

# John Nicholson, the Lion of the Punjaub

R. E. Cholmeley



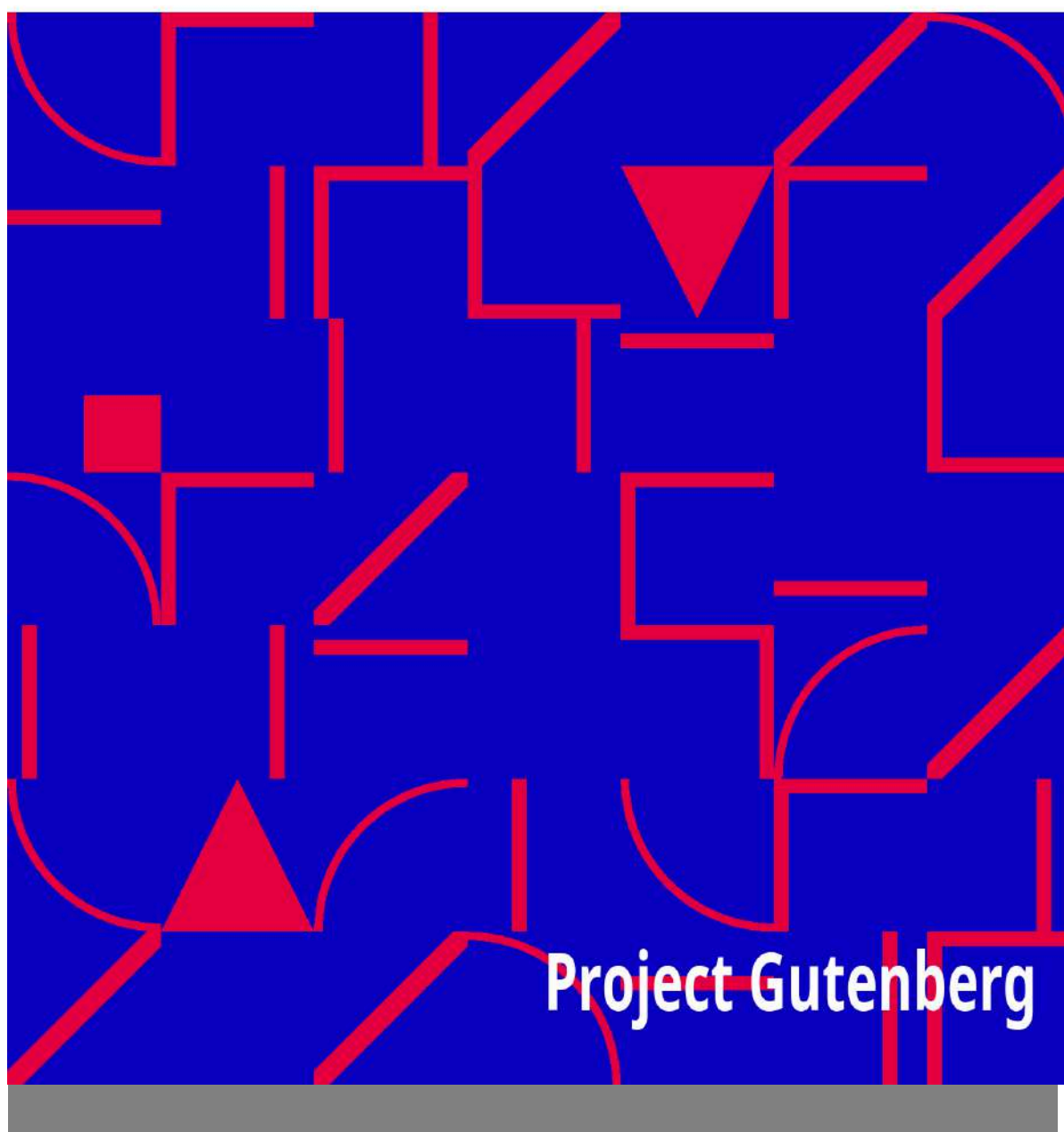
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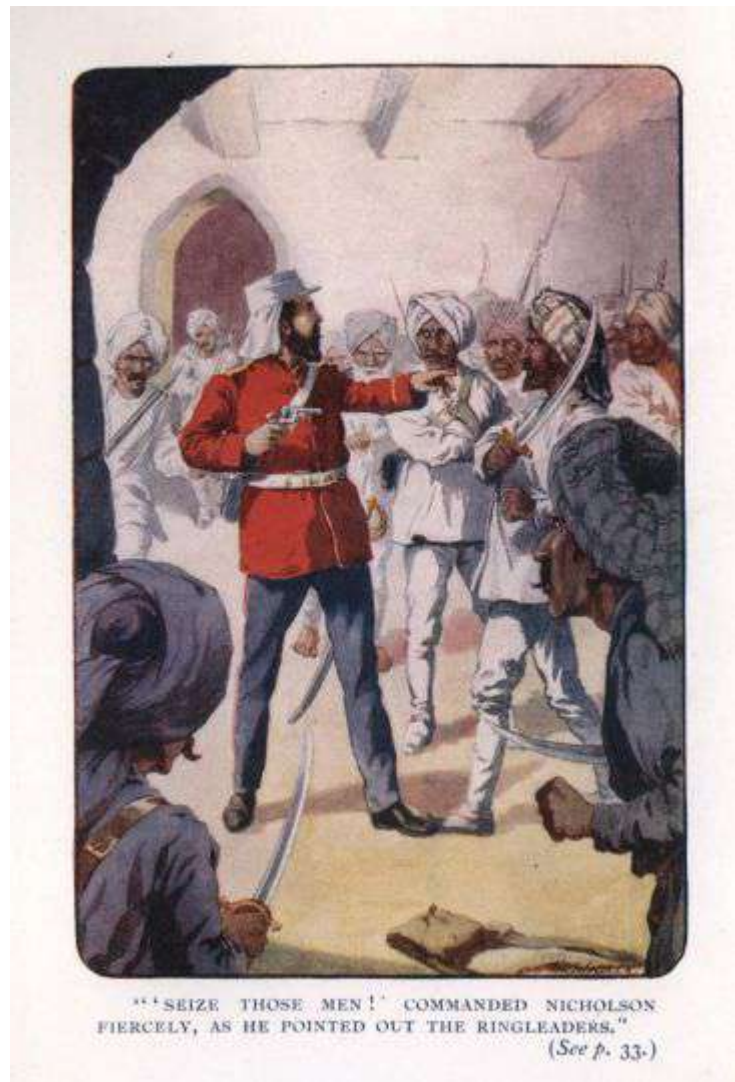
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**“Seize those men!’ commanded Nicholson fiercely, as he pointed out the ringleaders.”**



**JOHN NICHOLSON**

# **“THE LION OF THE PUNJAUB”**

**by**

# **R. E. CHOLMELEY**

“My Lord, you may rely upon this, that if ever  
there is a desperate deed to be done in India,  
John Nicholson is the man to do it.”

Sir Herbert Edwardes to Lord Canning,  
*March 1857.*

***WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES***

**LONDON:  
ANDREW MELROSE  
16 PILGRIM STREET, E.C.  
1908**

**TO  
GILBERT BRANDON WHITE**

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“Seize those men!” commanded Nicholson fiercely, as he pointed out the ringleaders . . . . . *Frontispiece*

One by one dropped through into the narrow street below

They seated themselves and fixed their eyes upon the object of their adoration

“You have just five minutes to read it and give me any message for your husband”

They saw Nicholson himself fastened with ropes to a tree

Portrait of John Nicholson

He saw Nicholson’s great form riding steadily on as if nothing was the matter

A sepoy leaned out . . . and pointed his musket at the tall figure beneath him

# JOHN NICHOLSON

## CHAPTER I.

### EASTWARD HO!

High up on the crest of the wild and rugged Margalla Pass, on the north-western frontier of India, stands a plain stone obelisk. It looks down on to the road that winds from Rawal Pindi to Hasan Abdal, the road where once only the Afghan camel-train passed on its way to and from Peshawur, but where now a railway marks the progress of modern India. Severely simple in its exterior, the obelisk is yet one of the most notable monuments to be seen in our great Eastern Empire, for it commemorates a soldier-hero of high fame. On its base is inscribed the name of John Nicholson.

This Margalla monument is not the only memorial to Nicholson in India: there is a tablet to his memory in a church at Bannu, the scene of his administrative work; and there is at Delhi, where he lies buried, a fine bronze statue of recent erection. But the stone obelisk in the frontier pass will stand for ever as the most striking tribute to the man who played so prominent a part in the saving of India. Its very position appeals strongly to the imagination. Here it was, in the district which he ruled so wisely and well, that Nicholson's early reputation was made; and here it is that among the wild tribesmen whom he tamed to his will his memory is still fondly cherished.

Who was John Nicholson? The question may well rise to the lips of many, for the writers of history textbooks have hitherto done him scant justice. And yet the tale of the Great Mutiny cannot be properly told without due acknowledgment being made to his genius. Those who know how the fate of India trembled in the balance in those dark days of 1857, know what we owe to him among other strong men whom the occasion brought to the front. It is now fifty years since Nicholson fell in the hour

of victory at Delhi; the present year is, therefore, a fitting time to retell the story of his short but glorious career.

Like his distinguished chief, Sir Henry Lawrence, John Nicholson was an Irishman. He was born, in December 1822, at Lisburn, near Belfast, where his father, Dr. Alexander Nicholson, had a flourishing practice. On the paternal side he came of a family which had been established in Ireland since the sixteenth century, while through his mother, who was a Miss Hogg, he was connected with a well-known Ulster family, of which the late Lord Magheramorne was a representative.

Of young John's early life several stories have been preserved which give some indication of his character. According to Sir John Kaye, he was "a precocious boy almost from his cradle; thoughtful, studious, of an inquiring nature; and he had the ineffable benefit of good parental teaching of the best kind." Both his father and mother were deeply religious people, and their children—seven in all—were brought up with an intimate knowledge of the Bible. One day, it is said, when John was three years old, Mrs. Nicholson found him alone in a room with a knotted handkerchief in his hand and striking furiously at some invisible object. On being asked what he was doing, John answered, "Oh, mamma dear, I am trying to get a blow at the devil! He is wanting me to be bad. If I could get him down, I'd kill him!"

The boy's willingness to be taught enabled him to learn how to read and write at the early age of four. When, five years later, his father died, and the family removed to Delgany, in County Wicklow, he was sent to a school in that town. Thence he proceeded to the Royal School at Dungannon, where, although he did not greatly distinguish himself as a scholar, he made good progress. His chief characteristics were a fiery temper and a reputation for truthfulness and courage. A relative has placed on record her remembrance of having heard as a child that her cousin John was always leader in games, and was never known to tell a lie. "He was quite a hero from the first," she says.

Another feature of the boy's character was his very real love for his mother. With two girls and five boys to bring up on a slender income, Mrs. Nicholson was sometimes worried as to their future, and at these times John, as her eldest son, would do his best to smooth away the

wrinkles from her forehead. "Don't fret, mamma dear," he would say; "when I'm a big man I'll make plenty of money, and I'll give it all to you." The mother no doubt smiled her pleasure at these brave words, but she little guessed then how faithfully her son would keep his word in the years to come.

