



CHAPTER III.

GENERAL POLICY OF SIR JOHN LAWRENCE—THE RAISING OF LOCAL LEVIES—EVENTS AT PESHAWUR—DISARMING OF THE NATIVE REGIMENTS—PUNISHMENT OF DESERTERS—MUTINY OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH—EXPEDITION TO HOTE-MURDAN—MUTINY OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH—THE OUTBREAK AT JULLUNDHUR.

WHILST Daly's Guide Corps was making this splendid march, and the Punjab was contributing the first-fruits of its accumulated strength to the succour of the English Army at Delhi, events were ripening in the frontier province, and John Lawrence and his associates were laying fast hold of the crisis with a vigorous tenacity, as men knowing right well the sovereign importance of promptitude of action. The Chief Commissioner, in earnest council with Edwardes and Chamberlain, had clearly marked out the policy which was now to be pursued for the preservation of the Punjab. When intelligence of the events at the capital, and especially of the disarming of the Native regiments at Meean-Meer, reached him, he had been at first somewhat startled by the boldness of the conception, and perhaps inclined to question the wisdom of the achievement. For John Lawrence, with all his immense energy and resolution, was a man cautious and circumspect, who never acted upon impulse. If he thought at the beginning that this open movement

✓
May, 1857.Policy of Sir
John Lawrence.
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1857.

May.

against the Sepoys on the part of the Sirkar—this vehement declaration of want of confidence in men who had as yet, within his own circle of administration, done nothing disloyal—was hastily to proclaim a war that it was not desirable to precipitate, there was substantial reason for the doubt.* But he very soon felt full assurance that what had been done had been done wisely and well. And from that time, sternly recognising the fact that the crisis had come, that there was nothing to be postponed, or coqueted with, or smoothed down, he flung himself into the work before him, full-brained and strong-armed, and grappled with it as, perhaps, no other man could have done. Then he, in his turn, startled others by the boldness of his conceptions. There were men equally shrewd and courageous at Lahore, who learnt with alarm that the Chief Commissioner was enlisting Sikhs and Afghans into the service of the State. But this policy was based upon a sound estimate of the antagonism between the Poorbeah Sepoys from Hindostan and the Punjabee races, whether Sikhs or Mahomedans—a natural antagonism fostered and increased by the conduct of the former.† To replace

* See the following extract from a private letter addressed by Lawrence to Edwardes, in which the position of affairs is most accurately stated in a few words: "The misfortune of the present state of affairs is this,—Each step we take for our own security is a blow against the Regular Sepoy. He feels this, and on his side takes a further step, and so we go on, until we disband or destroy them, or they mutiny and kill their officers."

† On the parts of the Sikhs and Punjabees there happily existed a considerable degree of antipathy, if not downright enmity, towards the Sepoys of the Native Corps of the

Line. The latter had rendered themselves insufferable by assuming airs of superiority, and regarding the former with disdain, as being themselves more warlike and better soldiers. "We mar-ed (beat) Caubul, we mar-ed the Punjab," was the every-day boast of the Poorbeah Sepoy to the Sikh, whom he further stigmatised as a man of low caste. The bad feeling between the two races was still further fostered by the cold shoulder usually turned by the Poorbeahs to the Sikhs and Punjabees, whom they could not openly prevent enlisting into regiments of the Line."



1857.

May.

these Hindostanees, among whom it every day became more apparent that mutiny was spreading like a pestilence, by the mixed races of the province and the frontier, might be to substitute a new danger for the old; but the one was certain, the other merely conjectural. And there was good reason to believe that so long as we were capable of asserting our strength, the military classes of the Punjab would array themselves on our side, if only for the sake of gain. Among the Sikhs, Delhi was both an offence and a temptation. Old prophecies had foretold that the Imperial City of the Mogul would some day be given up to the plunder of the Khalsa. And it was not to be doubted that the destruction of the Hindostanee Army of the Company would tend, sooner or later, to assist them to recover the ascendancy they had lost. Sir John Lawrence saw this clearly enough; but he had to deal with an immediate necessity, and he had no need at such a time to take thought of the Future. So he asked the consent of the Governor-General to the raising of local levies, and this, sought and granted on a small scale, soon expanded into larger proportions, and Sir John Lawrence held in his hand an open commission to act according to his own judgment and discretion.*

This policy met with general favour among the chief political officers in the Province, and there were few who did not press for permission to recruit in their own districts. But it was soon apparent that there was in some parts, especially on the frontier, overmuch of hesitation, resulting from want of confidence in our strength. Meanwhile other precau-

* I ought not to omit to state that, as many Sikhs had enlisted into the Sepoy regiments, an order went out to excerpt these men from the Hindostanee corps and form them into separate battalions.



1857.

May.

tionary measures were being pressed forward with that promptitude and energy which always distinguished such operations in the Punjab. The Police was strengthened. The utmost vigilance was enforced upon them. The different passages of the Punjab Rivers—the fords and ferries—were watched and guarded; and every effort was to be made to intercept those emissaries of evil who, in the guise of wandering fakeers or other religious mendicants, were sowing the seeds of sedition broadcast over the country.* Then, again, great endeavours were made—and with wonderful success—to save the Government Treasure, the loss of which was not to be calculated by the number of rupees to be struck off our cash-balances. It was emphatically the sinews of war to the enemy. Wherever it was held, under Native guards, at outlying stations, it was removed to places of security and stored under the protection of European soldiers. And at the same time an order went forth—merciful in the end, but terrible in the hour of our need—to punish all offenders against the State with a deterring severity, which would strike a great fear into the hearts of the people. “There was no room then for mercy,” it was said; “the public safety was a paramount consideration.” The ordinary processes of the law were set aside, and authority was given to any two civil officers to erect themselves into a special commission to try criminals, and to execute upon them, when needed, the sentence of death. At the same time, seeing that it was better to remove the

* I have been told that the picture in the first volume of this History, of the wandering emissaries of sedition, who, in one disguise or another, traversed the country, was purely an effort of my imagination.

As this opinion has been made public through an influential channel, I may note that the statement in the text is from Sir John Lawrence's Official Report, laid before Parliament.



1857.

May.

means of offence than to punish its commission, he tried to clear the province of all that mass of disaffected non-military humanity from Hindostan,* which was either hanging on to the skirts of the Poorbeah Army, or had followed the Feringhees in the hour of success, moved by the great lust of gain to worship what they now reviled. And all these measures for the internal security of the province seemed to John Lawrence the more necessary, as he was straining every nerve to send down troops to Delhi, and thus was weakening his own defensive powers. For this reason, too, it seemed to him that we should act vigorously, and at once, against our declared enemies, taking the initiative whenever opportunity presented itself, and establishing a reputation for that confidence in our own resources, the belief in which by our adversaries is always a tower of strength. And already events were hurrying on to this desired point. One great opportunity was close at hand, and others were pressing on tumultuously behind.

On the 21st of May, Colonel Edwardes returned to Peshawur.† Little sunshine greeted him there. His colleagues, Cotton and Nicholson, had no cheerful intelligence to offer him. A great cloud was over

Events at
Peshawur.

* "The traitorous symptoms evinced and the intrigues set on foot by the non-military Hindostances in the Punjab territories, rendered it necessary to remove large numbers of them. These people were employed to a considerable extent among the police and other subordinate civil establishments; and as camp-followers they swarmed in every cantonment, and in the adja-

cent cities. Most of the lower class of employes were discharged, and numbers of camp-followers deported out of the province."—*Sir John Lawrence's Official Report.*

† The regular Hindostance regiments at Peshawur consisted of the Fifth Cavalry and the Twenty-first, Twenty-fourth, Twenty-seventh, and Fifty-first Infantry regiments.



1857.

May.

the place. The Sepoy regiments had shown unmistakable signs of that feverishness which presages revolt. Cotton had divided his Hindostanee troops in such a manner as to render joint action more difficult; and he had placed Europeans, with guns, in their immediate vicinity, to be prepared for a sudden rising. From many parts of the country tidings of fresh mutinies had come in, and there was a general belief that the whole Native army was rotten to the core. Intercepted letters showed that the excitement was not confined to those whose names were written on the muster-rolls of our regiments.* Nicholson, who, with his wonted energy, had been pushing forward the work of raising local levies, had found an uneasy feeling among the chiefs of the principal tribes, and a general unwillingness to enlist into the service of a Government which seemed to be in a state of decrepitude, if not of decay. "Men remembered Caubul," wrote Edwardes at a later period. "Not one hundred could be found to join such a desperate cause." It was clear, therefore, both to him and to Nicholson that it was necessary to sweep away the doubts and uncertainties which were keeping up this dangerous state of unrest, and to assert, vigorously and undeniably, the power of the English on the frontier.

May 21.

On the night of the 21st they had gone to rest in their clothes beneath the same roof, both assured that a few more hours would ripen their plans, when an express arrived informing them that the companies of the Fifty-fifth had mutinied at Nowshera, some

* "Thaneysur Brahmins and Patna Mahomedans, Hindostanee fanatics in the Swat Valley and turbulent outlaws in Gitanah, were calling upon the Sepoys to declare them-

selves. . . . The whole disclosed such a picture of fanatic zeal and base treachery as made the very name of a Poorbani Sepoy suspected and loathed."—*Cave-Browne*.



twenty-four miles distant from Peshawur, and that there was no reliance to be placed on the Tenth Regiment of Irregular Cavalry at the same place. The former regiment had been brigaded at Meerut and other stations with the Third Cavalry, and was regarded as a fogleman corps, whose every movement would be strictly followed by the regiments in the Punjab. It needed not any long-sustained conversation between Edwardes and Nicholson for both to arrive at the conclusion that the Native troops at Peshawur should be at once disarmed. So the Commissioner and Deputy-Commissioner of Peshawur went straightway to the Quarters of the Brigadier, and woke him up in the dead of the night. Starting from his sleep, Cotton saw beside him his two political associates, and, wondering what had brought them to his bed-side, prepared himself to listen. He was not a man in any emergency to be flustered, and he soon took in with a cool brain the whole state of the case. It would be necessary to send European troops from Peshawur to coerce the refractory regiment at Nowshera and Hote-Murdan, and the white troops at Cotton's disposal, already weakened by the requirements of the Movable Column and by summer sickness, could little afford a further draft from them, whilst the Hindostanee regiments were in armed force in the Cantonment. Moreover, it was plain that the tribes on the Frontier were eagerly watching events, and that the excitement was every day increasing. But there were two aspects in which this might be regarded, for thus to strip the Frontier of a large part of its defenders—to reduce the available force at the disposal of the British Government to a handful of European troops—might be to encourage the Afghans to stream through the Khybur

1857.

May 21—22.



1857.
May 22.

Pass in an irresistible spasm of energy for the recovery of Peshawur. The risk of action was great; the risk of quiescence seemed also to be great. But to those three brave men, in midnight council assembled, it appeared that the bolder would be the better course; and so it was resolved that they should be the first to strike, and that four of the five Sepoy Regiments should be disarmed at break of day.* The responsibility of the blow would rest with Cotton. He did not hesitate to accept it.

Disarming of
the Sepoy
Regiments.

There was no time to be lost. So he at once summoned the Commanding Officers of the Native Regiments to his Quarters. Day broke before they were assembled. There, in the presence of Edwardes and Nicholson, Cotton told them what he had determined to do, and ordered them to parade their regiments with all possible despatch. Then there arose a storm of remonstrance. Protesting their entire confidence in the fidelity of their men, these Sepoy Commandants clamoured vehemently against the threatened disgrace of their regiments; and one declared his conviction that his corps would never submit to lay down its arms, but would rise against the order and resolutely attack the guns.† Cotton listened

* The Twenty-first Sepoy Regiment was exempted from the operation of the disarming order. It was the Senior Regiment in the cantonment, and as such, according to military etiquette and usage, the other battalions looked to it for an example. It had certainly not given a signal for insurrection, and whatever may have been the feelings with which it regarded the supremacy of the English, it had shown no active symptoms of disaffection. It was thought advisable, therefore, to spare it, the more especially as it was held to be "indispensable to keep one

Native Infantry corps to carry on the duties of the station."

† "It was impossible not to sympathise with the soldierly feelings of Colonel Harrington and Major Shakespeare; but when Colonel Plumbé has implicit confidence in the Twenty-seventh Native Infantry to be unshaken by events in Hindostan, and had nothing to recommend but conciliation, whilst the Colonel of the Fifty-first, on the other hand, predicted that his men would attack the guns if called on to give up their muskets, hesitation was at an end."—*Edwardes's Report.*

1857.
May 22.

attentively to all that was said, but the discussion proceeded after argument had been exhausted, and, after a while, Edwardes, thinking that time and words were being wasted, broke in with an emphatic sentence, to the effect "that the matter rested entirely with Brigadier Cotton." On this Cotton at once exclaimed: "Then the troops as originally determined will be disarmed." This silenced all further remonstrance. Not another word was said by way of argument. The regimental commandants received their instructions and went forth to do the bidding of their chief.

It has been stated that the Peshawur Force had been wisely cut in two, as a precautionary measure, by Brigadier Cotton. It was now arranged that Edwardes should accompany Cotton to the right wing, whilst Nicholson went to the left with Colonel Galloway of the Seventieth Queen's, who stood next in seniority.* With the former were Her Majesty's Eighty-seventh Fusiliers, with the latter the Seventieth, both with detachments of Artillery to support them. It was a moment of intense anxiety. The Sepoy Commandants were parading their men, and the Queen's Regiments were lying in wait to attack them on the first sign of resistance. The suddenness of the movement took the Sepoys aback; they laid down their arms to the bidding of their own officers. And as the piles grew and grew, under the mournful process of humiliating surrender, a feeling of profound grief and shame took possession of their officers, and it is recorded that some of them cast their own swords and spurs upon the heaps of abandoned musketry and sabres in token of the strength of their

* Brigadier Cotton at this time commanded generally the Frontier Force, whilst Colonel Galloway was Brigadier Commanding the Station.



