



1857

June 8.

the city. From those walls their comrades, looking out towards the scene of action, could see the smoke and flame which pronounced that the Sepoys' Lines, in our old cantonments, were on fire. That day's fighting had deprived them of their shelter outside the walls, and given us the finest possible base for the conduct of our future operations against the city.*

Results of the
Battle.

So the victory of the 8th of June was complete, and it remained for us only to count what we had gained and what we had lost by that morning's fighting. The loss of the enemy is computed at three hundred and fifty men; and they had left in our hands twenty-six guns, with some serviceable ammunition, which we much wanted.† Our own loss was small, considering the dashing character of the work that had been done. Four officers and forty-seven men

* In these first operations, as in all others, as will subsequently appear, the Sirmoor battalion did excellent service. Major Reid thus describes their conduct on the 8th: "About one o'clock P.M. we reached the Ridge, when I was directed by General Barnard to occupy Hindoo Rao's House, which is within twelve hundred yards of the Moree Bastion. Had just made ourselves comfortable, when the alarm was sounded. In ten minutes the mutineers were seen coming up towards Hindoo Rao's house in force. I went out with my own regiment and two companies of Rifles, and drove them back into the city. This, however, was not accomplished till five P.M., so that we were under arms for sixteen hours. Heat fearful. My little fellows behaved splendidly, and were cheered by every European regiment. It was the only Native regiment with the force, and I may say every eye was upon it. The general was anxious to see what the Goorkahs could do, and if we were to be trusted. They had (because it was

a Native regiment) doubts about us; but I think they are now satisfied." It is true, as stated, that the Sirmoor battalion was the only Native regiment engaged on our side; but there were other Native detachments. The Sappers from Meerut fought well, and were commended in Sir H. Barnard's despatch, as was also the Contingent of the Jheend Rajah. And Jan Fishan Khan, with his horsemen, did gallant service. Flushed with the excitement of the battle, the Afghan chief is said to have declared that another such day would make him a Christian.

† The statement in the text is given on the authority of Sir H. Barnard's official despatch. But the number of guns captured on the 8th of June is set down at *thirteen* in Major Norman's narrative, Major Reid's Extracts from Letters and Notes, and in the "History of the Siege of Delhi by an Officer who served there," &c. Norman has specified in detail the nature of the captured ordnance, and he is notable for his accuracy.

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were killed in the encounters of that day, and a hundred and thirty-four men were wounded or missing. Among those who received their death-wounds at Budlee-ka-Serai was the chief of Sir Henry Barnard's Staff. Colonel Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, was shot down, almost at the commencement of the action. As he lay there, in agony, with young Barnard, the General's son and aide-de-camp, vainly endeavouring to help him, he asked the young officer to raise his head, so that he might see the wound that was rending him; and, having seen it, he knew that he was dying. Telling Barnard that nothing could be done for him, he begged his young friend to leave him to his fate. Then presently the spirit passed away from his body: and, at sunset, all that was left of the Adjutant-General of the Army was laid in the grave. To the Commander of the Delhi Force this must have been a heavy loss, for Chester possessed all the knowledge and experience which Barnard lacked; and the Adjutant-General was a brave soldier and a man of sound judgment, and his advice, in any difficult conjuncture, would have been wisely received with respect.* But Chester had risen in the Department, and the time was coming when departmental experience and traditionary knowledge were to be stripped of their splendid vestments. And History, without any injurious reflection upon his character, may declare that the incident was not all evil that

* "Among the slain was unhappily Colonel Charles Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, a brave and experienced soldier, whose loss thus early in the campaign was a grave and lamentable misfortune; for his sound judgment and ripe knowledge would have been precious in council as in action."—*Baird Smith's Unpub-*

lished Memoir. Two other officers of the Staff were killed, Captain C. W. Russell and Captain J. W. Delamain. The fourth officer who lost his life was Lieutenant A. Harrison of the Seventy-fifth; Colonel Herbert of that regiment was among the wounded.



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THE MARCH UPON DELHI.

CSL

May. in due course brought Neville Chamberlain and John
June 8. Nicholson down to Delhi.

But it is not by lists of killed and wounded, or returns of captured ordnance, that the value of the first victory before Delhi is to be estimated. It had given us an admirable base of operations—a commanding military position—open in the rear to the lines along which thenceforth our reinforcements and supplies, and all that we looked for to aid us in the coming struggle, were to be brought. And great as was this gain to us, in a military sense, the moral effect was scarcely less; for behind this ridge lay our old cantonments, from which a month before the English had fled for their lives. On the parade-ground the Head-Quarters of Barnard's Force were now encamped, and the familiar flag of the Feringhees was again to be seen from the houses of the Imperial City.



BOOK V.—PROGRESS OF REBELLION IN UPPER INDIA.

[MAY—JULY, 1857.]

CHAPTER I.

THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES—STATE OF AFFAIRS AT BENARES—STATE OF THE CITY—THE OUTBREAK AT AZIMGURH—ARRIVAL OF GENERAL NEILL—DISARMING OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH—THE MUTINY AT JAUNPORE—AFFAIRS AT ALLAHABAD—MUTINY OF THE SIXTH—APPEARANCE OF GENERAL NEILL—THE FORT SECURED—RETRIBUTORY MEASURES.

It has been seen that whilst Lord Canning was eagerly exhorting the chiefs of the Army to move with all despatch upon Delhi, never doubting that a crushing blow would soon descend upon the guilty city, he was harassed by painful thoughts of the unprotected state of the country, along the whole great line of the Ganges to Allahabad and thence through the Doab to Agra. There was one English regiment at Dinapore; there was one English regiment at Agra; and besides these the whole strength of our fighting men consisted of a handful of white artillerymen and a few invalided soldiers of the Company's European Army. And, resting upon the broad waters of the Ganges, there was the great military cantonment of Cawnpore, with a large European population, a number of Sepoy regiments, and few, if any, white troops. To all these unprotected places on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, and the more inland stations dependent upon

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them, the most anxious thoughts of the Governor-General were now turned, and his most earnest efforts directed. If the Native soldiery, who were thickly strewn along these lines, not only in all the military cantonments, but in all the chief civil stations, guardians alike of the property of our Government and the lives of our people, had risen in that month of May, nothing short of the miraculous interposition of Providence could have saved us from swift destruction.

But in all that defenceless tract of country over which the apprehensions of the Governor-General were then ranging, and towards which he was then eagerly sending up reinforcements, rebellion was for a time in a state of suspension. Whether it was that a day had been fixed for a simultaneous rising of all the Sepoy regiments, or whether, without any such concerted arrangements, they were waiting to see what the English would do to avenge their brethren slaughtered at Meerut and Delhi, the Native soldiery at the stations below those places suffered day after day to pass without striking a blow. No tidings of fresh disaster from the great towns, or from the military cantonments dotting the Gangetic provinces, followed closely upon the news of the capture of the imperial city. But everywhere the excitement was spreading, alike in the Lines and the Bazaars, and it was plain that many weeks would not elapse without a fresh development of trouble, more dreadful, perhaps, than the first growth, of which he already had before him the record.

Benares.

A little more than four hundred miles from Calcutta, in the direction of the north-west, lies the city



of Benares. Situated on a steep sloping bank of the Ganges, which its buildings overhang, it is the most picturesque of the river-cities of Hindostan. Its countless temples, now beautiful and now grotesque, with the elaborate devices of sculptors of different ages and different schools; its spacious mosques with their tall minarets grand against the sky;* the richly carved balconies of its houses; its swarming marts and market-places, wealthy with the produce of many countries and the glories of its own looms; its noble ghauts, or flights of landing-stairs leading from the great thoroughfares to the river-brink, and ever crowded with bathers and drawers of the sacred water; the many-shaped vessels moored against the river-banks, and the stately stream flowing on for ever between them, render this great Hindu city, even as seen by the fleshly eye, a spectacle of unsurpassed interest. But the interest deepens painfully in the mind of the Christian traveller, who regards this swarming city, with all its slatternly beauty, as the favoured home of the great Brahminical superstition. It is a city given up to idolatry, with, in the estimation of millions of people, an odour of sanctity about it which draws pilgrims from all parts of India to worship at its shrines or to die at its ghauts. Modern learning might throw doubt upon the traditional antiquity of the place, but could not question the veneration in which it is held as the sacred city of the Hindoos, the cherished residence of the Pundits and the Priests.

But neither sacerdotal nor scholastic influences had softened the manners or tempered the feelings of the

* A recent writer states that it is computed that there are fourteen hundred and fifty-four temples and two hundred and seventy-two

mosques in the city of Benares.—*See Sherring's "Sacred City of the Hindus."*

people of Benares.* There had always been something more than the average amount of discontent and disaffection among the citizens; and now in the summer of 1857 this was increased by the high price of provisions—always believed to be one of the curses of British rule.† And there was another source of special danger. Some of the most disreputable members of the Delhi Family had been long resident at Benares, where they had assumed all the airs of the Imperial Family, and persistently endeavoured in secret to sow resentment in the city against the English. These wretched Mogul Princes, it was not doubted, would be well disposed, in such a conjuncture, to foment rebellion among the Sepoys; and it was scarcely less probable that the State prisoners—Sikhs, Mahrattas, Mahomedans, and others, who had been made to find an asylum in Benares, would find ample means of gratifying their love of intrigue in dangerous efforts against the power that had brought them to the dust.‡

* The population of Benares is estimated at about two hundred thousand, of which an unusually large proportion are Hindoos. The author of the "Red Pamphlet" computes the number at three hundred thousand, and Macaulay rhetorically amplifies it into "half a million." In May, 1857, Mr. Tucker, the Commissioner, writing to Lord Canning, speaks of "the huge, bigoted city of Benares, with a hundred and eighty thousand of the worst population in the country." This is probably rather under the number, but it is to be remembered that there is in Benares always an immense floating population of pilgrims from other provinces.

† "The city, always the most turbulent in India, was now the more dangerous from the severity with which the high price of corn pressed

upon the poorer classes: the Poor-beah Sepoys, who had been more or less restless since the beginning of March, now publicly called on their Gods to deliver them from the Feringhees, clubbed together to send messengers westward for intelligence, and, finally, sent away their Gooroo (priest), lest, as they said, in the troubles which were coming, he should suffer any hurt."—*Report of Mr. Taylor, Officiating Joint Magistrate.*

‡ Major Charters Macpherson, who had been Governor-General's Agent at Benares, before the appointment was incorporated with the Commissionership, has thus described some of the leading features of the population of Benares: "These attenuated shadows of the regality of Delhi—these strong, noble, robust, and workman-like

1857.
May.The Secrole
Cantonment.

At a distance of about three miles, inland, from the city of Benares, is the suburb of Secrole. There was the English military cantonment—there were the Courts of Law and the great Jail—the English Church and the English Cemetery—the Government College—the several Missionary Institutes—the Hospitals and Asylums—the Public Gardens, and the private residences of the European officers and their subordinates. The military force consisted of half a company of European Artillery and three Native regiments. These were the Thirty-seventh regiment of Native Infantry, the Sikh regiment of Loodhianah, and the Thirteenth regiment of Irregular Cavalry—in all, some two thousand men, watched by some thirty English gunners. The force was commanded by Brigadier George Ponsonby.* He was an officer of the Native Cavalry, who fifteen years before, in the affair of Purwan-durrah—that charge, which was no charge, and which was at once so heroic and so dastardly—had covered himself with glory. The names of Fraser and Ponsonby, who flung themselves almost alone upon the horsemen of Dost Mahomed, will live as long as that great war is remembered, and will be enshrined in the calendar of our English heroes. In spite of those fifteen years, the incident was still fresh in men's minds in India, and there was confidence in the thought that Ponsonby commanded at Benares.

There other good soldiers also were assembled;

Sikh chiefs, whom my heart takes in straight; then the shroffs, merchant-zemindars, and bankers of four hundred years' standing, and insurance companies of Benares—the very essence, pride, and heart of Gangetic commerce, or rather half-heart, Mirzapore holding the other

ventricle; then, also, its Pundit-dom in full strength yet, all this has passed before me most curiously."—*Memorials of an Indian Officer.*

* In the early part of May, Ponsonby had not taken command. Colonel Gordon then commanded the station.



