



of about 150 yards north of the camp. The party under Lieutenant Holmes was placed in a very perilous situation; but that officer succeeded in returning to camp with, however, serious loss in three killed and eleven wounded, of whom eight were dangerously so, a subadar of the 40th Native Infantry being of the number of the latter. The Artillery now played with the most deadly effect, and the report of heavy guns at Martaban caused the alarm to be sounded in cantonments at Maulmain. The two companies of H. M.'s 51st Light Infantry and 26th Native Infantry got under arms; the former were marched off at once, embarked in boats, and proceeded to Martaban. The "Feroze," from her position opposite the office of Messrs. Graceman and Co., a distance of some two or three miles from the white pagoda on the hill, sent discharges of artillery which made the Burmese seek a more distant point of protection, and defaced the beauty of their pagoda. The strength of the Burmese was now seriously weakened, and the reserved forces obliged to be brought up to the rescue. These were also reduced in number, for the attack being in open day, and not as hitherto at night, their position and numbers were ascertained and dealt with accordingly. A body of men entrenched themselves behind a small white pagoda, near their former storehouse or magazine, and hoisted a flag on it, which, being observed by Lieutenants Steuart and Baird, became a mark at once. The flag on the first shot was sent down in tatters, the summit of the pagoda keeping it company. The Burmese now found themselves uncomfortably situated here, the guns being fired in this direction until the glacis of the hill was cleared. From this time until late in the evening shots were fired at intervals to clear the place of stragglers.

Commodore Lynch, on delivering his instructions to his second in command, manned his three cutters, and proceeded up the Salween to intercept the flight of the Burmese. He found them scattered at the third pagoda, now repairing, north

of the camp, and ordered his boats to open fire upon them with shell and canister, which made them retire. The Infantry met them in their flight, and opened a raking fire upon them. Captain Tapley, on the other hand, with his own cutter, and one from the "Medusa," manned by marines from the "Feroze," went in a south-westerly direction, but failed to meet the enemy. The boats returned on the same evening, and proceeded up again yesterday morning.

The Burmese force was commanded by the notorious Dacoit chief and robber MOUNG SHOAY-LOANG, who had been sent from Ava to retake Martaban, or forfeit his head in case of failure. Wednesday last was, according to the guardian angels of MOUNG SHOAY-LOANG, considered the lucky day for the exploit; but with what success has now been seen.

Burmese Games.

A few words about the games among Talaings and Burmese may now be interesting. The principal are cock-fighting, wrestling, buffalo-fighting, foot-ball, and boat-racing. They have likewise a sort of dice to aid their gambling propensities. At the buffalo-fights men sit on the beasts; these last rush at each other with tremendous fury. Frequently the horns become locked together, when a trial of strength ensues, each pushing his adversary as far back as possible. The buffaloes, after a short contest, generally become tired of the sport, and not unfrequently scamper away at a furious rate from their tormentors. The buffalo is seldom killed; but the rider is often thrown. The game is every bit as *rational* as the bull-fights so extensively patronised by the ladies of Spain, and to the Burmese ladies it is certainly quite as exciting. Football is played with a small ball of wicker-work—very light, of course. The players form a circle, and keep up the ball with remarkable skill; with knee or foot they send it flying in every direction, as if they were perfect masters in the



law of projectiles.* In boat-racing the Burmese shine considerably. Boats very long and very narrow, with some twenty rowers on a side, and paddled along at an incredible speed. Singing and a variety of gestures aid the effect of this exciting amusement. The Burmese posture of defiance is common in the pleasure as well as in the war boats. The latter are generally ornamented, and armed with some thirty men or so, carrying questionable muskets, but sharp dhás. A national game, of minor importance, is a sort of draughts. The players commence by drawing squares on the ground, and seated occasionally in a state of profound abstraction before a move, they play away with a gravity worthy of the great Gautama himself. The Burmese enjoy a game at cards quite as much as the old ladies of England. They are fond of music and very superstitious: many of them believe in fairies. The instrument of sound used is a sort of *harmonicon*, which discourses most eloquent music either to the adventurer on his rambles, or to the Burmese beauty as she sits, like many of those in our country, pensive and alone. Men and women, in every clime, are both poets and musicians by nature. In the melody or modulation of sound there is a wonderful power, which, "partly from nature, partly from habit and association, makes such pathetic impressions on the fancy, as delights even the most wild barbarians." The Burmese are likewise fond of dancing, when they frequently display their skill in the dress of devils. What the sensation drama is to the British public, the *Pooay* is to the Burman.

We shall conclude this chapter with the description† of a Burmese funeral.

* While revising this narrative (September 1879) the writer has just learned that English foot-ball has now become common among the Burmese. They use the leather cover, with bladder inside, and affect Rugby to a considerable extent! Lately, we understand, the Burmese beat the gallant 54th at foot-ball.

† From notes furnished us by Lieutenant Cadell, of the Bengal Artillery. This description is of the most humble Burmese funeral. In general, the last

Returning from Kemmendine in the evening, we saw a Burmese funeral-procession following the remains of an old woman. Women and children attended as well as men, and three priests brought up the rear. The corpse is placed in a coffin made of matting, and is carried by four men. Old women were howling in a most disconsolate manner. On reaching the burial-ground the poongis (or phongyees) came forward, and took up their position on a raised platform at the head of the grave. Before the priests were placed three large dishes of plantains, and dried fish. Pieces of wood were put across the grave, and the coffin rested on them. The men then kneeled round the priests, and the women and children formed an outer semi-circle. A poongi then repeated a few prayers, to which the men responded. Then a long prayer was said, and, while the priest was speaking, a man was pouring water slowly on the ground from a small earthenware vessel. This finished the ceremony, and the poongis, having had their provisions carefully collected, departed. The corpse was then taken from the coffin and buried. Buddhists, it must be remembered, *bury* as well as burn. Pouring the water from the earthen vessel is to signify the spirit departing from the body.

rites, even where no sign of great wealth is observable, are performed with extravagant splendour. The bier of the deceased, raised on high, and enclosed in the model of a Buddhist temple, borne along on the shoulders of some dozens of bearers, the glaring red and gilt and silvery ornaments of the grotesque machine, to which a grace is given by the white flags and umbrellas attached to it; the long train of followers, chiefly women, in rear, and poongis in front. Such is a faint outline of the richer Burmese funeral.