The only other anecdote recorded of John Nicholson as a boy tells of a serious accident, which came very near to putting an abrupt end to his career. While spending a holiday at home in Lisburn he was playing with gunpowder, when some of it unexpectedly exploded in his face. With his hands over his eyes he ran into the house calling out that he was blinded. Mrs. Nicholson on looking at his face saw that it was a blackened mass, the eyes being completely closed, and blood trickling down his cheeks.

"For ten days," says Sir John Kaye, "during which he never murmured, or expressed any concern except for his mother, he lay in a state of total darkness; but when at the end of that time the bandages were removed, it was found that God in His mercy had spared the sight of the boy, and preserved him to do great things."

By the time John was sixteen he was ready to leave the school at Dungannon. The question of a profession for him now presented itself, and at this juncture a good fairy stepped in in the person of his uncle, Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Weir Hogg. Mr. Hogg, who was a Member of Parliament and a Director of the East India Company, had had a remarkable career. Going out to the East as a mere youth, he had found fame and fortune at the Calcutta Bar. Having become a man of wealth, he had returned to England to enter public life. He felt now that he ought to do something for his sister and her large family, and offered to obtain for John a cadetship in the Bengal Infantry. To this Mrs. Nicholson gladly assented.

In the days of "John Company" the interest of influential persons was sufficient to procure entry into the service. Young Nicholson was therefore spared the ordeal of an examination or special course of training. In the New Year of 1839 he went up to London to meet his uncle and make final arrangements. An outfit was bought for him by Mr. Hogg, and, at a momentous interview with the "honourable Directors of the East India Company" at their office in Leadenhall Street, John took the necessary oath of allegiance.

A few weeks later he sailed for India in the *Camden*, with his uncle's sage counsel to work hard and live carefully, and his mother's last injunction, "Never forget to read your Bible, John," treasured in his heart.

## CHAPTER II.

### FIGHTING THE AFGHANS.

After a five months' voyage Nicholson reached Calcutta safely. Here he spent a little time with certain of his uncle's friends, until at last he was temporarily appointed to the 41st Regiment of Sepoys quartered at Benares. At this station he studiously mastered his drill and prepared himself for the permanent appointment which was promised him. This followed at the end of the same year, 1839, when he was placed in the 27th Native Infantry at Ferozepore, on the Sutlej.

The young ensign was now to experience his first taste of war. Soon after he had joined his new regiment, the 27th was ordered up into Afghanistan and despatched to Jellalabad. At that time Afghanistan was occupied by British troops, and to all intents and purposes was well disposed towards us, but appearances were deceitful. Though hardly anyone knew it, trouble was brewing in the Amir's capital. Below the surface of calm, feeling ran high against Shah Soojah, the unpopular Afghan ruler, and his supporters, the British; and the followers of Dost Mahomed, the rival claimant to the throne, had no difficulty in fomenting a general revolt. The blow fell on the 2nd of November 1841. On that day Sir Alexander Burnes, the British envoy at Cabul, was assassinated, and the streets of the city ran red with blood.

When the insurrection thus blazed forth, John Nicholson was at Fort Ghuzni, nearly a hundred miles to the south of Cabul. His regiment had been ordered there some months previously to relieve the 16th. In three weeks' time the hill fortress was surrounded by Afghan warriors, and Colonel Palmer, the commandant, found himself in a state of siege.

Unfortunately for the little garrison, the winter was now upon them. Situated very high up, Ghuzni was exposed to the full severity of the pitiless snowstorms which swept over the neighbourhood. These not only added to the discomfort of the troops, but had the effect of checking the advance of a relief column under General Maclaren that had started from Candahar.

For a time the enemy was kept at bay without the city, their old-fashioned *jezails*, or matchlocks, failing to produce much effect. Then treachery made itself felt. Actuated by humane motives, Colonel Palmer had refrained from expelling the Afghan townspeople, and the latter now repaid this act of kindness by undermining the city walls to admit their countrymen. One dark December night the Afghans poured in through the breach, driving the Sepoys and their British officers into the shelter of the citadel.

For a month the little garrison held out bravely, suffering some loss from the enemy's bullets and suffering even more from the scarcity of water. While the snow fell it was possible to melt it and replenish their store, but when the storms ceased they were in a desperate case. Instructions now came from General Elphinstone at Cabul that the fortress should be surrendered. Colonel Palmer, who was loth to believe the message, prolonged negotiations as long as he could, but reflection showed him that he had no choice but to submit. The water supply was at an end, and the Afghans threatened to renew the siege in a more determined manner than before. Very reluctantly, therefore, he yielded, having first bargained that the garrison should be permitted to march out with the honours of war and should be escorted in due time to Peshawur.

To this course the enemy's leaders agreed. But an oath counts for little in the Afghan mind, and Nicholson quickly learned of what depths of treachery this people were capable. No sooner had the sepoy of the 27th marched out to the quarters assigned them in the city than a crowd of *ghazis* fell upon them, massacring many of the poor fellows in cold blood. Nicholson himself, with Lieutenants Crawford and Burnett, was on the roof of a house near by and saw the terrible deed. In the building were two companies of sepoy. Joining these without delay, the officers prepared to make a bold stand.

The attack on the house was not long in coming. Storming the door in their furious desire to get at the hated infidels, the Afghans endeavoured to effect an entrance. When it was seen that this could not be done, the place was set on fire, and soon the flames and smoke drove the inmates from room to room. Before very long the position became untenable. With the few men remaining Nicholson and his brother officers cut a hole with their bayonets in the back wall of the house, and one by one dropped through into the narrow street below. Fortunately, the two other buildings in which Colonel Palmer and his sepoy had taken refuge, were close by. In a few moments the fugitives had joined forces with their comrades.



“ONE BY ONE DROPPED THROUGH INTO THE NARROW STREET BELOW.”  
(See p. 15.)

**“One by one dropped through into the narrow street below.”**

But though safety for a time had been gained, the chances of ultimate escape seemed hopeless. The houses were filled to overflowing with

sepoy soldiers and camp followers, men, women, and children, and when by and by the large guns of the fortress were trained upon them the slaughter was very great. The British officers, it is stated, expected nothing less than death. They even began to burn the regimental colours to prevent them falling into the enemy's hands.

In this extremity the Afghan leaders made fresh proposals of honourable treatment on surrender, and Colonel Palmer at last consented to yield. How Nicholson regarded this move was very clear. In his anger at the base treachery he had witnessed he would have fought to the last gasp ere trusting again to the word of an Afghan. When the command came to surrender he refused to obey, and it is recorded that he "drove the enemy thrice back beyond the walls at the point of the bayonet, before he would listen to the order given him to make his company lay down their arms." Then, with bitter tears, he gave up his sword, and allowed himself to be made prisoner.

Of the five months' captivity at Ghuzni, from March to August 1842, we learn most from Lieutenant Crawford's narrative. From the first the prisoners were treated miserably. The British officers—ten in number—were confined in a small room "only 18 feet by 13," and for several weeks deprived of any change of clothing. What possessions they had were taken from them by their guards; watches, money, and jewellery, and even their pocket-knives, thus being lost to them.

Only one officer succeeded in retaining a cherished trinket, and this was Nicholson himself. Captain Trotter, who records the incident,[1] quotes from a letter sent by Nicholson to his mother in which the writer says, "I managed to preserve the little locket with your hair in it ... and I was allowed to keep it, because, when ordered to give it up, I lost my temper and threw it at the soldier's head, which was certainly a thoughtless and head-endangering act. However, he seemed to like it, for he gave strict orders that the locket was not to be taken from me."

The severities of the confinement increased when in April news came of the death of Shah Soojah at the hands of an assassin, and the little prison in the citadel became almost a second "Black Hole of Calcutta." The one window was shut and darkened, making the air of the room unbearable. To add to the horror of the situation, Colonel Palmer was now cruelly tortured before his comrades' eyes, one of his feet being

twisted by means of a tent peg and rope. This was done in the hope that he or some one of his fellow-captives would reveal the hiding-place of a phantom "four lakhs of rupees," which the Afghans declared the British had buried in the vicinity.

But in June came a change for the better. The prisoners were now allowed to sleep out in the open courtyard in the *postins*, or rough sheepskin coats, supplied them. Two months later they learned that they were to be sent to Cabul, where Dost Mahomed's son, Akbar Khan, was keeping captive Lady Sale, Mrs. Sturt, George Lawrence, Vincent Eyre, and other Europeans. The exchange was a welcome one. Slung in camel panniers, they were jolted along the rough country roads for three days, arriving in the Afghan capital on the 22nd of August, when they were generously dined by the chief and his head men.

The quarters in which the party were now housed, together with Lady Sale and the other survivors of the Cabul massacre, were a paradise compared to their former lodging. They had a beautiful garden to walk in, servants to wait upon them, and an abundant supply of food. Their satisfaction, however, was shortlived. In a few days the prisoners were hurried off to Bamian, in the hill country to the north-west, and thence to Kulum. The reason for this move was apparent. Generals Pollock and Nott had already commenced their victorious advance upon Cabul, and Akbar Khan resolved to keep his captives as hostages for his own safety.

To Nicholson and his companions it looked as if their fate was sealed, but a ray of hope dawned for them. The Afghan officer in charge of their escort showed himself ready to consider the offer of a bribe. A bond was eventually drawn up ensuring him a handsome recompense for his services did he lead them to safety, and in the middle of September they found themselves once more free.

Late one afternoon the rescue party sent to their aid by General Pollock met them toiling along the dusty road on the other side of the Hindu Kush mountains. Within a few hours they were safe inside the British lines.

Nicholson duly marched with the main army to Cabul, and had the satisfaction of seeing the Afghan capital suffer the punishment it justly merited. On the way home, however, he experienced the first great loss in his life. His youngest brother, Alexander, who had but recently joined

the Company's service, was killed in the desultory fighting outside the city, and to Nicholson fell the sad duty of identifying the boy's body as it was found, stripped and mutilated, by the roadside.

[1] *Life of John Nicholson.*

### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **ONE OF LAWRENCE'S LIEUTENANTS.**

The three years that John Nicholson had spent in India had left their mark upon him. The stripling had grown to man's stature. He was now full six feet in height, black-haired and dark of eye, and with a grave manner which the exciting experiences he had passed through had intensified. Many people found the young officer too cold and austere for their liking, but the haughty demeanour which characterised him in reality covered a warm and sympathetic nature, of which those who were admitted into his intimacy were fully aware. By this time he had made several notable friends, including Major George Lawrence (brother of the future Lord Lawrence), and a subaltern in the 16th Native Infantry, named Neville Chamberlain, who was to make a great name for himself in the stirring days to come.

To such as had followed his career Nicholson had come through his baptism of fire with flying colours. He had shown himself possessed of high courage, and had won admiration as much for his fortitude in captivity as for his bravery in action. So far, indeed, the life of a soldier had suited him; he was now to see the other side of the shield and experience the peaceful but monotonous existence in cantonments at Meerut and Moradabad.