1857.
May 22.

sympathy with the Sepoys, and their detestation of the authority which had degraded them.*

✓ The arms surrendered, Brigadier Cotton addressed the regiments, praising them for the readiness with which they had obeyed orders; and they went to their lines. Thus was the work done well and thoroughly—and without the shedding of a drop of blood. The effect upon the minds of the people was magical. They believed that we were strong because we were daring. The old aphorism, that “nothing succeeds like success,” was here triumphantly verified. The tribes, who had held aloof whilst danger threatened us, and the issue was doubtful, now pressed forward eagerly to do homage to the audacity of the English. Without another halt of doubt, or tremour of hesitation, they came forward with their offers of service. “As we rode down to the disarming,” said Herbert Edwardes, “a very few chiefs and yeomen of the country attended us, and I remember, judging from their faces, that they came to see which way the tide would turn. As we rode back friends were as thick as summer flies, and levies began from that moment to come in.” Good reason, indeed, had Sir John Lawrence to write to the Peshawur Commissioner, with hearty commendation, saying: “I look on the disarming of the four corps at Peshawur as a master-stroke—one which will do much good to keep the peace throughout the Punjab. Commandants of Corps are under a delusion, and

* Colonel Edwardes's Official Report. “As the muskets and sabres of the once honoured corps were hurried uncereemoniously into carts, it was said that here and there the spurs and swords of English officers fell sympathisingly upon the pile.” General Cotton says that the conduct of some of the Sepoy officers

then, and afterwards, was of a highly insubordinate character, and that serious consequences to them would have ensued, “had it been prudent to exhibit such a division in the European element in the eyes of the Native troops and the people of the country.”

1857.
May.

whilst in this state their opinions are of little value. . . . We are doing well in every district—Becher famously.^{22*}

But although the Native regiments at Peshawur had been disarmed, they had not been rendered altogether innocuous. Arms on that frontier, though for the most part of a ruder kind than our own, were abundant, and our disciplined Sepoys, fraternising with the border tribes, might have returned to do us grievous injury.† It was, perhaps, too much to expect that the entire body of Sepoys would remain quietly in their Lines; for if the active principle of rebellion were within them, they would be eager to cross the frontier, and if they were under the pressure of a great panic, confused and bewildered by the blow which had fallen upon them, they would surely believe that it was the design of the English to destroy the soldiers whom they had disarmed. It was scarcely, therefore, to be hoped that at such a time there would be no desertions. But it was necessary at once to arrest these natural impulses to leave the Lines.‡ It was not a time for tenderness—for mercy—even for justice. A stern example was to be made of the first offenders. So the Police were put upon their track, and the tribes were encouraged to arrest the fugitives. Many were brought back, in the firm grip of their supposed friends and confederates—some of them after falling among thieves and being despoiled of all they possessed.

Those were the early days of our great trouble, and Regulation and Routine were still paramount amongst us. The technicalities of the Judge-Advocate had

* Major John Becher of the Engineers, Deputy-Commissioner of the Hazarrah Division of the Punjab.

† MS. Correspondence.

‡ The desertions were principally from the Fifty-first Regiment.



1857.
May 28.

not been dispensed with, and the trial of these deserters, therefore, was conducted with all due ceremony and formality.* Colonel Galloway was President of the Court Martial assembled by order of General Reed, and the first result was that the Soubahdar Major of the Fifty-first, found guilty of desertion, was sentenced to death; whilst a Havildar and a Sepoy were condemned to short terms of imprisonment. The leniency of these latter sentences provoked Cotton and Edwardes; but the public execution of a high Native officer might still have a good deterring effect. So on the evening of the 28th of May, what was called, in the demi-official language of the time, "an useful timber frame-work" was erected on the parade-ground, and a general parade was ordered for the following morning. "The Soubahdar Major of the Fifty-first was hanged this morning," wrote Edwardes to Nicholson on the 29th, "in presence of all the troops, who behaved well. I occupied the road in rear of Cantonments with Horse and Foot levies, in case the Fifty-first should refuse to attend the Parade, as some people expected, in which case General Cotton would have put them to the bayonet."† But soon the "useful timber frame-work" thus called into requisition for the first time at Peshawur was put to larger uses, until the process of suspension became tedious, and convicted offenders were blown from the guns.

In the meanwhile retribution was overtaking the Fifty-fifth Regiment at Murdan. "An hour hence," wrote Edwardes on the day after the disarming at Peshawur, "a small force of three hundred European Infantry, about two hundred and fifty Cavalry (Native

* The Judge-Advocate said that drum-head courts-martial were "obsolete." It was not long before they were revived into institutions of the present.

† MS. Correspondence.

Destruction
of the Fifty-
Fifth.

1857.
May.

Irregulars), and eight guns, six of which are howitzers, will march from this cantonment to the ferry at Do-bundee, and thence proceed to-morrow night in one long march to the Fort of Murdan, for the purpose of disarming the Fifty-fifth Native Infantry, which is said to be in a state of mutiny." The expedition was commanded by Colonel Chute of the Seventieth Queen's,* and with it, as political officer, went Colonel John Nicholson, ever eager to be in the thick of the action. It has been already related that the Fifty-fifth had been ordered to relieve the Guide Corps at Hote Murdan. It had proceeded thither from Nowshera, leaving two companies at the old station under Captain Cameron. There the Queen's Twenty-seventh (Enniskillens) had been stationed with Brougham's battery; but the former had been ordered to Rawul-Pindee, and the latter to Peshawur. And now, with the exception of a little handful of Europeans, who had been placed in charge of the sick and the women and children of the old European garrison, the place was left to the mercy of mutinous Native troops.† The situation was one of extreme danger. But it was manfully confronted by Lieutenant Davies of the Enniskillens, who, having placed his helpless charge in a convenient barrack, drew up his little body of staunch Englishmen, fully accoutred and ready for action, and prepared to meet his assailants. These signs of resistance were too much for the mutineers. Having fired a few random shots from a distance, they made off towards the river, intending to cross by the bridge of boats, and to join their comrades in

* Brigadier Cotton wished himself to go in command, but Edwardes persuaded him to remain at Peshawur, where his services were more needed.

† It should be stated that there was a detachment of the regiment posted on the Attock to guard the ferry at Khyrabad. These men were the first to mutiny.



1857. Hote-Murdan. But Taylor, of the Engineers, with
May 22---24. characteristic readiness of resource, broke the bridge,
by drawing out the boats in mid-channel, and only a
few men made the passage of the river and joined
their head-quarters in the course of the night. The
rest returned to their Lines, and for a while remained
sullen and inactive. But a summons came to them
to march to Murdan, and on the night of the 22nd
they went thither peaceably under Cameron's com-
mand.

They went to swell the tide of treason. There was
no doubt of the treachery of the main body of the
regiment, although with lip-loyalty it was still de-
ceiving its officers, after the old fashion; and its
Colonel, Henry Spottiswoode, who is described as "a
devoted soldier, who lived for his regiment," pro-
tested that he had "implicit confidence" in his men,
and implored Cotton not to act against them. So
strong, indeed, was his trust, that even the warnings
of some men of his own corps could not shake it.
Two hundred Sikhs had been enlisted into the regi-
ment since it had been stationed in the Punjab, and
these men now offered, if separated from the rest, to
fight the whole of the Hindostanee Sepoys. But
Spottiswoode shook his head and declined the offer.
He had faith in his children to the last. He would
"stake his life on their staunchness;" and he did.
On the night of the 24th, the advance of the force
from Peshawur was suspected, if not known, by the
Sepoys, and the Native officers went to the Colonel
for an explanation. Spottiswoode knew the truth of
the report but too well. He could answer nothing
of an assuring kind, and the deputies went unsatisfied
from his presence. Then his heart sunk within him.
It was all over. The mutual confidence on which he



had relied so much was gone for ever. He could not bear the thought of the future, so left alone in his room he blew out his brains.*

1857.
May 25.

"As day was breaking on the 25th, Chute's column, having been strengthened by a body of Punjab Infantry under Major Vaughan, came in sight of the Fort of Hote-Murdan. No sooner was their advance discerned from the walls than the Fifty-fifth rose in a body and rushed forth tumultuously, turning their faces towards the hills of Swat. Now that their Colonel was gone, they felt that there was no hope for them. So they went, taking with them their arms, their regimental colours, all the treasure they could seize, and all the ammunition that they could carry with them. Chute sent on a detachment of all arms of his little force, whilst he occupied the fort with the remainder;† but the mutineers had a long start, and the country was such that our guns could not be brought within range of the fugitives. These things were in their favour. But there was one thing terribly against them. Nicholson was there. His foot in the stirrup, his sword by his side, and a few trusty horsemen behind him, all his old martial instincts, of which civil employment had long denied the gratification, grew strong within him again, and he swept down upon the flying Sepoys with a grand swoop, which nothing could escape or resist. It was said afterwards that the tramp of his war-horse was heard miles off. "Spottiswoode's light-hearted boys," Nicholson in pursuit.

* See an interesting note in Mr. Cave-Browne's book, vol. i., p. 170. Colonel Spottiswoode had served chiefly with the Twenty-first, and had been only for a few months in command of the Fifty-fifth.

† It should be stated that the officers of the Fifty-fifth, with about

one hundred and twenty men, came out of the Fort and joined Chute's force. It was doubted whether they were more faithful than the rest. Colonel Edwardes (Official Report) says that they were brought over by the threats and persuasions of their officers.



1857. May 24—26. he wrote to Edwardes on the 24th, "swear that they will die fighting. *Nous allons voir.*" And a day or two later he wrote to the same beloved correspondent saying, "The Fifty-fifth fought determinately, as men, who have no chance of escape but by their own exertions, always do." But the pursuing party killed about a hundred and twenty of the mutineers, captured about a hundred and fifty, with the regimental colours, and more than two hundred stands of arms.* The rest took refuge in the Loond-khoor hills. And many of those who fell on that day fell under Nicholson's own strong arm. Of those under him, none fought so well as his own Mounted Police. The men of the Irregular Cavalry only "pretended to act."† "I did not get home till 7 P.M. yesterday," he wrote to Edwardes on the 26th of May, "having been just twenty hours in the saddle, and in the sun the whole day. So you may fancy I was dead beat, and my horse too. He carried me over seventy miles."

If there had been any doubt before as to the man of men—the one, of all others, strong in action and swift in pursuit, by whom desperate work, such as Edwardes had spoken of in Calcutta, was to be done best, the question was now settled. All men saw in this the first of Nicholson's great exploits in

* Colonel Cinte to Brigadier Cotton, Murdan, May 26.

† "There were some Irregulars, but they only pretended to act. Captain Law, who commanded a party of the Tenth Irregular Cavalry, got wounded in setting a vain example to his men, one of whom treacherously fired into the Fifth Punjab Infantry. The Fifth, under Major Vaughan, followed as close as infantry could do, and showed an admirable spirit throughout the day."

—*Edwardes's Report.* Nicholson wrote that "the casualties in the Tenth Irregular Cavalry the other day were an excellent index of the state and value of the corps."—"These casualties were one European officer, wounded whilst trying to get his men to advance, one Sowar killed, not by the Fifty-fifth, but by Vaughan's men, into whom he treacherously fired."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857.
May.

the mutiny-war, the forerunner of many others of the same stamp. It was a fine thing at that time—nothing finer in the whole history of the War—to mark the enthusiasm with which men, all earnest in the great work before them, rejoiced in the successes of their brethren, and sent forth, one to another, pleasant pæans of encouragement. The chief officers of the Punjab were bound together not merely by the excitement of a common object; the bonds of a common affection were equally strong within them, and each was eager to express his admiration of the good deeds of another. There may have been good fellowship in other provinces, but in none was there such fellowship as this. Men of the stamp of Edwardes and Nicholson, Becher and Lake, James and M'Pherson—all having equal zeal for the public, but not all enjoying equal opportunities, or, perhaps, possessing equal powers, free from all jealousies, all rivalries—were strong in mutual admiration, and were as proud of the exploits of a comrade as of their own. This great raid of John Nicholson stirred the hearts of all men to their depth. Edwardes in letter after letter, in brief but emphatic sentences, had sent him those fine, frank, genial words of hearty commendation, which no man ever uttered more becomingly or more acceptably, and afterwards recorded officially that his friend “with a handful of horsemen hurled himself like a thunderbolt on the route of a thousand mutineers.” And John Becher, all aglow with admiration of the two Peshawur Commissioners, wrote to Edwardes, saying, “I rejoice to see you thus riding on the whirlwind and controlling the storm, and glad amidst the thunder-clouds. Your letter sounds like a clarion-blast full of vigour and self-reliance; and I am proud to see you and Nicholson in this grand



1857.

May.

storm, masters at your work; right glad that Nicholson did not leave. There was work for his war-horse, and he is in his element—the first who has struck a death-blow. And we may be proud of John Lawrence as a master-spirit in these times.”*

June 2.