CHAPTER VI.

PEGU.—PROME.—THE GRAND QUESTION.—LORD DALHOUSIE
AT RANGOON.

DURING the first fortnight of May, the Peguese had risen in considerable strength against the Burmese, and had turned them out of their towns and villages. At the end of the same month we found the case reversed ; and the town of Pegu again in the hands of a Burmese chieftain. Regarding the Peguese already in the light of allies, it was natural to expect that an expedition from our Force would shortly pay their ancient capital a visit. Pegu was reduced by Alompra, after his conquest of Burma's rival kingdom, to a state of comparative ruin and desolation.

The conqueror spared the temples, among others the magnificent *Shwé-madoo Praw*, or Temple of the Golden Supreme.*

Conciliation was attempted. But every endeavour to conciliate the Peguese by Burmese strategy signally failed. What

* See "Rangoon," Appendix No. IX. p. 276. The extreme height of this building, above the level of the country, is three hundred and sixty-one feet, or about forty feet higher than the Great Shwé Dagon.

they sought for was—either independence, or a good system of government by the people of a nation wiser and more civilised than themselves. With the former, in its strict sense, every half-civilised people must now go back in the scale; with the latter they must advance, and add their portion of lustre to the triumphant light which shall, sooner or later, dwell upon earth.

The town of Pegu is situated some seventy-five miles nearly north from Rangoon, to which it is far inferior as a commercial position. On the 2nd of June an expedition was ready to start for Pegu. The party consisted of two companies of H. M.'s 80th, and two companies of the 67th Bengal Native Infantry, the whole under Colonel Sturt, of the latter corps. As many as could be stowed were placed on board the "Phlegethon"; the remainder were put in country boats, to be towed. But it was soon discovered that the boats were not seaworthy. The troops could not proceed to Pegu that day; so all were marched back to quarters. On the following morning the expedition, considerably reduced in size, made a successful start. It now consisted of one company of H. M.'s 80th Foot,* the rifle company of the 67th Bengal Native Infantry, under Captain Hicks, and a detachment of Madras Sappers and Miners, under Lieutenant Macintosh, with Lieutenant Mayne as Field Engineer; the whole commanded by Brevet-Major Cotton, of the 67th Regiment. This force was accompanied by a small party of the marines and sailors from the "Fox," "Phlegethon," and "Medusa," under the command of Captain Niblett, of the "Phlegethon," and Commander Tarleton, of H.M.S. "Fox." All embarked on board the "Phlegethon" steamer, which took in tow the boats of the squadron.

Of course our "Chevalier Bayard,"† Captain Latter, accompanied the expedition. By nightfall the steamer had reached

* We believe commanded by Captain Ormsby.

† Sans peur et sans reproche.



within sixteen miles of Pegu, where she anchored. From the narrowness and shallowness of the river it was not considered safe to proceed farther. The only thing worth observing that took place on the passage was that several large villages, as the expedition came in view, assembled all their inhabitants on the banks of the river, and cheered and raised their hands towards Pegu! "Let the British standard be planted on the walls of Pegu!"

On anchoring for the night, information was brought off that a party of Peguese, on the right bank of the stream, under a chief named *Moungtah*, had risen and defeated, the day before, a detachment of the Burmese garrison, and that they had proceeded along the bank of the river, intending to co-operate with *us* in the attack on Pegu.

The allies were to be distinguished by wearing a small white flag in the cap.

Next morning the whole party took to the boats, and proceeded leisurely up to Pegu, a short distance from which *Moungtah* and his Peguese band made their appearance. These were directed, in case of accident, during our operations, to keep at a distance till required. However, as heavy firing was heard on the right bank of the river, between the Pegu and the Burmese, the troops immediately landed. A few the enemy only were to be seen, retreating as fast as they could. The boats and naval party, under Commander Tarleton, were directed to proceed farther up the river, to cut off the retreat of the enemy who might attempt to pass across. However, seeing a party of the enemy on the left bank, on which the town of Pegu is situated, Commander Tarleton landed the whole of his party, except the boat-keepers, and proceeded to disperse them. Having advanced some distance, a body of Burmese, seeing the unguarded state of the boats, pounced upon them, and took possession. Fortunately the Burmese were more anxious to plunder than to destroy the boats.

As Commander Tarleton and his party were returning to their boats they were fired upon from jungle growing upon old and ruined walls. The little party gallantly turned to the assault, and entered the work by a large gap or gateway, which was not fortified. There were not more than forty shots fired by the enemy, who fled before the steady fire of the naval force with the utmost precipitation. Seven Burmese only were shot down. It was on entering this gap that a correct view of the future scene of operations was obtained. Within these ruined walls was an open area of about four miles in length; nearly in the centre a lofty pagoda, with much jungle at its base. The enemy also appeared in considerably larger force than was expected. Commander Tarleton, accordingly, prudently determined to hold the gap, and to send notice to the troops under Major Cotton, on the opposite bank. These were on their return, having heard that the boats were in the possession of the enemy. In the meantime Commander Tarleton likewise heard of the same circumstance; and that gallant officer immediately returned with his men to the scene of disembarkation. Thus, the sailors coming down on the one bank and the soldiers on the other, the boats were immediately recaptured with the loss of two riflemen wounded.