In this distasteful period of inaction, he applied himself diligently to the study of native languages, and was able to report to his mother ere

long that he had passed the interpreter's examination. What also eased the irksomeness of his situation was his appointment as adjutant of his regiment. The new duties that fell to his lot gave him plenty of employment.

But the reign of peace was destined to be short. In the autumn of 1845 came the first signs of a great rising among the Sikhs, whose territory was divided from the British by the river Sutlej. This warlike nation had reached the height of their power under the famous Ranjit Singh. After his death no fit successor was found to rule in his place, and the turbulent soldiery quickly found an excuse to rebel against the British Government which held them in check by the troops massed upon the frontiers.

War was declared in November. In the following month occurred the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah, in which General Sir Hugh Gough was victorious over the Sikh army. At these fierce engagements Nicholson was present as a commissariat officer, and not, to his regret, as a combatant. Some weeks later followed the victories of Aliwal and Sobraon, which resulted in the youthful Prince Dhuleep Singh, the avowed head of the Sikhs, making his submission, and gave the British a foothold in the Punjaub.

By one clause of the treaty which was concluded, the province of Cashmere was ceded to us, but shortly afterwards it was made over to the Maharajah Gholab Singh of Jammu for the sum of one million sterling. At the request of the Maharajah, the Government now selected two officers to assist the new ruler in keeping his subjects in order, their choice falling on Captain Broome of the Bengal Artillery and Lieutenant Nicholson. The latter owed this step to Henry Lawrence, to whom he had been already introduced and upon whom he had made a distinct impression. Colonel Lawrence himself had succeeded Major George Broadfoot,[1] the distinguished political agent for the Punjaub, and was installed as British Resident at Lahore.

The ostensible reason for the appointment of Broome and Nicholson was the need for drilling and disciplining the Cashmere army, but they soon found that their presence was required by the Maharajah simply to show that he had the support of the British. It was highly desirable that a display of such friendship should be made, for the Sikh inhabitants did

not take at all kindly to their new chief. After a stay at Jammu Gholab Singh set out for Cashmere, accompanied by Broome and Nicholson and a small body of his own troops. Before many days had elapsed he was hastening back to his capital with such of his soldiers who could escape from the insurgents, while the two British officers just managed to avoid capture in the mountain passes, and join him later at Jammu.

The Sikh insurrection, however, had a brief life. A few months later Nicholson was again in Cashmere with a definite appointment in the North-West Frontier Agency. He was marked out by Lawrence as one of the men whom he could rely upon to help in the work of keeping peace in the Punjaub. Of the other lieutenants of Lawrence—Herbert Edwardes, Abbott, Reynell Taylor, Becher, and the rest—mention will be made in due course. Never was master better served than was the British Resident by these young and able officers.

To the wise way in which they carried out his policy of conciliation we owe it that the vast district of the Punjaub not only remained quiet at the outbreak of the Mutiny, but itself furnished us with native troops who had a great share in quelling the rebellion.

From Cashmere Nicholson was in time transferred to Lahore to act as Assistant to Colonel Henry Lawrence. This was a pleasing promotion, and held out hopes of even more important posts in the future. On the way down to the old Sikh capital he had the satisfaction of meeting his younger brother Charles, who had followed him into the service and arrived in India some months previously. Another brother, Alexander, as has been noted, had been killed in action in the fighting round Cabul in 1842, and a third—William—was to meet with a sadder fate. He was found dead in circumstances that gave rise to a suspicion of foul play.

Now began for Nicholson that useful training in administrative work which gained him such repute a few years later. Within three weeks of his arrival at Lahore he was despatched on a mission to Umritsur, with instructions to survey and report generally on the district. This done, he proceeded to the Sind Sagur Doab country, where he was stationed as political officer in command. To cultivate the acquaintance of the two Nazims, or ruling chiefs, the Sirdars Chuttur Singh and Lall Singh, and support their authority, at the same time that he protected the people from

oppression, was Nicholson's charge from Lawrence, and he applied himself to the difficult task with zeal and enthusiasm.

"Avoid as far as possible any military movement during the next three months," wrote Lawrence; "but, should serious disturbance arise, act energetically." By peaceful methods, if possible, did he wish to bring the Punjab under subjection. Still, if the

". . . new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child,"

were rebellious and needed chastening, the hand that smote them was to smite heavily.

Very soon after Nicholson reached his new district the occasion arose for him to assert his power. Captain Abbott, then acting as Boundary Commissioner, was having trouble with the chiefs of Simulkund. These worthies had committed some dastardly outrages in the neighbourhood, and refused point-blank to appear at his court to answer for their misdeeds. In response to the other's summons, Nicholson led a small force to Simulkund, where he acted in conjunction with Abbott. The result of these prompt measures was to make the Simulkund rebels abandon their position without firing a shot.

This was a peaceful termination to an overt act of rebellion. The next piece of lawlessness that called for punishment was of a more serious nature, and gave Nicholson more opportunity to display his mastery. Although the country round Rawal Pindi was apparently tranquil, the natives were, as a matter of fact, only waiting for a convenient moment to shake off the yoke. Pathans, Rajputs, Jats, Gujars, and men of other tribes, alike resented the check laid upon their raiding and cattle-lifting, while the rough soldiery especially lamented the lost opportunities for plundering.

Before the winter of 1847-48 had come to an end there was a violent outbreak in Mooltan. In that district the Moolraj treacherously murdered some white officers and proclaimed a "holy war" against the British.

The revolt soon began to spread. Tribe after tribe helped to fan the fires of rebellion into a blaze, until at last Sirdar Chuttur Singh, whom everybody had thought to be tamed, threw off his allegiance and raised his wild Hazara followers. To Nicholson news speedily came that

Chuttur Singh meant to seize the fort at Attock, an important hill station. Although suffering from fever, he declared to Lawrence his readiness to start at once for the fort and occupy it before the rebel chief could forestall them.

“I will start to-night,” said Nicholson. “The fever is nothing, and shall not hinder me.”

Lawrence having consented to his departure, he set off some hours later with a body of Peshawur Horse and Mohammedan levies, and by dint of hard riding reached the fort in the nick of time. The garrison were on the point of closing the gates against him. Leaping from his horse, and striding boldly among them, Nicholson ordered the Sikh soldiers to arrest their leaders. For a moment they wavered, and the young officer’s life hung in the balance. But no one dared fire the shot which would have turned the scale for mutiny.

“Seize those men!” commanded Nicholson fiercely, as he pointed out the ringleaders. And, impressed by his resolute bearing, as he towered above them with grim determination written on his face, the soldiers did as he ordered, whereupon he placed the prisoners in fetters and made arrangements for the security of the fort.

It was a daring and characteristic piece of work, made all the more noteworthy by the fact that Nicholson was almost alone when he leapt thus upon the mutineers. In his fiery impatience he had outdistanced his escort of sixty horsemen, only a handful of these being able to keep up with him to the end. The infantry, he noted in his report, did not arrive until midnight.

Such a swift blow at their plans as this was not without its lesson to the Sikhs, and the name of “Nikalseyn” from that time began to assume a terrible significance in their minds.

[1] Killed at the battle of Ferozeshah.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SECOND SIKH WAR.

The capture of Attock effected, there still remained much to be done in the immediate neighbourhood. Chuttur Singh's Hazara forces were moving about with the intention of joining the main army under another Sikh leader, Shere Singh. With his newly raised troop of 700 levies Nicholson dashed hither and thither, striking heavy blows at the scattered portions of the enemy whom he encountered and damping the ardour of other tribesmen who had thoughts of swelling the numbers of the rebels.

Hasan Abdal received one of these sudden and unexpected visits. Here a body of Sikh horse had mutinied and expelled their commander from the fort. Nicholson promptly paraded the garrison, placing the ringleaders under arrest, as he had done at Attock. In this instance, however, he thought it better policy to show some leniency. When the Sikhs begged hard for forgiveness he granted it, wishing to show that he was "not entirely without confidence in them."

Almost immediately after this incident he learned that a Sikh regiment of some strength, with two guns, was at Rawal Pindi on its way to meet Chuttur Singh's army. By a quick march he intercepted the rebels at a place called Jani-ka-sang, near the Margalla Pass. The mutineers had taken up a strong position within the walls of a cemetery, and if it came to a fight in the open the advantage lay entirely on their side.

Nicholson made up his mind quickly as to his course of action. Concealing his men in a piece of jungle, he called out the colonel of the disaffected regiment and gave him half an hour in which to decide whether he would surrender or be attacked. What Nicholson would have actually done had the Sikh commander remained obdurate is a question; possibly he would have risked a dash across the open ground in front of the cemetery walls and taken the chance of his men facing the rebels' fire or turning tail. But he was spared such a crucial test. Before the half-hour was up the Sikh colonel reappeared to announce that he and his men regretted their disobedience, and were ready to place themselves at his service.

Once more Nicholson's reputation for fearlessness had won him a bloodless victory. Having read them a severe lecture, he dismissed the mutineers with no further punishment, and sent them off to Rawal Pindi.

From now on Nicholson was busy scouring the country round Hasan Abdal, reducing Chuttur Singh's chances of increasing his army as far as was possible. Wherever mutiny reared its head, there was the young lieutenant with his troop of irregulars ready to crush it at once with a stern hand. There was no temporising with him. He held much the same views at this time as some years later when, in reply to a lengthy despatch from Sir Henry Lawrence calling upon him for a report of the courts-martial he was holding and punishments he was inflicting, he wrote on the other side of the document in large letters: "The punishment of mutiny is death."

By September 1848 Chuttur Singh, with several regular regiments and nearly a score of field-pieces, was making a determined forward movement. There was also another but smaller force in the field led by a son of the Sikh chief. When Nicholson learned that the latter body was endeavouring to join the main army he made a bold attempt to cut it off, and started off post-haste for the Margalla Pass. At this spot, through which he knew the rebel troops would be compelled to march, was a formidable tower situated high up on the hillside. To gain entrance to this it was necessary to clamber up to an opening in the outer wall some ten feet from the ground, but Nicholson was not daunted by this. It was most essential that the tower should be carried by storm and its position held by his men.

Accordingly he led his troops to the assault in a mad rush that carried the Pathans to the base of the tower before they could realise what a foolhardy undertaking they were engaged upon. The rest of his men very cowardly lagged behind. Then, no ladder being procurable, he set to work to break down the wall, while from above the defenders rained down a storm of stones upon them. One of these missiles hit Nicholson in the face and knocked him over, but the wound was luckily not a severe one.

