cloth disfigured by spilt champagne. All the same, it took a party of British Dragoons, with lances, outside the doors to keep people away until everything was ready!

One of the most attractive displays was the review of native chiefs' retainers, held in the arena, as the huge covered-in amphitheatre built for the Durbar ceremony was called. Just a glorious circus, but what a circus! I'm glad I saw it, for it is never likely to be repeated on the same scale. Lord Curzon must regret extremely he was unable to attend. The review was a procession of these retainers along the horse-shoe of the arena. It seemed unending, and took one's breath away with its varied wonders, all so typical of India and the East.

Irregular horse in chain armour, the horses prancing and rearing straight up every other stride, as taught to do; troops of elephants in wonderful embroidered clothes, stopping every few yards to trumpet and salaam; the famous gold and silver guns from Baroda, drawn by richly-clad bullocks; the Maharajah of Alwar's golden three-tiered carriage, drawn by four elephants clothed *in armour*; a dancing elephant which performed all the way round; a Kashmir giant over eight feet high, and a Patiala dwarf of thirty inches, accompanied by men on stilts; horsemen and foot-soldiers of Kishengarh in the quaintest quilted uniform; a brilliantly-dressed contingent from Patiala escorting a gorgeous elephant carrying the *Grunth* (sacred Bible) of the Sikhs; the Kashmir horsemen from Gilgit and Yasin, preceded by dancing musicians in huge, fearsome masks; and, lastly, the Shans from the upper valleys of Burma, with their queer sunshades, fantastic hats and gaily-coloured dresses.

It made me feel rather proud to belong to a nation that could cause such wonders to be produced, and whose officers could stage-manage such a varied assortment of men and animals, and bring off so marvellous a spectacle without a single hitch.

The Durbar itself was chiefly remarkable for the cordial

reception given to the 9th Lancers, as they rode off after escorting the Duke of Connaught to his seat. There had been some trouble about them over a case of assault on an Indian. Rumour, wrong as usual, attributed the punishment meted out to the direct intervention of the Viceroy. This was entirely incorrect. The whole matter had been settled by the Chief in conjunction with Baring (the Viceroy's military secretary) without any action by Lord Curzon whatever.

Those who should have known better, and especially many who were actually the Viceroy's guests, took upon themselves to display their feelings on this question by most marked and uproarious applause whenever the 9th Lancers appeared. Done on purpose to annoy the very man who was not only their host, but whose genius was responsible for providing them with so much enjoyment.

It is said that the Committee which organised King George's Durbar in 1911 wished to be nothing if not original. They would have preferred an entirely new programme of ceremonics and functions, but force of circumstances compelled them to adhere to a great many of Lord Curzon's plans. Wherever they differed from them, such as the omission of the elephant state procession, review of retainers, state ball, etc., all who had attended both Durbars agreed that a grave error had been committed.

As guests in Lord Kitchener's camp, my wife and I were fortunate enough to see everything in great comfort. Wishing to obtain an unbiassed opinion on the Durbar as a whole, I carefully selected two intelligent acquaintances, who knew nothing of India, and asked their views. The answer in both cases was identical, that there was not one single ceremony, or pageant, which they would not give anything to see repeated.

After my poor friend General Hill's breakdown in 1903, I returned to regimental employ, and in the autumn was ordered to conduct signalling operations from Ranikhet to Lord Curzon's camps in the hills of Garhwal, where he was making a sporting tour. This he was induced to do at the instigation of a Balliol fellow graduate, Mr. J. S. C. Davis, Indian Civil Service, the Deputy-Commissioner of Garhwal.

There was some idea that it would be quite possible, with a base in the telegraph office at Ranikhet, to supply Reuter's

news to Lord Curzon, as well as keep up daily communication with him on matters of State. So it would have been, had it not happened to be the end of the rains, which were particularly late that year, and attended by constant heavy mists.

Selecting a central mountain about 12,000 feet high, I made that my head-quarters, locating some 120 selected signallers, both British and Indian, on various intermediate heights. But it rained and rained and rained, and when it wasn't raining there was a thick mist, so the duplicate messages sent by runners were of much more use to the Viceroy.

On going down some 3,500 feet to his camp, he repeatedly asked me what I was doing in that "impenetrable mist," and was very annoyed that I had not brought down my wife, as instructed. I explained that my reason for being there was to try and get his telegrams through to him, and that my wife couldn't come as I had descended by a goat track, so steep in parts as to require both hands for guidance.