It being now about 10 o'clock A.M., the sun was very powerful; and the men having passed over a large extent of ground, Major Cotton prudently determined on postponing the attack on the pagoda till 3 P.M. By that time the men would have rested, and enjoyed their rations. The gallant Major took up an admirable position with the Rifles in front inside the ruined walls, sheltered by the jungle covering them, and commanding a clear view of any movements from the pagoda. The European portion of the force put up in the few huts that remained about one hundred yards in the rear on the bank of the river; the sailors occupied the boats. About 1 P.M., however, the enemy, apparently emboldened by what seemed to be inactivity, and perhaps by the *loot* (spoil) from the boats, which had been taken



to the pagoda, were seen coming down about fourteen hundred strong, in something like order, commanded by some thirty chiefs, on ponies. Another account said, there were one thousand two hundred men, some mounted, and carrying umbrellas over their chiefs, besides which there were regular horsemen, who, while they rode, sung a kind of vaunting song. The alarm being sounded, the Rifles immediately rushed out, and held the enemy in check. On the native troops being joined by the European soldiers and sailors the enemy immediately fled; and so precipitate was their retreat, that not a single Burman was touched even by the long shots of the rifles. The advance of our small and gallant party was now so rapid that they seemed as if by magic, in one instant, to rush up the west and south faces of the pagoda, killing a few of the enemy, and suffering no loss whatever themselves.

A stronger party, under Mr. Midshipman L——, was now left in the boats; and Captain Latter was directed to remain for their further safety with the Peguese on the banks. The next day was spent in destroying the granaries, and carrying off nine guns; and, on the following morning, the whole party returned to the steamer. The entire loss of the British on this occasion was one European sailor killed, and two wounded, in the occupation of the boats by the enemy. One sailor was wounded in the assault on the gap, under Commander Tarleton; and two riflemen were wounded on our recapture of the boats. The loss of the Burmese could scarcely be estimated, from the best information, at more than one score.

Thus was the old town of Pegu captured. It was not occupied by the British, but made over to the Talaings—a political step on which it was rather difficult to form an opinion, after an earnest request from the Peguese for the expulsion of their oppressors.* It was thought, however, they would defend

* The following was published about the middle of June:—"The British troops stormed the pagoda at Pegu, after some heavy skirmishing on the 4th,

their own persons, if they could not keep their towns, till Pegu came forth in greater beauty than ever, under an enlightened rule. The month of June in this narrative was also distinguished by the achievements of the Hon. Company's gallant little steamer "Proserpine," under Captain Brooking, in the Irawady. She was sent up the river, and made good her way, before the middle of the month, without serious opposition, to where the Irawady divides itself, like the two prongs of a fork ; or, say eighty miles below Prome. All that portion of the river below this point was thus surveyed. At the point where the Irawady divides into two streams, and above which there is no other outlet, to the sea, we may be said to command the navigation of the great river. Captain Brooking, with the "Proserpine," succeeded immediately after in exploring the Irawady to within thirty miles of Prome, having thus penetrated into the very heart of the enemy's country, and, with the assistance of two well-armed boats of H.M.S. "Fox," having captured and destroyed eighty boats of grain, of thirty tons each. The rice in these boats was destined for the Burmese army assembling at Promè, and its loss at such a crisis was, of course, severely felt. An intelligent writer remarked :— "It was a proud thing to reflect upon this little English vessel alone, in the midst of enemies and of an enemy's country, performing its duties as unconcernedly as if it was on the Thames, and taking and destroying the Burmese Commissariat in their very teeth."

The "Proserpine," on her voyage, did not escape being fired

with a loss of one seaman killed ; three seamen, two sepoys, and one camp-follower wounded. The force, after destroying the fortifications, returned to Rangoon on the 5th. Everything quiet round Bassein. The enemy had left the neighbourhood, and the inhabitants were coming in numbers to seek protection under our rule. The troops were all very healthy. Soon after our troops left the old town of Pegu, the Burmese came down in a body of three thousand or four thousand strong, and drove out the Peguese."



on; and, about the end of the month, intelligence reached us at Rangoon of a brilliant little affair against a stockade, which she silenced and destroyed, after expending all her ammunition. This position was, most probably, held by a strong band of dacoits, who roam like firebrands through the country, ready to espouse any successful side, but, until opportunity turns up, destroying everything that comes in their way. Similar lawless vagabonds infest the Nizam's dominions in the Deccan. But "Jolly June" had its peaceful as well as its warlike triumphs; the former, of course, at Rangoon. An elegant theatre was being erected for the entertainment of officers and men; and the Rev. Mr. Burney's reading and lecture room was very well attended. This excellent chaplain arrived from Calcutta early in May; and his frequent visits to the hospitals, combined with his admirable expositions of pious and homely truths to the men on a Sunday, effected immense good. His idea of getting up instructive lectures for the men, to be delivered once or twice on the week days, was a good one.* Large audiences of British soldiers were enlightened with a graphic sketch of the rise of European traffic in Burma to its decline, with various information regarding the country. They were likewise, we believe, favoured by Mr. Kincaid—before alluded to—with a lecture on Buddha, which one would imagine to have been rather above their comprehension. When the author of this work was at home on furlough a well-educated man took him into a corner one evening, and said, with a solemn face,—“Now tell me, what does Buddha mean? Who *was* Buddha?” A very natural question, and one of so puzzling a character, that we were obliged to leave it to such men as Colonel Sykes and Professor Wilson to fairly answer.

* In September 1864 Royal Artillery lectures and public readings for the Europeans were established at Rangoon. But these were got up under far more advantageous circumstances than in 1852, the year of the first lecture to British soldiers in Pegu.