In the end he was forced to fall back with his handful of men, the tower being practically impregnable and a large body of Sikhs having been observed marching to the relief of the garrison. But the vigour of

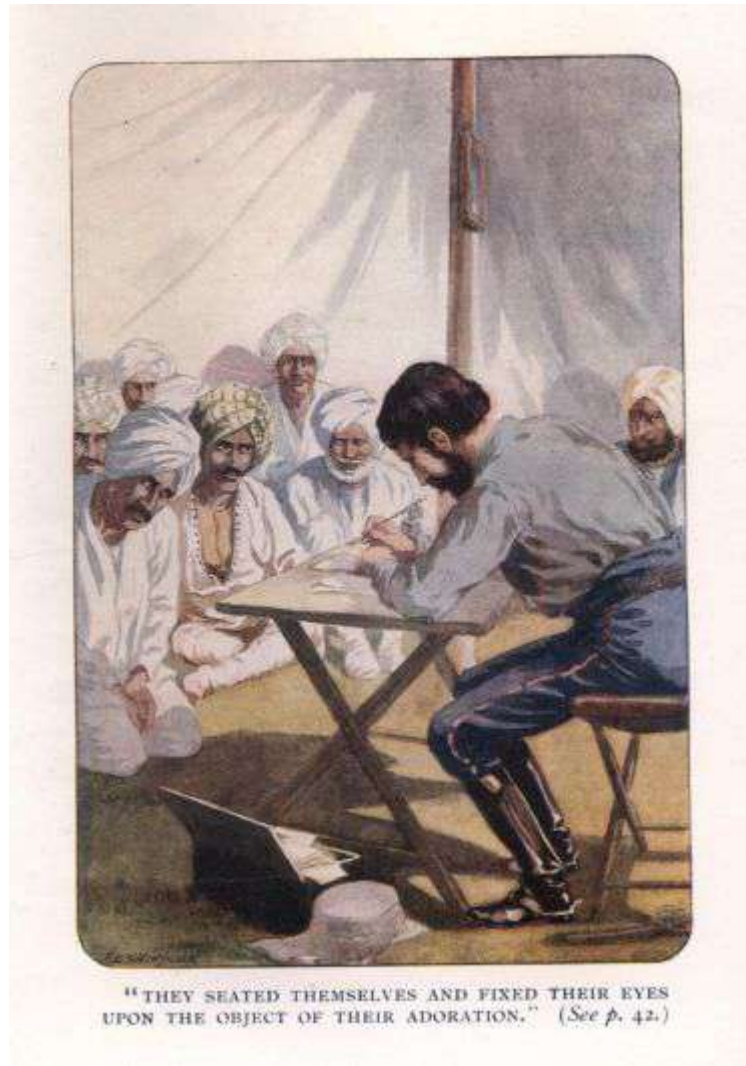
his attack had its moral effect. The Sikh soldiers, fearing that the assault would be renewed next day, and that Nicholson would take some terrible revenge upon them for their resistance, quietly stole away under cover of the darkness, leaving him master of the situation!

It was somewhere about this time that the famous sect of Sikhs arose which honoured Nicholson by elevating him to the rank of a deity. A certain Hindu devotee in Hazara gave out that he had discovered in "Nikalseyn" the incarnation of the Brahman god, and he soon gathered about him a little company of enthusiastic fellow-worshippers. To their hero's annoyance, the "Nikalseyns," as they styled themselves, indulged in open adoration, even prostrating themselves at his feet. In vain did he threaten them with condign punishment, and at last actually resort to flogging. The devotees admired him all the more for his severity, and sang his praises still louder.

"After the last whipping," says Sir Herbert Edwardes in a character sketch of the hero, "Nicholson released them, on the condition that they would transfer their adoration to John Becher (Abbott's successor at Hazara), but, arrived at their monastery, they once more resumed the worship of the relentless Nikalseyn."

In his reminiscences of India[1] Mr. R. G. Wilberforce states that the Sikhs declared they would raise a Taj to Nicholson, beside which the famous Golden Taj at Umritsur should be as nought, did he but openly profess their religion.

"During the time that Nicholson was with the column," he continues, writing of the days before the march to Delhi, "it was a common sight of an evening to see the Sikhs come into camp in order that they might see him. They used to be admitted into his tent in bodies of about a dozen at a time. Once in the presence, they seated themselves on the ground and fixed their eyes upon the object of their adoration, who all the while went on steadfastly with whatever work he was engaged in, never even lifting his eyes to the faces of his mute worshippers."



**“They seated themselves on the ground and fixed their eyes upon the object of their adoration.”**

“Sometimes, overcome perhaps by prickings of conscience, or carried away by feelings he could not control, one of them would prostrate himself in prayer. This was an offence against the committal of which warning had been given, and the penalty never varied: three dozen lashes with the cat-o’-nine-tails on the bare back.”

With Chuttur Singh’s open revolt the second Sikh War had fairly begun. Nicholson was now more and more in demand, doing guerilla service, or engaged in such useful work as collecting boats for Sir Joseph Thackwell to cross the Chenab River and acting as intelligence officer to the forces. At the battle of Chillianwallah he did duty as aide-de-camp to Lord Gough, and at Guzerat, which followed soon after, he and his Pathans enjoyed the distinction of capturing nine guns from the enemy.

A striking tribute to Nicholson's personality, and the valour he displayed on these occasions, is the well-vouched-for story that for many years afterwards, when visitors came to view these battlefields, the country people would begin their accounts by saying, "Nikalseyn stood just *there!*"

After the conclusion of the campaign, which saw him a brevet-major, Nicholson decided to take a two years' holiday and return home. What influenced him to this most was the desire to comfort his mother, who, he knew, was grieving over the loss of her two sons, William and Alexander. But it was not easy for him to leave. India, as he wrote, was "like a rat-trap," more difficult to get out of than into, and it was not until January 1850 that he was at last free to depart. His old friend and colleague, Herbert Edwardes, as it happened, was also of a mind to see "the old country" again, so the two journeyed together down to Bombay, whence they took ship for England.

But before Nicholson was to see his widowed mother again he was to pass through a romantic experience which deserves a chapter to itself.

[1] *An Unrecorded Chapter of the Indian Mutiny.*

## **CHAPTER V.**

### **ON FURLOUGH.**

Nicholson's plan, which he proceeded to carry out, was to pay a visit to Egypt, where he was desirous to see Thebes, Cairo, and the Pyramids, and thence journey home by way of Constantinople and Vienna. He did not intend to stay long in any of these places, but circumstances were against him. At both the Turkish and Austrian capitals he was detained by adventures which appealed strongly to his chivalrous nature. The account

of these comes to us through Sir John Kaye, to whom Nicholson's mother told the story.

At the time that Nicholson arrived in Constantinople, early in the New Year of 1850, the city held a notable prisoner. This was Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, whom the Austrians had driven into exile. Owing to British influence, the revolutionary leader's asylum in Turkey was rendered safe for the time, but a movement was set on foot by his friends to smuggle him out of the country and convey him to America. Such a project received all Nicholson's sympathies, and when a friend of his—an Englishman who had married a Hungarian lady and served in the Magyar army—enlisted his help, he readily placed himself at the other's service.

The scheme was a simple one. Every day Kossuth took a ride accompanied by a few Turkish soldiers, the route being changed on each occasion. It was accordingly arranged that he should choose to ride on a particular day in the direction of the sea-coast. At a certain spot the conspirators were to await him and his escort, overpower the latter, and carry Kossuth on board an American frigate which was to be at hand.

Unhappily for the patriot, a lady who was in the secret revealed it to a bosom friend, who in turn confided in another. In a short time it came to the knowledge of the Austrian ambassador. Representations were at once made to the Turkish authorities, who redoubled their vigilance, and the plot fell through.

The same friend, "General G——," through whom Nicholson had been interested in the attempt to free Kossuth, now asked the young officer to do him another favour. His wife, a Hungarian lady, as has been said, was imprisoned in an Austrian fortress. So vigorous was the confinement that she was kept in ignorance of her husband's fate, and the General was anxious to send her news of his escape and present whereabouts. Nicholson promptly undertook to convey a letter to the unfortunate lady, should it be possible to do so, and started off immediately for the fortress.

On arriving at his destination, he marched boldly up to the gate of the citadel, demanding to see the officer of the guard.

"I am Major Nicholson of the Indian Army," he said, "and I shall be greatly obliged if you will allow me to see my friend, Madame G——."

The request was undoubtedly an irregular one, but the Austrian officer, after a little demur, courteously gave his permission. Nicholson was then conducted to the prisoner's cell and told that he could have five minutes' conversation, no longer. As soon as the door had closed behind him, and he and Madame G—— were alone, he pulled off one of his boots and drew out the letter, saying, "You have just five minutes to read it, and give me any message for your husband."



"YOU HAVE JUST FIVE MINUTES TO READ IT,  
AND GIVE ME ANY MESSAGE FOR YOUR HUSBAND."  
(See p. 49.)

**“You have just five minutes to read it, and give me any message for your husband.”**

There was no time for the poor lady to express her gratitude as fully as she would have liked. Having read the welcome letter, she told her visitor what she wished him to say to her husband, and then—the five minutes having expired—Nicholson departed.

“These two incidents,” says Sir John Kaye, “speak for themselves. There is no lack, thank God, of kind men, brave men, or good men among us, but out of them all how many would have done these two things for ‘his neighbour’? How many respectable men would at this moment condemn them both?”

What Henry Lawrence and his noble wife thought of the Kossuth enterprise was expressed in a letter from the latter some months later. “You can hardly believe,” she wrote, “the interest and anxiety with which we watched the result of your projected deed of chivalry.... When I read of your plan my first thought was about your mother, mingled with the feeling that I should not grudge my own son in such a cause.”

After having performed his mission, Nicholson made his way to London, where he found his mother awaiting him at Sir James Hogg’s town house. It was now the month of April. The rest of the year he spent in sight-seeing, visiting his old home at Lisburn, and looking up various relatives in Ireland and England. He found time, however, to make a journey to St. Petersburg, where he was much impressed by a grand review of troops by the Tsar. This opportunity to study the Russian military system gave him considerable satisfaction, as he had already devoted some attention to the French and Prussian armies. But what struck him most was a recent Prussian invention, the needle-gun, which he saw would be the arm of the future. In strong terms he urged the importance of introducing this weapon in place of the old-fashioned muskets then in use, but his counsel was unheeded.

At the end of 1851 Nicholson bade good-bye to his mother, and set off on his return journey to India. His friend, Herbert Edwardes, had preceded him thither some months earlier, taking with him his newly-wedded wife. To Nicholson Edwardes had said before he left, “If your heart meets one worthy of it, return not alone,” but the advice was not followed. Nicholson, with all the fascination which his personality exerted over women, gave no indication of being susceptible to the grand passion, and he went forth to take up the great task that lay before him single-handed.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MASTER OF BANNU.

On reporting himself at his old station at Lahore, Nicholson was not left waiting long for a fresh appointment. Reynell Taylor, who had been in charge of the Bannu district, had applied to be relieved, and Sir Henry Lawrence, now Chief Commissioner for the Punjaub, offered the post to Nicholson. The latter accepted, and in May of 1852 entered upon his duties as Deputy Commissioner.

This new position was one fraught with considerable difficulties. Bannu, which lay on the north-western frontier of the Punjaub, was populated by a wild and lawless people. Waziris, Marwatis, and men of other Afghan tribes, they had lived an open, free-booting life, raiding far and wide at will, and were known as the most daring thieves and bloodthirsty ruffians on the border. Under Taylor's wise but gentle rule they had been kept within certain bounds, but much remained to be done. They were now to learn from Nicholson the lesson which in time transformed the province into the most orderly one in the whole Punjaub.