He was most solicitous about doing something for her, and asking if he could send up anything, I mentioned books and a milch goat. He told me he had nothing in the reading line but official files, which he thought would not interest her. The goat turned up, with a case of champagne, which, although most kind of him to send, we found rather a white elephant in our onward marches, being deadly unpalatable at that altitude, especially out of tin mugs.

By a stroke of good luck, we had *one* fine morning, which followed the very evening on which the new Cabinet had been cabled out from home. This enabled Lord Curzon to receive in camp, within a few hours of despatch from England, the names of the new members, and to send congratulatory cables to Alfred Lyttleton, St. John Brodrick, etc.

It was while dining in one of his camps with the Viceroy that his unbending formality struck me; for, although I understood Davis was an old friend, and we were in camp miles away from anywhere, he was always "*Mr. Davis*," while most of his conversation emphasised the dignity and prestige which should attach to the person of the Viceroy of India.

Who doubts, however, that he is a great man? Will not history classify him as one of our most highly gifted and most distinguished Governors-General? If he had done nothing more than pass his Bill for the restoration and preservation of the glorious archæological monuments of India, he would have deserved well of the Empire, and his name would have lived for ever. But when you add to this the hundred and one projects, improvements and innovations that mark his regime, you are lost in admiration at his ability and industry, and marvel at the want of foresight in his predecessors.

While on the subject of Lord Curzon, mention may be made of the amazing misconception which exists regarding his resignation of the Viceroyalty in November, 1905.

Put bluntly, many seem to think that Lords Curzon and Kitchener had a row, that "K." won, and consequently Lord Curzon resigned in a huff.

That is not the case at all. There was of course a serious controversy between the two over Kitchener's official condemnation of the cumbrous working of, and undue influence exercised by, the old military department as regards military administration in India.

Speaking briefly, "K." strongly objected to the then existing system whereby the military member of council had direct access to the Viceroy behind the Chief's back. Moreover, the M.M. was in a position to criticise and even reject proposals made by the latter without putting them before the Viceroy at all.

Lord Curzon upheld the system, and advised the Secretary of State against acceptance of the Commander-in-Chief's proposals. He was overruled by Mr. Brodrick,¹ but he did not resign. He simply gave way.

A new department of military supply was formed to be represented in the government of India by a member of council who was to be a soldier. As the first supply member the Viceroy nominated Sir E. Barrow of the Indian Army, and much wished to have him. The Secretary of State insisted on appointing Major-General Sir C. Scott, late Royal Artillery.

Lord Curzon protested, without success, and resigned

¹ Now Lord Midleton, and then Secretary of State for India.

because he was refused the officer he had selected. Lord Kitchener took *no* part in this disagreement. He may, indeed, have been consulted, may even have been asked to note; but, if so, undoubtedly declined to do it, as being none of his business.¹

The incident naturally caused some excitement in India, but apparently, being an Indian question, roused little interest at home! Happening at that time to be writing to the late Newnham Davies (the "Dwarf of Blood" of *The Sporting Times*), I added a postscript asking what people were saying about it in London. His reply is typical: "Bar the fact that Curzon and Kitchener have had a row, and that Kitchener has come out top dog, the British public know nothing about the matter, and care less."

One of the last functions I attended at Almora was a full-dress ceremonial parade, as strong as possible, in honour of the title of "Queen Alexandra's Own," conferred on the 3rd Gurkhas. The original title (1907) had been "The Queen's Own," but when the regimental deputation, consisting of General Hutchinson and the two battalion commanders, were received by Her Majesty, she said this title might mean *any* Queen, and she would like her own name inserted. King Edward consenting, the regiment received the present designation.

At this parade a large painting of Queen Alexandra was placed at the flagstaff, covered with flowers, and each company saluted it in the march past. On returning home my wife asked our phlegmatic Gurkha orderly if he knew what the parade had been for?

"Yes," he said, "it was because we have now become the regiment of the great Rani [King's consort] Aleck-jalander." He then continued: "But we all want to know, is she the number one wife?"

My wife tried to explain that Britishers only had *one* wife, adding that surely he understood that, because of the many sahibs he knew.