Yes, with all their erudition and vast research, notwithstanding the immortal labours of Sir W. Jones, Vans Kennedy, Coleman, Colebrooke, Remusat, Manupied, and a host of others, men will be inquiring, in a generation yet to come,—Who *was* Buddha?*

Mr. Kincaid, on his return from Maulmain, recovered but a very small portion of his valuable books lost in the "Flight." Lexicons and dictionaries, letters and manuscripts, were nowhere to be found. This zealous missionary appeared to be a man of no ordinary stamp, judging by all we had heard of him from officers of the Force and others. Having resided some twenty years in Burma, he had amassed a vast quantity of information concerning the people and the country. His work of proselytism had been wonderfully successful. He twice visited the city of Ava; and on one or more occasions experienced ill-treatment. If the truth were known, we dare say this American missionary had really been, like many before him, and St. Paul his great exemplar, "in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren." Thinking seriously on the matter, there is something to greatly admire in those devoted men and women who labour in a distant land, consecrating their whole lives to an obedience to the Divine mandate, published by the Great Captain of our Salvation—"Go and preach the Gospel to every creature!" There can be little doubt that the missionaries stand forth as the pioneers of civilisation in Burma. Regarding the missionary enterprise in a political point of view, two things are requisite, above all others, MODERATION AND PATIENCE! With these the grand cause must flourish—without them there can

* How true it is, that the very errors of the human mind form a part of its history! In China there are three systems of philosophic or religious belief—*Yu*, the doctrine of Confucius; *Fo*, or Buddhism; and the sect of *Taou*, or Rationalists. Buddhism, "the fairest branch of the religion of India," called also Samaneism, deserves the attentive study of every thinking man. For remarks on Gautama and Buddhism, see "Rangoon," chap. x. p. 129.



be no satisfactory result. And, musing carefully over the respective creeds of Brahmanism and Buddhism, very many may be apt to believe that the latter presents the easier field for missionary labour; and, consequently, the chance of success must be greater. On the plain Deism of the Karens, also, we know that missionaries do not find it difficult to engraft the valuable truths of Christianity; whereas, in the dark religion of Brahmanical polytheism, the difficulties are legion, and terribly disheartening to the Christian philanthropist.

Mr. Burney's father was the well-known Resident at the Court of Ava, Colonel Burney, who, when the Burmese Government would have a Resident no longer, was yet requested by the King to stay as a friend.

Captain Impey, of whom we briefly wrote in our first Narrative,* was now quietly residing at Bangkok, in Siam, under the assumed name of George Aylmer. At first he was reported to be drilling the King of Siam's troops; but he was really there in the peaceful capacity of a merchant. The adventurous Captain "hoped to be appointed agent to the Singapore merchants at the capital of Siam."

From the throne *Amarinwinichai-Mahaiswriyapheman*, great improvements were now expected in the government of Siam. The policy of exclusiveness was said to be, at length, abandoned; and the Siamese King had taken to free trade, after a fashion, which was as necessary to the welfare of his kingdom as to his own preservation. He had forbidden his own subjects the use of opium, and had made a vigorous effort to extend the commerce of his country.

Regarding that curious people, the Karens,† Deists, who

* See "Rangoon," p. 144.

† "Their traditions embody remembrances of the creation, the deluge, and the promise of a deliverer." They, in fact, embrace what may be styled the fossilized skeletons of the faith.



occupy the various mountainous and difficult tracts throughout Burma, Pegu, the Tenasserim coast, and parts of the Shan and Siamese countries, we read that the "second section of the great Karen tribe, which in Burma has embraced Christianity by themselves, and is rapidly being organized into a nation, resides in Siam" (1852).

There is evidently a great change operating in the Siamese character. The pride of this nation has been described by some author of note, as so excessive, that the lowest Siamese considered himself superior to the greatest subject of any other nation. In their literature, as with the Burmese, they have nothing to enforce upon them the folly of extreme pride.

In June, it may be mentioned, the Madras Artillery sustained a severe loss by the death of that excellent officer, Major Hugh Montgomery.* He had distinguished himself at the capture of the White House Stockade, and during the advance on the Great Pagoda.

By the commencement of July, Rangoon was a flourishing town, with some forty or fifty thousand inhabitants.† People to be seen of nearly every creed, and of every Asiatic nation. Of course, it was to be expected that among this numerous population lurked many men of questionable character. There was the slippery dacoit, who had come to try his hand, perhaps, upon a commissariat bullock; there was the wily gambler who had come to cheat those who had money about them; there were Burmese spies, who had just dropped in to look quietly at the state of affairs, and see whether our gallant General was on the *qui vive* or not; but the majority consisted of those who were driven by hunger to flee from Burmese oppression, and

* The lamented Major was brother to the late Sir Henry Montgomery, Bart., for many years a member of Her Majesty's Indian Council.

† This may not be quite correct, as, in 1857, the population of Rangoon did not much exceed forty thousand. For 1851, or shortly before the war, we have seen it printed as low as twenty thousand.



who now rejoiced to live in certain security, under British protection! Was it not for this, Providence sent us here? Was not the Indian Government working out its grand destiny? Near the beach was an immense bazaar, where fish, fruit, meat, and vegetables were sold. The vendors were women, old and young. There were pine-apples, plantains, and mangoes in abundance, for sale; also pumpkins and cucumbers. The bek-ties and mangoe fish were, generally speaking, very inferior to what we got in India.

And, in addition to the necessities of life, many articles of luxury were now procurable in Rangoon. Justice breathed under the vigilant magistracy of Captain Latter; and, on the whole, civilisation here seemed in a fair way of taking root.

From such a point of prosperity in our narrative we pass on to the middle of July, when the welcome intelligence arrived of the success of an expedition of steamers which had been despatched up the Irawady.

The flotilla was under Commander Tarleton, R.N.; and the steamers employed were the "Proserpine," "Pluto," "Phlegethon," "Medusa," and "Mahanuddy."

Prome had been circumvented; the enemy's war-boats had been destroyed, and the Burmese put to flight, with the loss of forty guns. "It is all up with the army," said many. "There will be no medal for Prome!" said a few. The wise said nothing; although it did certainly seem that James Watt had taken more than his share of the glory. The question of "Could not the General ere this have taken troops sufficient to Prome in the steamers and rafts?" or, "Could he not have taken two thousand men, and at once have occupied Prome on this occasion?" might have been answered in various ways; one of them, perhaps, "It would certainly have been impolitic to have denuded Rangoon of troops, at such a period of the war, without the chance of immediate reinforcements." Another, "Why occupy Prome immediately, when the wishes of Government are not known on the subject of annexation?" and another, "Why

should the men be exposed at such a season as this, with the chance of, on their arrival at Prome, finding all the houses burned to the ground, and the ancient boundary between Pegu and Burma utterly destroyed? ”

The object of the expedition to Burma was described by Lord Derby, in the House of Lords,* as follows :—“ To strike a blow against Rangoon and Martaban, which by striking terror into the minds of the Burmese, and by showing the efficiency of our forces, would induce them to make peace on terms honourable to the British Government.” Far more than this had been done. Bassein had been captured, and various minor successes had attended our arms; and then the Burmese kept silence, while the Peguese seemed everywhere to desire our protection and government; yet Peace did not come from the Court of Ava! With the golden-footed King, or his vile and dissolute advisers, she did not dwell!