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The civilians
at Benares.

and civilians too, with the best courage of the soldier and more than his wonted wisdom. Mr. Henry Carr Tucker—one of a family famous alike for courage and for capacity—was Commissioner of Benares. Mr. Frederick Gubbins, who, some time before, as Magistrate, had acquired by a grand display of energy in a local crisis an immense ascendancy over the minds of the people, was now the Judge. Mr. Lind was the Magistrate of Benares. It is impossible to over-rate their exertions.* As soon as the fatal news arrived from Meerut and Delhi, they saw clearly the danger which beset them, and the work which lay before them, to preserve our old supremacy in such a place. The crisis was one which demanded that the civil and military authorities should take counsel together. Warned by the wholesale butcheries of Meerut and Delhi, they deemed it a point of essential urgency that there should be a common understanding as to the place of resort for women and children and non-combatants in the event of a sudden surprise or alarm. A council, therefore, was held; but it would seem that no definite plan of action was formed. On the following day two military officers called upon Mr. Lind, with a proposal that greatly startled him. One was Captain William Olpherts, commanding the Artillery, an officer of good repute, brave as a lion, but of uncertain temper, who had served under Williams of Kars, in the auxiliary operations connected with the Crimean War. The other was Captain Watson, of the En-

* "The magistrate and judge (Messrs. Lind and Gubbins) exerted themselves with great skill to maintain the peace of the city; now patrolling with parties of Sowars, now persuading Bunyahs to lower the price of corn, now listening to

the tales of spies, who reported clearly the state of feeling in the city, and told the minds of the Sepoys far more truly than the officers in command."—*Mr. Taylor's Report.*



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gineers. Their opinions were entitled to be received with respect; but when they suggested the propriety of an immediate retreat to the strong fortress of Chunar (eighteen miles distant from Benares), Mr. Lind resented the proposal, and said that nothing would induce him to leave his post. When his visitors had taken their departure, the Magistrate hastened to Mr. Gubbins, and, returning to his own house with the Judge, was presently joined by Mr. Tucker and by Colonel Gordon, who temporarily commanded the station. Olpherts and Watson had intimated that Gordon had approved the plan of retreat to Chunar; but when in answer to a question, which he put to Mr. Gubbins, the civilian said, "I will go on my knees to you not to leave Benares!" Gordon promptly answered, "I am glad to hear you say so. I was persuaded against my will." Mr. Tucker had never doubted that it was their duty to stand fast.* So it was resolved that no sign of anxiety should be made manifest, either to the soldiery or to the people; that every one should remain in his own home, as in quiet times, and that there should be no open display of arming, or any other symptom of distrust. But in the event of a sudden rising either of the soldiery or of the people, all the Christian residents not

* Mr. Taylor, however, in his official narrative, says, "They both (Lind and Gubbins) returned to Mr. Lind's house to discuss the best means of operation, and were soon joined by Mr. Tucker the Commissioner, and Colonel Gordon. When the former alluded to the plan (the retreat to Chunar) in terms which seemed to imply he approved it, Mr. Lind condemned it most strongly," &c. &c. It is possible that for "former" we should read "latter." In a letter before me (May 19), addressed to Lord Canning, Mr. Tucker

says, "One officer of high rank and much experience recommended that we should make a night march, and shut ourselves up in Chunar. Colonel Gordon, commanding the station, Mr. Gubbins, the judge, and Mr. Lind, the magistrate, unanimously agreed with me that to show any open distrust in this manner would cause a panic, the bazaars would be closed, and both the troops and the city would be up against us. We, therefore, determined to face the danger without moving a muscle."



1857. engaged in suppressing it were to seek refuge in the
May. Mint.

An interval of
quiet.

And so the daily goings on of social life fell back again into the old groove; and some even found, in the prospect before them, causes of increased hopefulness and bountiful anticipations of a pleasure-laden future. Were there not European troops coming up from Dinapore and Calcutta, and would there not be gay doings at Benares? Those whose duty it was to know what was going on in the surrounding country, heard this careless talk with something of a shudder, but wisely refrained from saying anything to dash the cheerfulness of the talkers. "My game," wrote the Commissioner to the Governor-General, "is to keep people in good spirits; so I keep my bad news to myself, and circulate all the good." Meanwhile, he and his colleagues were doing all that could be done, without noise or excitement, to restore confidence alike to the soldiery and to the townspeople. It was no small thing to supply an antidote to the famine-prices which were then ruling in the markets of the city, and this might be done, so far at least as the evil bore upon the soldiery, without interfering with the privileges of the sellers. So the Commissioner guaranteed, on the part of Government, that for every rupee paid by the Sepoys for their *ottah*, a certain number of pounds, as in ordinary times, should be given, whilst the Judge and the Magistrate went about in the city endeavouring (and with good success) to convince the chief importers of grain that it would be sound policy in the end to keep down their prices to the normal rates.* These things had a good effect; but the

* "I guaranteed Ponsonby yesterday in issuing *ottah* to the troops at sixteen seers, and trust you will bear me out. It is ill talking to a hungry man. All the bazaars are open, but very naturally the grain-sellers are apprehensive, and raising their prices. Gubbins and Lind

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utter weakness of the European force in Benares stared these brave and sagacious men in the face at every turn, and they felt that, under Providence, nothing could save them until the arrival of succour, except the calmness and confidence of their demeanour in the hour of danger. "So great is my confidence," wrote the Commissioner, "that I have not a single weapon, beyond a heavy-handled riding-whip, in my possession. In dealing with a parcel of children, which Sepoys and all Natives are, moral force goes a great way." And it should be noted here, as an encouraging symptom, that about this time all the Sikh Sirdars, then prisoners at Benares, offered their services to Mr. Tucker—and it was believed in good faith—to act as a body-guard to him, and to protect his house.

And the confidence thus felt—which in the breasts of some, at least, was a sustaining trust in the overflowing mercy of God—was made manifest before all the people of Benares, by a practical illustration of a remarkable kind. On the 24th of May, a detachment of forty-four men of the Eighty-fourth Queen's, who had been pushed up by the Governor-General by dawk, arrived from Chinsurah, near Calcutta. This reinforcement would have more than doubled the reliable military strength on which the security of the English at Benares was to depend. From every station along the great line of country between Delhi and Calcutta had come the despairing

First arrival
of Reinforce-
ments.

May 24.

have been in the city all the morning trying to show the principal importers the good policy of keeping down prices as much as possible."—*Mr. H. C. Tucker to Lord Canning, May 23, 1857.* "Through the exertions of Mr. Gubbins, assisted by Mr. Lind, and his influence with the

wealthy merchants, the price of grain in the Bazaar has fallen from twelve or thirteen seers to fifteen seers (for the rupee). This is a great triumph of confidence, and has reassured the multitude wonderfully."—*The Same to the Same, May 26, 1857.*



1857.
May 24.

ory, "For God's sake send us Europeans!" And now that this help had come to the first of the great undefended stations—small, it is true, in numbers, but still at such a time an immense relief and reinforcement to the little band of Christian men, who were trusting in God, and maintaining a bold front before their fellows—they bethought themselves of others who were in greater need than themselves, and suffered the welcome detachment to pass on to Cawnpore; and that too at a time when they seemed to be in their greatest peril. For news had just come that the Seventeenth Regiment, at Azingurh, some sixty miles distant, was on the verge, if not in the full stream, of open mutiny, and the Benares regiments seemed only to be waiting for a signal from their comrades in the neighbourhood. Still they thought more of others than of themselves. Sir Henry Lawrence had written earnestly to urge upon them the great need of Cawnpore, where General Wheeler was threatened by a dangerous enemy; and so Ponsonby and Tucker, taking counsel together, determined to let the succour which had been sent to them pass on to the relief of others. "Gordon," wrote the Commissioner, "thinks that we have run too great a risk in sending on at once the parties of the Eighty-fourth, whom you sent on to us by dawk; but Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to me so urgently to send every man who could be spared, that Ponsonby and I concurred in thinking that it was our duty to run some risk here, and stretch a point for the relief of Cawnpore. Besides, we argued that nothing could show better to the suspected Thirty-seventh Regiment than that when we had got Europeans from Calcutta, and placed our guns in safety, we did not care to detain, but sent them on straight to join the

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May 25—27.

troops collecting above. This is a real mark of confidence in the Sepoys and in ourselves. Besides, it will do good at Allahabad, and along the road, to see Europeans moving up, party after party, so fast. So if anything does happen to Benares before other Europeans join, your lordship must excuse the despatch of these forty-four men as an error of judgment on the right side." Other Europeans had been expected from Dinapore, but scarcely had the men of the Eighty-fourth been pressed forward, when tidings came that the detachment of the Tenth from Dinapore, which had been proceeding upwards to the relief of Benares, had "stuck fast at Chapra." "So all hopes for the present," it was added, "from that quarter are gone." "Brave Brigadier Ponsonby," continued the Commissioner, "calls the failure of the Dinapore relief 'a slight contretemps, somewhat unpleasant, but it cannot be helped.' I am glad we did not know of it yesterday evening, as it might have prevented the despatch of the forty-four men to Cawnpore." But, next day, when further reinforcements arrived, they were all hurried onward to Cawnpore. "I had another telegram this morning," wrote Mr. Tucker to Lord Canning on the 27th, "from Sir Henry Lawrence, begging me to spare no expense in hurrying up European aid. We send up all the men we get from Calcutta. Thirty-eight more will go this evening. We do not keep one for ourselves." Even the detachment of the Tenth from Dinapore was to be sent on "the moment it arrives." "Your lordship may feel assured," added the Commissioner, "that nothing will be left undone to insure the quickest possible relief to Cawnpore. I have let Sir H. Wheeler know what we are doing to relieve him, as Hope is half the battle."



1857.

May.

Diversities of
English man-
hood.

Thus, already, was the great national courage of the English beginning to take many shapes. Whilst some, girding up their loins, were eager to anticipate danger and to strike at once, smiting everywhere, hip and thigh, like the grand remorseless heroes of the Old Testament, others were fain to oppose to the mass of rebellion that was surging upwards to the surface, the calm impassive fortitude of patient resolution, born of an abiding faith in God. Men of different temperaments and different convictions then wrought or waited according to the faith that was in them, with self-devotion beyond all praise. There was need of strenuous action in those days; but there was need also of that calm confidence which betrays no sign of misgiving, and the very quietude of which indicates a consciousness of strength. Restricted sympathy and narrow toleration are among the manifestations of our national character, not less than the broad many-sided courage of which I have spoken; and therefore it has happened that sometimes rash judgments have been passed by men incapable of understanding other evidences of bravery than those which their own would put forth in similar crises.* But it may be easier to go out to battle with death than quietly to await its coming. The energy that stimulates the one is less rare than the patience that inspires the other. But this quiet courage must be content to wait for quiet times to be estimated at its true worth.†

* Charles Dickens, in a notice of the Life of Walter Savage Landor, which I have read since the passage in the text was written, says that Landor's "animosities were chiefly referable to his singular inability to dissociate other people's ways of thinking from his own." But I am

inclined to think that this inability, so far from being singular, is the commonest thing in the world.

† How utterly free the Commissioner was from the least leaven of official jealousy, and how eager he was to do justice and to get justice done to his colleagues, may be seen

1857.
May,Henry Carre
Tucker.

Henry Tucker was a Christian gentleman, in whom the high courage of our race took this latter form. He went about, fearless and confident, saying to himself, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in Him will I trust. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation; my high tower, and my refuge; my Saviour."* And in this abundant, overflowing confidence and resignation he seemed to despise all human means of defence, and almost to regard defensive efforts—"secondary means"—as a betrayal of want of faith in the Almighty. "Rather against Ponsonby's and my wish," he wrote to the Governor-General, "but by the advice of Messrs. Gubbins and Lind, and at the entreaty of the European residents, arms and ammunition have, this day, been issued out to all who required them. I hope that it will make their minds easy, and that they will rest quiet. I am so thankful we have no place of defence here. We have nowhere to run to, so must stand firm—and hitherto there has not been one particle of panic and confusion." And he said that if the enemy came he would go out to meet them with a bible in his hand, as David had gone out to meet Goliath with a pebble and a sling. He rode out in the most exposed places, evening after evening, with his daughter, as in quiet times; and when some one suggested to him that the

in the following extracts from letters written by him to Lord Canning: "Mr. F. Gubbins is a very superior man, and will make a model commissioner. I feel very thankful to have such a coadjutor here to make up for my own great deficiencies." And in another letter the Commissioner says: "Mr. Gubbins is carrying on the work in this district most energetically. Under the blessing of Providence, he has been the

means of securing great peace and quiet in the city and neighbourhood." And again: "I hope your lordship will find time for a letter of hearty thanks to Mr. F. Gubbins for his beautiful police arrangements and general exertions, in which Mr. Lind has aided greatly."

* He wrote to Lord Canning that the 22nd chapter of Samuel II. (which contains these words) had been "their stand-by."



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hat which he wore, being of a peculiar character, would clearly indicate the Commissioner, and afford a mark for a rebel shot, he said that he was as safe in one head-dress as in another, and had no thought of a change.

Language and action of this kind might be regarded as mere imbecility. It is not strange, indeed, that a man of Mr. Tucker's character was described as an amiable enthusiast quite unequal to the occasion; for his courage was not of the popular type, and his character not intelligible to the multitude. But, even looked upon in the light of mere human wisdom, the course which was favoured by the Benares Commissioner had much, at that time, to recommend it. For as the absolute weakness of the European community, with only thirty effective soldiers to defend them, forbade any successful resort to arms, it was sound policy thus to preserve a quietude of demeanour, significant of confidence—confidence both in our own security and in the loyalty of those who surrounded and who might have crushed us in an hour.* In continual communication, not only with Lord Canning at Calcutta, but with the chiefs of all the great stations, as Dinapore, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Agra, Henry Tucker knew what was being done in some quarters, and what was needed in others, to meet the difficulties of the crisis. He knew that help was coming from below; and that if rebellion were smouldering either in the Lines or in the City, the longer it could be left to smoulder,

* I do not wish it to be inferred from this that I think the serving out of arms and ammunition to the European Residents was a mistake; but I can appreciate Mr. Tucker's motives, and understand his reasons for inscribing "Thorough" on his

policy of inaction. It will be seen presently that Lord Canning, though he admired the calm confidence of Mr. Tucker, sided with Mr. Gubbins in this matter, and I do not doubt that he was right.

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before bursting into a blaze, the better. The confiding policy was the temporising policy. Those who best knew the character of the Bengal Sepoy, knew that a vague fear, more impressive for its very vagueness, was driving thousands into rebellion; and that the best way to keep things quiet was to do nothing to excite or to alarm. And so the month of May wore on, and European reinforcements came from below; but, in spite of the great temptation to retain them, Tucker and Ponsonby had strength to send them onward to succour others. They knew that they were exposing themselves to the reproaches of their comrades; but they felt that they could bear even this. "You and I," wrote Ponsonby to the Commissioner, "can bear much in such a cause. To aid the distressed is not so very wicked."

The high bearing of the chief officers at Benares excited the admiration of the Governor-General. And in the midst of all his urgent duties—his pressing cares and anxieties—Lord Canning found, or made, time, to write letters of stirring encouragement to all, of whose good deeds he had ample assurance. Whether the well-doer were a General Officer, a Civil or Political Commissioner, or a young regimental subaltern, Lord Canning wrote to him, with his own hand, a letter of cordial thanks, full of frank kindness, which braced up the recipient to new exertions and made him ever love the writer. He knew the effect at such a time of prompt recognition of good service, and he felt that such recognition, under the hand of secretaries, public or private, would lose half its influence for good. He had a wonderful grace of letter-writing; and there are

Encourage-
ment from
Lord Can-
ning.