A terrible example was now to be made of the mutineers of the Fifty-fifth. A hundred and twenty Sepoy prisoners were in the hands of the British. They were all liable to the punishment of death. It was not to be doubted that the time had come when the severity of the hour would be the humanity of all time. But these rebels, though taken fighting against their masters, and known to have had murder in their hearts, had not shed the blood of their officers, and there were some amongst them who in the tumult of the hour had been carried away by the multitude without any guilty intent. The voice of mercy, therefore, was lifted up. “I must say a few words for some of the Fifty-fifth prisoners,” wrote Nicholson to Edwardes. “The officers of that regiment all concur in stating that the Sikhs were on their side to the last. I would, therefore, temper stern justice with mercy, and spare the Sikhs and young recruits. Blow away all the rest by all means, but spare boys scarcely out of their childhood, and men who were really loyal and respectful up to the moment when they allowed themselves to be carried away in a panic by the mass.” And Sir John Lawrence wrote also in the same strain to the Commissioner of Peshawur. “In respect to the mutineers of the Fifty-fifth, they

* Nicholson himself was very anxious that too much credit should not be given to him for this exploit. It was stated in the public prints that he had commanded the expeditionary force from Peshawur, and that he had been twenty hours in

pursuit of the enemy; and he requested that it might be explained with equal publicity that Colonel Chute commanded the force, and that he (Nicholson) had been twenty hours in the saddle, but not all that time in pursuit.

1857.
June.

were taken fighting against us, and so far deserve little mercy. But, on full reflection, I would not put them all to death. I do not think that we should be justified in the eyes of the Almighty in doing so. A hundred and twenty men are a large number to put to death. Our object is to make an example to terrify others. I think this object would be effectually gained by destroying from a quarter to a third of them. I would select all those against whom anything bad can be shown—such as general bad character, turbulence, prominence in disaffection or in the fight, disrespectful demeanour to their officers during the few days before the 26th, and the like. If these did not make up the required number, I would then add to them the oldest soldiers. All these should be shot or blown away from guns, as may be most expedient. The rest I would divide into batches: some to be imprisoned ten years, some seven, some five, some three. I think that a sufficient example will then be made, and that these distinctions will do good, and not harm. The Sepoys will see that we punish to deter, and not for vengeance. Public sympathy will not be on the side of the sufferers. Otherwise, they will fight desperately to the last, as feeling certain that they must die.”*

And in these opinions, equally politic and merciful, the military authorities concurred; indeed, there was at one time some talk of suffering those men of the Fifty-fifth, who had not actually committed themselves, to retain their arms, and even of rewarding the best of them. But subsequent investigation proved that the Hindostanees who had not left the Fort owed their immunity from actual crime rather to accident than to loyal design; so they were discharged without pay,

* MS. Correspondence.



1857.
June 10.

and sent beyond the Indus, whilst the Sikhs, who had made gallant offer of service, were left with their arms in their hands, and drafted into other regiments.

Then came the stern work of retribution. On the 3rd of June, twelve deserters of the Fifty-first had been hanged; and now on the 10th, the parade-ground of the Eighty-seventh Queen's, on which the gallows had been permanently erected, witnessed another scene of execution still more ghastly in its aspect. The fugitives from Hote-Murdan had all been sentenced to death. A hundred and twenty criminals had been condemned to be blown away from our guns. But the recommendations of the Chief Commissioner had tempered the severity of the sentence, and only one-third of the number had been marked for execution. Forty prisoners were brought out manacled and miserable to that dreadful punishment parade. The whole garrison of Peshawur was drawn up, forming three sides of a square, to witness the consummation of the sentence. The fourth side was formed by a deadly array of guns. Thousands of outsiders had poured in from the surrounding country to be spectators of the tremendous ceremony—all curious, many doubtful, some perhaps malignantly eager for an outbreak, to be followed by the collapse of British ascendancy. The pieces of the Europeans were loaded. The officers, in addition to their regulation arms, had for the most part ready to their clutch what was now becoming an institution—the many-barreled revolver pistol. The issue was doubtful, and our people were prepared for the worst.

Under a salute from one of the batteries, the Brigadier-General appeared on parade. Having ridden along the fronts of the great human square, he ordered the sentence to be read. And this done,

1857.
June 10.

the grim ceremony commenced. The forty selected malefactors were executed at the mouth of the guns.* No man lifted a hand to save them. The Native troops on parade bore themselves with steadiness, as under a great awe, and when orders went forth for the whole to march past in review order, armed and unarmed alike were obedient to the word of command. To our newly-raised levies and to the curious on-lookers from the country, the whole spectacle was a marvel and a mystery. It was a wonderful display of moral force, and it made a deep and abiding impression. There was this great virtue in it, that however unintelligible the process by which so great a result had been achieved, it was easy to understand the fact itself. The English had conquered, and were masters of the position. Perhaps some of the most sagacious and astute of the spectators of that morning's work said to each other, or to themselves, as they turned their faces homeward, that the English had conquered because they were not afraid. The strength, indeed, imparted to our cause by the disarming-parade of the 24th of May had been multiplied ten-fold by the punishment-parade of the 10th of June. And it is hard to say how many lives—the lives of men of all races—were saved by the seeming severity of this early execution.

Among the rude people of the border the audacity thus displayed by the English in the face of pressing danger excited boundless admiration. They had no longer any misgivings with respect to the superiority

* It is a significant fact that neither Sir Herbert Edwardes, in his Official Peshawur Report, nor Sir Sydney Cotton in his published Narrative, says one word about this punishment-parade. And what these brave men, being eye-witnesses of

the horror, shrunk from describing, I may well abstain from dwelling on in detail. There is no lack, however, of particulars, all ghastly and some grotesque, in the cotemporary letters before me.



1857.
June 10.

of a race that could do such great things, calmly and coolly, and with all the formality of an inspection-parade. The confidence in our power, which the disbandment of the Native regiments had done so much to revive, now struck deep root in the soil. Free offers of allegiance continued to come in from the tribes. Feeling now that the English were masters of the situation, their avarice was kindled, and every man who had a matchlock or a tulwar, or, better still, a horse to bring to the muster, came forward with his tender of service to the British officers at Peshawur. The difficulties and perplexities of the crisis could not obscure the humours of this strange recruiting. Herbert Edwardes, who was the life and soul of every movement at that time, has himself sketched its comic aspects with an almost Hogarthian fidelity of detail.* But this passed, whilst every week developed more strikingly its serious results. For, as the month of June advanced, and news came that the English had not retaken Delhi, and across the border went from mouth to mouth the rumour of the fiery crescent, there was increasing danger that Mussulman fanaticism might prevail over all else, and that a religious war once proclaimed, it would be impossible to control the great tide of Mahomedanism that would pour itself down from the North. If in that hour the English had been weak at Peshawur, they might have been overwhelmed. But much as those wild Moslems loved Mahomed, they loved money more, and when they saw that we were strong, they clung to us, as the wiser policy.

The end of the Fifty-fifth may be narrated here.

* See the Peshawur Mutiny Report, especially paragraph 66, which will be found entire in the Appendix.

1857.
June.

Even more deplorable than the fate of these men, thus suddenly brought face to face with ignominious death, was the doom impending over their comrades, who had escaped from Nicholson's pursuing horsemen across the border into Swat. There they found the country rent by intestine feuds; almost, indeed, in the throes of a revolution. The temporal and spiritual chiefs—the Padshah and the Akhoond—were at strife with one another. The mutineers took themselves and their arms to the former, but he had no money to pay them, and our sleek, well-fed Hindostanees soon discovered that they had committed a grievous blunder. In a little while the body of their leader—the self-made shattered corpse of a white-bearded Soubahdar—was floating down the river under the walls of Nowshera, and his followers, disappointed and destitute, were turning their faces towards the country of the Rajah of Cashmere, sick of Mussulman fanaticism, and hoping to excite sympathy and obtain service under a Rajpoot government. These poor deluded Hindoos, who had abandoned pay, pension, peace, everything that was dear to them, under a blind besetting belief in the bigotry of their Christian masters, now found themselves breast-high in the bitter waters of Mahomedan persecution.* They had escaped the chimera of a greased cartridge to be despoiled of their sacred threads and circumcised. They had fled from a random rumour to confront a revolting reality. And now they were fain to go skulking along the border, taking their gaunt bodies and tattered garments to any place of refuge open to them, seeking rest, but finding none; for as they huddled

* Mr. Cave-Browne says that "many a sleek Brahmin was made a compulsory Mahomedan, doomed to servile offices in their musjids; others were sold for slaves. Rumour has it that one fat old Soubahdar was sold for four annas (sixpence)."



1857.
June.

along the Hazareh border, stumbling through rocky defiles, more inhospitable than their Mahomedan persecutors, John Becher raised the friendly clans to hunt them out like vermin. Then their misery was at its height. Hungry and naked and footsore, it was death to them to move, it was death to them to remain still. Another venerable Soubahdar set an example of suicide to his followers by shooting himself, declaring that it was better to die at once than to perish slowly by starvation. Becher himself has told with rare force of language how first one detachment then another was assisted by friendly Kohistanes and others, whose services he had most sagaciously enlisted, until the whole were either destroyed or brought prisoners into our Camp.* Then came the last scene of all, in which the Gibbet and the Guns were the chief actors. On the very outskirts of civilisation, where only a few Englishmen were gathered together, the last of "Spottiswoode's light-hearted fellows" paid the penalty of their folly

* See Major Becher's published report—Punjab Mutiny Papers. In a private letter to Edwardes (July 1) he gives a graphic description of the flight of the Sepoys and the raising of the border clans. "After making a march," he said, "in the direction of Khagan, they turned back and went by the more difficult road through the Kohistan, along the Indus to Chilass, and with faces towards Ghiljet, or some other portion of Cashmere, as to the promised land of safety. One of their officers shot himself at the prospect; one or two have died already; several are very ill. They have no carriage and are rather hungry. . . . The road is very difficult even for men of the country. They have no shelter, and I believe that very few can escape; besides which, the Maharajah Gholab Singh has moved a regiment to his Ghiljet frontier, and swears he will polish off every man he meets. He

has also warned the Goojurs and people of the country to pay them off. I have had several messengers who have seen them. They are mostly Hindoos. Looking naked as they do, the women and children throw stones at them and cry, 'Out on you, black Kaffirs without decency!' And they were shocked by the habits which they witnessed in the early morning. The people of Puckle and Hazara have come forth like spirits at my bidding. I have been deluged with clansmen, and our camp is very picturesque. . . . I have received satisfactory assurances from all our border chiefs. If the Syuds of Khagan had not, like good men and true, manned their front, I think the Sepoys would have tried an easier route; but then again they would have found men of Gholab Singh's ready at Mozufferabad."

MS. Correspondence.

1857.
June.

or their crime. One party after another of the fugitives was brought in, tried by a military court and sentenced to death; and they were hung up, or blown away, on some commanding ground, to be a warning and a terror to others. Brave and sullen they went to their doom, asking only to die like soldiers at the cannon's mouth, not as dogs in the noose of the gibbet. Little less than two hundred men were executed at that time in the Hazareh country. "Thus, hunted down to the last like wild beasts, was consummated the miserable fate of the Fifty-fifth regiment, and thus they afforded a salutary example to other mutinous regiments, by proving the far reach of our power, and that there was no refuge even beyond our border."* If any had not been thus hunted out, their fate was perhaps worse than that of the executed malefactors, for they were sold into slavery, and compelled to apostatise for their lives.

Elsewhere, however, were ominous symptoms upon the frontier. Nicholson, since his great raid against the fugitives of the Fifty-fifth, had been still in the field, and he had frequently written to Edwardes that the Mussulman chiefs on the border were eagerly watching the progress of events, and encouraging the rebellion of our Native soldiery; who, at the same time, had been making overtures to them. There was, too, a notorious outlaw, named Ajoon Khan, who was believed to be intriguing with our troops at Abazye, a fortress on the banks of the Swat River, and Nicholson was eager to make a swoop upon him.†

Alarms on
the Frontier.

* Major Becher's Report.

† This uneasy feeling on the frontier had been of long standing.

See the following significant passage in Mr. Forsyth's Mutiny Report: "Of the causes which led to this



1857.
May 26.

"The game is becoming nicer and more complicated," he had written on the 26th of May from Murdan, "Ajoon Khan has come down to Prangar, and it is generally believed that he has done so at the instigation of our troops there. This does not seem improbable. There is no doubt that for some time past emissaries (mostly Moollahs) from the Hills had been going backwards and forwards between the Fifty-fifth Native Infantry here and certain parties in their own country." Four days afterwards, he wrote from Omurzye, saying: "We are just starting for Abazye. I will let you know this evening whether I recommend the disarming of the Sixty-fourth Native Infantry. I am strongly inclined to believe that we should not merely disarm but disband that corps, and the Tenth Irregular Cavalry. There is no doubt that they have both been in communication with the Akhoond of Swat. . . . If the disarming of both or either corps be determined upon, we can do it very well from here, without troubling the Peshawur troops. I believe we did not pitch into the Fifty-fifth one day too soon. That corps and the Sixty-fourth were all planning to go over to the Akhoond together. I have got a man who taunted my police on the line of march with siding with infidels in a religious war. May I hang him?"

rebellion it is not for me to speak, but I cannot refrain from recording one fact, which was not without significance. In August, 1856, a letter from the Akhoond of Swat, addressed to Futteh Khan, of Pindee Gheb, was brought to me at Rawul-Pindee. Among much other news, the writer stated that the Mahomedans of Lucknow had written to Dost Mahomed, informing him that Oude had been taken by the British, and that as

they supposed that Hyderabad would follow, there would soon be no stronghold of Islam left in Hindostan, and unless some effort were made the cause of true believers would be lost. In the event of the Mahomedans of Oude entering on any plan, they wished to know what aid they might expect from the Dost. The sagacious reply to this observation was stated by the writer to be, 'What will be remains to be seen.'