All this would naturally tend to place the British Commander in a difficult position. Be this as it may, many thought Commander Tarleton had done a very fine thing. The General, just returned from a tour of inspection, was astonished at the event which had humiliated Prome, for a time.

The following description of the affair was eventually delivered by electric telegraph in Calcutta, when the “Fire Queen” came within telegraphic range of the City of Palaces:—“Prome was occupied on the 9th July. Twenty-two guns, many of large calibre, taken from the enemy by the steam flotilla in the Irawady, under the command of J. W. Tarleton, R.N. Flotilla attacked on the 7th by a strong force of the enemy at Konongee. Silenced enemy’s fire in an hour, and the steamers proceeded. On the 10th, fell in with the rear of General Bandoola’s army, and, after an exchange of shots, the enemy fled in great confusion, leaving the General’s state-barge,

* 5th of April, 1852.

standard, two gold umbrellas, several large war-canoes, and twenty prisoners in our possession." A few officers were wounded,* and, on the whole, twenty-eight guns were taken; twenty-nine by another account, and among them one 42 and one 54-pounder. Commander Tarleton, we believe, went through what may be styled the eastern channel, passing the Burmese who were drawn up in force, not on the island, but on the left bank of the river. This movement almost paralyzed the enemy; and as our steamers were returning, war-boats were sent out to intercept their progress. Then commenced the work of destruction and capture which terminated this brilliant little affair. Strange enough, in almost deserted Prome, some inhabitants who sought our protection assisted the men in finding the guns. A poor Peguese labourer, on being asked by one of our officers why he acted thus, replied, "Because we are perishing under this Government; no security for person, no security for property. If a man is possessed of five rupees to-day, and it becomes known, he is robbed of it by the greedy authorities to-morrow." No person in Burma, "ventures to exhibit his wealth by enjoying it, for means of extortion would soon be used to deprive him of it."

The people were fleeced by the governors, who were delegated by the King to rule over them for a high consideration. And of course the chief object was to drain the coffers of their helpless charge by a system of oppression.

Could it be otherwise, than that this people should wish the dynasty of Alompra at an end? The dog had had his day; he had earned a bad name; should we hang him? In an age of social progress and enlightenment, all such vile instruments of government must be swept away. What should such crea-

* According to this report, Lieutenant Elliot, Rl. M., Mr. J. Morgan, assistant-surgeon, H.M.S. "Fox," Mr. Hunter, I. N., and Mr. Brayer, mate, I. N.

tures as these do "crawling between earth and heaven?"* The grand question which now arose, was, "Would it be wise and politic in our Government to annex the country to our eastern domain?" We were inclined to answer in the affirmative. It would, we thought, be both wise and politic to absorb Burma, and place the worthless king on the list of pensioners. The country deserves care and trouble; let us dispense the blessings of security and civilisation, and ensure wealth and prosperity to a wide-spread and interesting people, whose domestic morals we may reform in the course of time, the vast and rich resources of whose country we shall be able to evolve for their own benefit as well as that of mankind at large. The Burmese would not require a great effort to be tamed under the paw of the British lion, and would form the most formidable barrier between our own and the Chinese Empire. Another view advocated the annexation of the kingdom of Pegu only to the British possessions in the East. This would humiliate the court of Ava, by taking away its best provinces, and would relieve the Peguese from tyranny and oppression. And many Burmese would soon come under our protection. At the close of the last war numbers of Burmese expatriated themselves; they availed themselves of a time and opportunity for emancipation from tyranny, flocked into the Tenasserim Provinces, "and formed the nucleus of their future prosperity."

The reader may now naturally inquire if any jealousy exists between the Talaings and Burmese? Not nearly so much as might be expected.

They are both of the Tartar race,† and each has been independent in its turn; neither of them is affected by caste; and

* Written in 1852. The author must have anticipated the reign of King Thebau in 1879. Hamlet's remark, in this case, becomes more striking, when we consider that Mandalay is held by the Burmese to be under the especial charge of Santama!

† This is, of course, an assumption; the people of further India are supposed by Mr. Crawford to be *radically distinct from any other Asiatic race.*



excepting a little jealousy which exists between the high phon-gyees, or rahans (priests, or monks), of the Burmese and Talaings—said simply to have reference to temporal dignity and position, without a tendency to produce schism—there is not more envy than we observe every day between any two men of a different trade or country. The question remains open whether “the independent sea-board power of Pegu or the comparatively land-locked kingdom of Ava was most likely to have first received the missionaries of Buddhism.” The Tenasserim Provinces had yielded no actual surplus revenue to British India. They had, on the contrary, cost us a few thousands a year. And why? Because at the close of the last war we occupied a country which could never be made to pay its expenses. We occupied this and the swamps of Arakan, while the once glorious kingdom of Pegu stretched out its arms to receive us! The Tenasserim Provinces had never paid their expenses; but, says an authority, taking his own view of the annexation question, “This is no reason why the rich province of Pegu, with its inexhaustible forests of teak, its fertile soil, its noble rivers, its mineral resources, and its industrious population, should not, under the impulse of improvement—which we shall not fail to impart to it—more than cover the whole expense of its occupation. Nor must we forget that we secure, at the same time, four or five millions of consumers of our manufactures—that is, according to the extent of territory we may appropriate—and open new marts of commerce.” Rangoon, at no very distant period, would become the Liverpool or Glasgow of further India. Immense traffic would naturally crown such an admirable commercial position, and the woods, grain, oils and minerals of Pegu, with its various other commodities, would be diffused throughout the civilised world.”