"Well, yes," said the orderly, "only I thought that was because officers were too poor to afford more. But with rich men it is different. For instance, our Badshah [King]

¹ The whole of this case is put with admirable clearness and in a most readable form by Sir George Arthur in his *Life of Lord Kitchener*, Vol. II, chapters lxxi. to lxxiv.

has *hundreds*, though the number one wife is the only one of any importance!"

The same year Kitchener selected me to raise the 2nd battalion 7th Gurkhas at Quetta, with promotion to lieutenant-colonel. The battalion was formed by splitting the 2/10th Gurkhas in two and completing each half to strength. A method of raising an extra unit quickly, which, as I've said before, would only have occurred to "K." The question was, which half was I to get? Thinking I was being "jockeyed," when the other O.C. suggested the left half to me, I insisted on tossing. I lost the toss, and had to take the left half, but they did me excellently well.

About a year later, the Chief came up to Quetta. I had an interview, when the following conversation took place:—

K. How is the battalion getting on?

Self. Very well indeed, and all ranks very keen.

K. How do the Gurkhas like Quetta?

Self. They don't like it at all.

K. But, Woodyatt, I hope you understand I want them to like Quetta.

Self. Well, sir, you can't make them like it to order.

K. Why don't they like it?

Self. It is a very long way from their homes: about 1,500 miles by rail, besides the road journeys onwards. Then the people of Baluchistan are all Mahomedans, and they can't even talk to them. There is no shooting or fishing, they hate the bad winds we get, and new barracks on a stony plain are devoid of all shade.

K. Why don't you plant trees?

Self. I have planted over three thousand.

K. Well, don't they give any shade?

Self. At present they are about as big as your walking-stick.

K. Well, Woodyatt, I think Quetta is a very good place for Gurkhas, and remember I want them to like it, and I'm sure they will in time.

He was quite right, as usual, and, strange to say, the men did get to like it very much, and it is now a popular station with them.

A little later I conceived the idea that it would be a

splendid thing to get Kitchener as Colonel-in-Chief of the 7th Gurkha regiment of two battalions ; but, on sounding " Birdie " (Sir Wm. Birdwood), he informed me that, much as the Chief was honoured by the request, and much as he would like it, unfortunately he was ineligible because of belonging to the British Service. A postscript said that Lord Kitchener begged him to add, should he ever become in any way eligible, nothing would give him greater pleasure.

At first it seemed a wash-out ; but, on reflection, I decided to write a special letter, officially, on the question, and took it to my old friend General Clements, commanding the Division, for recommendation and counter signature.

Clements, having read it, said : " Look here, Nigel, how the devil can I recommend 'K.' for a job ? " Explaining that it was a mere matter of form, and I must have his signature, he snatched up a pen and signed, when I posted it myself to " Birdie."

Eventually the appointment was gazetted, but how it was effected I did not learn until I got home in 1909, when, being at the India Office, I looked up an old friend there, who greeted me as follows : " Hullo, young man, you'd better not be seen in this old shop, for you are in bad odour here." Asking why, he told me that it was on account of Kitchener's appointment as colonel of the 7th Gurkhas. He gave me to understand that Mr. (now Lord) Morley, having received the application, put it in his pocket and, taking it himself to the King, next time he went to Buckingham Palace, got it passed. Returning to the India Office, he chucked it into his basket for necessary action.

Next morning, however, his secretary brought it back to him, in much perturbation, explaining that the appointment was entirely out of order and quite impossible, because Kitchener did not belong to the Indian Army.

" All right," said Morley, " you take it back to King Edward, for I won't " ; and through it went. " K.," of course, was delighted at being an unconscious associate in a cleavage of red tape, and I escaped myself from the India Office without being arrested.

We spent almost six years in Quetta, less two visits home, for eight months each time, in the summer and

autumn of 1909 and 1912. Taking into consideration, as well as its many other advantages, that of climate, we class Quetta as the best station in India. Though cold in winter, sometimes *very* cold, with the thermometer below zero, it is a jolly, healthy kind of cold, and we just loved it.

The spring is prolonged until May, or even later, and never during the summer do you really require a pun-kah, though used by some sybarites for meals. By the middle of August the weather has turned cold again at night, while September is the month usually devoted to brigade and divisional manœuvres. Occasionally, in autumn and winter, you get a cyclone, with a biting wind which some people found teasing. Personally, I enjoyed these hurricanes, and, no parade being possible, wandered over the hills in the snow after chakor, the red-legged partridge.