May 30.



1857.

June.

On the following day Nicholson wrote from Abazye, saying: "We arrived here all right yesterday, and found the Sixty-fourth looking very villainous, but of course perfectly quiet. They have been talking very disloyally both to the Ghilzyes" (men of the Khelat-i-Ghilzye Regiment) "and people of the country, and the former have ceased to associate with them. The latter have been rather hoping for a row, in the midst of which they may escape paying revenue." What he saw was quite enough to convince him that it would be well to do the work at once. Approval had come from Cotton, from Edwardes, and from Lawrence. So a detachment of Europeans, with some Punjabee details and some guns of Brougham's battery, the whole under that officer, were sent to disarm the companies at Shubkudder, and afterwards those at Michnee, whilst the force at Abazye was being dealt with by other components of Chute's column. The teeth of the Sixty-fourth were drawn without difficulty. But the annihilation of the Tenth Irregular Cavalry was reserved for another day. Nicholson recommended that no action should be taken against the Irregulars until tidings of the fall of Delhi should have reached the Punjab. He little thought how remote was this event at the beginning of June; that long months were yet to wear away in unsuccessful efforts to accomplish the great object for which the Punjab was pouring out so much of its military strength. And others were of the same sanguine temper all over the Province—fortunately, for this faith, strong though delusive, sustained them, and they worked with better heart and greater vigour for holding fast to the lie.

There was now no further service for Chute's column to perform. So it marched back to Peshawur,



1857.
June 10.

and Nicholson rode on in advance of it, to resume his political duties. On the 10th of June, Edwardes welcomed his friend and fellow-workman with warm congratulations on his success. "Nicholson came in from Abazye this morning," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, "looking rather the worse for exposure; and we have been going over the batta question, &c., with the General, and have decided to say nothing about it till Delhi falls, and then to disarm the Tenth Irregular Cavalry, and exempt from the abolition of batta the Twenty-first Native Infantry, the Khelat-i-Ghilzye Regiment, and the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Irregular Cavalry, if they keep quiet." And in the same letter he wrote to the Chief Commissioner, saying, "What a terrible job is the going off of those three regiments from Jullundhur and Phillour towards Delhi!" It was a source of sore distress and dire aggravation to Edwardes and Nicholson that, whilst they had been doing so much for the defence of the province and the maintenance of the honour of the nation, others were throwing away every chance that came in their way, and by their weakness and indecision suffering the enemy to escape.

Mutiny at
Jullundhur.

For in other parts of the province there was not always that glorious audacity which secures success by never doubting its attainment. In the first week of June, the Sepoy regiments at Jullundhur, whom, as we have already seen, Brigadier Johnstone had not disarmed in May, were swelling with sedition and ripe for revolt. Major Edward Lake, who, in early youth, had shared with Herbert Edwardes the distinction of striking the first blow at the Mooltancee

1857.
June.

insurgents of '49, was Commissioner of the Jullundhur division. He had been absent on circuit when the events occurred which have been detailed in a previous chapter,* but before the end of the month he had returned to Head-Quarters, had closely observed the temper of the Sepoys, and had been convinced that they were only waiting an opportunity to break into open rebellion. He strongly counselled, therefore, the disarming of the regiments. But there was no Cotton at Jullundhur. The Sepoy commandants shook their heads after their wonted fashion; and the Brigadier, tossed hither and thither by wild conflicts of doubt, at last subsided into inaction. Events were left to develop themselves, and they did so with all possible advantage to the mutineers. On the night of the 7th of June, the Native battalions—two regiments of Foot and one of Horse—inaugurated a general rising by setting fire to the house of the Colonel of the Queen's regiment. In a little while the Lines were all astir with the sights and sounds of open mutiny; and the officers were making their way to the parade-grounds, whilst women and children, in wild excitement, were hurrying to the appointed place of refuge. It is not easy to describe the uproar and confusion which made the midnight hideous, nor to explain the reason why, in the presence of an European regiment and a troop of European Artillery, the insurgents were allowed to run riot in unrestrained revolt. The incidents of the rising were of the common type. They were not distinguished by any peculiar atrocities. It seems that there was a general understanding among the Sepoys that on a given day they should set their faces towards Delhi. As a body, they did not lust for the blood of

June 7.

* *Ante*, pp. 427-28.



1857.
June 7.

their officers; but in the excitement of the moment, murderous blows were dealt. Adjutant Bagshawe, of the Thirty-sixth Regiment—a gallant officer and a good man—was mortally wounded whilst endeavouring to rally a party of his Sepoys. The death-blow did not come from one of his own men, but from a trooper who “rode up and shot him.” Other officers were wounded in the confusion of the hour; houses were burnt, and property was destroyed. But there were instances of fidelity and attachment on the part of the Sepoys; men came forward staunchly and devotedly to save the lives of their officers. And altogether there were the usual contradictions and anomalies, which, more or less all over the country, seemed to indicate the general half-heartedness of the Sepoy revolt.

It was obviously the intention of the Jullundhur Brigade to pick up the long-wavering regiment at Phillour, and then for the whole to march on to Delhi.* A trooper of the Cavalry galloped forward in advance of the rebel force to give the Third the earliest tidings of their approach. The conduct of the last-named corps appears to be inscrutable, except upon the hypothesis of a long-cherished design, and that patient, sturdy resistance of all immediate

* I find the following in the Punjab Mutiny Papers. It seems to leave little doubt with respect to the foregone design: “These intentions were by chance divulged by a wounded Havildar of the Third Native Infantry to an officer, who found him concealed at Homayoon’s tomb, after the capture of Delhi. This information was given without any attempt at palliation or reserve.

... It was from the lips of a man who knew his end was near, and conveyed the impression of truth to its hearer; it is, moreover, borne

out by known facts and circumstances. It was, strictly, that all the troops in the Jullunder Doab had agreed to rise simultaneously; a detachment from Jullunder was to go over to Hooshiarpore, to fetch away the Thirty-third Native Infantry, failing which the Thirty-third were to remain (and they did so); then their arrival at Phillour was to be the signal for the Third to join, when all were to proceed to Delhi, facing the river as best they could.”—*Report of Mr. Ricketts.*

1857.
June 8.

temptations, which seems in many instances to have distinguished the behaviour of men waiting for an appointed day and a given signal. The Third, that might have done us such grievous injury when the siege-train was in its grasp, now that the time had come, cast in its lot with the Jullundhur mutineers, and swept on towards the city of the King. It is one of the worst disgraces of the war that these Jullundhur regiments were ever suffered to reach Phillour. There was no lack of men eager to pursue the mutineers; but the one word from the one responsible authority was not spoken until all orders might as well have been given to the winds. The mutineers had done their work and marched out of cantonments by one o'clock in the morning, and not until seven was the word given for the advance of the pursuing column. The extreme consideration of Brigadier Johnstone for his European troops was such that he waited until the fierce June sun had risen—waited until the commissariat was not ready—waited until the enemy had escaped.* The pursuers marched out and marched back again, never having seen the enemy at all.

The history of the so-called pursuit appears to be this. In the course of the day, there being a vague impression that Phillour might be in danger, Olpherts, with two of his guns, carrying a small party

* I give this on the authority of Brigadier Johnstone, who himself says: "The pursuit of the mutineers commenced before seven o'clock of the morning following the night of the outbreak. It could not have been undertaken earlier. The direction taken by the rebels was not ascertained till half-past three o'clock. Preparations had to be made in obtaining carriage for the infantry, providing rations, &c., perfecting the

equipment for guns, horses, &c., and these, after the utmost despatch of officers, as ready and zealous as men could be, were found impossible to be completed at an earlier hour. The complaint of one writer I understand is, that the haste of departure in pursuit was so great, that the Infantry had to march without rations and other comforts, which is true," &c. &c.—*Letter to Lahore Chronicle*,



1857.
June 8.

of the Eighth Queen's on their carriages, and accompanied by the Second Punjab Cavalry, pushed on to that place, where they found that the officers of the Third had escaped into the Fort, and that the Sepoys were crossing the river at a ferry some four miles distant. After a while, the main body of the troops from Jullundhur came up, and then the question arose as to whether anything could be done. Those who would fain have done something, did not know what to do, and those who knew what should be done, were not minded to do it. No one from Jullundhur knew the way from Phillour to the Sutlej, and the Phillour officers, shut up in the Fort, sent out no one to guide them. So the result was that no one did anything, and the pursuing column bivouacked bravely for the night. It is understood that the highest military authorities were convinced that Brigadier Johnstone had done his duty nobly—but History and the Horse Guards are often at issue.

Ricketts and
Thornton.

Such, however, are the alternations of light and shadow in this narrative, that the narrator has never to tarry long without an example of that activity of British manliness which saved the Empire in this great convulsion. Whilst the Jullundhur Brigadier was thus earning the approbation of the highest military authorities, two junior civilians, acting only on their own impulses, were doing their best to cut off the march of the mutineers. One of these was a young gentleman named Thornton, who had been one of the first to enter the service by the open door of general competition, and who seemed to be bent on proving that the reproach levelled at the new order of civilians—that they were men of books, not men of action—was unfounded and unjust. He had ridden over from Loodhianah to Phillour to pay the regi-



1857.

June.

ment there, had learnt that the troops had risen, and had pushed on with all haste to the river-bank and cut away the bridge of boats. Hurrying then back to Loodhianah, he found that Mr. Ricketts, the Deputy-Commissioner, had received by telegraph information of the rising at Jullundhur, and was already making such preparations as he could for the security of that important post. Lying on the great high road from the Punjab to Hindostan, it was to be assumed that the mutineers would sweep through it, carrying destruction with them, on their route to the appointed goal of Delhi. Little was it that Ricketts could have done in any case, but that little was made less by the fact that the news of the Jullundhur rising reached the Sepoys at Loodhianah almost as soon as it had reached himself, and they were not less prompt in action. Those Sepoys were a detachment of the Third from Phillour. They were waiting for the signal and ready to strike. Their first movement was to seize the Fort and the Treasury. There were no European troops, so this was easily accomplished. The situation was one of infinite peril. The mutineers from Jullundhur and Phillour might be expected at any hour. But the Sutlej was still between them, and if Ricketts could guard the passages of the river only for a little space, the pursuing column might come upon the fugitives before they had crossed. Fortunately, the Fourth (Rothney's) Sikh Regiment had reached Loodhianah that morning after a long and weary march. Three companies, under Lieutenant Williams, were now told off for service, and the Rajah of Nabha was called upon for a Contingent. The chief sent detachments of Horse and Foot, with two six-pounder guns, and with these Ricketts went out to dispute the passage of the river.

flash out in seasons of general excitement.* Large numbers of aliens were there. Foremost amongst these were the Caubul refugees—the miserable incapables of the Suddozye Family, with their swarms of dissolute retainers—all eating the bread of British compassion, but hating the hand that fed them. Then there was the great colony of Cashmere shawl-weavers, who, sheltered and protected as they never could have been elsewhere, followed their peaceful calling unmolested, and held their gains in the most perfect security. Both of these classes now rose against us with a vehemence proportioned to the benefits they had received. The Caubulees were “conspicuous in the outrages and plunder committed in the city;” and the Cashmerees were among the foremost in “plundering the Government stores, in pillaging the premises of the American Mission, in burning the churches and buildings, in destroying the printing presses, and in pointing out the residences of Government officials, or known well-wishers of Government, as objects of vengeance for the mutinous troops.” Besides these, there were large numbers of Mahomedan Goojurs, who had been wrought up to a high state of fanaticism by the preachings of an energetic Moulavee, and who were eager to declare a jaidad† against us. All these persons now welcomed the mutineers, and aided them in the work of spoliation. The prisoners in the gaol were released. Whatsoever belonged to Government—whatsoever belonged to Englishmen—was destroyed, if it could not be carried off; the quiet, trading communities were

* “It is filled with a dissolute, lawless, mixed population of Caubul pensioners, Cashmere shawl-workers, Goojurs, Bowreahs, and other predatory races. There is a fort without Europeans to guard it, a city

without regular troops to restrain, a district traversed by roads in every direction . . . a river which for months in the year is a mere network of fordable creeks.”

† Holy war.

Chad



1857.

June 9.

compelled to contribute to the wants of the mutineers in money or in kind; grain and flour were carried off from the bunniah's shops; and, wherever a horse or a mule could be found, the rebel hand was laid instantly upon it. It was too much to expect that these traders, how much soever they may have benefited by British rule and profited by the maintenance of order, should take any active steps to aid the authorities in such a crisis. The bankers secreted their money-bags, and the merchants locked up their wares, and every man did what he thought best for himself in the face of the general confusion.

Escape of the
Mutineers.

And what was Johnstone doing all this time? Johnstone was playing out with admirable effect another act of the great tragedy of "Too Late." The Europeans had heard the firing of the preceding night, and had waited eagerly for the order to move, but no order came. Three hours after Ricketts's one gun had been silenced by want of ammunition, Henry Olpherts, with his splendid troop of Horse Artillery, and a party of the Eighth Foot, was suffered to go through the ceremony of taking command of the "advance" of the force that was to march to the rescue of Loodhianah and to the extermination of the Jullundhur mutineers. But no sooner were they ready to move than fresh misgivings assailed the mind of the Brigadier. It would not be "safe" to send forward such a force without adequate supports. In vain Ricketts sent expresses to Johnstone's Camp, urging him to send forward the Horse Artillery to his aid; but the day wore on, the succours never came, and the enemy rioted unchecked in Loodhianah until nightfall.* Then the insurgent regi-

* "In the mean time no troops arrived in pursuit. I sent twice, begging the Horse Artillery might advance, and they might have caused them (the mutineers) immense loss; but they could not be trusted to the



1857.
June.

ments made a forced march towards Delhi, and when at last our Europeans made their appearance at Loodhianah, pursuit was hopeless. The Jullundhur insurgents had escaped.