And why should not this be brought about? The entire people of Southern Burma were seeking our rule; Rangoon and Kemmendine were filled with inhabitants; and the Peguese, according to General Godwin, “decidedly and ever our friends,”

what could we seek more? Or, it may be better to say, what could we wish more, after we had invested and occupied Prome by British troops? Such a consummation was, doubtless, near at hand. "From Prome to the Aeng Pass on one side," wrote an authority, "and to Martaban, taking the Sittang river as the boundary on the other, would give us the whole sea-board, and Pegu in its integrity, whilst it would still leave a noble territory to the Court of Ava, larger than, for the interests of the people, it ought to possess." So much confidence General Godwin appeared to have in the Peguese, that he once said at Rangoon, "if he had the authority to promise annexation, he would levy a militia of these fellows, and go with them and a portion of our force, to Prome at once."

The "Phlegethon," under Captain Niblett, took a trip to Donabew in May. No fortifications were found there, merely the town, and the remains of the work destroyed in the last war.

The General, Bandoola, whose name has appeared while narrating the temporary capture of Prome by Commander Tarleton, was the son of our gallant and determined enemy during the last war, who said, not long before his death at Donabew, that the English did not know how to fight! The report for some time had been rife at Rangoon that Bandoola junior was coming down to make a grand stand. He had forty thousand of the King of Ava's chosen troops with him, goodly men and true.

Probably the Golden Foot thought that the name of Bandoola would act like magic on the people. Such is well enough in Europe, perhaps, but it will not do in Asiatic countries. The master-mind was wanting. Bandoola proved himself, on the occasion referred to, to be a disgrace to his father's name; he fled bodily, probably to drown his misfortune in dissipation, to which, report said, the would-be Bandoola the Great was very much addicted.

Great Britain in the East—particularly at this time—appeared



to be working out a grand destiny. Providence seemed to have ordained that she should "go forth conquering and to conquer." To advance is life — to retire is death. Such assurances ably cheer the onward march of civilisation.

To review the affairs of a mighty Government there must be no prejudice, no party feelings of revenge; there must be amplitude of comprehension and an intimate acquaintance with the subject. Without these, a fair and candid judgment can never be passed on civil or military affairs. Thoughts like these were apt to crowd upon the mind at a time when India was about to occupy a greater share of public attention than ever; at a time when a natural desire existed among so many that justice might be done to India, and to the Honourable East India Company. It was highly pleasing to read the speech delivered by the First Minister of the Crown (the Earl of Derby) on Friday, the 2nd of April. Justice was then done to the Company, which, "from an humble origin, established in a comparatively short period, the mightiest empire under the sun, redeeming any errors of rapacity and lust in its early stages by the wise government and enlightened humanity by which, in later times, it had achieved a dominion absolute and uncontrolled, whether by the direct exercise of its authority, or by an influence not less absolute than actual authority, over a district of country extending from Cape Comorin on the south, to the borders of Burma, of Cashmere, Cabul, and Afghanistan on the north, and embracing, I think, something like 28° of latitude (cheers); a vast district inhabited by a population which I believe I am within the mark when I set down at 150,000,000 exercising its authority over a population of various races, and of various religions, who have been often in hostility to each other, but who now, conquerors and conquered, agree to submit to the jurisdiction of a comparatively small body of Europeans; a Company which has secured its power, not so much by the sword as by the wisdom of its councillors; which has seen succumb to it, one after another, the mightiest monarchies of

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India, and which, without any attempt at conquest—nay, contrary to its wish—has seen the populations of those monarchies gradually freeing themselves, under the protection of its authority. It was not less extraordinary that this vast empire should be maintained by an army of 285,000 men, composed mainly of natives, every variety of religion and grades, equally loyal to their conquerors. It was a task of magnitude to investigate the machinery by which this great territory was superintended.”

With reference, again, to the grand question, whether Prome, or Amarapura, would be on the northern boundary of our grasp, a highly intelligent officer wrote, “Why, here is a country, the conquest of which would cost comparatively a small outlay of men and money, of much greater value to us than the Punjab, as a maritime and commercial people, from its geographical superiority and advantages, to say nothing of its productions which are of the most remarkable kind.” Thus was the matter looked upon in the light of a commercial necessity.

Some talked of Ava and Prome making “convenient appendages” to Calcutta, “rounding off” our possessions in the East. And once having moved inland, it would be difficult to stop short of the Sea of China.* “No fear of our Empire,” said a bold son of Progress, “falling to pieces from its own size, were it extended from the Caspian to the Wall of China, *so long as the country is rich enough to meet its own charges, and is possessed of a defensible frontier.*”

Including Arakan, the Burmese Empire was stated, many years ago, to contain seventeen millions of souls.† The popu-

* “The peninsular is scarcely a thousand miles across, and is penetrated by noble rivers, from north to south and from east to west—and we could advance from both shores were we so inclined.”

† Colonel Symes estimated the total number at seventeen millions, while Captain Cox, who succeeded him as ambassador, does not go beyond eight millions; but from subsequent information collected by Captain Canning, there was reason to believe that even this last number greatly exceeded the truth. In 1809 the country appeared half depopulated.



lation has since very much decreased. Should we become eventually possessed of the inheritance of the House of Alompra, the Indian Government would exercise authority over little less than one-fifth of the whole human family!

On Tuesday, the 27th of July, the Governor-General of India arrived at Rangoon, in the Company's steam-frigate "Feroze."