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May.

many now who treasure up, as their most cherished possessions, the few expressive lines, warm from the heart, in which, amidst dangers and difficulties that might well have excused graver omissions, the Governor-General poured forth his gratitude to his subordinates for good aid of any kind—for wise counsel, for fertility of resource, for active heroism, or for patient courage.

Thus, on the 23rd of May, he wrote to Mr. Tucker: "Although it represents a most critical state of things at Benares, it satisfies me that the crisis is met with calm courage, based upon that which alone is the foundation of true courage, and that events as they arise will be dealt with temperately, firmly, and with sound judgment. You have, indeed, a precious stake upon the issue. I sympathise deeply with your family. If they need to be assured of it, I beg you to tell them that not an hour has been, or will be, lost in sending aid to Benares, and wherever else it may be most urgently required. . . . Come what may, do not fear any aspersions or misrepresentations. No one shall be ignorant how nobly the authority of our Government, and the honour and dignity of Englishmen, has been upheld at Benares."

May 30.

And to Mr. Gubbins he wrote, a week afterwards, saying: "If I had more leisure for writing letters, I should not have left you so long without a word of thanks for your admirable and most judicious exertions. I know from Mr. Tucker's letters and messages, and also from other quarters, how much is due to you and to Mr. Lind, and I beg you both to believe that I am most grateful for it. You have all had a difficult game to play—if ever there was one; and your success has been hitherto complete. I pray that you may carry it through. You have done



really good service in the Bazaars, in obtaining a reduction of the price of grain." And he then added, with reference to the difference of opinion which had prevailed respecting the arming of the Europeans, "I think you quite right in recommending that arms should not be refused to the Europeans, who desired them. Your self-confidence has been made quite plain by the calm front you have already shown to all danger; and I do not believe that any of the advantages thereby gained will be sacrificed by the adoption of a common-sense precaution, which does not necessarily imply mistrust of those more immediately around you, when, as is too surely the case, there is abundance of danger at a little distance."*

1857.
May 30.

But although outwardly there was fair promise of continued tranquillity, as the month of May came to a close a crisis was, indeed, approaching. The birth of June was ushered in by the familiar work of the incendiary. A line of Sepoys' huts recently vacated was fired; and it was found that the wretched scum of Delhi royalty were in close communication with the Incendiaries. Then news came that the Sepoy Regiment at Azimgurh, sixty miles off, had revolted. This was the Seventeenth Regiment, under the command of Major Burroughs. It had been believed all along to be tainted, for it had been brigaded with the Nineteenth and Thirty-fourth, which had been ignominiously disbanded, and it was known that some of the men of the former were harboured in its Lines. Its insolence had been manifested unchecked, for Burroughs was not equal to the occasion; and although the Magistrate, Horne, had himself addressed

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The mutiny at
Azimgurh.

* MS. Correspondence of Lord Canning.



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May—June.

the Sepoys, and otherwise striven to keep them true to their salt, the evil influences had prevailed, so that before the end of the month the men of the Seventeenth were ripe for revolt.* It happened that just at this critical moment they scented the spoil. The rattle of the rupees was heard in the distance. A treasure-escort was coming in from Goruckpore, under charge of a Company of the Seventeenth Sepoys and some Horsemen of the Thirteenth Irregular Cavalry, and this was to have been despatched, with the surplus treasure of Azimgurh, to Benares, under command of Lieutenant Palliser, who had been sent from the latter place with a detachment of the Thirteenth to escort it. Five lakhs of rupees had come from Goruckpore, and two lakhs were added to it at Azimgurh; seventy thousand pounds in the hard bright coin of the country, and this was now in the grasp of the Sepoys. The temptation was more than they could resist. So they rose and loudly declared that the treasure should not leave the station. This stern resolution, however, seems to have been lulled for a time, and on the evening of the 3rd of June, the treasure-escort marched out from Azimgurh. It was felt, however, that the danger had not been escaped, and that at any moment the Sepoys might break into open rebellion. The officers and their wives were dining at the Mess of the Seventeenth, when all their anxieties were confirmed by the well-known warning voice of the guns. It was plain that the firing was in the direction of the Parade-ground. A beating of drums was soon heard; and no words were needed to express the assurance of

June 3.

* On May 24, when some men afterwards violently assaulted a Native officer, Major Burroughs found himself too weak to punish. imputently rejected extra cartridges which were served out to them and

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all that the Sepoys had risen.* There was then a scene of confusion, which it is not easy accurately to describe. The ladies and non-combatants hurried off to the Cutcherry, which had been fortified by the Magistrate and his colleagues, and there barricaded themselves. Meanwhile the Sepoys, having shot their Quartermaster and their Quartermaster-Sergeant,† but, with the strange inconsistency of conduct which distinguished all their movements, having spared and, indeed, protected the rest of their officers, hurried after the treasure-escort to seize the coin on the road to Benares. And with them went the myrmidons of the Police-force, which Horne had made vast efforts to strengthen for the protection of the jail, but which had displayed its zeal in the hour of our trouble by releasing the prisoners, and giving up the houses of the English to plunder and conflagration.

When they swarmed down upon him, all armed and accoutred and eager for the spoil, Palliser found that he was helpless. The troopers of the Thirteenth Irregulars were wavering. They were not so far gone in rebellion as to desire the death of their officers, but a strong national sympathy restrained them from acting against their countrymen. The officers, therefore, were saved. But the treasure was lost. The Sepoys of the Seventeenth‡ carried it back

* There were two post guns stationed at Azimgurh. These the mutineers seized at the commencement of the outbreak. They were afterwards taken into Oude.

† Lieutenant Hutchinson and Quartermaster-Sergeant Lewis.

‡ It is stated on the authority of Lieutenant Constable of the Seventeenth, that the Sepoys "behaved with romantic courtesy." "They formed a square round their officers, and said that they not only would

not touch, but would protect them, only that there were some of the mutineers who had sworn the death of particular officers, and therefore they begged the whole party to take to their carriages and be off at once. 'But how are we to get our carriages?' said they, 'seeing that they are scattered all through the station.' 'Ah, we will fetch them,' said the Sepoys; and so they did, and gave the party an escort for ten miles out of the station on the



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to Azimgurh, whilst the Irregulars escorted their officers on to Benares. Meanwhile, the European Residents of the former place had fled to Ghazeepore; and when the Sepoys returned to their old station, they found all European authority gone, and the official functionaries, civil and military, swept out of it to a man. So, flushed with success, they marched off to Fyzabad in military array, with all the pomp and panoply of war.

The crisis at
Benares.
June 4, 1857.

When news of these events reached Benares, crusted over in the first instance with some exaggerations, it was plain that the hour was approaching when tranquillity could no longer be maintained. But the vigorous activity of Gubbins and the calm composure of Tucker, holding rebellion in restraint whilst succours were far-off, had already saved Benares; for now fresh reinforcements were at hand, and with them one who knew well how to turn them to account. After despatching his men, as has been already told,* by the railway to Raneegunge, Colonel Neill had made his way, by train and horse-dawk to Benares with the utmost possible despatch, eager to avenge the blood of his slaughtered countrymen. And with this Madras Colonel came the first assertion of English manhood that had come from the South to the rescue of our people in the Gangetic provinces. Leading the way to future conquests, he came to strike and to destroy. He was one of those who wisely thought

Arrival of
Neill.

road to Ghazeepore. It has been remarked that to complete the romance they ought to have offered the officers a month's pay out of the treasure they were plundering.—*Annals of the Indian Rebellion, Part IV.* This is somewhat inconsistent with the statement (*Red Pamphlet*)

that the Sepoys of the Seventeenth implored the Irregulars to slay their officers, "appealing to religion, nationality, love of money, even offering 5000*l.* for each head." These inconsistencies, however, were fast becoming common phenomena,

* *Ante*, p. 132.

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from the first, that to strike promptly and to strike vigorously would be to strike mercifully; and he went to the work before him with a stern resolution not to spare. Both from the North and from the South, at this time, the first great waves of the tide of conquest were beginning to set in towards the centres of the threatened provinces. From one end of the line of danger, Canning, and from the other, Lawrence, was sending forth his succours—neither under-estimating the magnitude of the peril, but both confident of the final result. It was the work of the latter, as will be told hereafter, to rescue Delhi, whilst the former was straining every effort to secure the safety of Benares, Allahabad, Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and other lesser places dependent upon them. And now assistance had really come to the first of these places. A detachment of Madras Fusiliers was at Benares, and the men of the Tenth Foot, from Dinapore, whose arrival had been delayed by an accident, had also made their appearance. It was determined, therefore, that the Sepoys should be disarmed.

But a question then arose as to the hour of disarming. The first idea was, that the regiment should be paraded on the following morning, and that then the several companies, after an assuring explanation, should be called upon to lay down their arms. But there were those in Benares, to whom the thought of even an hour's delay was an offence and an abomination. When work of this kind is to be done, it should be done, they thought, promptly. Stimulated by the intelligence from Azimgurh, and suspecting what was in store for them, the Sepoys might rise before morning, and then all our councils and cautions would be vain. The chief command was in

The question
of disarming.



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Ponsonby's hands, and it was for him to give the word for disarming. It appears that Colonel Gordon, who had ascertained that the more turbulent spirits of the city were in communication with the Sepoys, accompanied the Brigadier to the house of the Commissioner to consult with him. Tucker suggested that they should call on Gubbins; so they went to the Judge's residence, and there they received ample confirmation of the reports which Gordon had heard. Soon afterwards they met Colonel Neill, who was eager for immediate action;* and, after some dis-

* The circumstances conducing to this change of plan have been variously stated. Mr. Taylor, in his official report already quoted, says: "It appears that as Brigadier Ponsonby was returning home after the Council, he met Colonel Neill, who recommended him to disarm the corps at once. Disregarding all other consideration, he hurried to the parade ground." But in a letter before me, written by Brigadier Ponsonby in July, that officer states that, "On the 4th of June Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, commanding the Regiment of Loodhianah, called and informed me that he had reason to believe the men of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry were entering into a conspiracy with some of the bad characters of the City, in view to the subversion of the British power in Benares. After some conversation on the subject, in which I ascertained from the Lieutenant-Colonel that he considered that he could rely on the fidelity of his own regiment, we agreed to go together to the Commissioner, Mr. Tucker, and to acquaint him with what had been communicated. We proceeded to Mr. Tucker, and on broaching the subject of our visit, he proposed that we should go to Mr. F. Gubbins, who lived close at hand, and we did so. Mr. Gubbins, it appeared, had heard from his spies that which not

only confirmed Colonel Gordon's report, but gave much more detailed information as to the secret proceedings of the men of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry. Colonel Neill came in while Mr. Gubbins was speaking, and soon afterwards the Brigademajor, Captain Dodgson, entered to report that the treasure, which was on its way from Azingurh to Benares under a guard of fifty men of the Irregular Cavalry, had been plundered by the Seventeenth Native Infantry—the guard of the Irregulars having connived at the deed. It was immediately felt that this circumstance, occurring in such close proximity to Benares, rendered the adoption at once of some strong measures imperative, and Lieutenant-colonel Gordon proposed the disarming of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, to which I acceded. There was some discussion as to whether this should be attempted at once, or at ten A.M. on the following day. Mr. Gubbins having expressed his opinion that emissaries from the Seventeenth Native Infantry would soon be in Benares, it was settled to disarm the Thirty-seventh at five o'clock, and it being now past four, it was also arranged to keep the measure as quiet as possible in order that the regiment might not be on its guard." Nothing can be more distinct than this. But Colonel

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cussion, the Brigadier consented to hold a parade at five o'clock, and at once to proceed to the work of disarmament.

Then Ponsonby and Gordon went together to the house of the latter, where they found or were joined by Major Barrett of the Thirty-seventh. The Sepoy officer, after the manner of his kind, with that fond and affectionate confidence in his men, which was luring so many to destruction, solemnly protested against the measure, as one which would break their hearts. To this Ponsonby replied, that what he had learnt from Mr. Gubbins had left him no alternative, and that, therefore, it was Barrett's duty to warn the officers to be ready for the five o'clock parade. The Brigadier had ordered his horse to be brought to Gordon's house, and now the two mounted and rode to the parade-ground, to plan the best disposition of the troops. The horse which Ponsonby rode had not been ridden for a month. It was fresh and restive,

Neill, with equal distinctness, declares that Ponsonby and Gordon called upon him, and that he (Neill) recommended the afternoon parade. In his official despatch he says: "Brigadier Ponsonby consulted with me about taking the muskets from the Thirty-seventh, leaving them their side-arms. He proposed waiting until the following morning to do this. I urged its being done at once, to which he agreed, and *left my quarters* to make his arrangements." In his private journal, too, he records that, "The brigadier called on me at three p.m., with Colonel Gordon of the Sikhs, informing me of the mutiny of the Seventeenth at Azimgurh . . . very undecided . . . would put off everything until to-morrow. I speak out, and urge him to act at once, which he unwillingly agrees to . . . the Europeans to parade at five p.m. . . . the Thirty-

seventh to be disarmed . . . the Irregulars and Sikhs said to be staunch to act with us." We have, therefore, before us three conflicting statements. Mr. Taylor says that Ponsonby met Neill as the former was going home from Gubbins's house. Ponsonby says that Neill came into Gubbins's house, when he (the Brigadier) and Gordon were there. And Neill says that the Brigadier and Gordon visited him in his own quarters. The matter is of little importance in itself; but the discrepancies cited afford an apt illustration of the difficulties which beset the path of a conscientious historian. On the whole, I am disposed to think that Neill, writing on the day of the events described, is more likely to be correct than Ponsonby, writing a month afterwards, or Taylor, collecting facts, after the lapse of more than a year.



