

**RECOLLECTIONS OF
A LUCKNOW
VETERAN, 1845-1876**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649099115

Recollections of a Lucknow veteran, 1845-1876 by Major-General J. Ruggles

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MAJOR-GENERAL J. RUGGLES

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LUCKNOW VETERAN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

RECOLLECTIONS

OF A

LUCKNOW VETERAN

1845-1876

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL J. RUGGLES

COLONEL, 19TH PUNJABES

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1906

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Dedicated

TO MY DEAR WIFE

AS A SLIGHT RETURN FOR ALL

THE UNTIRING INTEREST AND TROUBLE SHE HAS TAKEN IN MY WORK

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INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH possessing no claim to literary merit, it has occurred to me that these few jottings from my Military Life might interest some of those who, like myself, passed through the troublous times of the Indian Mutiny and still survive. I fear that this number is fast decreasing, and personally I find it very sad when we assemble at our Annual Lucknow Dinner to miss familiar faces, and it seldom comes round without some missing comrades who shared with me this anxious time. From about fifty we have now dwindled down to scarce twenty-five, and the SILENT TOAST, so often drunk to their memory, casts a shadow over those present.

So many have passed away that I now hold the position of the "Father of the Garrison". At the time of my writing this, H. R. H. the Prince of Wales has just paid us the very high compliment of receiving the few surviving Veterans at Lucknow.

His Royal Highness, in replying to an address, made the following remark: "The name of 'LUCK-

now' is very precious to us at home ; it is part of our history of which we are proud, and these sentiments may be shared by the gallant Veterans'. Two years since, by His Majesty's gracious permission, I was appointed "Hon. Colonel" of my old regiment, the 19th Punjabees ; so, after twenty-eight years, I again find myself holding a link with the past.

I am indebted to Mr. Gubbins' book, published in the year 1858, for many reminders of what occurred during the Siege, and with few exceptions my notes tally with his History.

After a lapse of sixty-one years, it seems a bold task to write one's reminiscences and recollections of what happened so long ago, and that is the number of years since the date of my first commission, namely 13th June, 1845 ; and yet, when one's mind is carried back to that time, how many things almost forgotten come back to one ; and, amongst them, the faces of old friends—gone long ago. Priestly, who was my first friend in the 41st and with whom I shared a house for nine years—what enjoyable times we had together, and how we consoled with each other on the state of impecuniosity we were generally in, normal with the subaltern in those days ! Scott was another of our standing, a dear old fellow ; fond of horses, and always with several in his stable, but never in that state of "*Hard-up-ishness*" that most

of us were. How he managed it I don't know, but he always seemed to have some money put by. After the Mutiny he bought a tea plantation in Assam, and it was in returning from an inspection in a boat down the river that during the night the overhanging bank fell in and crushed him. Bennet, too, and Gibbs; we all joined the regiment within a few days of each other, and now they are all gone, but my remembrance of them is very dear, and will, I trust, always remain so.

Taking it all in all, my career has not been a very eventful one. My life in India was most pleasant and enjoyable, the climate agreed with me, and there were hardly any drawbacks. My regret was in having to leave the service when I did, and I have no need to console myself with what Aliph Cheem writes, that :—

India is not the land alone,
Where one digs for a nugget and finds a stone.