Welcome intelligence, at the same time, came from England that the fall of Rangoon and Martaban had drawn forth a feeling of unqualified admiration of the skill and courage of our troops. Soon after his arrival in the river, General Godwin and Commodore Lambert paid Lord Dalhousie a visit. The weather was by no means auspicious for such an important event as the arrival of the head of the Indian Government on these shores. The day was rainy, and dark, and dreary-looking, as if it were determined to repel the message of light to Burma. But, as usual at this season, it cleared up in the afternoon; and everything around seemed bright and beautiful. Next morning there was a grand parade, in honour of the Governor-General; the time he had appointed for landing was 7 o'clock. Punctual, as usual, the noble Marquis landed; and, entering the stockade, passed through the street, lined with troops, to the south gate of the Great Pagoda. H. M.'s 18th Royal Irish furnished the guard of honour below, and the Artillery, of course, furnished its guard of honour* above, on the upper terrace. What with the various salutes—the shipping having thundered away in the river, and the Artillery on the upper terrace—and the general excitement, there was a temporary relief from our rather monotonous life at Rangoon. Music, too, welcome music, was now to be heard. The Governor-General was accompanied on his visit by Major Banks, acting as Military Secretary,† Mr. Charles Allen, Foreign Secretary,

* Under Captain Cooke, Madras Artillery.

† This gallant officer afterwards fell at the [Residency during the siege of Lucknow (1857).

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his Aides-de-camp, Sir Edward Campbell, Captain D'Oyley, and others. He was received, on reaching the base of the Great Pagoda, by Colonel Foord, the Artillery Commandant, who introduced Major Back and Brigade-Major Scott to his lordship.

The illustrious party wandered round the Temple, of course wondering and admiring. "I am astonished how your men got in here, with such defences!" remarked the Governor-General, who was also pleased to express his high approbation of the soldier-like appearance of the Artillery guard of honour. The quaint-looking houses of some of the officers, on the upper terrace, must have excited the attention of the strange party; nor could they have been less astonished at the bells, huge, and now dumb, monsters of sound; they also enjoyed a splendid view of the country and river from the parapets.

While the Governor-General was residing at Rangoon, of course the curiosity of every one was excited to the utmost. What was going to be done? Would there be now an immediate advance on Prome, to follow up the recent successful achievement? If so, immediate annexation would doubtless follow.

On the arrival of reinforcements a force was to be sent through the Aeng Pass into the basin of the Irawady, to cut off all communication between Ava and Prome. A force would also proceed from Martaban up the Sittang river; and the principal force would start from Rangoon in the steamers. There would be no bullocks to destroy the efficiency of the Artillery, and delay the army in its onward progress. The rivers in October and November would have water sufficient for steamers of considerable size to proceed up with perfect safety. "There were steamers enough to take an army to Ava, without wetting the sole of a man's foot." Such lively remarks became current during the stay of the Governor-General at Rangoon.

But, with regard to *marching*, no one could pretend to give an exact opinion as to the intentions of General Godwin. To



conquer a country thoroughly you must *march* through it; there must be no rebels hanging on your rear. This is a general view of the custom of war. With a river possessing such capabilities as the Irawady, much steaming, however, to save marching through an injurious and swampy soil, one would imagine to have every chance of greatly facilitating the operations, and of bringing the campaign to a brilliant and glorious termination. To use the steamers as much as possible may have been the intention of our gallant General. The "Pluto," in July, anchored off Prome, in eight fathoms water. Cox and Crawford both mention that the rise of the Irawady at Prome is from twenty to twenty-five feet, and that large vessels* have been built there.

Our steamers gave us the entire command of the Irawady below Prome—"in fact, of the whole of the Lower Provinces." Steam would soon render Pegu truly British in character; and, with its auxiliary, the Press, it might form the nucleus of civilisation in a new land, which would be sure to flourish under a wise and liberal Government. After holding a levee the Governor-General left Rangoon on Sunday, the 1st of August, much pleased with his visit. It was believed he waited instructions from England, which could not be received before the end of September; so, on the great question, we were left in the dark as much as ever. It was not decided on whether we should take the entire Burmese Empire, or simply unite the two disjointed provinces of Arakan and Maulmain, by annexing the intermediate delta of the Irawady.

And now, to close this portion of our narrative, Rangoon was flourishing beyond all possibility of conception. In the first war Rangoon had but few tenants. It was peopled chiefly by the army and its followers. When we landed in April (1852) the town was almost deserted. The case soon became entirely

* Of from three hundred to five hundred tons burthen.

changed; the people placed confidence in us, and rushed to seek our protection. This time it was not probable that cunning Burmese diplomacy would be allowed to have a hand in the business. There would be no time for an interchange of *civilities*, or other “airy nothings.”

Looking with a sort of prophetic eye into coming events, we remarked :—The Burmese are crafty; but the British are earnest in a good cause. There will be no Dr. Jonathan Price, excellent man as he was, rushing backwards and forwards to Ava, bringing doubtful intelligence, as well as bad rupees, and only a portion of the treasure at a time. There will be no deputations to the King, to present gifts of State. When we get to Prome, or beyond it, trifling must cease. There will be much business of vast importance to transact; and there can be little doubt of its being transacted in a manner highly creditable to the Government of British India.*

The following is Lord Dalhousie’s concise and elegant farewell gift to the force at Rangoon :—

“The Major-General† commanding, has the highest gratification in publishing to the troops the following General Order by the Most Noble the Governor-General of India :—

“Rangoon, 1st August 1852.

“The Most Noble the Governor-General of India cannot forego the opportunity which is afforded to him by his visit to Rangoon,‡ for again offering the combined force his most cordial acknowledgment of the valuable and distinguished services they have rendered here. The gratification which

* It was said, that when reinforcements arrived from Bengal and Madras, General Godwin’s army would number about eighteen thousand men. At no period of the war were there so many troops in Burma.

† By a recent order, the Brevet Lieutenant-General was in several cases cancelled, and our gallant Commander was among them.

‡ The next important visit to this rising commercial city in Chin-India was that of the much loved and afterwards lamented Earl of Mayo, in January 1870, when Colonel Fyche was Chief Commissioner.



the Governor-General experiences in thus congratulating the force on its success in the field, is greatly enhanced by his being able to add the expression of his unqualified approbation of its conduct in quarters.

"In every branch, whether Naval or Military, European or Native, the force has exhibited an orderly conduct and inoffensive demeanour towards the people of the country, and a spirit of sound discipline, which are as truly honourable to its character as the high distinction it has won in battle.