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and the motion of the animal, aided by the slant rays of the afternoon sun, soon began to affect him. Enfeebled as he was by previous illness, he became, in his own words, "most anxious and uneasy in mind and body." But, whilst Gordon was drawing up the Sikh Regiment, he rode to the European Barracks, where he found Neill mustering the Europeans, and Olpherts getting ready his guns. The necessary orders were given; but the Brigadier felt that he was no longer equal to the responsibility of the work that lay before him.

And, in truth, it was difficult and dangerous work that then lay before the English commanders. The Native force was some two thousand strong. The Europeans hardly mustered two hundred and fifty.* Of the temper of the Sepoy Regiment there was no doubt. The Irregulars had been tried on the road from Azimgurh, where they had betrayed the weakness of their fidelity, if they had not manifested the strength of their discontent.† But the Sikh Regiment was believed to be faithful; and, if it were faithful, there could be no doubt of the result of that afternoon's parade. It is said that, as they were assembling for parade, they were in high spirits, and appeared to be eager to be led against the Hindostanees of the Regular Army. Not merely in Benares,

* The official returns state—H.M.'s Tenth Regiment, one hundred and fifty men and three officers; Madras Fusiliers, sixty men and three officers; Artillery, thirty men and two officers.

† These regiments of Irregular Cavalry were differently constituted from those of the Regular Sepoy Army. They had few European officers, and those only picked men, who had the greatest pride in their several corps, and seldom or never

any desire to leave them. The troopers, who received high pay and found their own horses, were generally men of a better class, and the position of the Native officers was of a higher and more responsible character than in the regular Army. All these things were at first supposed to be favourable to the continuance of the fidelity of the Irregular Cavalry. But it was soon found that they were as incurably tainted as the rest.

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but in all parts of the country, was it of the highest moment that the Sikh fighting men should be on our side; for it was believed that the fame of their loyalty would spread, on all sides, to the confines of our Empire, and that, throughout the Punjab itself, the renown of their achievements would stimulate others to do likewise. But everywhere so great a sensitiveness thrilled through the Native troops of all nationalities, that it was always possible that the weight of a feather in the balance might determine the out-turn of events on the side of loyalty or rebellion.

When the order for disarming had gone forth, Colonel Spottiswoode and his officers proceeded to the parade-ground of the Thirty-seventh, turned out the regiment, and ordered them to lodge their muskets in the bells-of-arms. There were about four hundred men on parade, the remainder, with the exception of one company at Chunar, being on detached duty in the station. To Spottiswoode it appeared that the men were generally well-disposed. There were no immediate signs of resistance. First the grenadier company, and then the other companies up to No. 6, quietly lodged their arms in obedience to the word of command. At this point a murmur arose, and some of the men were heard to say that they were betrayed—that the Europeans were coming to shoot them down when they were disarmed. Hearing this, Spottiswoode cried out that it was false, and appealed to the Native officers, who replied that he had always been a father to them. But a panic was now upon them, for they saw the white troops advancing. By word of command from Ponsonby the Europeans and the guns were moving forward towards the Sepoys' lines. Opposite to the quarter-guard of the Thirty-seventh

The Disarming Parade.



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the Brigadier ordered the little force under Colonel Neill to be wheeled into line and halted. He then went forward and spoke to the Sepoys of the guard. He said that they were required to give up their arms, and that if they obeyed as good soldiers, no harm of any kind would befall them. As he spoke he laid his hand assuringly on the shoulder of one of the Sepoys, who said that they had committed no fault. To this Ponsonby replied in Hindostanee: "None; but it is necessary that you should do as you are ordered, as so many of your brethren have broken their oaths and murdered their officers, who never injured them." Whilst he was still speaking, some of the men shouted to their comrades on the right and left; a stray shot or two was fired from the second company, and presently the Sepoys rushed in a body to the bells-of-arms, seized their muskets, loaded and fired upon both their own officers and the Europeans. Going about the work before them in a systematic, professional manner, they sent some picked men and good marksmen to the front as skirmishers, who, kneeling down, whilst others handed loaded muskets to them, fired deliberately upon the Europeans from a distance of eighty or a hundred yards. Seven or eight men of the Tenth were shot down, and then the rest fell back in line with the rear of the guns. Meanwhile the officers of the Thirty-seventh, who had been providentially delivered from the fire of their men, were seeking safety with the guns; but Major Barrett, who had always protested against the disarming of the regiment, and now believed that it was foully used, cast in his lot with it, and would not move, until a party of Sepoys carried him off to a place of safety.

To the fire of the Sepoy musketeers the British Infantry now responded, and the guns were wheeled

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round to open upon the mutineers with irresistible grape. The English gunners were ready for immediate action. Anticipating resistance, Olpherts had ordered his men, when they moved from their lines, to carry their cartridges and grape-shot in their hands.* The word of command given, the guns were served with almost magical rapidity; and the Thirty-seventh were in panic flight, with their faces turned towards the Lines. But from behind the cover of their huts they maintained a smart fire upon the Europeans; so Olpherts, loading his nine-pounders both with grape and round shot, sent more messengers of death after them, and drove them out of their sheltering homes. Throwing their arms and accoutrements behind them, and many of them huddling away clear out of cantonments beyond the reach of the avenging guns, they made their way to the city, or dispersed themselves about the country, ready for future mischief and revenge.

Meanwhile, the detachment of Irregular Cavalry and Gordon's Sikhs had come on to parade. It was soon obvious what was the temper of the former. Their commander, Captain Guise,† had been killed by a Sepoy of the Thirty-seventh, and Dodgson, the Brigade-Major, was ordered to take his place. He had scarce taken command, when he was fired at by a trooper. Another attempted to cut him down. But the Sikhs appear to have had no foregone intention of turning against our people. Whether the object of the Parade and the intentions of the British officers were ever sufficiently explained to them is not very

* Whether this was observed by the Sepoys I know not; but if it were, there can be no difficulty in accounting for their suspicion and alarm.

† One writer says that Guise's head was afterwards split open by his own troopers. He was shot on the rear of the Lines, as he was going to parade.



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apparent; but they seem to have been, in this juncture, doubtful and suspicious, and it needed but a spark to excite them into a blaze. The outburst of the Irregulars first caused them to waver. They did not know what it all portended; they could not discern friends from foes. At this critical moment, one of the Sikhs fired upon Colonel Gordon, whilst another of his men moved forward to his protection. In an instant the issue was determined. Olpherts was limbering up his guns, when Crump, of the Madras Artillery, who had joined him on parade and was acting as his subaltern, cried out that the Sikh regiment had mutinied. At once the word was given to unlimber, and at the same moment there was a cry that the Sikhs were about to charge. At this time they were shouting and yelling frantically, and firing in all directions—their bullets passing over and through the English battery. They were only eighty or a hundred yards from us on an open parade-ground; and at that time our Artillery were unsupported by the British Infantry, who had followed the mutineers of the Thirty-seventh Regiment into their Lines. It was not a moment for hesitation. The sudden rush of a furious multitude upon our guns, had we been unprepared for them, might have overwhelmed that half-battery with its thirty English gunners; and Benares might have been lost to us. So Olpherts, having ascertained that the officers of the Sikh corps had taken refuge in his rear, brought round his guns and poured a shower of grape into the regiment. Upon this they made a rush upon the guns—a second and a third—but were driven back by the deadly showers from our field-pieces, and were soon in confused flight. And with them went the mutineers of the Irregular Cavalry; so the work was thoroughly



done, and Olpherts remained in possession of the field.

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Whilst these events were developing themselves on the parade-ground, the little power of endurance still left in the Brigadier was rapidly failing him, and before the afternoon's work was done he was incapable of further exertion. The slant rays of the declining sun, more trying than its meridian height, dazzled and sickened the old soldier. The pain and discomfort which he endured were so great that he was unable any longer to sit his horse. Having previously given orders to Colonel Spottiswoode to fire the Sepoys' lines that none might find shelter in them, he made over the command to Colonel Neill, who eagerly took all further military responsibility on himself.* The victory of the Few over the Many was soon completed. Some who had sought shelter in the Lines were driven out and destroyed, whilst a few who succeeded in hiding themselves were burnt to death in their huts.†

* It is not easy to determine the exact period at which Ponsonby gave over the command to Neill. From the official report of the latter it would appear to have been done before the Sikhs broke into mutiny, but Ponsonby's own statement would fix the time at a later period. The account in the text is the official version of the transfer of command; but the fact, I believe is, that Neill, seeing Ponsonby on the ground, went up to him and said, "General, I assume command." So Neill's journal, and oral information of an officer who heard him say it.

† There is no passage in this history on which more care and labour have been expended than on the above narrative of the disarming at Benares on the 4th of June. In compiling it I have had before me several detailed statements made by

officers present at the parade, including a full narrative written by Brigadier Ponsonby, and furnished to me by his widow, and the private journals and letters of Colonel Neill, as well as his official reports. Colonel Spottiswoode's statement is published in the Parliamentary Return relating to the Regiments that have mutinied. There was also a very clearly written narrative by Ensign Tweedie (one of the young officers wounded by the fire of the Sikh regiment), printed in the newspapers of the day. Besides these, I have had the advantage of much personal conversation with one of the chief surviving actors in the scene described, and have received from him written answers to my questions on all doubtful points. I have a strong conviction, therefore, that the story cannot be more correctly told.



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June 4.

The military
question con-
sidered.

All the circumstances of this parade of the 4th of June being fairly reviewed and impartially considered, it is not strange that some should think that it was grievously mismanaged. That this was the opinion of the highest authorities at the time is certain. Writing on the 6th of June to the Governor-General, the Benares Commissioner said, "I fear the business of disarming was very badly managed indeed. The Sepoys feel very sore at what they consider an attack on men, many of whom were unarmed at the time. This is not a point for a civilian to discuss, but the general opinion seems to be that the affair was much mismanaged." This opinion was shared by Lord Canning, who wrote, a fortnight afterwards to the President of the India Board, that the disarming "was done hurriedly and not judiciously." "A portion of a regiment of Sikhs," he added, "was drawn into resistance, who, had they been properly dealt with, would, I fully believe, have remained faithful." And, sixteen months afterwards, the civil functionary, on whom it devolved to write an official account of these transactions, deliberately recorded his belief, it may be assumed after full investigation, that the Sikhs were brought out not knowing what was to be done; that the whole affair was a surprise; that, as a corps, they were loyal, and "would have stood any test less rude."

The inference to be drawn from this is not so much that the business was done badly as that it was done hastily; or rather that it was done badly because it was done hastily. The sudden resolution to disarm the Thirty-seventh on that Thursday afternoon left no time for explanations. If the whole of the black troops at Benares had been known to be steeped in

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June 4.

sedition to the lips, and ready for an immediate outbreak, it would have been sound policy to surprise them, for only by such a course could our little handful of white soldiers hope to overthrow the multitude of the enemy. But whilst the regular Sepoys were only suspected, in whole or in part, of treacherous designs, and the intentions of the Irregulars were still doubtful, there had been nothing in the conduct of the Sikh regiment to cast a doubt upon its fidelity. It was an occasion, indeed, on which kindly explanations and assurances might have had the best effect. But there was no time for this. When it was tried with the Thirty-seventh, both by the Brigadier and by the Colonel, it was too late; for the Europeans were advancing, and the panic had commenced. And with the Sikhs it seems not to have been tried at all. It would, however, be scarcely just to cast the burden of blame on any individual officer. What was evil was the suddenness of the resolution to disarm and the haste of its execution. But this is said to have been a necessary evil. And whilst we know the worst that actually happened, we do not know the something worse that might have resulted from the postponement of the disarming parade. Even at the best, it is contended, if the Thirty-seventh had been quietly disarmed, it would have been sore embarrassment to us to watch all those disarmed Sepoys. It would, indeed, to a great extent have shut up our little European force, and, thus crippling its powers of action, have greatly diminished our strength. Moreover, it is contended that, in the crisis that had arisen, this stern example, these bloody instructions, had great effect throughout that part of the Gangetic Provinces, and, indeed, through-



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out the whole of the country. It was made manifest that European military power was neither dead nor paralysed. There was a beginning of retribution. The white troops were coming up from beyond the seas. Though few in numbers at first, there were thousands behind them; and Upper India would soon be covered by our battalions. The moral effect of this, it was said, would be prodigious. The mailed hand of the English conqueror was coming down again crushingly upon the black races.

And even as regards the Sikh corps, it was said that a large proportion of the Regiment—the Regiment from Loodhianah—were not Sikhs, but Hindostanees; that they were the brethren of the regular Sepoys, and that they had come on to Parade with their pieces loaded. This last fact is not conclusive against them. It may have been the result wholly of uncertainty and suspicion. But Olpherts, when he fired upon them, was fully assured that they had broken into open mutiny, and nothing ever afterwards tended to weaken his original conviction. That there was mutiny in the Regiment—and mutiny of the worst kind—however limited it may have been, is certain; and if this were the first, it was far from being the last instance of a whole regiment being irrevocably compromised by the misconduct of a few Sepoys. An officer, with his guns loaded, in the presence of an overwhelming number of Native soldiers, cannot draw nice distinctions or disentangle the knot of conflicting probabilities. He must act at once. The safety of a station, perhaps of an Empire, may depend upon the prompt discharge of a shower of grape. And the nation in such an emergency will less readily forgive him for doing too little than for doing too much.



1857.

June 4-5.

The night
afterwards.