The hunting in Quetta used to be very good. We had to meet in the afternoon, as frost made the ground like iron in the morning. As a constant follower of the Quetta hounds, I give the palm, as Master, during my six seasons, to J. C. R. Gannon, now on Lord Rawlinson's staff in India. It was customary to lay a drag for a few miles, and turn down a bagman at the finish. Sometimes he would go very straight and fast, but always in the direction of the hills which surround the Quetta plain on all sides.

One of the most formidable obstacles was the Samungli brook. Not so very broad, but with treacherous banks and black surging water that looked horrible. It always pounded a large portion of the field. One day we had already crossed it in the drag. Then the bagman, crossing it twice again, made for the hills over open country, which it had been hoped he would take when he was originally turned down. There was soon a tremendous tail and only five of us, besides the Master and first whip, were up at the finish. One horse was killed and another so badly lamed he had to be shot.

The other chief form of obstacle was a ragged ditch called a "karez,"¹ made by the villagers to bring water to their

¹ A succession of pits or wells sunk with great courage and labour by the villagers, often 20 feet to 60 feet deep and more. The bottoms are connected by a tunnel, to construct which men are

fields or villages. Of very varying width, horribly deep, and with rotten banks, it was not a pleasant jump at all, especially on a blown horse. People often went in, and it was a tremendous business digging the horse out. Sometimes, however, the chasm was so wide that you could lead your horse along the bottom until you got to a cart track where the banks had been cut. The Agent to the Governor-General (Sir H. McMahon) hunted regularly, and had just turned out in pink as Field Master, when he was transferred to Simla as Foreign Secretary.

A peculiar feature of Baluchistan is that the birds are European, the snakes (I seldom saw one) African, and the wild animals Persian. Chukor are to be found in abundance, but not very near cantonments after the season has opened for a month. The thing to do was to take the train for a journey of an hour or two; stay the night after shooting, or try to return the same evening. I could generally get ten to twenty brace. Really big bags were obtained by Mr. Beatty, the superintendent of police, and his parties. I had the pleasure of joining one, when, in two days, four guns got over one hundred and fifty brace.

These shoots were most enjoyable, except for the methods employed by Beatty, as well as the civil officials of this district, to obtain big bags. In Baluchistan water is very scarce, and chakor will not water at night. Some days before a shoot, all irrigation channels in the proposed area were stopped, and "watchers" posted by day at all the sources of water to prevent the birds drinking.

The result was that they remained in large numbers near their watering places, hoping for a drink when restrictions were removed. Coming to the first water-hole, you put up dozens of birds, and although when really alarmed they took to the higher slopes and precipices, giving you lots of climbing, a good many had been bagged by then. As soon as you shot elsewhere, they came back to their old haunts, thirstier than ever, poor beggars, and there you found them again later on. I tried hard to persuade the chief civil official to get this water stopping put an end to, but was unsuccessful.

let down in baskets by a hand windlass. Water is conveyed through the tunnel from a spring in the hills to the low lands. This tunnel becomes an open ditch as the water level approaches the ground surface level.

F. M. Beatty, the superintendent of police, was a great character, and quite the most interesting personality in the province. He had been there a great number of years, and wielded an influence amongst the wild tribesmen far exceeding that of any political. Born and bred in India, his had been a most varied career from early manhood, when he drifted into Baluchistan before even the railway through the Bolan pass was constructed.

Blessed with a magnificent physique, good eye and iron nerve, he was a great sportsman in his younger days, being a terror on the hillside, and a magnificent shot. Many are the tales of his prowess after trans-frontier criminals. Amongst them, credit is given him of having tracked, followed, run down, and actually *knifed* his man over the border, then, of having returned safely to Quetta, with or without the scalp.

The Indian Staff College was one of Lord Kitchener's pet schemes, and he was hugely delighted when it became an accomplished fact. Originally established at Deolali in 1905, it was transferred to Quetta about two years later, and when I arrived there it had only been opened a few months.

An enormous acquisition it was too, with its large staff of earnest, keen and most hospitable officers. Not only did it provide, as additional residents, a charming coterie of delightful people, but its professors set a most excellent tone which soon influenced, in every way, both the professional and social life of the community.