Truly could Herbert Edwardes, who had had no little experience of them, say afterwards, "I only knocked down the walls of the Bannu forts; John Nicholson has since reduced the *people* to such a state of good order and respect for the laws, that in the last year of his charge not only was there no murder, burglary, or highway robbery, but not an *attempt* at any of these crimes."

The new *hákim* (or magistrate) quickly made his influence felt when he arrived on the scene at Bannu. Up in the hills to the westward lived the Umarzai Waziris, among the worst of the outlaws. The knowledge that a fresh ruler had been appointed over them troubled them not a whit, and they proceeded to swoop down on the villages in the plain for the purpose of taking toll as aforetime. Nicholson acted promptly. Placing himself at the head of 1500 mounted police, he carried war into the enemy's country, penetrating the hill-fastnesses into which no one else had yet dared to venture. To the surprise of the Umarzais, he turned the tables completely upon them, and in a week or two he had their headmen at his feet suing for pardon.

The moral of this swift retribution was not lost upon the other people of the district. One and all came to agree that “Nikalseyn” was a man to be feared, respected, and obeyed. His hand fell heavily and surely on the wrong-doer within the limits of his jurisdiction, and he was a bold Bannuchi indeed who dared to challenge his power. At the same time that the new Deputy Commissioner was a stern dispenser of justice he showed himself an impartial ruler. If he punished the lawless he certainly protected the oppressed, irrespective of rank. Lies availed little in the court over which he presided; sooner or later he would get to the bottom of the matter, and the wrong would inevitably be righted.

The villagers, it is said, after long discussion of his merits under the vine trees, where they gathered of an evening, came to the conclusion that “the good Mohammedans” of olden days must have been “just like Nikalseyn,” and emphatically approved him as every inch a *hákim*.

Of Nicholson’s methods in dealing with his turbulent subjects Mr. S. Thorburn, who served in the same district some years afterwards, tells this story. The locale, he believes, was Rawal Pindi. A reward of a hundred rupees had been offered for the capture of a noted freebooter, whose whereabouts were well known, but whose reputation had deterred anyone from arresting him. On taking his seat in his court-house one day Nicholson demanded to know whether the man had been caught. The officers of justice shook their heads.

“Double the reward at once,” said Nicholson. This was done, but without any result. The same afternoon he inquired again if the fellow had been caught, and received the same answer, “Not yet, my lord.” The timorous officials added the suggestion that a very strong force of police would be necessary, as the man was surrounded by his kinsmen.

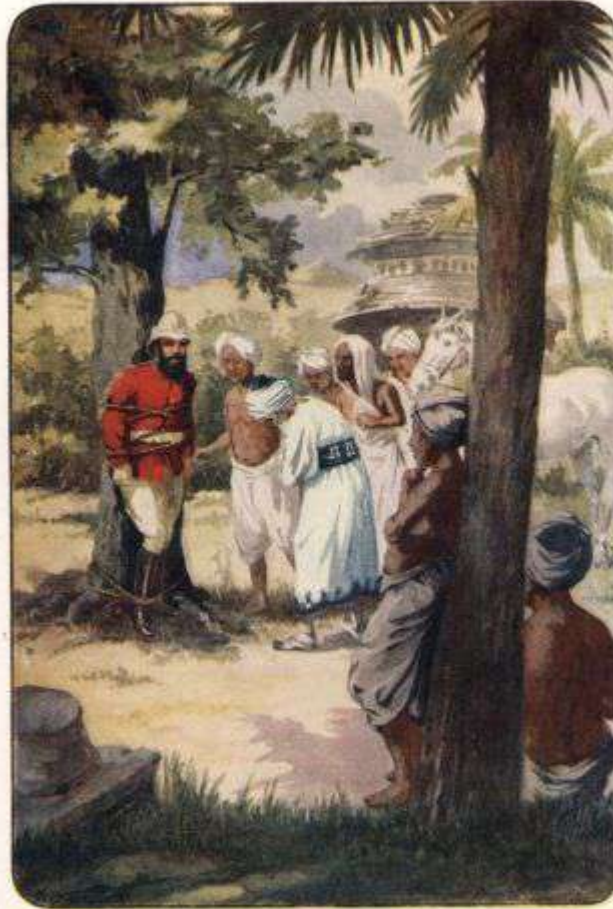
“Very well, then,” said Nicholson, “saddle my horse.”

A few minutes later he rode off alone to the village in which the outlaw was sheltering, though, as a matter of fact, the latter walked about openly in little fear of capture. Almost the first person Nicholson met was the very man he had come to find. At his order to surrender the desperado rushed upon him with drawn sword. Nicholson calmly awaited the attack, and with a sweeping stroke of his own sword cut the man down. Then, riding back to his court, he commanded that the body should be brought in, and the head cut off and placed on his table.

It was a gruesome thing to do, perhaps, but it must be remembered that it was necessary to strike terror into the hearts of other evil-doers, to whom the free-booter in question had been something of a hero. Every Malik[1] who came into court recognised the features of the dead man's head as it rested by Nicholson's elbow, and understood that the same fate would befall him did he venture on a like course.

A more pleasing anecdote is that which tells of how Nicholson settled a complicated land dispute. One Alladâd Khan was accused of having seized the inheritance of his orphan nephew, to whom he had acted as guardian during the boy's minority. As usual there was much hard swearing on both sides, but the weight of the evidence went with Alladâd Khan. The most influential man in the village, he made it understood that it would be wisest to support his claim. To Nicholson the case was perplexing, but he had strong reasons for believing that the youth was in the right. He decided upon a novel plan to solve the difficulty.

One morning, therefore, Alladâd Khan and his neighbours were greatly concerned at seeing their *hâkim's* famous white mare grazing untethered on a piece of grass on the outskirts of the village. This meant a fine or a whipping at least for some one, so the party resolved to drive the animal to the next village, and let the people there bear the brunt of their lord's wrath. The mare was accordingly turned into the road, but Alladâd Khan and his followers had not gone far before they saw Nicholson himself fastened with ropes to a tree!



“THEY SAW NICHOLSON HIMSELF FASTENED WITH ROPES TO A TREE.”  
(See p. 60.)

### **“They saw Nicholson himself fastened with ropes to a tree.”**

When, with trembling hands, they went to release him, Nicholson asked in a stern voice, “Whose land is this I am on?”

“It belongs to Alladâd Khan, my lord,” replied one or two bolder than the rest. The piece of ground was the actual plot in dispute between uncle and nephew. At this assertion Alladâd Khan emphatically denied ownership. “It is not mine, indeed, my lord,” he protested, “but my nephew’s. Nay, of a truth, it is not mine!”

“Will you swear it is so?” demanded Nicholson. And Alladâd Khan swore by all he held most sacred that the land was his nephew’s. This was all that Nicholson wanted; and, having now several witnesses to the other’s statement, he permitted himself to be unbound.

The breaking-in of these “fluttered folk and wild” among whom he was thus cast took Nicholson four years, but the work was done thoroughly. Throughout the vast district between the Indus and the Sulaiman Mountains his name alone was sufficient to inspire awe and bring the refractory to reason. For a long time after he had left Bannu, it is said, the village people would wake at night trembling, declaring they heard the tramp of “Nikalseyn’s war-horse.” And Waziri mothers would still their crying babes by saying that he was coming to them, though by thus holding him up as a bogey they did Nicholson an injustice, for he was ever tender and kind with children.

There is significance, too, in a note which Mr. Thorburn makes in his interesting volume on Bannu. Often, he says, when sitting in his court he would be puzzled by the lying of the parties in the suit before him, and in despair would give the disputants “a few minutes’ freedom of tongue.” Then he would be amused by hearing one of them saying, “Turn your back to the sahib, and let him see it still wealed with the whipping Nikalseyn gave you!” Whereupon the other would retort, “You need not talk, for your back is well scored also!”

Of the nature of the people with whom he had to deal Nicholson once told a story which is grimly characteristic. A little Waziri boy having been brought before him on a charge of poisoning food, he asked the young culprit if he knew that it was wrong to kill people. The boy acknowledged that it was wrong to kill with a knife or a sword. “But why?” persisted Nicholson. “Because,” was the prompt answer, “*the blood leaves marks!*”

Towards the end of his stay in Bannu Nicholson had a narrow escape from assassination at the hands of a fanatic. The story may be best told in his own words, as he described the incident in a letter to Herbert Edwardes.

“I was standing at the gate of my garden at noon,” he wrote on the 21st of January 1856, “with Sladen and Cadell, and four or five chuprassies” (native orderlies), “when a man with a sword rushed suddenly up and called out for me. I had on a long fur pelisse of native make, which I fancy prevented his recognising me at first. This gave time for the only chuprassie who had a sword to get between us, to whom he called out contemptuously to stand aside, saying he had come to kill me

and did not want to hurt a common soldier. The relief sentry for the one in front of my house happening to pass opportunely behind me at this time, I snatched his musket, and, presenting it at the would-be assassin, told him I would fire if he did not put down his sword and surrender. He replied that either he or I must die; so I had no alternative, and shot him through the heart, the ball passing through a religious book which he had tied on his chest, apparently as a charm.

“The poor wretch turns out to be a Marwati, who has been religiously mad for some time. He disposed of all his property in charity the day before he set out for Bannu. I am sorry to say that his spiritual instructor has disappeared mysteriously, and, I am afraid, got into the hills. I believe I owe my safety to the fur *chogah*, for I should have been helpless had he rushed straight on. The chuprassie (an orderly from my police battalion) replied to his cry for my blood, ‘All our names are Nikalseyn here,’ and, I think, would very likely have got the better of him had I not interfered, but I should not have been justified in allowing the man to risk his life, when I had such a sure weapon as a loaded musket and bayonet in my hand.”

[1] The head-man of an independent village.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GREAT MUTINY.

Nicholson quitted Bannu early in 1856 for a six months’ special mission to Cashmere, preparatory to taking up an appointment as Deputy Commissioner at Peshawur. It was at this frontier outpost that his loyal friend Herbert Edwardes was stationed as chief political officer. Before going on to speak of this important change, however, I may refer to a side of Nicholson’s work that has not been touched upon in the preceding chapter.

His duties as a civil officer at Bannu comprised more than the dispensing of justice and the keeping in order of the unruly tribesmen. As “Warden of the Marches” he had to watch closely the agricultural interests of the community, and it is well worthy of note that he reclaimed a large waste tract of land named Landidák by running a canal into it from the river Kuram. He also made a summary settlement of the Land Revenue in 1854, thus following up a task that Reynell Taylor had begun.

To make quite clear the course of future events, it is necessary further to point out that Nicholson was now placed directly under John Lawrence. Three years previously friction had arisen between Sir Henry Lawrence, as Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub, and his equally strong-willed brother. While the difficulties were purely technical, and in no way affected their personal relations, it soon became evident that affairs would come to a deadlock, and Lord Dalhousie very wisely determined on a bold stroke. Transferring Sir Henry to Rajputana, to act as Agent there, he gave John Lawrence the vacant post of Chief Commissioner, a position for which he was well fitted.