Complete as was the military success, the danger was not passed. The dispersion of a multitude of mutinous Sepoys might have been small gain to us in the presence of a rebellious population. If the malcontents of the city had risen at this time and made common cause with the dispersed soldiery and with their comrades under arms at the different guards, they might have overwhelmed our little gathering of Christian people. But the bountiful Providence, in which Commissioner Tucker had trusted, and which seemed to favour the brave efforts of Judge Gubbins, raised up for us friends in this awful crisis, and the fury of the many was mercifully restrained. It had been arranged that in the event of an outburst, all the Christian non-combatants should betake themselves to the Mint, which lay between the cantonment and the city, as the building best suited to defensive purposes. The rattle of the musketry and the roar of the guns from the parade-ground proclaimed that the Sepoys had risen. There were then great alarm and confusion. Numbers of our people made for the Mint. The missionaries left Benares behind them, and set their faces towards Ramnuggur on their way to Chunar.* The civilians, some with their wives and families, sought refuge, in the first instance, in the Collector's Cutcherry, ascending to the roof of the building, where at least they were safe from capture.† But there was a great and reasonable fear that the Sikhs of the Treasury-guard,

* There were some exceptions to the general exodus of the missionaries. Mr. Leupholt, of the Church Missionary Society, seems to have stood fast in the mission premises with his flock of Native Christians. This excellent man afterwards rendered good service to the British

Government by exerting his influence, which was considerable in the neighbourhood, to obtain supplies for our European troops.

† The Commissioner was not of this party. He had gone to the Mint.



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June 4—5.

rendered furious by the slaughter of their countrymen, would seize the Government coin, and the crown jewels of their own exiled Queen, which were stored with it, and would then fire the building and attack our Christian people wheresoever they could be found.

Good services of
Soorat Singh.

And that they would have struck heavily at us is not to be doubted, if one of their nation, a Sikh chief of good repute, had not come to our aid in the hour of our greatest need. This was the Sirdar Soorat Singh, who, after the second Sikh war, had been sent to reside at Benares, in honourable durance, and who had fully appreciated the generous treatment he had received from the English. He had unbounded confidence in Gubbins; and when the crisis arose, he manfully shouldered a double-barrelled gun and accompanied his English friend to the Cutcherry. Promptly and energetically he came forward to aid us, and by his explanations and persuasions softened down the anger of the Sikh soldiery, who might have been excused if they were burning to avenge the blood of their slaughtered comrades. Thus assured and admonished, they not only abstained from all acts of personal violence, but they quietly gave up the Government treasure and the Lahore jewels to the Europeans, to be conveyed to a place of safety.*

Pundit
Gokool-
Chund.

Nor was this noble-minded Sikh Sirdar the only friend who rose up to aid us in this conjuncture. Even from that great hot-bed of Hindooism, Brah-

* The place of safety was within the strong cells of the Artillery Congee-House, whither the treasure was taken, by the advice, I believe, of Captain Olpherts, who had always protested against the notion of making the same building available both as a refuge for the women and

children and a storehouse for the treasure. Mr. Taylor, in his Official Narrative, says the treasure was taken to the Magazine. In reward for the fidelity and forbearance of the Sikhs, the Commissioner next morning very properly distributed ten thousand rupees among them.



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June 4—5.

minism itself sent forth a staunch ally and potent deliverer to be a present help to us in our trouble. Pundit Gokool-Chund, a high-caste Brahmin, known to all, respected by all in Benares, flung all the weight of his influence into the scales in our favour. He was a servant of the Government—Nazir of the Judge's Court—and as such in constant intercourse with Gubbins. Had he been a Christian gentleman, he could not have striven, day and night, more ceaselessly and more successfully to succour our people. There was another, too, who put forth a protecting hand, and was earnest in his endeavours to allay the inquietude of the people. This was a wealthy and influential Hindoo noble—Rao Deonairain Singh—a loyal and devoted subject of the British Government, a man of high intelligence and enlightenment, liberal and humane. No words could exaggerate the importance of his services. Nor was the titular Rajah of Benares himself wanting in good offices to the English. On the night of that 4th of June, he succoured the missionary fugitives, and, from first to last, he placed all his resources at our disposal, and seemed honestly to wish well to our cause. Truly, it would have gone ill with our little handful of Christian people, if God had not raised up for us in our sorest need these staunch and powerful friends from among the multitude of the Heathen.*

Deonairain
Singh.The Rajah
of Benares.

The prompt action of Soorut Singh saved the civilians at the Cutcherry. For many hours they remained there, anxious and uncertain, calculating the chances against them, but resolute to sell their lives at the highest price. But two hours after midnight a little party of English gentlemen, headed by

* See in Appendix a Memorandum on the Benares Rajahs.



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June 4--5.

Gubbins, went forth in the broad moonlight to obtain the assistance of an European guard from the Mint to escort thither the fugitives at the Cutcherry. As they went, they were fired at by some Sepoys; but they returned, unharmed, with the guard, and safely conveyed their companions to the appointed place of refuge.* There the hours of morning darkness passed away in drear discomfort, and day dawned upon a scene of misery and confusion in the Mint. Officers and ladies, masters and servants, huddled together, for the most part on the roof, without much respect of persons or regard for proprieties of costume. The Europeans who had been sent for their protection bivouacked in the lower rooms, many of them utterly worn out with the exhausting labours of the day; whilst outside in the compound, or enclosure, was a strange collection of carriages, buggies, palanquins, horses, bullocks, sheep, goats, and packages of all sizes and all kinds brought in for the provisioning of the garrison.

June 5--9.
State of the
city.

"The town is quite quiet," wrote Commissioner Tucker to Lord Canning on the following morning, "in the midst," as he said, "of the utmost noise and confusion of this crowded building," which made it difficult to write at all, and was altogether so distracting, that, though a man of grave speech, he described it as "such a Pandemonium, that it was impossible to think, write, or do anything in it." There had

* This incident is made still brighter by an act of heroism which it is a pleasure to record. It is thus officially narrated: "Messrs. Gubbins, Caulfield, and Demomet went in a buggy to the Mint, and Mr. Jenkinson, C. S., accompanied them on horseback. As the party was crossing the bridge, Mr. Jenkinson saw some ambushed Sepoys aiming

at the party in the buggy. There was no time for warning or for hesitation, and he at once reined back his horse, covering with his own body his companions in danger. It were far easier to praise such an act than to praise it worthily, and I praise it best by not praising it at all."—*Mr. Taylor's Official Narrative.*



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June 5-9.

been an alarm in the course of the night of risings in the city; for the Mahomedans had hoisted the green flag, but nothing came of the demonstration. And days passed, but still there was quietude throughout Benares. All the circumstances of the "Sacred City of the Hindoos" being considered, it must be a source of wonder, not only that so little Christian blood was shed, but that there was so little resistance of any kind to the authority of the British Government.* "It is quite a miracle to me," wrote Commissioner Tucker to the Governor-General on the 9th of June, "how the city and station remain perfectly quiet. We all have to sleep at night in the Mint, but not a house or bungalow has been touched, and during the day everything goes on much as usual."† Wisely

* Up to this time only one English officer (Captain Guise) had been killed, and four wounded—all on the parade of the 4th of June. The wounded officers were Captain Dodgson, and Ensigns Tweedie, Chapman, and Hayter. A letter from Captain Dodgson states that the last-named was "shot by the Sikhs when they turned round and fired upon us." Young Hayter was shot in both thighs, and had a third wound below the knee. The latter was so painful that the limb was amputated; but he sunk under his sufferings, and died a week or two afterwards. There is something so touching in the brief account of the poor young soldier's last days, in the letter above quoted from Captain Dodgson to Mr. Tucker, that I cannot refrain from giving the following extract from it. "He bore his wounds with the utmost fortitude, and when told that there was no hope of recovery, said he hoped he was prepared to die. . . . I used to read the Prayers for the Sick to him, and many of the Psalms of his own choosing. The last he selected was the fifty-first. He got his over-

land letters when I was with him, a few days before he died, and kissed them again and again, and asked me to read them to him, which I did, poor boy!"—*MS. Correspondence.*

† The following characteristic passage in the letter above quoted ought not to be withheld. "I do firmly believe," wrote Mr. Tucker, "that there is a special Divine influence at work on men's minds to keep them quiet. The few Europeans in the Mint and round the guns could do nothing to guard the Cantonment; but of all the three mutinous regiments not one seems to have thought of burning the station or plundering the houses of the residents. There is much prayer here, and I know that many prayers are offered up for us; and I fully believe that they are accepted at the Throne of Grace, and that this is the cause of the quiet we enjoy. Even with all the best possible arrangements that we can make, there is nothing to prevent the mutineers, who are hanging about, or the city rabble, from doing any mischief they please, but they do not attempt it."—*MS. Correspondence.*



1957.
June 5—9.

and vigorously was Gubbins now doing his work. He had sunk the judge in the magistrate. His court was closed, and he had taken the weight of the executive upon him. And now, partly by the fear, partly by the love he had inspired in the hearts of the people, he held them in restraint, and the great city lay hushed beneath his hand.

State of the
Rural Dis-
tricts.

But although there was extraordinary repose in the city, in the surrounding districts violence and anarchy arose with a suddenness that was quite astounding. It was not merely that the mutinous Sepoys, hanging about the adjacent villages, were inciting others to rebellion (this was to be expected), but a great movement from within was beginning to make itself felt upon the surface of rural society, and for a while all traces of British rule were rapidly disappearing from the face of the land. Into the real character and general significance of this movement I do not purpose here to inquire. The investigation is an extensive one, and must be deliberately undertaken. It is enough, in this place, to speak of immediate results. The dispersion of the Native soldiery on the 4th of June was followed almost immediately by disorder and rapine in the contiguous country. A few days sufficed to sweep away law and order, and to produce a revolution of property, astonishing even to those who were best acquainted with the character and temper of the people. "I could not," wrote Mr. Tucker on the 13th, "have believed that the moment the hand of Government was removed there would have been so sudden a rising of landholders to plunder each other and people on the roads.* All the large landholders and auction-purchasers are paralysed

* "The Native idea now is," he off, and that it is every man for added, "that British rule has slipped himself."



and dispossessed, their agents being frequently murdered and their property destroyed."* To arrest this new danger, which threatened to become a gigantic one, overwhelming, irrepressible, our people had now to put forth all their strength.

On the 9th the Government of India caused Martial Law to be proclaimed in the divisions of Benares and Allahabad. On the same day, Mr. Tucker, not knowing that already the Legislature had provided the extraordinary powers which he sought†—nay, even more than he sought—wrote to the Governor-General, suggesting that he should place the Benares division "beyond the reach of Regulation Law, and give every civil officer, having the full power of magistrate, the power of life and death." "I would prefer this to Martial Law," he added, "as I do not think the greater proportion of the military can be entrusted with the power of life and death. The atrocious murders which have taken place have roused the English blood, and a very slight circumstance would cause Natives to be shot or hung. I would, therefore, much prefer retaining the powers in the hands of those who have been accustomed to weigh and to value evidence. No civilian is likely to order a man to be executed without really good cause."‡

Time soon exploded the error contained in these last words. But the Benares Commissioner, though a little blinded by class prejudice, was right when he wrote about the hot English blood, which forbade the judgment of a cool brain. Already our military officers were hunting down criminals of all kinds, and hanging them up with as little compunction as

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June 5—9.

June 9.
Punitive
enactments.

* See *ante*, vol. i. p. 157.

† The Act, of which a summary has been given (Book iv. chap. iv.), though passed on the 30th of May,

did not receive the sanction of the Governor-General before the 8th of June.

‡ MS. Correspondence.



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June 9.

though they had been pariah-dogs or jackals, or vermin of a baser kind. One cotemporary writer has recorded that, on the morning after the disarming parade, the first thing he saw from the Mint was a "row of gallowses." A few days afterwards military courts or commissions were sitting daily, and sentencing old and young to be hanged with indiscriminate ferocity. These executions have been described as "Colonel Neill's hangings." But Neill left Benares four or five days after the outbreak, and it did not devolve on him to confirm the sentences, of which I have heard the strongest reprobation. On one occasion, some young boys, who, perhaps, in mere sport had flaunted rebel colours and gone about beating tom-toms, were tried and sentenced to death. One of the officers composing the court, a man unsparing before an enemy under arms, but compassionate, as all brave men are, towards the weak and helpless, went with tears in his eyes to the commanding officer, imploring him to remit the sentence passed against these juvenile offenders, but with little effect on the side of mercy.* And what was done, with some show of formality, either of military or of criminal law, was as nothing, I fear, weighed against what was done without any formality at all. Volunteer hanging parties went out into the districts, and amateur executioners were not wanting to the occasion. One gentleman boasted of the numbers he had finished off quite "in an artistic manner," with mango-trees for gibbets and elephants for drops, the victims of this

* The general reader, however, must not calculate years in such a case as they would be calculated in Europe. What, estimated by years, is a boy in England is a man in

India—a husband, a father, with all the full-grown passions of maturity—and an equal sense of personal independence and responsibility.



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wild justice being strung up, as though for pastime, in "the form of a figure of eight."

This, it is to be presumed, was the martial law, of which such graphic details have been given by cotemporary writers, without a prevision of publicity.* But the Acts of the Legislative Council, under the strong hand of the Executive, fed the gallows with equal prodigality, though, I believe, with greater discrimination. It was a special immunity of this Benares mutiny that the prison-gates were not thrown open, and the city deluged with a flood of convicted crime. The inmates of the gaol remained in their appointed places. But even this had its attendant evils. For as crime increased, as increase it necessarily did, prison-room was wanted, and was not to be found. The great receptacle of the criminal classes was gorged to overflowing. The guilty could not be suffered wholly to escape. So the Gibbet disposed of the higher class of malefactors, and the Lash scored the backs of the lower, and sent them afloat again on the waves of tumult and disorder. But, severe as Gubbins was when the crisis was at its height, he restrained his hand when the worst had passed, and it had ceased to be an expedient of mercy to strike into the hearts of the people that terror, which diminishes crime and all its punitive consequences.