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2-28
The evil, which had been thus done or suffered by our inertness, was small in comparison with the danger which had been escaped. It was the true policy of the enemy, at that time, to occupy Loodhianah. With the Fort in their possession—guns mounted and manned, the Government treasure in their hands, and the bulk of the population on their side—they might, for a while at least, have successfully defied us. To the British cause, the loss of this important city, lying on the great high road from the Punjab to Delhi, would, indeed, have been a heavy blow. It would have affected disastrously, perhaps ruinously, the future operations of the war, by deferring indefinitely the capture of Delhi. But instead of this, the mutinous regiments merely carried themselves off, by the least frequented routes, to the Great Head-Quarters of Rebellion, there to swell the already swollen numbers of the garrison, without increasing its actual strength.*

Fourth Sikhs or the small detachment of Punjab Cavalry, and had to wait for the European Infantry; and so this second great opportunity to destroy these mutineers was lost, and as they had four miles' start of the European Infantry, of course pursuit was hopeless that evening."
—*Ricketts*.

* "I imagine their plan was temporarily to hold the Fort and City of Loodhianah, where they could command the Grand Trunk Road from the Punjab to Delhi, whence they could have spread disorganisation throughout Cis-Sutlej, and have shaken the Sikh States, and by cutting off supplies and placing troops in requisition to attack them, have

made a most untoward diversion for our small force before Delhi; but their ammunition was expended; in their hurry in leaving Jullundhur they had carried off blank for ball ammunition, and so they had to hurry on by forced marches, avoiding any possibility of collision with our troops."—*Mr. Ricketts's Report*. The writer admits that this is for the most part conjecture, but he thinks that it is borne out by the fact that, if their ammunition had not failed them, the mutineers had the game in their own hands. I have had no opportunity of investigating the hypothesis that the Jullundhur regiments supplied themselves with blank cartridges by mistake.

1857.
June.

It was now necessary to make a severe example of all who had been guilty of aiding and abetting the mutinous Sepoys, or who had taken advantage of the confusion which they had created. It was easy to bring the guilt home to the offenders, for plundered property was found in their possession; and now that English authority had reasserted itself in all its strength, witnesses flocked in from all sides, eager to give damnatory evidence against their fellow-citizens. More than twenty Cashmerees and others were promptly tried, and as promptly executed. The telegraphic wires brought from higher official quarters the necessary confirmation of the sentence of death, and on the evening of their trial the prisoners were hanged. Others detected in seditious correspondence shared the same fate. "It was by such measures as these," wrote the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, "that the peace was preserved; any vacillation or tender-heartedness would have been fatal, for rebellion would have spread in the province, and many valuable lives would have been lost in recovering our authority. So long as order was maintained here, our communications with the Punjab on the one hand, and the Delhi force on the other, were kept unimpaired; as it was, with daily convoys of treasure, ammunition, stores, and men passing down the road, I am happy to say that not a single accident occurred."

The next step was to disarm the people of Loodhianah. Taking advantage of the presence of Coke's regiment, which afterwards made good its march to Delhi, Ricketts disarmed the town of Loodhianah. And in other parts of the Cis-Sutlej States the same process was carried on with the zeal, vigour, and success that distinguished all the efforts of the officers



1857.
June—July.

of the Punjabee Commission. But, doubtless, as on former occasions, of which I have spoken, there were many concealments, even in our own territories; and, moreover, the contiguity of the Protected Native States afforded opportunities of evading the search, to which the people on the border eagerly resorted. Mr. Barnes called upon the chiefs to adopt similar measures, and they formally complied; but he said that they were slow to move and suspicious of our intentions.* There was, in truth, a general feeling of mistrust; and it was presently ascertained that the people were not only concealing arms, but making large purchases of saltpetre and sulphur, and other components of gunpowder, for use in a day of danger. It was all in accordance with their genius and their temper, and it could excite no surprise in any reasonable mind. But it was necessary to grapple with these evils; so proclamation was made, rendering the carrying of arms a misdemeanor, and restrictions upon the sale and export of all kinds of ammunition and their components.†

Whilst preventive and precautionary measures of this kind were being pushed forward throughout the Punjab, there were unceasing efforts all along the great road to Delhi to furnish the means of transporting stores for the service of Barnard's army. In this most essential work civil and military officers worked manfully together; and although there were many difficulties to be overcome, the great thoroughfare

* Mr. Barnes's Cis-Sutlej Report.

† At this time communication between Calcutta and the Punjab was very slow and irregular, and tidings of the legislative enactments passed in Calcutta had not yet reached the Frontier Province. But Mr. Barnes, writing at a later period, observed, "That in the measures adopted for

the trial and punishment of mutineers and heinous criminals, or for disarming the population, or checking the importation of military stores, we only anticipated the acts almost simultaneously passed at Calcutta by the wisdom of the Legislative Council."



was soon alive with carts and carriages and beasts of burden conveying downwards all that was most needed by the Army, and especially those vast supplies of ordnance ammunition which were required to make an impression on the walls of the city which we were besieging.* It is hard to say what might not have befallen us if, at this time, the road had not been kept open; but the loyalty of the great chiefs of the Protected Sikh States, and the energy and sagacity of Barnes and Ricketts, secured our communications, and never was the Delhi Field Force in any danger of the interception of its supplies.†

1857.
June—July.

Thus was the Punjab aiding in many ways the great work of the recovery of Delhi and the suppression of the revolt. It was sending down material, and it was sending down masses of men. Nor was this all that it could do. The Punjab had become the Nursery of Heroes. And it was from the Punjab that now was to be drawn that wealth of individual energy upon which the destinies of nations so greatly

* To the activity of Captain Briggs, who organised a military transport train, and worked it with admirable success, we are mainly indebted for these good results. But we are a little too prone to forget such services as these, or, perhaps, we undervalue the importance of feeding an army and loading its guns.

† These services were afterwards becomingly acknowledged by General Wilson, who wrote to Sir John Lawrence, saying: "I beg to bring specially to your notice the very important services rendered by the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, Mr. G. C. Barnes, to whose good government, under yourself, may be partly attributed the preservation of

peace in these districts, and to whose influence with the independent chiefs I am mainly indebted for the valuable aid of the Pateela and Jheend Contingents, by means of which our communication with our rear has been kept open, and the safe escort of numerous convoys of stores and ammunition to the camp has been effected; and his most energetic assistant, Mr. M. Ricketts, the Deputy-Commissioner of Loodhiana, of whose unflagging exertions in procuring carriage, aiding the movements of troops, and forwarding supplies, and of his hearty co-operation with the magazine officer in the despatch of ammunition, I am deeply sensible, and cannot speak too highly."



1857.
June.

depend. Death had made its gaps in the Delhi Army. The death of General Anson sent General Reed down to the Head-Quarters of the Army as Senior Officer in the Presidency, and, therefore, Provisional Commander-in-Chief. Who then was to command the Frontier Force? For some little time there was a terror in the Peshawur Council lest Brigadier Johnstone, who had smoothed the way for the safe conduct of his Native troops to Delhi, should be appointed to the command of the division. It could not be permitted whilst Sydney Cotton was there. Little by little regulation was giving way to the exigencies of a great crisis; and when news came that the Adjutant-General of the Army had been killed in the battle of Budlee-ka-serai, there was a demand for the services of Neville Chamberlain as the fittest man in the country to be Chief of the Staff of the besieging Force. So Nicholson was "instinctively selected to take command of the Punjab Movable Column, with the rank of Brigadier-General,"* whilst Chamberlain proceeded downwards to join the Head-Quarters of the Army. What Barnard and his troops were doing it is now my duty to narrate.

* These words are in Colonel Edwardes's Official Report. The writer adds: "How common sense revenges itself on defective systems, when real danger assails a state! Had there been no struggle for life or death, when would Neville Cham-

berlain and John Nicholson, in the prime of their lives, with all their faculties of doing and enduring, have attained the rank of Brigadier-General? Why should we keep down in peace the men who must be put up in War?"



CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL BARNARD'S POSITION—IMPORTANCE OF THE CAPTURE OF DELHI—DELHI AND ITS ENVIRONS—QUESTION OF AN IMMEDIATE ASSAULT—COUNCILS OF WAR—ABANDONMENT OF THE NIGHT ATTACK—WAITING FOR REINFORCEMENTS—ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ENEMY—THE CENTENARY OF PLASSEY—ARRIVAL OF NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN AND BAIRD SMITH,—DEATH OF GENERAL BARNARD.

THE Delhi Field Force having planted its Head-
Quarters on the old site of the British cantonments on the "Ridge," was now spreading itself out over the ground which it had conquered, in the manner best adapted to both offensive and defensive operations. Seldom has a finer position been occupied by a British Army; seldom has a more magnificent panorama turned for a while the soldier's thoughts from the stern realities of the battle. It was difficult not to admire the beauty of the scene even amidst the discomforts of the camp and the labours of the first encamping. The great city, with its stately mosques and minarets, lay grandly at our feet, one side resting upon the Jumna, and others forming a mighty mass of red walls standing out threateningly towards the position which we had occupied. And scattered all about beneath us were picturesque suburbs, and stately houses, walled gardens and verdant groves refreshing to the eye; whilst the blue waters of the flowing Jumna glittered in the light of

June, 1857.

The British position at Delhi.



1857.
June.

the broad sun. It was not an hour for philosophical speculation or for the indulgence of any romantic sentiments concerning the decay of empires and the revolutions of dynasties; else was there much food for thought in the strange circumstances which had brought a British Army to besiege a city which, only a month before, had been regarded as securely our own as London or Liverpool, and to contend against a Sovereign who, within the same brief space of time, had been held in contempt as a harmless puppet. There was no room in the minds of our military chiefs for such thoughts as these. They contemplated the position on which they had encamped our army with the keen eyes of practical soldiers, and looked around them from their commanding position upon the ground that was to be the scene of their future operations. And this was the result of the survey.

Roads and
canals.

Intersecting the old Cantonment towards the left-centre, and then following its front towards the right, was a road which joined the Great Trunk from Kurnaul, beyond the extremity of the Ridge, and led down, through a mass of suburban gardens and ancient edifices, to the Caubul gate of Delhi. Two other roads, also leading from Kurnaul, diverged through the Cantonment to different gates of the city. And scarcely less important to us than the roads were the canals which were cut through the country in the neighbourhood of our camp. In the rear of our encampment was a branch canal, known as the Nujufgurh Jheel Aqueduct, which carried the waters emptied into this lake to the stream of the Jumna. To the right rear of our position this great drain was intersected by the Western Jumna Canal, which passing through a bold excavation of the solid rock, flowed through the great suburbs of Delhi, and



1857.

June.

entering the city by a culvert under the walls, traversed the length of its main street and emptied itself into the river near the walls of the Imperial Palace. And it was a source of especial rejoicing to the British chiefs, firstly, that our position was open to the rear, and that there were good roads leading down to it, from which we could keep up a constant communication with the Punjab, now become our base of operations; and, secondly, that there was an abundant supply of water in the Nujufgurh Canal. It was the driest season of the year, and in common course the canal would have been empty. But the excessive rains of 1856 had so flooded and extended the area of the lake, that it had not ceased even in the month of June to emit an unfailing supply of pure good water to fill the aqueduct in the rear of our position*—water in which not only our people could freely bathe, but which they could drink with safety and with pleasure; and it is hard to say how much the salubrity of the camp was maintained by this providential dispensation. Nor was it merely in a sanitary point of view that this flow of water was so advantageous to the English, for in its mili-

* See remarks of Colonel Baird Smith on this subject (Unfinished Memoir): "By one of those remarkable coincidences of which so many occurred to favour the English cause, as to suggest the idea of a special Providence in them, the rains of the year preceding the mutiny had been unprecedented in magnitude, and the whole basin had been gorged with water, the area covered exceeding a hundred square miles. . . . From the enormous accumulation of water in the Jheel during 1856, this canal, ordinarily dry during the hot season, was filled with a deep, rapid stream of pure and wholesome water

during the whole period of the siege. It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the value of such a provision both to the health and comfort of the troops, for without it the river, two miles distant, or the wells in Cantonment, all brackish and bad, must have been the sole sources of water supply for man and beast. Sanitary arrangements were facilitated, good drainage secured, abundant means of ablution and healthy aquatic exercises were provided, and the Jheel Canal was not merely a good defensible line for military operations, but a precious addition to the comfort and salubrity of the camp."



1857.
June.

tary aspects it was equally favourable to defensive purposes. And so there were comfort and encouragement in the contemplation of our position.

The Ridge.

And a nearer inspection of the Ridge, though there were some countervailing circumstances to detract from the general satisfaction, had an assuring effect upon the British Leader and the Staff by whom he was surrounded. It had been, in part at least, the site of the old Delhi Cantonment. The left of this rocky chain rested upon the Jumna some three or four miles above Delhi, whilst the right extremity approached the Caubul Gate of the City at a distance of about a thousand yards. "Formed of a hard, compact, semi-crystalline quartz rock, disposed in layers, and presenting occasional natural cliffs on the city side,"* it extended along a line of rather more than two miles, at an elevation of from fifty to sixty feet above the general elevation of the city.† The natural soil was so hostile to cultivation that the general aspect of the Ridge was bare and rugged; and the same gritty, friable qualities of the earth rendered it especially ill-adapted to defensive purposes, for where no cohesive properties existed the construction of earth-works was almost impossible. On the left and centre of the Ridge, obliquely to the front of attack, the tents of the English were pitched a little to the rear of the ruins of their old houses, which effectually concealed us from the besieged. The extreme left of the Ridge was so far retired from the main position of the enemy as to be in little danger from his assaults, but our post on the ex-

* MS. Memoir of Colonel Baird Smith.