To Nicholson the change of masters was by no means welcome. Between him and Sir Henry there existed a rare bond of sympathy, and he felt that he could never entertain a similar affection for John Lawrence. Despite this, however, he worked loyally for his new chief, who, for his part, thoroughly understood the nature of his fiery-tempered and impetuous subordinate, at the same time that he appreciated his many admirable qualities. There were differences of opinion between the two naturally, but John Lawrence’s firmness and tactful methods, together with Nicholson’s sense of justice, prevented any rupture.

At Peshawur Nicholson found that his reputation had preceded him, and made his task all the easier. Bannuchi and Waziri tribesmen had carried a faithful report of his doings to their more northern compatriots, and the word quickly went round that “Nikalseyn” was a dangerous man to flout. There were some, as it happened, who ventured to cross swords with him, but the result taught them that this stern-faced, black-bearded giant of a sahib was their master every whit as much as was Edwardes.

The spring of the fateful year 1857 now arrived, and with it came a desire in Nicholson’s mind to exchange his post in the Punjaub for

another more remote. A restless fit was on him. He would have liked to go to Persia to see some fighting, or to Oude, to serve under Sir Henry Lawrence. Fortunately for India, Lord Canning, who had succeeded Lord Dalhousie as Governor-General, did not see his way to oblige him. Edwardes pleaded his cause at Calcutta in an interview in which, after a eulogy of his friend, he uttered these memorable words: "My lord, you may rely upon this, that if ever there is a desperate deed to be done in India, John Nicholson is the man to do it!" But the time was too critical for such a man as the Deputy Commissioner at Peshawur to be spared. Already signs were to be observed of disaffection among the native troops, and the time was rapidly nearing when a challenge was to be flung at British supremacy in India. "Wait," said Lord Canning in effect, and Nicholson went on quietly with his duties.

The native mine which had been slowly preparing exploded in May of the same year. On the morning of the 12th the belated news was flashed over the wires to Peshawur that three regiments of sepoy had revolted at Meerut two days before, and massacred every European not in the British lines. The Great Mutiny had begun in earnest.

How Edwardes, Nicholson, and the other British officers at Peshawur received the startling tidings we learn from Lord Roberts, who was on special duty in the city at the time. Roberts, then a youthful subaltern in the artillery, acted as secretary at the council of war which was immediately held at the house of General Reed, the divisional commander. There were present, he tells us, besides Reed, Brigadier Sydney Cotton, Herbert Edwardes, Nicholson, Brigadier Neville Chamberlain, and Captain Wright. The last-named had been summoned to act in a similar capacity with Roberts. The question to be decided was how to make the Punjab secure and prevent a general rising there, and the point to be borne in mind was that there were only some 15,000 British troops with 84 guns in the province, as against over four times the number of natives armed with 62 guns.

Almost the first proposal was made by Nicholson. To raise a strong force of native levies who could be trusted was his recommendation, warmly supported by Edwardes, and it was unanimously approved by the council. All along the border which they had brought into submission during those arduous years of labour at Bannu, Attock, and other stations, Nicholson and his chief had staunch friends among the Sikh

warriors. To these they now turned for help in the time of need. And so it was that the Movable Column came into existence, that splendid body of picked men who made themselves and their leader ever famous in Indian history.

In the meantime it was arranged that General Reed, as senior officer in the Punjaub, should join Lawrence (now Sir John) at Rawal Pindi, to act in concert with the Chief Commissioner, and that Brigadier Cotton should succeed him in command at Peshawur. As a measure of precaution, the "treasure" (computed at 24 lakhs of rupees) was now removed from the cantonments to the fort outside, where a European garrison guarded it. At the same time, for the security of the ladies and children in the station, Brigadier Cotton made his headquarters at the Old Residency, a strong, double-storeyed building which was capable of being well defended.

For the next week or two Nicholson and his colleagues had their hands full. He himself tapped the mail-bags at the post office, making thereby many important discoveries in the shape of treasonable correspondence, and saw to the prompt checking of seditious reports, such as that issued by the Mohammedan editor of a native paper, who went to prison for his pains. The raising of the native levies, to his disappointment, proceeded slowly. Most of the border chieftains were waiting to "see how the cat jumped," to put it figuratively, and both Edwardes and Nicholson were kept hard at work exerting their influence with the *maliks* of the various villages.

After the news that Delhi had fallen to the mutineers came an alarming report of a fresh outbreak at Nowshera, only a few miles away. In the face of this development, the two friends came to the conclusion that the sepoy at Peshawur must be disarmed. They carried their arguments at once to Sydney Cotton, and convinced the Brigadier of the necessity for such drastic action. This decision was arrived at in the small hours of the 22nd of May. By six o'clock the same morning the colonels of the sepoy regiments had received their orders, and by seven the work of disarmament had begun.

"These prompt and decided measures," notes Edwardes, "took the native troops completely aback. Not an hour had been given them to consult, and, isolated from each other, no regiment was willing to

commit itself; the whole laid down their arms.” The same writer records how, as the muskets and sabres of “once-honoured corps” were thrown unceremoniously into carts, there were to be seen here and there the spurs and swords of British officers who had vouched for the loyalty of their men, and who still refused to believe them traitorous. Very soon after were these simple gentlemen to have their faith rudely shattered.

It was a dramatic scene, but to Nicholson, if to none other, it was not painful. Too well did he know how the seeds of rebellion had been sown in these same regiments.

The next day Nicholson was called upon for immediate active service. The 55th Sepoys at Mardan had mutinied and taken to the hills. At the head of a strong body of cavalry and infantry he hurled himself on the track of the rebels, and then began a fierce pursuit that gave the fleeing sepoy no respite. Up hill and down dale they were hunted, until at last nearly three hundred had been killed or taken prisoners, together with a large quantity of arms. The rest, it may be mentioned, fell into the unfriendly hands of the hill tribes across the border, and suffered either death or slavery. Not a man is known to have escaped.

In this dashing piece of work Nicholson was ever foremost, bringing many a mutineer to the dust with his own great sword. For twenty hours he was in the saddle under a scorching sun, and “could not have traversed less than seventy miles.” He had given a practical lesson in the art of punishing rebellion, and had demonstrated the value of a mobile field force. He was now within a short time to further display his abilities as the commander of the Punjaub Movable Column, to perform, in fact, that “desperate deed” of which Edwardes had spoken to Lord Canning.

## **CHAPTER VIII.**

### **WITH THE MOVABLE COLUMN.**

On the formation of the Movable Column to which the council of war at Peshawur had agreed, Sir John Lawrence gave the command to

Brigadier-General Neville Chamberlain. Nicholson, like Edwardes and Cotton, had volunteered for the post, and, in view of the fact that the suggestion had been his, was somewhat disappointed at being passed over; but he made no protest. On the other hand, he affirmed that the Chief Commissioner had made the best choice. His loyal friendship to Chamberlain would admit of no jealousy.

Soon after the cutting up of the 55th Regiment of Sepoys at Mardan, however, Neville Chamberlain was promoted to be Adjutant-General, and Nicholson, with the rank of Brigadier-General, was placed in command of the column. It was a popular choice. After Chamberlain there was no one better fitted for the post. With the exception of, perhaps, Edwardes, Nicholson surpassed any of his *confrères* in the Punjaub in his intimate knowledge of the native mind, while his commanding presence and strong personality marked him out as the man for a crisis such as had arisen.

The first thing to be done in Nicholson's estimation when he took over the leadership of the Movable Column was to purge it thoroughly of any taint of disaffection. Two native regiments were suspected, and he resolved on disarming these at once. On the morning of the 25th of June, while the column was halting on the high road leading to Delhi, the British regiments, with the guns, were manoeuvred into position so that they would completely command the sepoy of the 33rd and 35th, who were marching into camp a little later. When they arrived they would walk straight into a trap.

There was no hitch in the proceedings. Not a native of the suspected regiments had any idea that anything out of the usual was about to occur. Some of the British officers were lying carelessly on the ground laughing and talking as the 35th came up and found themselves suddenly confronted by a menacing line of infantry and guns. As Nicholson, through his staff officer, Roberts, gave the order to "pile arms," the sepoy's faces fell. But a moment's reflection showed them that they were outwitted, and sullenly they threw down their muskets and belts, which were immediately carted off to the fort.

In due course the 33rd were similarly treated, though not without a vigorous protest from their old colonel, Sandeman. "I will answer with my life for the loyalty of every man in the regiment," he declared. But

the order was final. It was all over in a very few minutes, and Nicholson was impressing upon the disarmed sepoys the warning that desertion would be punished by death.



### **Portrait of John Nicholson**

Some days before this dramatic scene a notable incident took place at Jalandhar in which Nicholson was the chief figure. The city was found to be in no little confusion on the arrival of the Movable Column, mutiny being rampant among the troops, and the military authorities taking scarcely any precautions to prevent an outbreak. In the streets it was apparent from the swagger of the native soldiers that they believed the *sahibs* were powerless through fear.

To strengthen his hands, Major Lake, the Commissioner, invited Nicholson to a durbar at which the officers of the Kapurthala troops were to be present. Nicholson attended, and at the close of the ceremony observed that Mehtab Singh, a native general, was leaving the room with

his shoes on. This was an act that implied great disrespect. Lord Roberts, who was a spectator, tells the story of what happened in a graphic manner.[1]

Stalking to the door, Nicholson, he says, “put himself in front of Mehtab Singh, and waved him back with an authoritative air. The rest of the company then passed out, and when they had gone, Nicholson said to Lake, ‘Do you see that General Mehtab Singh has his shoes on?’ Lake replied that he had noticed the fact, but tried to excuse it. Nicholson, however, speaking in Hindustani, said, ‘There is no possible excuse for such an act of gross impertinence. Mehtab Singh knows perfectly well that he would not venture to step on his own father’s carpet save barefooted, and he has only committed this breach of etiquette to-day because he thinks we are not in a position to resent the insult, and that he can treat us as he would not have dared to do a month ago.’

“Mehtab Singh looked extremely foolish, and stammered some kind of apology; but Nicholson was not to be appeased, and continued, ‘If I were the last Englishman left in Jalandhar, you should not come into my room with your shoes on!’ Then, politely turning to Lake, he added, ‘I hope the Commissioner will now allow me to order you to take your shoes off and carry them out in your own hands.’”

Major Lake assented, and the crestfallen general did as he was bidden. Mr. Henry Newbolt pictures his discomfiture for us in the stirring ballad he has written on this incident[2]—

“When Mehtab Singh came to the door  
His shoes they burned his hand,  
For there in long and silent lines  
He saw the captains stand.

When Mehtab Singh rode from the gate  
His chin was on his breast:  
The captains said, ‘When the strong command,  
Obedience is best.’”

The immediate result of Nicholson’s high-handed action was to change the current of public feeling in Jalandhar. The natives dropped

their impudent manner, and realised that the British *raj* was by no means in as tottering a condition as they had supposed.

From Jalandhar the Movable Column proceeded to Umritsur, where tidings reached it of fresh outbreaks at Jhelum and Sialkot. Nicholson lost no time in dealing out vengeance to the mutineers, who had killed many Europeans. Pushing on with his force at full speed, he came in touch with them on the banks of the river Ravi, a branch of the Chenab, and opened fire. It was a short but sharp engagement, for numbers of the rebels were inflamed by the drug known as *bhang*, and fought like fiends. In less than half an hour the sepoys turned tail, leaving some hundreds dead or wounded on the battlefield.