Meanwhile, other sources of anxiety were developing themselves in more remote places. One incident must be narrated here as immediately connected with the outbreak of the 4th of June. The story of the

June 5.

The mutiny
at Jaunpore.

* See especially a letter, written by a private of the Seventy-eighth Highlanders, which was published in the *Times*, and quoted at some length by Mr. Montgomery Martin.



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Loodhianah Regiment of Sikhs has not yet been fully told. There was a detachment of it at Jaunpore, a civil station, some forty miles from Benares. When news arrived on the 5th of June that the Thirty-seventh had revolted, and were pouring into the district, they made demonstrations of fidelity to their British officers; but when later tidings came that the head-quarters of their own regiment had been fired on by the Europeans, they rose at once in open mutiny. Lieutenant Mara, the officer commanding them, was shot down. Mr. Cuppage, joint-magistrate, on his way to the jail, shared the same fate. The Treasury was plundered. And all surviving Europeans, after a humiliating surrender of their arms, were driven to seek safety in flight. British government was expunged, as it had been at Azimghur, and its chief representatives were glad to find a hiding-place for themselves in quarters which, a little time before, their *fiat* could have swept away like summer dust. Then the station was given up to plunder; and the mutiny of a few Sikh mercenaries grew into a general insurrection of the people. The houses of the English were gutted and burnt. The soldiery, burdened with money-bags, having gone off towards Oude, the plunder of "the Treasury was completed by decrepit old women and wretched little boys, who had never seen a rupee in their lives."* And all over the district, the state of things, brought about by our settlement operations and our law courts, dis-

* Mr. Taylor's Official Narrative. The writer adds: "In the district not a semblance of authority was left to any one. Those who had lost their estates under our rule thought this a good time to regain them; those who had not, thought that they could make a little profit by plundering their weaker neigh-

bours; the bolder spirits thought to secure more brilliant advantages by intercourse with the rebel powers in Oude." In no other district, Mr. Taylor observes, were "auction purchasers more numerous, old Zemindars more powerful, or the present landholders on worse terms among themselves."

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appeared like the bursting of a bubble. The very presence of our fugitive people, though powerless and forlorn, was an offence and an abomination to the now-dominant class, who drove them from their sanctuary in the house of a friendly Rajah to take refuge in an indigo factory. And it became one of the Benares Commissioner's greatest cares to rescue Mr. Fane and his companions from the dangers which then beset them. Having discovered their abode, he sent out "a party of Europeans and volunteers to bring them into Benares."*

Troops were now coming up every day from below. Benares was safe. Other stations were to be saved. The best service that could be rendered to the State was the prompt despatch of reinforcements to the upper country—and most of all to Allahabad and Cawnpore. This service was entrusted to Mr. Archibald Pollock.† True to his great historical name, he threw himself into the work with an amount of energy and activity which bore the best fruits. Every kind of available conveyance was picked up and turned promptly to account in the furtherance of the eagerly looked-for Europeans, whose appearance was ever welcomed by our peril-girt people as a great deliverance. Nor was want of sufficient conveyance the only difficulty to be overcome. There was a want of provisions for Europeans, especially of flour and rum; and Mr. Tucker wrote eagerly to Lord Canning to send up commissariat stores of every kind for the soldiery, "as European necessities are not to be had here in any quantity." He was

Despatch of
troops
upwards.

* Mr. Tucker to Lord Canning, June 9th. In this letter the fugitives are said to have consisted of sixteen men, five ladies, and eleven children.

† The youngest son of General Sir George Pollock. He was then joint magistrate of Benares.



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very eager at this time to save the treasure in neighbouring civil stations along the main line, as Mirzapore and Ghazepore, and he sent parties of Europeans by steamer to bring it off in safety to Benares. It was, moreover, a great object to keep the white troops in motion, and thus to display European strength, first at one point, then at another, and by means of a few to make an appearance of many, as in a mimic theatre of war. At once to have recovered Azinghur and Jaunpore, from which we had been so ignominiously expelled, would have been a great stroke; and the Commissioner wrote to Lord Canning, saying that if the Government would allow him to divert two hundred Europeans from the main line of operations, the magistrates and other civil officers might return to their posts, and British authority might be re-established. But troops could not be spared for the purpose, and it was left to another day and to other means, whereof due record will be made hereafter, to prove to the people of those districts that the English had not been swept out of the land. The narrative must now follow the upward line of the Ganges to the next great city of note.

Allahabad.

About seventy miles beyond Benares, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, lies the city of Allahabad. It has none of that wealth of structural beauty which renders Benares so famous among the cities of the East. Its attractions are derived chiefly from its position, at the extreme point or promontory of the Doab, formed by the meeting of the waters. The broad rivers rushing down towards the sea, and mingling as they go their streams of varied colour and varied motion—the one of yellow-brown,

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thick and turbid, the other blue, clear, and sparkling*—the green banks between which they flow, the rich cultivation of the inner country dotted with groves and villages, make a landscape pleasant to the eye. But the town itself, principally situated on the Jumna, has little to command admiration. It has been called in derision by natives of Hindostan, "Fukeerabad," or the city of beggars; but the Fort, which towers above it, massive and sublime, with the strength of many ages in its solid masonry, imparts peculiar dignity to the place. Instinct with the historical traditions of the two elder dynasties, it had gathered new power from the hands of the English conqueror, and, garrisoned by English troops, might almost have defied the world.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the military importance of the situation at the junction of the two rivers, commanding, as it does, the great fluvial thoroughfare of Hindostan, and also the high road by land from the Upper to the Lower Provinces. Both in a strategical and political sense, its security had ever been of great moment; but the recent acquisition of Oude had rendered it still more essential that it should be safely in hand. In this powerful fortress of Allahabad was an arsenal stored with all the munitions of war, and an array of guns in position

* Historians and poets alike delight to describe the meeting of the waters. "The half-modernised fortress," says Trotter, "looks grandly down on the meeting of the clearer Jumna with the yellow waters of the broad Ganges" (*History of the British Empire in India*); Waterfield (*Indian Ballads*) sings of "the sisters blue and brown;" and again, "Where Yamuna leaps blue to Ganga's arms." And Bholanath Chunder (*Travels of a Hindoo*), writing in prose, but scarcely less

poetically, says: "The spot where the Sister Nuddees (Greek Nyades) meet makes a magnificent prospect. The Ganges has a turbid, muddy current—the Jumna, a sparkling stream. Each at first tries to keep itself distinct, till, happy to meet after a long parting, they run into each other's embrace, and, losing themselves in one, flow in a common stream. The Ganges strikes the fancy as more matronly of the two—the Jumna a gayer, youthful sister."



1857. commanding the approaches from the country below. And their possession by the enemy would have been a disaster beyond compare. Some time before, Sir James Outram had suggested to Lord Canning the expediency of adopting measures for the greater security of Allahabad, and had warned him of the, at least possible, danger of such a mischance befalling us.* I do not know whether these warnings were remembered — warnings afterwards repeated most emphatically by Sir Henry Lawrence; but there was no place to which Lord Canning turned his thoughts with greater anxiety and alarm—no place to which he was more eager to send relief in the shape of European troops.

Tidings of the great disaster at Meerut reached Allahabad on the 12th of May, and a few days afterwards came the story of the progress of the rebellion, and the restoration of the Mogul Emperors of Delhi. At the beginning of May, the force posted at Allahabad consisted of a single Sepoy regiment, the Sixth, under the command of Colonel Simpson, which had marched in from Jummalpore at the latter end of March, relieving the Eleventh, under Colonel Finnes. But on the 9th, a wing of the Ferozpoore Regiment of Sikhs had arrived from Mirzapore; and ten days later two troops of Oude Irregular Horse came in, under orders from Sir Henry Lawrence, to place themselves under the civil authorities. Shortly afterwards sixty European invalids were brought in from Chunar. The bulk of the Native troops occupied their Lines in the Cantonment, which lay at a distance of two or three miles from the Fort between the two great rivers.

* "I myself am more shocked than surprised," he wrote from Baghdad to the Chairman of the East India Company, on first hearing of the outbreak, "for I have long dreaded something of the sort; and you may recollect I told you of the warning that I gave to Lord Canning when I was last at Calcutta, and suggested that measures should be adopted for the better security of Allahabad."—June 8, 1857. *MS.*



Detachments were posted in the Fort. The principal civil officers were Mr. Chester, the commissioner, and Mr. Court, the magistrate—both men of courage and resolution, not easily shaken or disturbed. They and the other civilians, as well as the military officers, dwelt in comfortable and pleasant garden-houses in the European station, without an anxious thought of the future to disturb them.

In the eyes of the commanding officer, and, indeed, of every Englishman who held a commission under him, the Sixth was true to the core; and was thoroughly to be trusted. It was one of those regiments in which the officers looked lovingly on their soldiers as on their children; cared for their comforts, promoted their amusements, and lived amongst them as comrades. They had done so much for their men, and seen so many indications of what at least simulated gratitude and affection, that it would have been to their discredit if they had mistrusted a regiment which had such good reason to be faithful to the English gentlemen who had treated them with the kindness of parents. But the civil officers, who had none of the associations and the sympathies which made the centurions of the Sixth Regiment ever willing to place their lives in the hands of the native soldiery, saw everywhere grounds of suspicion and causes of alarm. There was evidently a wide-spread feeling of mistrust both in the City and in the Cantonment.* All kinds of vague reports were in the

Colonel Simpson and the Sixth.

State of popular feeling.

* Mr. Willock, joint magistrate, says in his official report, "As each day passed some fresh rumour was circulated regarding the state of public feeling in the city. Agents of the rebel leaders were evidently busy poisoning the minds of the people. . . . The Bazaar was closed, and it was very evident that an out-

break in the city would follow on éments of the soldiery. The men of the city warned the magistrate against the infidelity of the Sepoys, and the Sepoys cautioned their officers against the city people, protesting against the tales that had been circulated of their lukewarmness towards Government."

1857.

air. Whether the disturbing faith had grown up spontaneously in the minds of the Natives, or whether the great lie had been maliciously propagated by active emissaries of evil, it was believed that a heavy blow was to be struck at the religion of the people.* At one time it was reported that the English had determined to serve out the greased cartridges on a given day, and that the regiment would be paraded on the glacis of the Fort, in a position commanded by our guns, and blown into the air if they disobeyed orders. Then it was said that the Sepoys had determined to prevent the treasure being moved into the Fort;† and again, that the Sikhs were conspiring with the Native Infantry for a joint attack upon the English. At the same time, the price of grain and of other kinds of food rose in the market, and the common feeling of disquietude was enhanced by the discontent occasioned by the dearth of provisions, which was always attributed to the agency of the English.

May 22.
Conflicting
projects.

In this state of uncertainty, Colonel Simpson proposed to betake himself with his regiment to the Fort. This movement was strenuously opposed by Mr. Court, the magistrate, and the project was abandoned.

* I have remarked, and with much uniformity of observation, that these monstrous reports of "forcible conversion," or destruction of caste, were most rife where the Mahomedan population was the densest. Allahabad contained an unusual number of Mussulmans, whilst in Benares there was a great preponderance of Hindoos; but these reports appear to have been circulated more freely in the former than in the latter city.

† It was said that this ought to have opened the eyes of Colonel Simpson to the real state of his corps. But the fact is, that the circumstance referred to in the text was nothing more than an alleged

conversation between a Native officer of the Irregular Cavalry and another of the Sixth. The former was said to have asked whether the Sixth would allow the treasure to be removed, and the latter to have answered, "Some of them would not until they had received their arrears of pay." "This," says Colonel Simpson, "was immediately reported to the Adjutant, who did not credit it. On the 23rd I made poor Plunkett and Stewart inquire into the business, and the latter reported to me there was no truth in it, as the Native officer and men of the Sixth guard denied the accusation."

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May 22.

On the same evening a council of the leading civil and military officers was held, and it was determined that the women and children only should be removed next morning into the Fort. But next morning, before daybreak, there was a change of plan. The order, which had decreed that "no (adult) male should be allowed to enter the Fort," was cancelled, in spite of Court's remonstrances, and two hours before noon "there was a regular flight to the Fort of men, women, and children, carrying with them all the property they could."* But later in the day the energy of the magistrate prevailed, and the non-military members of the community were enrolled into a volunteer guard, to patrol the city and station, accompanied by some mounted police.

May 25.
Lip-loyalty.

As the month wore on to its close, appearances seemed rather to improve. Some apprehensions had been entertained lest the great Mahomedan festival of the *Eed*, which was to be celebrated on the 25th, should stir all the inflammatory materials gathered together in Allahabad into a blaze. The day, however, passed over without any disturbance; and at a parade held in the evening, two Sepoys, who, on the preceding day, had given up a couple of Mehwattees, charged with tampering with their fidelity, were

* Official Report of Mr. Fendall Thompson, officiating magistrate. Colonel Simpson, in a narrative of events with which he has furnished me, says, "On the 23rd of May, the ladies, children, and non-military were ordered into the Fort for security, in consequence of the various reports received by the magistrate regarding the unsettled state of the city of Allahabad, aggravated by the high price of grain." It might be gathered from this that the magistrate had approved of the removal

to the Fort of the non-military males, whereas the official report states that he had in reality protested against it. Colonel Simpson, however, says, in another memorandum, that "a notice to this effect" (i.e. the removal of "ladies, children, and non-military") "was circulated by the magistrate throughout the station, and regimentally by two of his sowars." Colonel Simpson says that it was signed both by himself and Court,



1857.
May 25.

publicly promoted.* But this spasm of energy seems to have been designed only to throw dust into the eyes of the authorities. It is stated that, at the very same time, they were intriguing with the Oude Cavalry. Perhaps the arrest was designed to irritate the minds of the people of the city. If so, it was a successful movement; for it was soon noised abroad that a rescue would be attempted, and so the prisoners were removed to the Fort.