† Baird Smith says in the Memoir quoted above that its utmost height above the level of the city does not

exceed eighty or ninety feet." In another memorandum he says that "the average command may be taken for practical purposes at about forty feet."



treme right "invited attack from the moment of occupation to the close of the operations."*

1857.

June.

Hindoo Rao's house.

This position on the extreme right was surmounted by a somewhat extensive building of comparatively modern construction, known as Hindoo Rao's House. The former owner of this edifice was a Mahratta nobleman, who is said to have been nearly connected with the Family of Scindiah. Political necessities had compelled his residence at a distance from Gwalior, and he had settled himself in the neighbourhood of Delhi, where he had earned a good reputation among all classes of the community. Of a robust manhood and a genial temperament, he was noted for his hospitality.† The house had been built and fitted up much after the fashion of an Anglo-Indian mansion of the better class. But on his death it had been left without an occupant, and on the arrival of Barnard's force it was found empty and deserted. It was a roomy and convenient edifice, with good approaches both from the Cantonment and the City; and, apart from the excellence of the situation, which strongly recommended it as an advanced post, it afforded good shelter and accommodation for a considerable body of troops.

Between the two extreme points of the Ridge were other important posts, destined to occupy conspicuous places in the history of the coming siege. Near the point at which the middle road of the three crossed the Ridge, was the Flag-staff Tower, of which mention has before been made; for thence was it that our people, on the fatal 11th of May, huddled together for transient safety, had looked forth despair-

The Flagstaff Tower.

* Baird Smith.

† "The old man was a well-known member of the local society—a keen sportsman, a liberal and hospitable

gentleman, of frank, bluff manners, and genial temperament." — *Baird Smith's Unfinished Memoir*.

1857.
June.

The Mosque.

The Observa-
tory.

The Suburbs.

ingly towards the city, from which the signal for massacre was to come.* A double-storied, circular building, it had a fine command of observation, comprehending the country lying between the Ridge and the walls of the city, and was sufficiently strong to afford good shelter to troops. Further on to the right—about midway between the Flag-staff and Hindoo Rao's house—was a ruined mosque “of the old Pathan type,” which had also good walls of masonry, and was well suited for an outpost, as it afforded both shelter and accommodation to our men; and still further along the Ridge road, at a distance of some two hundred yards from our position on the extreme right, was an ancient Observatory,† of somewhat irregular structure, ill-lighted and ill-ventilated, but still a serviceable building, as it afforded good support to the advanced position on our right, which was so long to bear the brunt of the affray. At these four points, Sir Henry Barnard, after the battle of Budlee-ka-Serai, established strong pickets, each supported by guns.

The country around Delhi, which the roads and canal-cuttings above described intersected after passing the Ridge, was a varied mass of ruined and habitable houses, walled gardens, green woodlands, cultivated rice fields, and unhealthy swamps. Beyond Hindoo Rao's house to the rear was the beautiful suburb of Subzee-mundee (or the Green Market), lying along the great Trunk Road—a cluster of good houses and walled gardens, which afforded shelter to the enemy, and were, indeed, the very key of our position. And beyond this the plain was “covered with

* *Ante*, book iv., chap. iii. It is stated that a cart load of dead bodies was found in it, supposed to be the bodies of officers of the Fifty-fourth.

† Built by the Rajpoot Astro-nomer, Rajah Jeit Singh.

1857.
June.

dense gardens and thick groves, houses, and walled enclosures bordering upon the great canal." Beyond Subzee-mundee, on this line of the Great Trunk Road, stretching towards the Caubul Gate of the City, were the villages of Kishen-gunj, Trevelyan-gunj, Pahari-poor, and Tallewarree. These villages were amongst the worst of the local evils opposed to us, for they were near enough to the walls of the city to cover the enemy as they emerged from their stronghold, and afforded them a sheltered approach as they advanced towards our position on the Ridge; whilst they were too far off from our posts to admit of our occupying them in force.* Looking out from the Ridge towards the centre and left of our encampment, the space before the city appeared to be less crowded. There were a few somewhat imposing buildings irregularly scattered about this expanse of country, among which that known as Metcalfe House was one of the most conspicuous. It stood on the banks of the river, in the midst of an extensive park, and was almost buried in thick foliage. Some substantial out-buildings in the park, with a mound of some altitude in their rear, seemed to recommend themselves as serviceable outposts for future occupation. Between the Metcalfe House and the city was an old summer-palace of the Delhi Emperors, known as the Koosya Bagh. It was then little more than one of the many memorials of the former grandeur of the Mogul sovereigns with which the new capital was surrounded; but the lofty gateways, the shaded cloisters and arcades, and the spacious court-yards, of which it was composed, showed, even in their decay,

* "They were all strong positions, and commanding site on the slope of the right flank of the Gorge."—*Baird Smith*, and Kishen-gunj pre-eminently so, from its massive masonry enclosures



1857.

June,

that it had once been a place of no common architectural beauty.* More remote from the river, and almost in a line with the Cashmere Gate of the City, was Ludlow Castle—a modern mansion of some importance, which had been the home of the late Commissioner, Simon Fraser, slaughtered in the Delhi Palace.† It was erected on the crest of a ridge sloping down towards the city walls, with the dry bed of a drainage canal at its base. And on the line of the Jumna, between the Koosya Bagh and the water-gate of the city, was a spacious modern building of the English official type, but surrounded by trees and shrubs, looking out from the windows of which it almost seemed that the city walls were overhanging the place.‡ These were the most noticeable edifices, which attracted the attention of our people on the Ridge, as posts, which in the coming operations might be turned to account, whilst in the intervening spaces it was seen that there were gardens and groves, sometimes intersected by deep ravines. These fine breadths of luxuriant foliage, seen from the higher ground, were pleasant to the eye of the English soldier; but it was too probable that they would prove to be as favourable to the operations of the enemy as damaging to our own.§

* "Its interior was in ruins, but sufficient indications of its design and structure remained to show it to have been one of the rich examples of florid architecture of the later Moguls, of which Delhi possesses so many beautiful illustrations; and the broad space, with its walls, was overgrown with orange-trees, and limes, and rose-bushes, and other shrubs, all growing in the wildest luxuriance."—*Baird Smith, Unpublished Memoir.*

† Mr. Russell, in his "Diary in India," speaks of Ludlow Castle as "a fine mansion, with turrets and

clock-towers, something like a French château of the last century."

‡ Baird Smith.

§ "They offered innumerable facilities for occupation by armed men of any degree of discipline, and in truth so incompatible were its features generally with the action in mass of disciplined troops that the many combats of which it was the scene were rather trials of skill between small bodies or individuals than operations by mass."—*Baird Smith.* "The luxuriant foliage, though picturesque as a landscape-effect, concealed to a damaging ex-

1857.
June.

And over these tracts of country the British Commander now looked at the great city itself, and surveyed the character of its defences. The circuit of its walls extended to some seven miles, two of which were covered by the side which ran parallel to the river, and were completely defended by it. The rest formed an irregular figure, partly facing obliquely the line of our position on the Ridge, and partly turned towards the country on the left. These landward walls, about twenty-four feet in height, consisted of a series of curtains of red masonry, terminating in small bastions, each capable of holding from nine to twelve guns. Around them ran a dry ditch, some twenty-five feet in breadth and somewhat less than twenty feet in depth, the counterscarp being an earthen slope of very easy descent, "much water-and-weather worn." There was something that might be called a glacis, but to the eye of a skilled engineer it was scarcely worthy of the name.* The entrances to the city through these substantial walls of masonry were numerous. A series of so-called gates—for the most part in the near neighbourhood of the several

tent the movement of our enemies, who, creeping out of the Cashmere or Lahore gates, would, under cover of trees and walls and houses, reach unperceived almost the foot of our position on the Ridge. It was thus that our engineers found it necessary to lop away branches and cut down trees and bushes, marring the beauty of the scene, but adding to our security."—*MS. Memorandum by an Officer of Artillery.*

* Baird Smith. The most recent writer on the subject of the material aspects of Delhi, quoting a professional description of the fortifications, says, "The 'original round towers formed into angular bastions,' the 'crenelated curtains,' and the fine glacis covering three-fourths or

more of the height of the wall,' are the additions and improvements of English engineers of the present century."—*Bholanath Chunder—Travels of a Hindoo.* I rely, however, on Baird Smith's authority more confidently than on any other. [Since this was written I have read in Major Norman's "Narrative" that there was before Delhi "an admirable glacis covering the wall for a full third of its height." As this is a high authority I think it right to quote Baird Smith's words: "The glacis scarcely merits the name, as it is but a short slope, seventy or eighty feet in breadth, springing from the crest of the counterscarp, and provided with no special means of obstruction."]

The City.



1857.

June.

bastions—were to be seen at irregular intervals along the walls. They were abutments of heavy masonry, but not without some architectural pretensions, comprising handsome arched gate-ways, which were surmounted by towers, forming stations or look-out posts for the city guards. These gates were ten in number—one was on the river side of the city; another led down to the Bridge of Boats from the extreme corner of the King's Palace;* and the rest were on the landward sides. The gates, known as the Cashmere Gate, the Moree Gate, and the Caubul Gate, were those most easily assailable from our position on the Ridge. Indeed, it was only on one side of the great walled city that the English Commander, looking down from his newly-erected camp, could hope to make an early impression. To invest so extensive a place with so small a force was an absolute impossibility. It was as much as we could do to invest this front—about one-seventh of the entire enceinte—leaving all the rest to the free egress and ingress of the enemy.

The Palace.

The Palace, or, as it was sometimes called, the Fort, of Delhi was situated about the centre of the river-front of the city, one side almost overhanging the waters of the Jumna. The artist pronounced it to be "a noble mass of building of truly beautiful design, vast magnitude, and exquisite detail;" but to the eye of the scientific soldier it appeared to be capable of only very feeble resistance to the appliances of modern warfare. Its defences consisted chiefly of high walls and deep ditches, with "most imperfect arrangements for flanking or even direct fire."† And on the north-east side, partly resting on

* These gates were known respectively as the Raj-ghant and the Calcutta Gates. By them the mutineers had entered on the 11th of May.

† Baird Smith.

1857.
June.

the main stream of the Jumna, was the ancient Pathan Fort of Selimghur, separated from the Palace by a narrow stream of the river, which was crossed by a bridge of masonry. It was, for defensive purposes, an important out-work, which, manned with heavy guns, might play along the river-side as far as the Metcalfe House, and enfilade the approaches to the city in that direction. Such were the principal material objects which presented themselves to Barnard and his Staff, when their telescopes on that June morning swept the country which lay between the River and the Ridge. And as they estimated the worth of all these several posts for offensive or defensive purposes, they endeavoured to calculate also the numerical strength of the enemy within the walls. But there was little more than dim conjecture to guide them. It was assumed that the bulk of the Meerut and Delhi Troops—five regiments of Infantry, one regiment of Cavalry, and a company of Native Artillery—were now within the walls of the city. And it was not less certain that the Sappers and Miners from Meerut, the Head Quarters of the Alighur Regiment, the bulk of the Regiments from Ferozpour, large detachments of Native Infantry from Muttra, and Irregulars from Hansi, Hissar, and Sirsa, had swollen the stream of insurrection within the circuit of Delhi. To these might be added the King's Guards, and, probably, large numbers of Native soldiers of all branches absent from their regiments on furlough, according to custom at that season of the year. And these trained soldiers, it was known, had at their command immense supplies of ordnance, arms, ammunition, and equipments, wanting none of the materials of warfare for a much larger force. To the General, who had served at Sebastopol, it appeared that the strength of Delhi thus garrisoned had been



1857.
June.

greatly underrated by those who believed that it was to be disposed of in a day.*

And against this great walled city thus garrisoned what had Barnard brought? Collectively it may be said that he had three thousand European soldiers and twenty-two field guns. This European force consisted of—

Her Majesty's Ninth Lancers. Two squadrons of the Carabineers. Six companies of Her Majesty's Sixtieth Rifles. Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth Foot. The First Bengal (Company's) Fusiliers. Six companies of Second Bengal (Company's) Fusiliers. Sixteen Horse Artillery Guns, manned by Europeans. Six Horse Battery Guns, also Europeans: with the Siege-train, the details of which have been already given.

Besides these there were two other bodies of reliable troops, as good as Europeans—the Goorkah battalion under Reid, and the Punjab Guide Corps under Daly. There were also a hundred and fifty men of the old regiment of Sappers and Miners, that had mutinied at Delhi, and who were still believed to be staunch. In Barnard's camp, also, were a regiment of Irregular Native Cavalry (the Ninth), and a portion of another (the Fourth), but the fidelity of both was doubtful.

June 9, 1857.
General Barnard at Delhi.

There were many then in all parts of India, especially among the more eager-minded civilians, who

* I have endeavoured in this description of Delhi to represent merely the appearances of the great city and the environs as they presented themselves to General Barnard and his Staff at the time of their first encamping on the Ridge. Other details will, from time to time, be given as the narrative proceeds.

I have consulted a variety of authorities, but I am principally indebted to Colonel Baird Smith's unfinished Memoir of the Siege of Delhi. As this was written after he had been enabled to verify by subsequent inspection his impressions formed during the siege, I confidently accept the accuracy of his descriptions.