Two days later the pursuit was again taken up, and the mutineers were cornered at another spot on the Ravi. As before, Nicholson had it all his own way. Shot and shell quickly drove the enemy out of their position on an island in the river, and those who escaped death from bullet or bayonet flung themselves panic-stricken into the river, to be drowned or captured subsequently. This victory was all the more notable by reason of the fact that the 3000 (some say 4000) sepoys who lost their lives were at the time marching to join the mutineers at Delhi.

In connection with this episode, Mr. R. G. Wilberforce, who served with the column, makes an interesting note in his book. Nicholson, he says, told him the story of how he had once killed a tiger with his sword while on horseback, the affair taking place (if the narrator is not mistaken) on the very island in the Ravi where the rebels had sought refuge.

This feat, with which Sir James Outram is also credited, is performed “by riding round and round the tiger at a gallop, gradually narrowing the circle until at last the swordsman is near enough to deliver his blow.” The tiger, it is said, follows the flying figure of the horseman, waiting an opportunity to spring upon him, but eventually becomes too bewildered to act.

The same writer also records an incident which illustrates Nicholson’s remarkable faculty for recognising rebels, however well disguised. On the march from the camp at Goodaspore, whence the column hurled itself on the Sialkot mutineers, two natives were observed by the wayside. They were miserable-looking wretches, with bundles on

their backs, and the soldiers gave them but a passing glance. When Nicholson came along, however, his keen eyes rested on them with interest. Then, turning to the Pathans who rode behind him, he uttered the word “Maro!” (kill), and the stalwart troopers instantly cut the pair down.

Nicholson’s instinct had not failed him. The natives, for all their innocent appearance, were sepoys carrying swords to a mutinous regiment which had been disarmed at Goodaspore.

How fully the Movable Column justified its existence in those critical two months of June and July, 1857, there is ample testimony. Nicholson moved his light-footed force from point to point with surprising celerity, striking mercilessly at every spot where mutiny threatened, until the possibility of the Punjaub bursting into a blaze of rebellion was averted. It was a difficult task throughout, and its magnitude was the greater in that the famous column itself had to be purged more than once. There was the ever-present danger of disaffection in his own ranks. In the end, we are told, his force consisted of little more than one field battery, one troop of horse-artillery, and an infantry regiment, all of which were British, with a few hundred trusted Pathans.

Of the native levies special mention must be made of the Mooltani Horse. These men, Sikhs for the most part, had followed Nicholson from sheer personal devotion. They recognised no head but him, and, it is said, refused to accept pay from the Government. At his death they disbanded, returning to their homes on the frontier.

In the last week of July Nicholson proceeded to Lahore to consult Sir John Lawrence as to the next step to be taken. The upshot of the conference was that he received instructions to march the Movable Column on to Delhi, where General Archdale Wilson had commenced the siege. So, on the 25th of the month, the Punjaub saw him once more on the move, his face set eagerly towards the old Mogul capital, where he was to place the crown upon his achievements and find a soldier’s grave.

[1] *Forty-One Years in India.*

[2] “A Ballad of John Nicholson” (*The Island Race*).

## CHAPTER IX.

### BEFORE DELHI.

In the long march to Delhi Nicholson's temper must have been tried time and time again. He was all impatience to get to his goal and urge on the assault, the delay of which every day added to the peril that threatened British India. The tardy progress made, owing to the heavy guns he carried in his train, caused him to chafe as he had done on that rebel-pursuing march from Goodaspore some weeks earlier, when his tireless energy could not brook even a brief halt for rest.

Captain Trotter, in his *Life of Nicholson*, gives us a vivid picture of the officers and men of the column snatching an hour's repose in the shade of some trees while their leader remained “in the middle of the hot, dusty road, sitting bolt upright on his horse in the full glare of that July sun, waiting, like a sentinel turned to stone, for the moment when his men should resume their march.”

Early in August the Movable Column had crossed the Sutlej, and four days later Nicholson was galloping on ahead to General Wilson's headquarters on the Ridge. Wilson, to his relief, had sent an urgent message summoning him to a council. It was the 7th of the month when Nicholson rode into the British camp. Before nightfall on that day everyone was aware that a new power had arrived and was on tiptoe with excitement to know what the new-comer intended doing.

With the thoroughness that characterised his methods, Nicholson promptly made a round of the pickets; his tall, striking figure exciting comment from those who had not seen him before. “His attire,” says an officer who was on the Ridge at the time, “gave no clue to his rank; it evidently never cost its owner a thought.” But one had only to look at the dark, handsome, sombre face to see that here was a man of no little distinction. Grave of demeanour as he always was, his features were

saddened still more now by the news of Sir Henry Lawrence's death at Lucknow. The loss of his old chief and patron touched him very nearly, and it was with a heavy heart that he went about his duties.

Riding back a day or two later to rejoin his troops, Nicholson found that the column had been strengthened by several additions, bringing its numbers up to a total of over four thousand men, less than a third of whom were British. This formidable body made a welcome reinforcement to Wilson's little army, and put fresh encouragement into the hearts of the besiegers. In the camp Nicholson renewed his acquaintance with Chamberlain, then recovering from a wound; Hodson, the dashing cavalry leader, who had raised a regiment of horse; and other distinguished leaders. One and all were unfeignedly glad to see him on the scene, and looked to him to spur the over-cautious commander-in-chief to a more resolute course of action.

The opportunity for Nicholson to prove his worth came before very long. A powerful siege-train had been despatched by Sir John Lawrence from Ferozepore. About the middle of August it was learnt that a large body of mutineers had sallied out from Delhi with the intention of intercepting the train, which was proceeding slowly under a rather weak escort. The duty of attacking the rebels and preventing what would be a terrible disaster was allotted to Nicholson, and he at once started off with a column of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, to give battle.

Inquiries revealed the fact that the sepoy occupied a strong position at Najafgarh, where they had repaired the bridge across the river. The road thither was a difficult one, and was rendered almost impassable at places by the swampy nature of the ground. It was the rainy season, unfortunately, so that the streams that had to be crossed were in flood. But, despite all obstacles, Nicholson pushed on doggedly, taking the lead with Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, who had volunteered to act as guide.

Sir John Kaye records the opinion of a Punjabi officer of note who averred that not another man in the camp—"except, perhaps, Chamberlain"—could have taken the column to Najafgarh. "They went through a perfect morass," he states. "An artillery officer told me that at one time the water was over his horses' backs, and he thought they could not possibly get out of their difficulties; but he looked ahead, and saw

Nicholson's great form riding steadily on as if nothing was the matter, and so he felt sure all was right."



**“He saw Nicholson’s great form riding steadily on as if nothing was the matter.”**

The engagement was opened briskly with artillery fire. Forcing the rebels' left centre, the troops drove the enemy from their strongest position near an old *serai* (or caravansary), silenced the guns there, and then swept irresistibly down the long line of the mutineers towards the bridge. Nicholson's plan of attack had succeeded beyond expectation. Under the terrible fusillade the sepoys broke in confusion, and ran pell-mell for the bridge and the open country on the other side, only to be pursued and cut to pieces in large numbers. The whole affair, from the moment of the first shot fired, occupied one hour, and in that time between 6000 and 8000 well-armed mutineers were put to flight.

It was a brilliant action—one of the most brilliant, indeed, that took place in the whole course of the Mutiny. Not only had a huge force of rebels been dispersed, but a number of guns had been captured, and this with the loss on our side of but twenty-five men. Well might General Wilson thank Nicholson and his gallant troops the next morning, “from my whole heart,” for the signal victory gained. Congratulations poured in on the hero of the day, Sir John Lawrence telegraphing from Lahore to say, “I wish I had the power of knighting you on the spot; it should be done!”

The time was now fast approaching when Nicholson was still further to distinguish himself. The importance of not delaying the assault longer than could be helped was being forced upon him daily, and at the council table he urged the necessity for striking an immediate blow. To his far-seeing mind it was essential that the mutineers should not be allowed to gather strength while the army on the Ridge became enfeebled through forced inaction. There were sorties and dashing charges almost every hour it is true, but these brought the actual assault on the city no nearer.

As the days crept by and still nothing was decided, Nicholson’s patience gave out. When at last the startling rumour got about that General Wilson contemplated abandoning the Ridge and retreating until he had a stronger army at his back, the leader of the Movable Column decided on a bold course. The idea of leaving Delhi to the mutineers as a centre for a rebellion which might within a few days become universal, appalled him. He went to the next council in the General’s quarters with the fixed determination to bring matters to a final issue.

Lord Roberts, from whose book I am again tempted to quote, relates the story of how he learned of this momentous decision. Nicholson had been sitting in his tent talking to the young artillery officer of his plans. He ended by making a dramatic announcement. “Delhi must be taken,” he said, “and it is absolutely essential that this should be done at once; and if Wilson hesitates longer, I intend to propose at to-day’s meeting that he should be superseded.”

On Roberts venturing to remark that, as Neville Chamberlain was *hors de combat* through his wound, this step would leave Nicholson senior officer with the force, the other smiled and answered, “I have not overlooked that fact. I shall make it perfectly clear that, under the

circumstances, I could not possibly accept the command myself, and I shall propose that it be given to Campbell of the 52nd. I am prepared to serve under him for the time being, so no one can ever accuse me of being influenced by personal motives.”

It was a characteristic declaration, and Roberts knew that Nicholson would carry out his word. As it happened, however, the occasion did not arise. That day Wilson agreed to the assault being made, and the next morning an order was issued to the troops informing them of the welcome decision.

## **CHAPTER X.**

### **IN THE HOUR OF VICTORY.**

The date fixed for the final leap on Delhi was the 14th of September. Before that historic day arrived there was a week of anxious preparation. The siege-train, to whose assistance Nicholson had gone, as related in the previous chapter, came into camp safely, bringing with it eighteen guns, 24-pounders, 18-pounders, and howitzers. These were quickly placed in position in new batteries close to the walls of the city, and the thunder of their fire warned the mutineers that the siege had entered upon its last phase.

The initial work fell mostly to the engineers. Under the direction of Alexander Taylor, second in command to Baird-Smith, who was unfortunately on the sick list, they worked day and night constructing the breaching batteries and getting ready fascines, gabions, and scaling-ladders. Owing to the heavy musketry fire concentrated on them by the sepoys, the task was one which cost many valuable lives; but, like the true heroes they were, the engineers never flinched. As one after another was laid low, a comrade was ready to step forward and take the fallen man's place.

Now was it that Medley, Greathed, Lang, and Home, among others, won fame for their daring reconnaissances of the enemy's position. The

big guns had battered down the Mori bastion, and made great breaches in the wall near the Cashmere Gate. It was important to ascertain the extent of these, so the four engineer officers named volunteered to make an examination. On the evening of the 13th of September, while it was still light, Lang stole out of the British camp, and coolly ran the gauntlet of the sepoy bullets to the very counterscarp of the ditch beneath the fortifications. He returned safely to report that the breaches were practicable.