After this there were outward quietude and security, for although with the new month there arose increased excitement in the city, still more favourable appearances presented themselves in the cantonment. The Sepoys of the Sixth, seemingly not satisfied with the latent loyalty of quiescence, quickened into energy and enthusiasm, and demanded to be led against the rebels of Delhi. News of their noble offer was promptly telegraphed to Calcutta, and Lord Canning sent back by the wires a cordial expression of the thanks of Government. But to the civilians at least it was apparent that the danger was not passed, for every day the excitement became greater in the city.

News from
Benares,
June 4.

Affairs were in this state when news came from Benares that the Sepoys stationed there had risen in revolt, and that they had been dispersed by Neill's Europeans. The telegraph brought the first tidings to Simpson, who, as an initial measure of precaution, issued orders that the gates of the Fort should be closed night and day, and no one, of whatsoever

* Sir John Malcolm writes of the Mehawattees, that, "although usually reckoned Mahomedans, it is difficult to say whether they are Mahomedans or Hindoos; they partake of both religions, and are the most desperate rogues in India. They

are turbulent, vindictive, cunning, cruel, robbers, murderers, and assassins—yet they are faithful, undaunted guards and servants to those whose nimuk (salt) they eat."—*Malwa Report*, p. 578, note.

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colour or creed, admitted without a passport.* The next step was to guard the approaches to Allahabad. The road from Benares ran on the other side of the Ganges, which was crossed by a bridge of boats at a point nearly opposite to the Fort, to the suburb of Darao-gunj. It seemed to be so certain that the Benares mutineers would make for Allahabad, that, on a requisition of the Magistrate, a Company of the Sixth was sent, with two guns, to defend the bridge by which the passage of the river must have been made. At the same time, a detachment of the Oude Irregular Cavalry was posted on an open space between the bridge-head and the cantonment, so as to command all the approaches to the latter. And no one then seemed to doubt that those Native guards would defend the bridge and the station as staunchly and as truly as if the insurgents had been people of other races and other creeds.

It will, perhaps, never be known to the full satisfaction of the historical inquirer whether the Sixth Regiment was saturated with that deepest treachery which simulates fidelity for a time, in order that it may fall with more destructive force on its unsuspecting victim, or whether it had been, throughout the month of May, in that uncertain, wavering condition which up to the moment of the final outburst has no determined plan of operations. The officers of the regiment believed that the men were staunch to the core. Outwardly, there were no indications of

* "From this period (May 25) until the 4th of June more or less excitement prevailed in the city of Allahabad, and on that date the mutiny at Benares took place, and was reported to me by telegraphic wire. On the same evening I ordered the Fort Gates to be closed, day and night, and neither European nor Native was allowed ingress or egress without a pass, so as more particularly to guard against any tamperers from Benares or from the city of Allahabad."—*Memorandum by Colonel Simpson. MS.*



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hostility. But when news came that the Native regiments at Benares had risen, and that the Europeans had fallen upon them, the long-abiding vacillation rose into robust resolution, and the regiment sprung, as it were, in a moment upon its prey. Whether it was in a wild panic of fear, believing that Neill and the Europeans would soon be upon them; or whether in the belief that the time for action had now come, as they would probably soon be joined by the Sepoys from Benares, the evening of the 6th of June found them ripe for any deed of violence.

But even as the sun was setting on that day—the last sun that ever was to set upon this model regiment—there was unbroken faith in its fidelity. The warning voice, however, was not silent. The Adjutant of the Sixth received a letter from a non-commissioned officer of the regiment, telling him that the news from Benares had caused much excitement in the Lines. The Adjutant took the letter to the Colonel. But Simpson could not admit that anything was wrong. He added, however, that at the sunset parade, which was to be held for the promulgation of the thanks of the Governor-General to the regiment, the temper of the men would be clearly ascertained.

The Thanks-
giving
Parade.

The parade was held. The thanks of the Governor-General were read. The Commissioner, who had attended at the request of the Colonel, addressed the regiment in Hindostanee, praising them for the loyalty they had evinced. The Sepoys appeared to be in the highest spirits; and they sent up a ringing cheer in response to the stirring words. When the parade was over, the officers, for the most part, rode or walked to the Mess. With Colonel Simpson rode Captain Plunkett—an officer of the Sixth, who had

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served for more than twenty years with the regiment. He spoke with delight of the pride he felt in its noble conduct, and his faith in its enduring fidelity. Thus conversing they rode to the Mess-house, where other officers had assembled, and were discussing the events of the day. Among them was Captain Birch, the Fort-Adjutant, who besought the Colonel to recall the guns posted at the Bridge of Boats and to post them in the Fort, where they were more needed. To this, Simpson esteeming the Fort to be his first charge, and having been warned not to trust the Sikhs, of whom the garrison mainly consisted, gave his consent; and orders went forth for their recall.*

There was a goodly gathering in the Mess-house, for the number of officers had been recently increased by the arrival of a party of young cadets, who had been ordered to do duty with the Sixth—mere boys, with the roses of England on their cheeks and the kisses of their mothers still fresh upon their lips. Without any sense of ills to come, old and young took their places at the dinner-table in perfect serenity of mind. There was at least one faithful regiment in the service! The civilians, equally assured, went to their houses and dined; and did as was their wont in the evening, wrapped themselves up in early slumber, or kept themselves awake with the excitement of cards. Some, indeed, who had slept in the Fort on the preceding night, were now again in their own homes. On no evening, perhaps, since the first startling news had come from Delhi and Meerut, had there been so little trepidation—so little excitement. But about nine o'clock the whole

The last
Mess-dinner
of the Sixth.

* These warnings came from Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow and Sir Hugh Wheeler at Cawnpore. Simpson was advised not to trust the Sikhs, and to man the Fort with all the Europeans available at Allahabad.



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European community of Allahabad were startled by the sound of a bugle-call announcing the alarm. The Colonel had left the Mess, and was walking homewards, when the unexpected sound smote upon his ears and urged him onward to his house, where he called for his horse, mounted, and rode for the quarter-guard. Thither many other officers had repaired on the first sound of the bugle-notes. The truth was soon apparent to them. The faithful Sixth had revolted.

Revolt of the
Regiment.

The story was this: The detachment sent to defend the Bridge had been the first to rise, as it had been first to learn how the guns had been turned upon the Native troops at Benares, and whilst Simpson with his officers was dining comfortably at the Mess-house, the orders, which he had despatched for the withdrawal of the Artillery from Darao-gunj, had been sternly resisted. The Sepoy Guard, told off as an escort, rose against the Artillery-officer, Lieutenant Harward, and declared that the guns should be taken not to the Fort, but to the Cantonment; and the rest of the detachment turned out, armed and accoutred, to enforce the demand. True to the noble regiment to which he belonged, Harward hastened to the post of the Oude Irregulars, which lay between the Bridge-head and the Cantonment, to bring up succours to overawe the Sepoys and to save the guns. The Irregulars were commanded by Lieutenant Alexander—a young officer of the highest promise—who at once responded to Harward's call, and ordered out his men. Tardily and sulkily they pretended to obey. Whilst they were forming, a hastily-written note was despatched by Harward to the Fort. The sound of the guns, grating along the road to Cantonments, was distinctly heard; and the Irregu-

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lars, headed by Alexander and accompanied by Harward, whom the former had mounted on a spare horse, then rode out to intercept the mutineers. They soon came upon the party, under the broad light of the moon; but when the order was given to charge the guns, and the English officers dashed at them, only three troopers responded to the stirring summons. The rest fraternised with the enemy. Alexander, as he rode forward and was rising in his stirrups to strike, was shot through the heart, and Harward narrowly escaped with his life.* The mutineers, who had before sent out two of their party to warn their comrades, and had, it is stated, sent up signal rockets, now marched with the guns to the Lines, and when their colonel appeared on parade, the whole regiment was in the throes of rebellion.

It was then too late for the voice of authority to overawe or to persuade. Simpson saw that there was great excitement on the parade-ground. Some of his officers were commanding their men to fall in, but there was little appearance of obedience. And when he rode up to inquire why the guns had been brought on parade, two Sepoys of the Guard replied by firing upon him. Expostulation was vain. A volley of musketry responded to his words; and he saw that everywhere on the parade-ground the Sepoys were shooting down their officers. Seeing that there was no hope of saving the colours, he then rode to the left of the Lines, where some men of the Light

Escape of
Colonel
Simpson.

* "During the night, the few Irregulars who had remained staunch came in, bringing with them the body of their officer, Lieutenant Alexander, who had been shot, as before related. His body bore witness to

the mad cruelty of his enemies, for besides the shot in his breast, which killed him, were sabre-cuts all over his head and face."—*Mr. Thompson's Report.*

Company, in whom there still seemed to be a feeling of compunction, if not of regard for their chief, clustered, unarmed and unaccoutred, round his horse, and besought him to ride for his life to the Fort. Hoping still to save the Treasury, he rode, accompanied by Lieutenant Currie, in the direction of that building, but fired upon from all sides, he soon saw that the case was hopeless.* He had now well nigh run the gauntlet of danger, and though a ball had grazed his helmet, he had providentially escaped; but opposite the Mess-house, as he galloped towards the Fort, the Guard formed in line at the gate and fired upon him. A musket-ball took effect on his horse; but Simpson was still unhurt, save by a blow on the arm from a spent shot; and the last dying efforts of his charger landed him safely within the walls of the Fort, covered with the blood of the noble animal that had borne him.

Massacre of
the Ensigns.

Meanwhile, others less fortunate had fallen beneath the musketry of the mutineers. Currie, who had accompanied the Colonel to the Treasury, escaped the fire of the guards and sentries; Captain Gordon and Lieutenant Hicks escaped also, as did two of the cadets, to the Fort;† but Plunkett, with his score years of good service in the Sixth, Adjutant Steward, Quartermaster Hawes, and Ensigns Pringle and Munro were shot down on parade. Fort-Adjutant Birch and Lieutenant Innes of the Engineers were

* "As my duty was to save the Treasury, if possible, I proceeded in that direction, when I was immediately fired on by the whole guard of thirty-two men on one flank, with a night-picket of thirty men on the other. The detachment of the Third Oude Irregular Cavalry remained passive, and did not fire."—*Memoirandum of Colonel Simpson, MS.*

† Hicks and the cadets (Pearson and Woodgate) were at the Darao-gunj when the mutiny broke out. They were made prisoners and carried towards Cantonments, but, in their eagerness to join in the plunder of the Treasury, the Sepoys suffered them to depart, and afterwards they made good their escape by twice swimming across the river.

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also killed, and eight of the unposted boy-ensigns were murdered in cold blood by the insurgent Sepoys.* The poor boys were leaving the Mess-house, when the brutal soldiery fell upon them. Seven were slaughtered on the ground; but one, a boy of sixteen, escaped with his wounds, and hid himself in a ravine. Having supported himself for some days, merely, it would seem, by water from a brook, he was discovered in his hiding-place, dragged before one of the insurgent leaders, and confined in a serai with a Native catechist. The faith of the convert was giving way to the sufferings which he endured, when Arthur Cheek, who had been scarcely a month in India, exhorted his companion to be steadfast in the faith. "Oh, my friend," he is reported to have said, "whatever may come to us, do not deny the Lord Jesus." He was rescued, but he was not saved. On the 16th of June the poor boy died in the Fort from exposure, exhaustion, and neglected wounds.†

It was fortunate that the bulk of our people were In the Fort. shut up in the Fort, where no external perils could assail them. But there was danger within the walls. A company of the Sixth formed part of the garrison, and the temper of the Sikhs was doubtful. When the noise of firing was first heard it was believed that the Benares mutineers had arrived, and that the Sepoys of Allahabad were giving them a warm reception. But at a later hour the truth broke in upon them; and all doubt was removed by the appearance

* It has been commonly stated that these poor boys were killed whilst sitting at the Mess-table. I am assured, however, on the best authority that this is a mistake. Few incidents of the mutiny have excited greater horror than this, which is

familiarly spoken of as the massacre of the "poor little griffins."

† See Mr. Owen's Journal. It has been erroneously stated elsewhere that he died in the hands of the enemy, on the day of Neill's arrival at Allahabad, the 11th of June.



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of the Commandant Simpson, smeared with the blood of his wounded charger. His first care was to order the Sepoys of the Sixth to be disarmed. This duty was entrusted to a detachment of the Sikh corps, under Lieutenant Brasyer—an officer who had won for himself a commission by his gallantry in the great battles of the Punjab, and who now proved his mastery over his men by forcing them to do a distasteful service. With the news that the Benares Sepoys of the Regular Army had been mown down by the white troops, came also tidings that Gordon's regiment had been riddled by our grape-shot. It was, therefore, fearfully probable that the offended nationality of the Sikhs at Allahabad would rise against their Christian masters, partly in revenge and partly in fear. Happily the treasure was outside the Fort. Had the design of bringing it within the walls not been abandoned, the love of loot and the thirst of blood would have prevailed together, and Allahabad might have been lost.

It was, in truth, a most critical moment. Had the men of the Sixth Regiment and the Sikhs then in the Fort made common cause with each other, the little Christian garrison could have made but feeble resistance against such odds. The Sepoys, who were posted, for purposes of defence, at the main-gate, had, on the first sound of firing in Cantonments, been ordered to load their pieces: so they were ready for immediate action. The Sikhs were drawn up fronting the main-gate, and before them were the guns, manned by the invalid Artillerymen from Chunar, in whom the energy of earlier days was revived by this unexpected demand upon them. And at a little distance, in overawing position, were posted little knots of European volunteers, armed



and loaded, ready on the first sign of resistance to fire down from the ramparts upon the mutineers. There is something very persuasive always in the lighting of port-fires, held in the steady hands of English Artillerymen. The Sepoys, charged to the brim with sedition, would fain have resisted the orders of the white men, but these arrangements thoroughly overawed them. They sullenly piled arms at the word of command, and were expelled from the Fort to join their comrades in rebellion.

