

been entered into, by which the whole territory was to be open to the settlers of both countries for a period of ten years; but the agreement was not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the contracting parties might have to any part of the country. In 1844 Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of State at Washington, explained his reasons for declining proposals made by the British government, in a state paper, in which he contended that times so far from impairing the American claims had greatly strengthened them, by the rapid advance of the population of the United States towards that territory. An emigration, estimated at not less than a thousand in 1843 and fifteen hundred in 1844, had flowed into it, and that the current thus commenced would continue to flow with increased volume hereafter. "There can, then, be no doubt now, that the operation of the same cause which impelled our population westward from the shores of the Atlantic across the Alleghany to the valley of the Mississippi, will impel them onward with accumulating force across the Rocky Mountains into the valley of the Columbia, and that the whole region drained by it is destined to be peopled by us."\* In 1845 the President in a public address while negotiations were pending, referred, contrary to all usage, to other contingencies than a friendly and satisfactory termination of the differences between the two governments. Upon this declaration sir Robert Peel expressed himself with deep regret that such a reference should be made in a tone and temper which was not likely to lead to an amicable and equitable settlement of the differences. We have rights, he said, respecting this territory of Oregon clear and unquestionable. "We trust still to arrive at an amicable adjustment—we desire to effect an amicable adjustment of our claim—but having exhausted every effort to effect that settlement, if our rights should be invaded we are resolved—and we are prepared—to maintain them." †

We have thus briefly traced the course of those differences which were happily concluded before the administration of affairs was handed over by the Peel government to that of lord John Russell. The territory in dispute has now become the rising colony of British Columbia. In looking to the probable extensive emigration in a few years to this vast territory—in many parts fertile, abundantly watered by numerous streams, and most attractive in adding one more to our gold-productive colonies,—we are struck by an eloquent prediction of the great modern orator of the United States, which was made at Boston three months after the speech of sir Robert Peel on the Oregon question. The anticipation of Mr.

\* "Annual Register for 1845," p. 288.

† Hansard, vol. lxxxi. col. 199.

Webster carries us forward to the consideration of a Future of far greater significance than the disputes of the Past. "I believe that it is in the course of Providence, and of human destiny, that a great state is to arise, of English and American descent, whose power will be established over the country on the shores of the Pacific; and that all those rights of natural and political liberty, all those great principles that both nations have inherited from their fathers, will be transmitted through us to them, so that there will exist at the mouth of the Columbia, or more probably farther south, a great Pacific republic, a nation where our children may go for a residence, separating themselves from this government, and forming an integral part of a new government, half-way between England and China; in the most healthful, fertile, and desirable portion of the globe, and quite too far remote from Europe and from this side of the American continent to be under the governmental influence of either country. This state of things is by no means so far off as we may imagine—by no means so remote from the present time as may be supposed; and, looking to this state of things, this question becomes one upon which intelligent and well disposed men might very readily come to an agreement." \*

In writing to lord Hardinge on the 4th of July, sir Robert Peel mentions "our reception in England of your closing exploits on the Sutlej." In the royal speech, on the prorogation, the Queen congratulated her parliament on the victorious course and happy conclusion of the war in India, and announced that perfect tranquillity prevailed throughout the whole of the British possessions in that quarter of the world. It was in December, 1845, when the British occupied most of the southern bank of the Sutlej, that the Sikh army began to cross the river for the purpose of making an attack on the British frontier. Runjeet Sing, the ruler of the Sikhs and the Punjaub, had, up to the time of his death in 1839, always continued on terms of amity with the British government. His son, Kurruck Sing, who died in 1840, was the ruler of the country, his elder brother being imbecile. An illegitimate son of Runjeet Sing, who succeeded to the government, was assassinated in 1843. His son, being very young, the mother assumed the power, giving her favourite, Lall Sing, the appointment of Vizier. There was no strong hand, as in the days of Runjeet Sing, to restrain the army, and thus, having crossed to the southern bank of the Sutlej, they took up an intrenched position at the village of Ferozeshah. In this camp the Sikhs had a force of more than 50,000 men, with 108 pieces of cannon. The British force, under the commander-in-chief,