Living next door to the Staff College, as we did, was a great advantage to me, for, during the period the late General Capper¹ reigned there, I attended many lectures and numerous staff rides. It was, indeed, a pleasure to me to renew my acquaintance with Tommy Capper of the East Lancs, which soon blossomed into a friendship I valued very greatly, and which was maintained until he fell in action at the battle of Loos (September 26, 1915). I had the greatest admiration for his lofty ideals and strategic brain, looking upon him as the veritable "Foch" of the British Army. People will tell you he had his

¹ The late Major-General Sir Thompson Capper, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., who commanded the 7th Division, British Army in Flanders and France.

limitations; so have we all; but, as a leader, he was matchless; as a strategist, incomparable; and, as an instructor, unique.

Having occasion to thank him for some very kind words he said, before he left Quetta, about my battalion and its officers, when lent to the Staff College for some night operations, I mentioned what an advantage I considered it had been to us in Quetta having a man like himself, with such high ideals, living beside us. His reply is so typical of the man, and exemplifies so clearly the high endeavour by which he was always actuated, that I reproduce it in full:

“ P. & O.S.N. Co.,

“ SS. *Caledonia*.

“ 31st January, 1911.

“ MY DEAR WOODYATT,—

“ Je suis bien touché a cause de votre lettre. I really don't think I deserve such eulogies. I have indeed a very high ideal of the military profession as an ethical calling affording us all the occasions we want, and more, for training a high character. But I feel too we don't all at all recognise this, and there is danger of our weakening on our own ideals through the feeling that high aims are really not expected of us.

“ It is therefore considerably strengthening to hear of earnest officers, as yourself, who pursue the same object. My argument is this—the military profession owes its dignity to the fact that, in its ultimate issue, it demands the highest self-sacrifice, i.e. the cheerful surrender of life itself. To be logical, then, we must work back from this, and regard all the minor forms of self-sacrifice, i.e. acceptance (instead of avoidance) of responsibility, performing unpleasant duties which we might avoid, and helping comrades to our own material disadvantage, etc., etc., as as much our duty as is the self-sacrifice of life, and all the more so, for these excite no remark and gain us no praise, indeed sometimes incur us in trouble which we might have otherwise escaped.

“ But it is true that the nation, and the army itself, have no very high standard in these respects, and there is danger, unless we do our best to counteract such lowering influences, to find our own ideals lowered, and a feeling

growing over us that so little is expected of us that we need give little.

"It does great good if those of us who do strive for the dignity of the profession of arms support each other by encouraging one another in upholding the same view, and in living in hopes, not unmixed with fear of failure, that in the day of real trial, we may act up to our fixed ideals.

"And I feel strongly, and try and impress on those at the Staff College, that the General Staff, if it is to aspire to lead the Army, must do so by the constant and habitual practice and expression of the highest type of self-devotion all day and every day.

"*On no other terms can it, or will it, secure the ungrudging confidence and esteem of the Army itself. Am I not right?*

"I am afraid this reads like a sermon, but I am sure you understand me, so I can let myself go.

"There is, however, one point in your letter which I must disagree with—in which you attribute any raising of the ethical level to me alone. You forget I have been helped by such people as Boileau, Shea, Waterfield, Franks, Bird, Drake, etc., etc., who have taken their full share in any success—and I am afraid it is small—which we may have attained.

"Anyway in your gallant regiment we have always felt we had firm friends and comrades on whom we could rely for any amount of support.

"Perhaps, who knows, we may some day find ourselves facing the foe together in earnest, and then we must think of our ideals, and not allow ourselves to be frightened out of them.

"But how strengthening it would be if we knew the whole nation, not the Army alone, thought as we did.

"Well—good-bye—my dear Woodyatt, and good fortune be with you, and all yours. I am sure you will bring up your son in your own footsteps, and then the traditions will be carried on.

"I wonder what my brigade will think when I begin to speak of military ethics? I will need to go gently at first.

"I expect I will be home before you get this. I hope I

will soon hear you have a high and honourable appointment, and also will soon be back in England on leave.

"Yours ever,
" (Sgd.) T. CAPPER."

Six months or so later I discussed with him, on paper, one or two questions, namely:

(a) The grant of commissions in our Indian Army to Indian gentlemen.

(b) Industrial unrest at home in 1911.

(c) The grave political crisis the same year between France and Germany over Morocco affairs.

One of his letters in reply is now most interesting in the face of what actually took place later.