The first danger was now surmounted. Those who knew best what was passing in the minds of the Native soldiery of all races, clearly saw the magnitude of the crisis. It is impossible to over-estimate the disastrous consequences that would have ensued from the seizure and occupation by the enemy of the Fortress of Allahabad, with all its mighty munitions of war. One officer, however, was prepared at any risk to prevent this catastrophe by precipitating another. Stimulated, perhaps, by the noble example set by Willoughby at Delhi, Russell, of the Artillery, laid trains of gunpowder from the magazines to a point, at which he stood during the disarming of the Sixth, near the loaded guns; and if mutiny had then been successful, he would have fired the trains and blown the magazines, with all the surrounding buildings, into the air.* The expulsion of the Hindostanee Sepoys, effected by Brasyer's cool courage and admirable management, averted for the moment this great calamity; and all that was left undone, did itself afterwards by the help of the national character of the Sikhs.

* I first read this anecdote in Mr. Clive Bayley's Official Report. Mr. Bayley has stated the fact on the authority of Mr. Court, the magistrate, whose testimony is not to be questioned.



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June 6.
Rising in the
City.

Such was the mutiny of the Sixth Regiment—in its purely military aspects one of the most remarkable in the whole history of the war, and, memorable in itself, still more memorable for its immediate popular results. For the great city rose in an instant. The suburbs caught the contagion of rebellion; far into the rural districts the pestilence spread, and order and authority lay prostrate and moribund. If a general rising of the people had been skilfully planned and deliberately matured, there could not, to all outward appearance, have been a more simultaneous or a more formidable insurrection. But, in truth, there was no concert, no cohesion. Every man struck for himself. In not one of the great cities of India was there a more varied population than in Allahabad. But there was a greater preponderance than is often seen of the Mahomedan element. And it was a perilous kind of Mahomedanism; for large numbers of the ancient dependents of decayed Mogul families were cherishing bitter memories of the past, and writhing under the universal domination of the English. The dangerous classes, indeed, were many, and they seem to have been ripe for revolt on the first sign of the rising of the soldiery. So, whilst the events above recorded were passing in the Fort, in the city and in the station were such tumult and confusion as had never been known before. All through the night of the 6th of June licence and rapine had full sway. The gaol was broken open, and the prisoners released. Vast numbers of convicted criminals, with the irons still rattling on their limbs, rushed forth, to the consternation of the peaceful inhabitants, to turn their newly-acquired liberty to account in the indulgence of all the worst passions of humanity. To the English station they made their way in large bodies, shouting

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and yelling as they went; and every European or Eurasian who crossed their path was mercilessly butchered on the spot. The houses of the Christian inhabitants were plundered; and the flames from our burning bungalows soon lit up the skies and proclaimed to many in the Fort that their pleasant homes would soon be only heaps of ashes. And there was a mighty pillage in the quarters of the Christian shopkeepers and the wharfs and warehouses of the steam companies. The railway-works were destroyed.* The telegraphic wires were torn down. All our people outside the Fort were ruthlessly put to death by the insurgents, and it has been said with every possible aggravation of cruelty. All the turbulent population of the great city turned out to glut their vengeance against the Feringhees, or to gratify their insatiate thirst for plunder. And with them went not only the Sepoys, who, a day before, had licked our hands, but the superannuated pensioners of the Company's Native Army, who, though feeble for action were blatant in council, and were earnest in their efforts to stimulate others to deeds of cowardice and cruelty.† Law and authority were, for a while, prostrate in the dust; whilst over the

* There seemed to be an especial rage against the Railway and the Telegraph. How far it was the growth of the superstitious feelings glanced at in the first volume of this work (pp. 190, *et seq.*), I do not venture to declare. There was apparently a great fear of the engines, for the insurgents brought the guns to bear upon them and battered them to pieces, some appearing to be afraid of approaching them as though they were living monsters.

† See the Red Pamphlet. The author states that he gives facts "from an undoubted source"—one

who received them "from the lips of an eye-witness." "Houses were plundered and burnt," he says, "their inmates chopped to pieces, some roasted, almost all cruelly tortured, the children tossed on bayonets. Foremost in the commission of these atrocities were the pensioners. . . . These men, unable from their infirmities to fight, were not thereby precluded from inflicting tortures of the most diabolical nature. They even took the lead in these villainies, and encouraged the Sepoys and others to follow their example."



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Cotwallee, or head-quarters of the city police, the green flag of the Prophet declared the supremacy of Mahomedan rule.

Nor was it only against the white-faced Europeans and the Christian people of the half-blood that the fury of the disaffected was at this time levelled. In some quarters of Allahabad were a large number of quiet settlers from the plains of Bengal, and many others drawn thither by the exigencies of their religion—peaceful pilgrims to the sacred Pryag. If to be a Bengallee were not at that time held in the North-Western Provinces to be the next thing to a Christian, it was at least known that he was an unwarlike, feeble personage, likely to have money in his possession, and small means of defending it. Upon these harmless people the “budmashes” fell heavily, and established a reign of terror among them. Their property was seized, their lives were threatened, and only spared by abject promises to disgorge the savings of a life, and to swear allegiance to the restored Government of the Mogul.*

June 7.

To sack the Treasury was commonly the first thought of the insurgents, alike of military mutineers and criminals from the streets and bazaars. But the coin lay untouched during the night under a Sepoy guard, and the first impulses of personal greed were restrained by some feeling of nationality which had found entrance into their breasts, though only on the briefest tenure. It was agreed that the treasure

* “The Bengallees cowered in fear, and awaited within closed doors to have their throats cut. The women raised a dolorous cry at the near prospect of death. From massacring their officers, and plundering the Treasury, and letting open the gaol-birds, the Sepoys spread through the

town to loot the inhabitants. Our friend, as well as his other neighbours, were soon eased of all their valuables, but were spared their lives on promise of allegiance to their (the Native) Government.”—*Travels of a Hindoo, by Bholanauth Chunder.*

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June 7.

should be carried in its integrity by the regiment to Delhi, and laid, with their services, at the feet of the King. The spasm of self-devotion seems to have ended with the night. In the morning the Sepoys of the Sixth are said to have assembled on the parade-ground, and to have voted for the repudiation of this patriotic scheme. Soon after noon they went to the Treasury, opened its doors, and began to serve out the money-bags. Each Sepoy took as many rupees as he could carry, and when the whole had satisfied themselves, they left what remained to the predatory classes, convicted and unconvicted, of the city. Then there was very little more thought of the national cause, of Delhi, or of Behaudur Shah. As a regiment the Sixth disbanded itself, and each soldier, carrying his spoil, set out for his native village. But the spirit of rapine had been roused in all the adjacent country; and there were many who, in the absence of white-faced fugitives, were by no means reluctant to plunder the black. And it is suspected that very few of the Sepoys, carrying off an ample provision for the remainder of their lives, ever lived to spend the money in the ease and dignity of their native homes.*

It is supposed that many, escaping towards Oude, perished in the Gangetic villages not far from the city. For as at Benares, so at Allahabad, the peasantry rose at once under their old Talookhdars, who had been dispossessed by the action of our law-courts; and there was anarchy in the rural districts. The auction purchasers—absentee proprietors—dwelt principally in the city, and the ryots had no sympathy with them. For their own sakes they were eager but

Rebellion in
the Districts.

* It is said that about thirty lakhs of rupees (about 300,000*l.*) were in the Allahabad Treasury, and that every Sepoy carried off three or four bags, each containing a thousand rupees (100*l.*)



1857.
June 7.

feeble supporters of Government; all the muscle and sinew of the agricultural races were arrayed against us. Indeed, it soon became painfully apparent to the British authorities that the whole country was slipping away from them. For not only in the districts beyond the Ganges, but in those lying between the two rivers, the rural population had risen. The landowners there were principally Mahomedans, and ready to join any movement which threatened to drive the English from the land. It was there, too, in the Doab that Brahminism was most powerfully enthroned. The point where the Ganges and the Jumna meet, known as the Pryag, is one of peculiar sanctity in the estimation of Hindoos, and the Priesthood, therefore, were strong in numbers and in influence. The gathering of the pilgrims was a source of wealth to them, and they believed that if the supremacy of the English were overthrown their gains would be greater and their power on the ascendant. So these "Pryag-wallahs" stirred up the Hindoo population of the Doab; and soon there was scarcely a man of either faith who was not arrayed against us. But on the further bank of the Jumna affairs were more propitious. There were incidental risings, plunderings and burnings of villages, but more on the surface than on the Ganges or in the Doab. For it happened that some powerful Rajahs, whose interest it was to maintain order, either sided with the English or maintained a discreet neutrality whilst the tumult was at its worst, and rose up to aid us when the star of our fortune again began to ascend.*

The Rajahs
of Manda,
Ditrya,
and Barra.

The Moulavies.

After the lapse of a few days, the first orgies of crime being over, and there being nothing more to plunder and little more to destroy, the universal

* See Mr. Fendall Thompson's Official Narrative.

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June 7.

rapine, with all its distractions and confusions and internecine conflicts, began to take a more consistent shape, and something like an organised rebellion arose in its place. There was a man known as the "Moulavee," around whom the insurgent population gathered, as he proclaimed the restored rule of the Emperor of Delhi. Whence he sprung few people at the time could say. But it was known at a later period that he came from one of the Mahomedan villages in the Doab, which had gone into rebellion. Making great pretensions to sanctity, and investing himself with the character of a prophet as well as of a ruler of men, he stimulated the dormant fanaticism of the people, and roused them to array themselves against the Feringhees. Establishing his head-quarters in the Chusroo Bagh—a spacious walled garden, in which were some tombs, held in high veneration—he simulated the possession of miraculous powers, by some obvious trickeries, which deluded his excited followers, and for awhile he was recognised as Governor of Allahabad. It little mattered who or what he was, so long as he was strong in his hatred of the English, and could induce the Mussulman population to believe that the Mahomedan dynasty would soon be restored. So for a little time he succeeded in setting up the likeness of a provisional government, and the name of the Moulavee was on the lips of all the followers of the Prophet. Telling them that the Book of Fate declared the speedy extinction of the white race in India, he urged his people, day after day, to attack the Fort; but, though they made sundry demonstrations, they kept at a discreet distance from our guns.*

* Some of the cotemporary accounts state that it was difficult to trace either the name or origin of the Moulavee, and my later investigations have not thrown much light upon the subject.* From a high civil authority, who had the best opportunity of ascertaining the history of



1857.

June 7.

Reinforce-
ments from
below.

June 9.

But this state of things was not to be suffered much longer to endure. The man, who, by his timely energy, had saved Benares, was now pushing on for the rescue of Allahabad. The one true soldier that was needed to put forth a strong hand to smite down the growing rebellion in the Gangetic Provinces was hurrying upwards, with a little band of English fighting men, to show that the national manhood of the country had lost nothing of the might that had enabled it to establish the empire of the Few in the vast territories of the Many. Having sent forward an advanced party of the Fusiliers, under Lieutenant Arnold, and made over the command of Benares to Colonel Gordon, Neill left that place with another party of his regiment, and pressed on by horse-dawk to Allahabad. Arnold had reached the Bridge of Boats on the 7th, but he had been unable at once to cross, as the passage was held by the mutineers, and there had been some delay in sending a steamer to bring them across the river to the Fort. Their arrival did something to establish confidence in the garrison, but the news that Neill was coming did still more. The old high spirit of self-reliance had never waned; and it was still felt that a handful of European soldiers under a commander, with a clear head and a stout heart, might hold Allahabad against the whole world of mutiny and rebellion.

the man, I can learn only that "he was not known in the district before the mutiny," and was "said to be an emissary from Lucknow." The best account that I can find is that given by Mr. Willock in his official report. "At this time," he says, "the city and suburbs were held by a body of rebels under the now well-known Moulavee Lyakut Ali. This man, a weaver by caste, and by trade

a schoolmaster, had gained some respect in his village by his excessive sanctity; and on the first spread of the rebellion, the Mahomedan Zemindars of Pergunnah Chail, ready to follow any leader, placed this man at their head, and marched to the city, proclaiming him Governor of the district in the name of the King of Delhi."

CSL
1857.
June 11.
Arrival of
Neill.

On the 11th of June Neill arrived. As he entered the gates of the Fort, the Sentry exclaimed, "Thank God, sir, you'll save us yet!" Lord Canning, who saw clearly that he had now at his disposal one of the men most wanted in such a crisis, had commissioned the electric wires to instruct the Colonel of the Madras Fusiliers to take command at Allahabad; and Neill had hastened upwards, under the burning heats of June, with a disregard for self, which well nigh cost him his life.* He had obtained entrance into the Fort, not without great personal risk; and only the indomitable will within him kept him from succumbing to the fierce rays of the noon-day sun. For some time after his arrival he could sustain himself only by continually lying down and drinking large quantities of champagne and water. But he never for a moment doubted his capacity to grapple successfully with the difficulties before him; whatsoever might be his physical prostration, he had no mental shortcomings, no deterring sense of responsibility to enervate and arrest him. "I had always the greatest confidence in myself," he wrote at this time to the partner of his life; "and although I felt almost dying from complete exhaustion, yet I kept up my heart." Whatever the conjuncture might be, it was the nature of the man to rise to the height of the occasion—"to scorn the consequence and to do the thing." He had long been looking for an opportunity, and, now that it had come, he was not one to succumb to the assaults of bodily weakness, and to

* "I was quite done up by my dash from Benares, and getting into the Fort in that noonday heat. I was so exhausted for days, that I was obliged to lie down constantly. I could only sit up for a few minutes at a time, and when our attacks were

going on, I was obliged to sit down in the batteries and give my orders and directions. . . . For several days I drank champagne and water to keep me up."—*Letter from Colonel Neill to his Wife. MS. Correspondence.*