\* "Annual Register for 1845," p. 301.



sir Hugh Gough, was advancing from Umballah in order to relieve Ferozepoor, held by sir J. Littler, which had been partially invested. On the 18th of December the British army reached Moodkee, and that evening repulsed an attack of the Sikhs. In this battle sir Robert Sale received a wound, of which he died two months afterwards. The British army, consisting of 16,700 men, and 69 guns, then marched towards Ferozepoor. Sir Henry Hardinge accompanied the army. Up to the time of the Sikhs crossing the Sutlej he had carefully avoided every demonstration which could be construed into an act of hostility. It was now his clear duty to repel aggression, and he put into the performance of that duty all that energy of a chivalrous nature which had so illustrated his career in the Peninsular war. Waving the claims of his rank as Governor-General, he offered to sir Hugh Gough to serve under him as second in command. On the 21st and 22nd of December was fought the great battle of Ferozeshah. The British attacked the intrenched camp on the evening of the 21st. The resistance of the Sikhs was most obstinate. Night closed before the British had become masters of a part of the intrenched quadrangle. Their situation was one of considerable peril. The British reserves had been engaged to the last man; the troops had fought a desperate battle after a long march; they were wearied, and had little food. A writer, who had access to special information, has given an animated description of the night which followed the attack on the intrenched camp. "Side by side, with the dying and the dead, the living lay down. They strove to sleep; some of them did sleep in spite of cold, hunger, thirst, and, worse than all, the cries and groans of their wounded comrades. And all around them and above, the horizon was illuminated with the flames of burning huts, exploding shells, tumbrils, ammunition carts, and occasionally a mine. Moreover, they suffered, even then, from a constant fire of artillery, which became at one time so annoying—where the Governor-General was in person—that he was forced to order two regiments, the 70th and 1st Bengal Europeans, to charge with the bayonet. But sir Henry Hardinge and sir Hugh Gough knew no rest at all; they went about from corps to corps, animating the men and cheerfully demonstrating to the officers that there was no alternative but victory or death."\*

"The long night wore away," wrote sir Hugh Gough, "and dawned the morning of the 22nd." The line was again formed. All the artillery of the British was brought up to the attack, but this arm of war was over-matched by the heavy cannon of the Sikh

\* "Quarterly Review," vol. lxxviii. p. 203.

batteries. Relying upon the unfailing British weapon, the bayonet, the line advanced. The two commanders rode in front. The inner works were carried; the troops entered the village. But the day was not yet gained. The Sikh army of reserve had marched from the camp above Ferozepoor early in the morning, and their advanced guard became engaged with our cavalry. They however drew off, but soon again appeared in tremendous force. Very touching are the words in which the veteran commander-in-chief described his feelings: "The only time I felt a doubt was towards the evening of the 22nd, when the fresh enemy advanced with heavy columns of infantry, cavalry, and guns; and our cavalry horses were so thoroughly done up that they would not command even a trot. For a moment then I felt regret (and I deeply deplore my want of confidence in Him who never failed me nor forsok me) as each passing shot left me on horseback: but it was only for a moment." The cavalry movement, with jaded horses and exhausted men, decided the struggle. A panic seized the Sikhs, who believed the British were going to fall on their flank in force. They abandoned their guns, and retreated across the Sutlej. The British in that terrible struggle, almost unmatched in Indian warfare, lost 2415 men, with many distinguished officers. The European regiments were fearfully thinned. Of these the 62nd left half its numbers on the field.