1857.

June.

believed that to reach Delhi was to take it. Habituated to success, and ever prone to despise our enemies, it seemed to our people, in this conjuncture, to be a settled thing that the force moving on Delhi, by whomsoever commanded, should, in the language of the day, "dispose of it," and then proceed to finish the mutineers in other parts of the country. Even the cool brain of Lord Canning conceived this idea of the facility of the enterprise. It was thought that the Delhi Field Force might march into the city, make short work of the rebels, the King and Royal Family included; and then, leaving there a small British garrison, proceed to the relief of Lucknow, Cawnpore, or any other beleaguered position in that part of Hindostan. And this belief in the possible was so common, that it soon began to take in men's minds the shape of the actual; and before the month of June was half spent, it was said in all parts of the country that Delhi had been retaken, and that the star of our fortune was again on the ascendant.

Whether, as was said at the time, and is still confidently maintained by some, if, after the victory of Budlee-ka-Serai, Barnard had swept on and pursued the enemy into the city, he might have driven them out, after great slaughter, with the loss of all their munitions of war, must ever remain a mystery. It was not attempted. But it was no part of the General's plan to sit down before Delhi and to commence the tedious operations of a protracted siege. It was assuredly not his temper to magnify dangers and difficulties or to shrink from any enterprise that promised even a chance of success. It might be a hazardous undertaking; he felt, indeed, in his inmost heart, that it was. But he knew that his countrymen expected him to do it. He knew that



1857.
June 11.

anything like hesitation at such a moment would bring down upon him a storm of reproach. He knew, also, that if he failed in the perilous enterprise, he would be charged with rashness and incapacity. But this appeared to the fine old soldier to be the lesser evil of the two. Right or wrong, he was prepared to risk it.

Question of a
coup-de-main.

With such thoughts heavy within him, Barnard was by no means slow to accept the counsel of the young Engineer officers, who urged upon him the expediency of an immediate attack upon the city. Nothing was plainer, than that delay would weaken our chances of success; for not only was the numerical strength of the enemy increasing by fresh accessions of mutineers, making the city of the Mogul their central rallying-point, but there was strong probability that the material defences of the place would be strengthened—especially by the simple device of bricking up the gateways. That this had not been done on the 11th, the Engineers ascertained; and on that day they were prepared with the plan of a *coup-de-main*, which they laid before the General, urging him to attempt it on the following morning at break of day. "We find," they said in the Memorandum placed in Barnard's hands, "that the Caubulee and Lahore Gates are not as yet bricked up—that the bridges in front of them are up to this time perfect—and that troops can approach from Camp under cover to four hundred and nine hundred yards of these gates respectively. An entrance can also be effected close to the Caubulee Gate by the channel through which the canal flows into the city. We recommend a simultaneous attempt to blow in the Lahore Gate by powder-bags, and such one of the two obstacles at the other point (namely, either the

1857.
June 11.

Caubulee Gate or the Canal grating close by it), as may be preferred on reconnaissance by the officers in charge of the explosion party." . . . "We are impressed with the necessity," they added, "of driving the enemy out of the City and into the Fort by the simultaneous advance of several columns, of which two shall pass along the ramparts right and left, taking possession of every bastion and capturing every gun, whilst the remainder, advancing towards the Palace by the principal streets of the City, will establish posts on the margin of the esplanade, which surrounds the Palace, communicating right and left with the heads of the adjoining columns. To this end we believe it essential that the attack should commence at the peep of dawn. We propose to effect the explosions at half-past three A.M.; intimation of success to be immediately followed by the advance of the columns detailed for each attack, which will be in readiness at the points hereafter indicated, half an hour before that time."

The report embodying this scheme was signed by four subaltern officers—by Wilberforce Greathed, by Maunsell and Chesney, of the Engineers, and Hodson, of the Intelligence Department, at a later period known as "Hodson, of Hodson's Horse."* The

* Hodson himself has thus referred to the matter in one of the letters published by his brother: "Yesterday I was ordered by the General to assist Greathed, and one or two more Engineers, in forming a project of attack, and how we would do to take Delhi. We drew up our scheme and gave it to the General, who highly approved, and will, I trust, carry it out; but how times must be changed when four subalterns are called upon to suggest a means of carrying so vitally import-

ant an enterprise as this, one on which the safety of the Empire depends. Wilberforce Greathed is the next Senior Engineer to Laughton, Chesney is Major of the Engineer Brigade, and Maunsell commands the Sappers. I was added because the General complimentarily told me that he had the utmost value for my opinion; and though I am known to counsel vigorous measures, it is equally well known I do not urge others to do what I would not be the first to do myself."



1857.

June 11.

June 12.

Contemplated
night attack.

scheme was accepted by Barnard, and orders were issued for its execution. Soon after midnight everything was ready. The troops selected for this enterprise were duly warned. Each Engineer officer had his appointed work. They were to assemble, under cover of the darkness of the night, between one and two o'clock, and to proceed noiselessly to the gates which were to have been blown in with powder-bags. But when the parade was held, an important part of the destined force was missing. A body of three hundred men of the First European Fusiliers was to have been brought up by Brigadier Graves; but at the appointed hour there was no sign of his appearance; and the column, thus weakened by their defection, was not strong enough to do the work before it. It was an intense disappointment to many eager spirits, who, on that June morning, believed that the stronghold of the enemy was within their grasp. But there seemed to be nothing left but the postponement of the enterprise; so, reluctantly, orders were given for the return of the storming party to their quarters. It is difficult not to believe that Brigadier Graves disobeyed orders. The excuse was that he misunderstood them, and the kind heart of Sir Henry Barnard inclined him to accept the excuse.*

* Graves was Brigadier of the day on duty. The orders conveyed to him were verbal orders, and he rode to Barnard's tent to ask for a confirmation of them. The story is thus told, and with every appearance of authority by Mr. Cave-Browne: "Brigadier Graves was the field-officer of the day. About eleven o'clock that night he received verbal orders that the Europeans on picquet along the heights were to move off without being relieved for special duty; with a vague hint that a night-assault was in contemplation. On

reaching the Flagstaff picquet we found the Native guards in the act of relief, and unable to believe that it was intended to leave that important position, with its two guns, in the charge of Natives only, he galloped down to the General's tent for further instructions. Here he heard that they were on the point of assaulting, and that every European infantry soldier was required. Now the Brigadier probably knew more of the actual strength of Delhi than any other soldier in the force;—he had commanded the brigade at



1857.

June.

Revised
scheme of
assault.

June 13.

But the project of a surprise, though thus delayed, was not abandoned. Wilberforce Greathed went hopefully to work, revising his scheme, and never ceasing to urge at Head Quarters the necessity of a night attack. The brief delay had at least one advantage. The moon was waning, and the cover of darkness was much needed for such an enterprise. Every day had made Barnard more and more sensible of the under-rated strength of the great city which lay before him. But he still clung to the idea of a sudden rush, and either a grand success or a crippling failure. "The place is so strong," he wrote to Lord Canning on the 13th of June, "and my means so inadequate, that assault or regular approach were equally difficult—I may say impossible; and I have nothing left but to place all on the hazard of a die and attempt a *coup-de-main*, which I purpose to do. If successful, all will be well. But reverse will be fatal, for I can have no reserve on which to retire. But, assuredly, you all greatly under-estimated the difficulties of Delhi. They have twenty-four-pounders on every gate and flank bastion; and their practice is excellent—beats ours *five to one*. We have got six heavy guns in position, but do not silence theirs, and I

the time of the outbreak; and when asked his opinion as to the chance of success, he replied, 'You may certainly take the city by surprise, but whether you are strong enough to hold it is another matter.' This made the General falter in his plans. Some of the young officers who were to take a leading part now came in and found him wavering. The Brigadier's remark had so shaken his purpose that, in spite of entreaty and remonstrance, he withdrew the consent which, if truth be told, he had never very heartily given to the project, and the assault was abandoned. The Rifles, already under

the walls, and the advancing columns were recalled into camp." Major Reid expresses his opinion that the Brigadier was "perfectly justified in having declined to allow his picquets to be withdrawn without written orders" (Reid himself had received written orders, which he obeyed), and declares that the mischance was a fortunate event. Major Norman says that "there are few who do not now feel that the accident which hindered this attempt was one of those happy interpositions in our behalf of which we had such numbers to be thankful for."



1857.
June 14.

really see nothing for it but a determined rush; and this, please God, you will hear of as successful."

About this time, Barnard had under consideration the revised scheme of Wilberforce Greathed for an attack on Delhi, "by means of simultaneous explosions of powder bags at the Caubulee and Lahore Gates, and of a charge against the Cashmeree Gate, to be fired at such time as the attention of the defenders of that enclosure may be engaged by the first-mentioned operations." Maunsell and Hodson were to conduct one explosion party, and Greathed and McNeill the other. On the sound of the bugle, the appointed storming parties were to advance and stream through the openings thus effected. Every precaution was taken in the event of failure at any point, and precise instructions laid down as to the course to be pursued by each column of attack on the occurrence of any possible contingency, and nothing was wanted to show, not only by written description, but also by plans and charts, what each detail of the force was to do after entrance had been effected.

Councils of
war.

This project, signed by Wilberforce Greathed, was dated June 14. On the following day a Council of War was held, and the scheme was considered. It was summoned by General Reed, who on Anson's death had come down from Rawul-Pindce, to assume as senior officer in the Presidency the Provisional Command in Chief of the Army,* and it was held in

* He had joined the army about the time of its arrival at Delhi; but he was prostrated by sickness, unable to mount a horse, and quite incompetent to take any active part in the prosecution of the siege. It was not before the 11th that he was enabled to sit up and write a letter to Sir John Lawrence. But from

that time his health began to improve, and he did good service by keeping the Chief Commissioner informed of the state of affairs at Delhi. The letters which the General then wrote were full of interesting and important details, and are distinguished by much clear good sense.

1857.
June 14.

his tent. Sir Henry Barnard, Brigadier Wilson, Hervey Greathed, and the chief Engineer Officers, were present. The old adage that a Council of War never fights was not falsified in this case. It was set forth very strongly that the project of the Engineers involved the employment of nearly the whole of the Delhi Field Force; that there would be no reserve to fall back upon in the event of failure; and that, in the event of success, the enemy, streaming out of Delhi, might attack our Camp, seize our guns, and otherwise inflict grievous injury upon us. The military authorities were all in favour of delay, until such time as a reinforcement of at least a thousand men might arrive. The Civilian who appeared in Council as the representative of the Government of the North-Western Provinces was opposed to this delay. Very forcibly Hervey Greathed urged that "the delay of a fortnight would disappoint expectations, protract the disorders with which the country is afflicted, increase the disaffection known to exist among the Mahomedan population in the Bombay Presidency, and cause distrust on the part of our Native allies;" but he added that he could not take upon himself to say that the delay would lead the Native States actually to throw off their allegiance to the British Government, or endanger the safety of Cawnpore and Oudh, and of the country to the eastward. He assumed that British relations with the Native States were too close to be so easily dissolved, and that the concentration of English troops at Cawnpore would ensure the safety of the districts to which allusion had been made. Wilberforce Greathed, ever ready for an immediate attack on the blood-stained city, pleaded that it would be easy to revise the scheme, so as to leave a larger reserve in

Views of
Hervey
Greaded.



1857.

June 16.

The Council
reassembled.

Camp. And, finally, it was agreed to defer the decision to the following day.

On the 16th of June, therefore, the Council again assembled. The military leaders had thought over the grave question before them. The feeling at the first consultation had been that, on political grounds, it would be desirable to attack the city immediately on the arrival of the first reinforcements. But even this much of forwardness waned on the evening of the 15th, and the Commandant of Artillery, who had been moved by Hervey Greathed's arguments at the first Council, had fallen back upon his military experience, and had recorded a Memorandum, which had in no small measure influenced Barnard.* For the General was a man too little self-reliant for his position—too prone to be swayed hither and thither by the gusts of other men's recorded or spoken opinions. When, therefore, on the 16th of June, the Council of War again met, and all the military members of Council, except Wilberforce Greathed, were opposed to immediate operations, his resolution yielded to the array of authority before him, and again he began

* Barnard recorded a note on the 15th, in which he said that circumstances were altered "by the fact that the Chief Officer of Artillery had represented that the means at his command were inadequate to silencing the enemy's guns on the walls, so necessary before any approach could be made," and that the "Chief Engineer represented that, as he had not the means of undertaking any necessary siege operations, the only practicable mode of attack rested on a *coup-de-main*, to effect which, and to occupy so large an area as the city of Delhi, required the employment of so much of the force under my command as to prevent my leaving a sufficient number to guard my

camp, and enable me to sustain the position in the case of any reverse attending the attempt." But he added that political considerations of moment had been so strongly urged upon him, that, although reinforcements were shortly expected, and, in a military point of view, there could be no doubt that it would be expedient to wait for them, he must "submit to those entrusted with the political interests to determine whether to wait is less hazardous than to incur the risk of failure." He halted, indeed, between two opinions; but, he added, "I am ready to organise the attack to-night, if deemed desirable."

1857.
June 16.

to entrench himself behind military principles and precedents.

Opinion of
Brigadier
Wilson.