"CLONSKEAGH CASTLE,
" CO. DUBLIN.
" 3rd September, 1911.

"MY DEAR WOODYATT,—

"Many thanks for your long letter.

* * * * *

"I quite agree with you about the many difficulties of putting the native-born officer on a par with the British. But I think also with you that it has got to come. I wonder how it would work to have a one-year volunteer system for all natives of good family, who could join with sufficient education and general bearing and standard of conduct to make them potential officers. The one-year volunteers would be in the ranks, but would be allowed to live in separate and more comfortable quarters (at their own expense) when off parade. At manœuvres and training camps they would be with the squadron or company. From these, a certain number who appeared suitable could be selected for commissions. I would make them work their way up through the ranks of native officer, with, if necessary, accelerated promotion. Thus they could not reach British officer's rank until fairly well on and experienced. If this transitional measure succeeded, it could be extended so that British officer's rank was reached earlier. But I am really too ignorant of the subject to have an opinion worth hearing. As it stands I take it that—

"(a) We have got to do something in the matter soon.

"(b) When we do something, we want to have guarantees that we make certain that the aspirant is what we want before admitting him to British officer's rank.

* * * * *

"We have had an exciting year, and I have had plenty to do. Besides the regular work, which, being new to me, gave me plenty to think about (especially as my Brigade Major and Chief Clerk were also new), there was the King's visit, which entailed a lot of arrangement. Then came strikes and riots, and I had to live in my office for three days and nights. We had to send off two battalions to England in the middle of one night; and I had to garrison three railway stations in Dublin. I thought on Saturday afternoon (19th August) that we were perilously close to a class war all over the Kingdom. Once the mob had felt real hunger, they would have broken out and looted all the property they could get at. Then the troops would have had to fire, and thus a class war would have begun.

"Luckily the strike collapsed that night.

"Now, of course, we are in a more or less standing-by condition in case Germany decides to go on bullying France, and so forces on a row. To-morrow's (4th September) conference at Berlin should bring matters to a crisis.

"I think Germany would be stupid to fight such a palpable war of aggression. She is too much in the wrong. But you never know what may happen, when a country suffers generally from such a severe attack of swollen head, as Germany is suffering from now. I hear that the Emperor by no means desires war, but that the upper and middle classes have a bad jingo fit on, and the politicians would proceed to almost desperate measures in order to quiet the Socialists who are getting a dangerous strength and threaten to swamp the Reichstag at the next elections.

"If it is to be war, I don't doubt that I shall be there or thereabouts pretty soon.

"Altogether, things are fairly exciting, and I have had plenty to do and think about.

* * * * *

"Kind remembrances to all your party from us both.

"Yours ever,

"(Sgd.) T. CAPPER."

Finally, I reproduce the last letter I got from him as a brigade commander and before he took over the duties of inspector of infantry at the Horse Guards. The programme I gave him was much on the lines of the most practical inspection I had ever undergone myself. I refer to the "Kitchener Test," which is described later on, when writing of Lord Kitchener.

" 13TH BRIGADE,
" LOWER CASTLE YARD,
" DUBLIN.
" 18th January, 1912.

" MY DEAR WOODYATT,—

" I wanted your advice as to what you consider, from the point of view of the officer *being inspected*, is the best line for a battalion inspection, at the close of its battalion training, to take.

" We don't get very long for battalion training, and I don't think I could allot more than one full day to inspection.

" That being so, will you favour me by suggesting a programme ?

" The day could be made to run into night, but not *all* night.

" I know you think of these things and have sound ideas. I can't well ask my own people! So I should like your own opinion on the matter.

" I only did a field exercise last year, which took the best part of a day, but seemed to me rather too superficial. I don't want anything to do with the *formal* inspection, which I arrange for separately. What I mean is a purely official business.

" I hope you are still alive after your hard work at Delhi.

" Yours ever,
" (Sgd.) T. CAPPER."

General Capper was a great admirer of General (now Marshal) Foch, and often talked to me about his sound views and extensive military knowledge. In Capper's death, England suffered a national loss. He was worth a million men. His death was emblematic of his life, in that he died to uphold a principle. That is, he held the moment had

come when it was essential even for a higher leader to set a personal example. What cared he if in doing so he must make the supreme sacrifice? He judged his duty and the occasion demanded (as he had written me over three years before) "the highest self-sacrifice, i.e. the cheerful surrender of life itself."