Having crossed the Sutlej the Sikhs again took up a fortified position. The British army were so destitute of ammunition that they were unable to prevent the Sikhs again establishing a portion of their army on the left bank of the river. They intrenched themselves near the village of Alliwali to prevent sir Harry Smith's communication with the main army. With 12,000 men and thirty-two guns he attacked them, carried their camp by storm, captured the whole of their cannon and munitions of war, and drove the entire force precipitately across the Sutlej.

On the 10th of February was fought the great battle of Sohraon. The Sikhs had here intrenched themselves on the southern bank, having constructed a bridge of boats across the river. The victory of Alliwali had enabled sir Harry Smith to unite with the main army. A siege train had arrived from Delhi. Sir Hugh Gough was strong enough to attack the Sikhs, at some moment when the accidents of climate would permit him fairly to engage the enemy. He waited for a fall of rain to swell the ford, or a thaw of snow upon the hills, which would deprive them of any means of crossing except by their bridge of boats. A fall of rain came; the ford was impracticable. The Sikhs, dislodged from



their intrenchments, retreated across the bridge, which broke down with the weight of the masses, having lost 13,000 men and sixty-seven guns. The British loss was about 2000 killed and wounded. On the 20th of February Lahore, the capital, was occupied; Dhuleep Sing, the young Maharajah, was reinstated in the city; and a treaty was signed by which he was continued in the relation of a friendly sovereign with the British government.

THE MINISTRY AS FORMED BY LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

CABINET.

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| Marquis of Lansdowne . . . . .             | Lord President of the Council.              |
| Lord Cottenham . . . . .                   | Lord High Chancellor.                       |
| Earl of Minto . . . . .                    | Lord Privy Seal.                            |
| Right Hon. Lord John Russell . . . . .     | First Lord of the Treasury.                 |
| Right Hon. Charles Wood . . . . .          | Chancellor of the Exchequer.                |
| Earl of Auckland . . . . .                 | First Lord of the Admiralty.                |
| Right Hon. Sir George Grey . . . . .       | Secretary of State for the Home Department. |
| Right Hon. Viscount Palmerston . . . . .   | Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.     |
| Earl Grey . . . . .                        | Secretary of State for the Colonies.        |
| Right Hon. Sir John Cam Hobhouse . . . . . | President of the Board of Control.          |
| Earl of Clarendon . . . . .                | President of the Board of Trade.            |
| Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay . . . . .        | Paymaster of the Forces.                    |
| Marquis of Clanricarde . . . . .           | Postmaster-General.                         |
| Lord Campbell . . . . .                    | Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.       |
| Right Hon. Viscount Morpeth . . . . .      | Woods and Forests.                          |
| Right Hon. H. Labouchere . . . . .         | Chief Secretary for Ireland.                |

NOT OF THE CABINET.

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| Duke of Wellington . . . . .      | Commander-in-Chief.                   |
| Marquis of Anglesey . . . . .     | Master-General of the Ordnance.       |
| Right Hon. Fox Maule . . . . .    | Secretary at War.                     |
| Right Hon. T. M. Gibson . . . . . | Vice-President of the Board of Trade. |
| H. G. Ward, Esq. . . . .          | Secretary of the Admiralty.           |
| Right Hon. R. L. Shiel . . . . .  | Master of the Mint.                   |
| J. Jervis, Esq. . . . .           | Attorney-General.                     |
| David Dundas, Esq. . . . .        | Solicitor-General.                    |

GREAT OFFICERS OF STATE.

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Earl Fortescue . . . . .  | Lord Steward.        |
| Earl Spencer . . . . .    | Lord Chamberlain.    |
| Duke of Norfolk . . . . . | Master of the Horse. |

IRELAND.

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Earl of Bessborough . . . . .     | Lord Lieutenant.      |
| Right Hon. Mazere Brady . . . . . | Lord High Chancellor. |

SCOTLAND.

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| Right Hon. Andrew Rutherford . . . . . | Lord Advocate.     |
| Thomas Maitland, Esq. . . . .          | Solicitor-General. |