At that Council, on the 16th of June, Archdale Wilson put in, as the expression of his matured judgment on the subject, the paper which he had written on the day before, and which was now read aloud: "Taking into consideration the large extent of the town to be attacked," it said, "a full mile in breadth, nearly two miles in length from the Cashmere to the Delhi Gate, I must own that I dread success, on entering the town, almost as much as failure. Our small force, two thousand bayonets, will be lost in such an extent of town; and the insurgents have shown, by their constant and determined attacks upon our position, how well they can and will fight from behind cover, such as they will have in street-fighting in the city, when every man will almost be on a par with our Europeans. With the large number of heavy ordnance they have mounted on the walls (from thirty to forty pieces), we must also expect heavy loss during the assault of the gateways, as their grape-shot will command the ground from seven hundred or eight hundred yards round the walls. I gave my vote for the assault, on the arrival of our first reinforcements, solely on the political grounds set forth by Mr. Greathed, feeling, at the same time, that, as a military measure, it was a most desperate and unsafe one. It has, however, since struck me that, even in a political point of view, it would be wiser to hold our own position and wait for the reinforcements from Lahore, when we could ensure success in our attack. So long as we hold this position we keep the whole of the insurgents in and round Delhi. On taking the city, they will naturally form into large bodies and go through the country,



1857.
June 16.

plundering in every direction. These bodies should be immediately followed by movable brigades, and cut up whenever come up with. It would be impossible, with the small force we now have, to leave a sufficient force for the protection of Delhi, and at the same time to send out such brigades as will be required. It appears to me a question of time only. The country all round, it is true, is in the hands of the insurgents and other plunderers, and must remain so until we can clear the country by our brigades. Mr. Greathed also contemplates the probability of the Native Chiefs, who are now favourable to us, becoming lukewarm in our cause; but what have they yet done for us? The Gwalior and Bhurtpore forces have long ago left us to our resources; and, from what I hear, little is to be expected from the Jyepore Contingent, until they are quite satisfied of our complete success over the insurgents."

Opinion of
General
Reed.

General Reed then declared his opinion at some length.* He said, that "Our success on the 8th had placed us in a favourable position, and one which we could hold for any time. It, therefore, became a question whether it would not be better to await the arrival of the strong reinforcements that were on their way to join us—the rear-guard of which must have reached Loodianah, so that by ordinary marches they ought all to be assembled here in fifteen days—than to risk an attack on the place at once, which would require every available bayonet of our force to effect, leaving no reserve, except Cavalry and heavy guns in position, thus risking the safety of our camp,

* The substance of what follows in the text was stated orally before the Council of the 15th. General Reed afterwards embodied it in a

letter to Sir John Lawrence, and it was read out at the meeting on the following day.

1857.
June 16.

stores, and magazines, which would be exposed to the incursion of many bodies of mutineers which we knew were encamped outside the walls of Delhi, and would take the opportunity of looting our camp, while our troops were attacking the city. There can be no question," he continued, "of the propriety of waiting, in a military point of view. In that all agree. We have, then, to look upon it in a political aspect, and to inquire whether, in that sense, so great a risk is to be run as an immediate assault would entail. There can be no doubt that expedition in terminating this state of affairs—which it is to be hoped that the capture of Delhi would accomplish—is a great consideration; but the possibility of failure, either total or partial, in that operation should be averted. This can only be done by having in hand such a force as will ensure success. That force, it is believed, will be assembled here in the course of fifteen days. In the mean time, by holding this position, we keep the chief body of the mutineers concentrated in and about Delhi. They know they cannot dislodge us, and that strong reinforcements are on their way to join us, while they are prevented from dispersing and marauding the country, which would be the effect of a successful attack upon Delhi at any time. Now we have not the means of sending out detachments to pursue them; then we should have ample means, and movable columns would be organised without delay to drive out the mutineers, and re-establish order in the neighbouring places which have suffered. It is not apparent, therefore, that the delay contemplated can have an effect, politically, sufficiently injurious to warrant the certainty of great loss and risk of possible failure, than which nothing could be more disastrous in its consequences.



1857.
June 16.

We have suffered no diminution of prestige since we advanced on Delhi; all our objects have been accomplished, in spite of great obstacles, by the well-known redoubtable bravery of our troops, the mutineers driven from their strong positions, and their guns taken. Their sorties in force have since been repulsed with great loss to them, and in no one instance have they succeeded in gaining any, even the smallest, advantage. Their only effective defence lies in their walls, which, instead of being weak and unable to support the weight and resist the concussion of guns, are strong (recently repaired and strengthened by us), capable of sustaining a numerous and heavy artillery, with which all their bastions are mounted. As neither our time nor material would admit of a regular siege, an assault or storm can only be resorted to; but the success of this must *be ensured*. A contrary event would endanger the Empire. Another reason has been alleged for an immediate attack—the approaching rains; but they are seldom heavy till the ensuing month, and the sickness does not ensue till the month after. Every precaution must, of course, be taken in cutting drains in camp previously, to carry off the water, for the wounded (there are, I am happy to say, few sick); there are good pukka buildings, Native Hospitals, in the Lines which we occupy, so that no inconvenience need be expected as far as they are concerned, nor do I anticipate any for the Force. There has been no ‘Chota Bursaut’ yet, which generally precedes the regular rains, and is succeeded by some fine weather before these regularly set in. The necessity of having as large a force as can be made available is also apparent in the size of Delhi, the circumference of which is six or seven

1857.
June 16.

miles. Having accomplished a lodgment, a strong force would be required to clear the ramparts and occupy the town, in which they may expect to be opposed at every house and wall behind which an insurgent can find room, under which it is known they can defend themselves with vigour. All things considered," concluded the General, "it is my opinion that the military reasons for awaiting the arrival of a sufficient force to ensure success far outweigh any political inconvenience that might arise, and which would all be remedied by certain success in the end."

The result of these decided expressions of opinion on the part of the principal military officers at Delhi was that again the project of a *coup-de-main* was abandoned. In the face of such opinions, Barnard did not consider that he would be justified in incurring the serious risks so emphatically dwelt upon by Wilson and Reed. The expression of his personal views is on record. Writing on the 18th to Sir John Lawrence, he said: "I confess that, urged on June 18. by the Political adviser acting with me, I had consented to a *coup-de-main* which would have entailed all the above considerations; accident alone prevented it; it may be the interposition of Providence. From what I can hear, and from the opinion of others whom it became my duty to consult, I am convinced that success would have been as fatal as failure. A force of two thousand bayonets, spread over a city of the magnitude of Delhi, would have been lost as a military body, and, with the treachery that surrounds us, what would have become of my *matériel*? Be sure that I have been guided by military rule, and that it required moral courage to face the cry that will be raised against our inactivity

Abandon-
ment of the
assault.



1857.
June 18.

before Delhi; I can but act for the best, and wait any favourable opportunity for striking the blow. The great point raised by Mr. Greathed was the security of the Doab, and the desirableness of sending troops to Alighur from Delhi; but were I in the city now I could not do this. The castle and Selimghur yet remain before me, and to hold the city and attack these with a force under two thousand would prevent my detaching any there. The fact is, Delhi, bristling with lances, and garrisoned by men who, however contemptible in the open, have sagacity behind stone walls and some knowledge of the use of heavy ordnance—for hitherto they beat us in the precision of their fire—is not to be taken by the force from Umballah, with two troops of six-pounders; and its present strength has been greatly under-estimated. We have fought one action at Budlee-ka-Serai, where, so long as their guns remained to them, they appeared formidable. We have been subject to frequent attacks ever since, each made with some spirit, but repulsed with heavy loss, and having now the position taken up from which we must eventually reduce the place. It strikes me the best policy is to view it in its best light; it is a difficult task, and not to be accomplished without a sufficient force. Once in the town, the game is over if we can hold it, and immediately a force will be available for any purpose Mr. Colvin requires. Delay is vexatious, and losing men daily in these attacks is heart-breaking. I am well, but much harassed. I do assure you, the more I think of it, the more I rejoice in the hap-hazard experiment failing. It is some comfort to see that you agree; I hope others will now see I had more to do than to walk into Delhi.”*

* To this letter Barnard added a postscript, saying: “We gave them



1857.

June.

But Wilberforce Greathed still did not despair of turning the hearts of the military chiefs towards his schemes of energetic action. Before a week had passed, he had submitted to Barnard another memorandum, urging that since the date of the last council the mutineers had been reinforced by the Nusserabad Brigade of two regiments and six guns, and the Jullundhur force of three regiments with one gun; that information had been received of the near approach to join the insurgents of the revolted Bareilly force, six regiments of Infantry with eight guns, and a regiment of Cavalry; and that, moreover, there were tidings of the Gwalior Contingent, of seven regiments of Infantry, three of Cavalry, and three batteries of Artillery, with a siege-train and magazine, having declared for the King of Delhi; and that in all human probability Agra would be besieged by the latter force—perhaps, indeed, already was in imminent peril. In such circumstances it had become a matter of infinite importance that a portion of the Delhi force should be detached to the relief of the former city. “But this is possible,” he added, “only after Delhi is in our possession, and the mutineers’ force dispersed. I respectfully submit, therefore, that a political necessity for pressing the attack of Delhi at

a great beating yesterday, with *heavy loss*. They had attempted to take up a position, seize [] and Kishengunj, and Trevelyan-gun) and Paharipoor; with two small columns under Major Tombs, B.A., and Major Reid, Sirmoor Battalion, we not only dislodged them, but drove them out of the Serai above, and, in fact, drove all before us on this side of the Force. It has had a very chilling effect, we hear, and their spirits are much disturbed. But their fire from the north is as true as ever; so

hot is it, that, until we approach ours nearer, we shall do no good; and such is the state of the service, that with all the bother of getting the siege-train, my commanding Artillery Officer can only man six guns, and my Engineer has not a sand-bag. It is really too distressing. I never contemplated making regular approaches, but I did expect my guns to silence those brought against me. But to do this they must be got nearer. Delay concentrates the insurgents.”



1857.

June.

almost any risk has arisen, and upon this ground I venture to submit a project of immediate attack concurred in by the officers who were commissioned to prepare the first project." But Barnard was not to be induced to swerve from the resolution formed by the Council of War. So, again, the younger and more eager spirits of the British camp were disappointed; and our troops fell back upon their old daily business of repulsing the enemy's sorties.

Work in
camp.

There was, indeed, whilst this great design of the *coup-de-main* was under consideration at Headquarters, no lack of work in camp, and no lack of excitement. There were real alarms and false alarms, and officers and men on the Ridge were compelled to be constantly on the alert. Greatly outmatched as we were in Artillery, we could make little or no impression upon the batteries of the enemy or the walls of Delhi, and were, in truth, except when our Horse Artillery guns were brought into close quarters, only wasting our ammunition. The Sepoys, who knew our habits but too well, were wont to come out against us in the midst of the fiercest mid-day heats. In the climate they had an ally, to which they felt that they could trust; and many of our best and bravest were struck down, or went about shivering with ague or confused by quinine. The days were very hot and the nights were unwontedly cold; and these severe alternations are ever trying in the extreme to the European constitution. But nothing could abate the elastic cheerfulness and hopeful spirit of our people. Some of our younger officers then ripened into heroism of the highest order, and all displayed a constant courage in action, and an enduring fortitude in suffering, unsurpassed in the military annals of any country or any time. Day by day



sad tidings came in of new mutinies and new massacres, and ever and anon fresh reinforcements of rebel regiments marched into Delhi to the sound of band-instruments playing our well-known English tunes. But the dominant feeling ever was, as these regiments arrived, that it was better for our countrymen and our country that they should be in the doomed city of the Mogul than they should be scattered about the provinces, assailing weak garrisons or defenceless cantonments, for, please God, the Delhi Field Force could not only hold its own, but, on some not very remote day, make short work of the Delhi rebels. How that was best to be done there were eager discussions in camp, leading to small results and no convictions. It must be admitted that there were many who shook their heads at the project of the *coup-de-main*, of which Greathed and Hodson had been the eager authors and the persistent exponents. It was said that, although the force might have made its way into Delhi, only a small part of it would have ever made its way out. And yet as weeks passed and no change came over the position of the Army before Delhi, men began to chafe under the restraints which had held them back. They felt that, in all parts of India, Englishmen were asking each other why Delhi was not taken; and it was painful to those gallant souls to think that their countrymen had expected of them that which they had not done.

Ever active among the active was Sir Henry Barnard. There was not an officer in camp, in the flower of his youth, who, all through this fiery month of June, worked day and night with such ceaseless energy as the Commander of the Delhi Field Force. He was not inured to the climate by long acquaintance with it. He had arrived in India at that very



1857.
June.

period of life at which the constitution can least reconcile itself to such extreme changes. But nothing could now induce him to spare himself. All day long he was abroad in the great glare of the summer sun, with the hot wind in his face; and it was often observed of him that he never slept. Men have ere now been carried safely through the most trying conjunctures by the possession of a power enjoyed by many of the world's greatest men—a power of sleeping and waking at will. But sleep had forsaken Barnard, and therefore the climate and the work were grievously assailing him. Not only was there strong within him, amidst all perplexities, an eager, dominant desire to do his duty to the country, for the sake of which he would at any moment have gone gladly to his death, but a tender concern for the welfare of all who were under his command, which kept him unceasingly in a state of unrest, passing from post to post by day and by night, now visiting a battery or directing a charge, and now gliding into an officer's hut, and seeing that he was sufficiently covered to resist the cold night air, as he lay asleep on his bed. He impressed all men with the belief that he was a good and gallant soldier, and the kindest-hearted, truest gentleman who ever took a comrade by the hand.

But although he bore himself thus bravely before men, the inward care was wearing out his life. Never since War began, was General in command of an Army surrounded by so many discouragements and distresses. For in truth there was no possibility of disguising the fact that instead of besieging Delhi, he was himself the besieged. The inadequacy of his means of regular attack became every day more apparent. He had planted strong picquets with guns at some of