To make more sure of the nature of the ground, Lang and Medley ventured out again after nightfall with a ladder and measuring-rod. They reached the great ditch, completed their examination of its depth and width, and were mounting to the breach itself when the alarmed sepoy sentries came running towards them. To stay meant almost certain death, so the two officers, with their escort of riflemen, made a dash for safety. Their figures were descried, however, and a volley of balls came whizzing about their ears as they bolted back. Elsewhere, at the Water bastion, Greathed and Home were similarly engaged, being able to announce that the breaches there were equally successful.

At last all was in readiness for the attack. To everyone's gratification, the honour of leading the assault had been conferred on Nicholson. He was to head the first of the three columns placed under his command and to storm the breach near the Cashmere bastion. The second column directed its attention to the Water bastion, while the third was told off to follow the first after the Cashmere Gate had been blown up.

The story of how the gallant Lieutenants Home and Salkeld, with Sergeant Carmichael, Corporal Burgess, and others, blew up the Cashmere Gate and covered themselves with glory, cannot be given at length here. Abler pens than mine have described the brave deed with graphic detail,[1] and I must refer the reader to their narratives. It is of Nicholson and his last glorious exploit that I have to tell.

His post of honour, as has been explained, was at the head of the first attacking column. While Home and Salkeld were carrying their powder bags to the Cashmere Gate, and while behind them No. 3 Column, under Campbell of the 52nd, waited like hounds in leash, Nicholson gave the signal to advance. The booming of the guns had ceased, the heavy shells from the 24- and 18-pounders having cleared once more the breaches

which the mutineers had vainly attempted to repair. The way was open for the stormers to enter the doomed city.

In the mad rush that followed, the attacking party outdistanced the ladder-bearers. This caused a brief delay, during which the foremost files of the column were exposed to a fierce fire; but no one wavered. Very soon the ladders were brought, officers and men dropped down into the ditch, and away they all went, racing up the opposite slope and driving the sepoys before them.

Nicholson was still in the van. Leading his men, sword in hand, he swept resistlessly through the gaping breach and found himself inside the city. At the sight of the grim-faced, menacing troops who poured in after him, the rebels fell back confusedly. Little difficulty was experienced in fighting a way through the streets to the point where it had been arranged the three columns should meet. This was an open space by what was known as Skinner's Church.

The juncture of the forces having been effected, Colonel Campbell's column proceeded to push on to the centre of the city. The other two columns, merged practically into one, turned themselves towards the Lahore Gate, the capture of which was all-important. Here, in fact, was the key to Delhi.

According to the instructions issued, the Lahore Gate was to be carried at all costs. Little did the commander-in-chief anticipate what a terrible ordeal he had set his subordinates. As they pressed eagerly forward the troops followed the line of the ramparts and eventually cleared a path to the Cabul Gate. So far they had been successful. There now remained before them a narrow lane less than three hundred yards long and varying from ten yards to three feet in width. Through this passage they would have to win ere the gate could be reached.

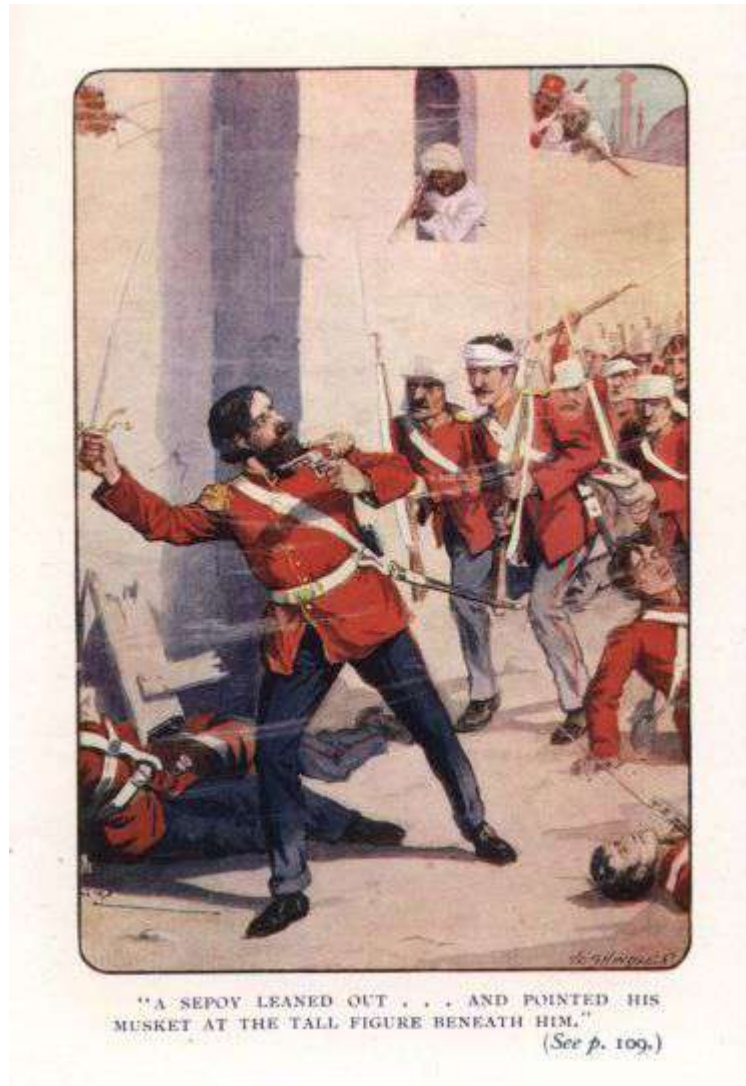
What a "lane of death" it was to prove was speedily shown. At the far end the sepoys, flushed with the success that had attended their efforts in repelling the assault at this point, had mounted two guns, one covering the other and each protected by a bullet-proof screen. Above these towered the massive Burn bastion, into which some minutes later hundreds of mutineers poured. It seemed beyond the bounds of possibility that any force could make its way against such terrible odds.

There were men, however, who were willing to try, and the advance began.

The 1st Bengal Fusiliers dashed forward at the signal and succeeded in capturing the first of the guns, but they got little farther. The fire directed upon them can only be described as murderous. Shot and shell dropped among the ranks thick and fast, inflicting heavy loss, and the remnant was obliged to fall back for the time. A second charge was made, but this too failed, leaving many another poor fellow stretched lifeless on the ground.

It was now generally realised that the task of forcing a passage through the lane was hopeless, or at least inadvisable, for the present. Nicholson, however, would not concede this. Every inch of ground gained in Delhi that day was worth untold gold, and he determined that no effort should be spared to win the Lahore Gate. Placing himself at the head of his men, he called on them for another charge, for one last brave attempt.

If there was one man whom the Fusiliers would have followed to death, it was Nicholson. At his summons they ran on again, some of them actually reeling from the terrific strain they had undergone. Springing out into the mouth of the lane, Nicholson waved his sword above his head and went forward. The soldiers advanced some paces, wavered, re-formed, and wavered again as the sepoy's guns belched forth flame and death. Then, as they paused hesitating, the fateful moment came. Some yards ahead of the soldiers stood Nicholson, facing his men as he called to them angrily to "come on." Suddenly a sepoy leaned out of the window of a house close by and pointed his musket at the tall, commanding figure beneath him. There was a flash, and on the instant Nicholson fell with a bullet in his back.



**“A sepoy leaned out . . . and pointed his musket at the tall figure beneath him.”**

Even then, lying mortally wounded, the dying lion refused to allow himself to be borne to the rear. “Carry the lane first,” he ordered; but Colonel Graydon, who went to his assistance, persuaded him to let a bearer party lift him to one side. Thence, a little later, he was taken to a hospital tent to have his wound attended to. It was at this juncture that a young staff-officer, who is now Lord Roberts, found Nicholson in a dhoolie by the roadside just within the Cashmere Gate. The stricken hero had been deserted by the native bearers and left to his fate!

Through Roberts’ efforts a fresh party of bearers was obtained, and Nicholson was carried tenderly to the nearest field hospital. He was seen to be in great pain, besides being much exhausted from loss of blood, but

hopes were entertained that his wound would not prove mortal. By the irony of fate, the occupant of another dhoolie, which was presently placed by his, turned out to be his brother Charles, whose arm had been shattered. The two had met again for the last time.

From the field hospital Nicholson was shortly after conveyed to the Ridge, where nothing was left undone that could ease his suffering. Medical skill, however, was unavailing; he lingered until the 23rd of the month, and then passed peacefully away.

Of Nicholson's last moments Neville Chamberlain, who was constantly by his bedside, has written in touching words. He himself had lost a devoted friend who could never be replaced. In the camp the news that Nicholson was gone was received with universal sorrow. It was felt that by his death the army on the Ridge had been suddenly deprived of the one strong man to whom everybody had instinctively turned for advice and encouragement, and who could least be spared. There was a sense of injustice, too. Delhi had fallen, but—John Nicholson, struck down in the hour of victory, was not there to share in the triumph.

The funeral of the dead hero took place on the following day. He was buried in a newly made cemetery not far from the Cashmere Gate and the breach through which he had led the storming party, a fitting spot truly for his resting-place. Among those who paid their last respects to him were the men of the Mooltani Horse, who had followed Nicholson from the Punjaub to Delhi. Their grief was unrestrained, sirdars and troopers mingling their tears as the body of their beloved "Nikalseyn sahib" was lowered into the grave.

Of the strange sect that had worshipped him as a god it is recorded that on Nicholson's death becoming known, the two head-men of the tribe committed suicide, declaring that life was no longer worth living. The rest, however, decided that their dead master would not have approved of such a course, and announced their resolve to worship in future the God of whom he had often spoken to them; whereupon they went to Peshawur in a body and became Christians.

After Nicholson's death the tributes of praise accorded him were many and widespread. In every part of India and in Great Britain his early demise—he was but thirty-five—created a feeling of a national loss. The *London Gazette* soon afterwards announced that had he lived

he would have been made a K.C.B.; while, for their part, the East India Company, in whose service he had laboured so well, marked their recognition of him by unanimously voting his mother a special grant of 500 pounds a year.

What more remains to be said? It is a fadeless memory that John Nicholson has left behind him. Soldier, administrator, and leader of men, he trod “the perfect ways of honour,” and by his private as much as by his public life made himself a shining ensample for all time. Like Havelock, Henry and John Lawrence, Gordon, and many another soldier of high fame, Nicholson was a man of deep religious feeling. For this his careful early training was largely responsible. He would not have enjoyed the Lawrences’ intimate friendship had he not been the high-minded, pure-souled man he was; but if he bore “the white flower of a blameless life” himself, he never paraded his religion or forced his views upon others. It was enough for him to live cleanly and righteously, to follow the dictates of conscience in all his actions.

We may fittingly close this brief record of his glorious career by echoing the words of an eloquent speaker who thus eulogised “the Lion of the Punjaub”—

“He fell as a soldier would wish to fall, at the head of his gallant troops, with the shout of victory in his ear. Was not such a death worthy of such a life? And will not the Cabul Gate, where he fell, live in future British history as live those Heights of Abraham on which there fell, a century ago, another youthful general, the immortal Wolfe?”

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[1] See, among other accounts, *The Book of the V.C.* (Melrose).

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN  
NICHOLSON, THE LION OF THE PUNJAUB \*\*\*

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