"Whatever may be the future course of this service, whatever may be the ultimate fate of this country, the Governor-General has the proud satisfaction of feeling that the people of Burma will hereafter associate with the presence of a British force among them no other recollections than those of its irresistible bravery in the field, of its order, forbearance, and obedience in the camp.

"(By command)

(Signed) "J. S. BANKS,

"Assistant Military Secretary
to the Governor-General."

The following account of Lord Dalhousie's reception of, and conversation with, the missionaries, from the graphic pen of Mr. Kincaid, is of too interesting a nature to be omitted from this narrative:—

"Rangoon, Aug. 8, 1852.

"In my last, I mentioned that Lord Dalhousie and suite were here. The day after his arrival one of his secretaries called on me and spent more than an hour, asking a great number of questions relative to the Government, &c. of Burma. On Saturday last, before he left, a line from one of his aides-de-camp informed me that the Governor-General would see me and my associates at 3 o'clock. I went accordingly with Mr. Vinton and Dr. Dawson.

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"His lordship received us in the kindest manner, and at once began conversing on Burman affairs in a way that indicated great familiarity with the subject. He inquired about the three races of Karens, Talaings, and Burmans, the peculiarities of each, the number of native Christians, whether the Government made no distinction between us and British subjects, whether I was acquainted with the present King, who were the leading spirits in the court of Ava, and what were the feelings of the people towards the English? He asked my opinion of the late Viceroy, whether he came down with peaceful or with hostile intentions. To this last I replied, 'Hostile, no doubt.'

"'How, then,' he inquired, 'do you account for the pacific tone of the King's letter to me?'

"'It was to blind Commodore Lambert, and give the Viceroy time to prepare for resistance.'"

This interesting conversation, in its entirety, will be found in Mrs. Wyllie's work,* the eighth chapter of which—the "Annexation of Pegu"—is a very interesting one, and which may with advantage be referred to. With regard to annexation and "the well-being or otherwise of unborn millions depending very much on his decision," Lord Dalhousie said, "I feel it; those who have not the responsibility may act hastily. I HAVE COME TO A DECISION AFTER LONG AND CAREFUL EXAMINATION." On taking leave, his lordship said to the missionaries—"We may meet again!"

And thus the great Pro-consul courteously and gracefully closed his first visit to Rangoon.

* Th "Gospel in Burma, 1859."



PART III.

FROM THE ADVANCE ON PROME, TO THE ENTIRE CONQUEST OF PEGU.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVANCE ON PROME.—CAPTURE AND OCCUPATION OF PEGU.

Few events in Indian military history gave rise to so many remarks, grave, gay, lively, and severe, as General Godwin's advance on, and capture of, Prome. Some of the Indian journals almost exhausted their wit on the subject. That five octavo pages of a Gazette should have been occupied in detailing an engagement in which only one man was killed and a few wounded, was, in the opinion of one of them, quite dissimilar to the "*Veni, vidi, vici*," of the great Cæsar. And again, the same writer held that Nelson's idea of having one day a Gazette "all to himself," was not "associated with such cheap results as the capture of Prome by the Army of Burma." It does certainly provoke a smile, while reading the graphic narratives by the Commodore and General, as set forth in their



Despatches,* pondering over the naval and military exploits, and the grand result. But we are a strange people in this respect. Had there been in human life a large "butcher's bill," there would have been more praise and less wit bestowed on the operations; so, however brilliant the wit may be on such occasions, the expression of it certainly does not say much in favour of British humanity. Looking at this failing in a purely professional point of view, it appears absurd in the extreme; since every one knows that it is the consummate art of war to do as much as possible with quickness, decision, and effect, at a small cost of life among the troops employed. Writing a few pages about doing the thing does not then become such a great crime after all; and no doubt the General as well as the Commodore were perfectly satisfied on this point.

Before briefly narrating the advance, with the view of giving a sort of continuous chain to the abstract of a separate narrative, a few events in August and September may be noted, with some remarks of general interest.

Rangoon, Martaban,† and Bassein were now in our possession, to the infinite delight of the Peguese, or former lords of Burma. The Irawady, that noble highway, or rather grand artery of the country, was in our hands, which had enabled us for some time to cut off the enemy's resources.

The Bay of Bengal continued to keep up an animated scene, and its billows rolled fresher than ever, as if they shared the joy of the Irawady, while steamers and transports dashed across its blue waters with brave reinforcements for the "Army of Ava." Who could deny that such vigour was highly creditable to the Indian Government? that such energy and such resources did

* See Appendix No. V., in "Pegu; a Narrative."

† For more information regarding the attack on Martaban, see "Pegu," chap. ii. p. 7.



infinite honour to our Indian Empire, which, although not a century since Clive won Plassey, was now the wonder and admiration of the world. But in the face of this hard-won glory there were still some good people in England—among them those who loved above all things to make a public “show”—who, as the great advocates of Free Trade put it, saw or read of “nothing but growth,” and for the most part talked of “nothing but decay”!

Among those who looked back with pride to the day they entered the old Company’s service, not the least important were the members of that army which, “originating in a few gunners’ crews and factory guards, had, in the course of not quite two centuries, swollen to that gigantic and well-disciplined host known as the Company’s Army.”*

This army had again sent forth a gallant portion of its sons on another grand enterprise, as pioneers to clear the way for justice and civilisation.

In the middle of August, the 1st Madras Native Infantry, under Colonel Goldsworthy, reached Maulmain, as the garrison there was sadly in want of reinforcement. It was truly considered that no little responsibility was attached to guarding a town, some three or four miles long, with cantonments, arsenal, and magazine. This important capital of the Tenasserim Provinces—so famous for its teak and timber trade†—is about thirty-seven miles from the sea. Martaban is on the right or north bank of the Salween river, nearly opposite Maulmain.

We now return to Rangoon, where an attack was made, on the night of the 14th, on the quiet village of Puzendown—*lit.*, in Burmese, “the shrimp district”—under our very eyes. The chief object of attack was a house occupied by the ex-Governor of Pegu; and the attacking party consisted of fifty

* “Begbie’s Services of the Madras Artillery.”

† For capabilities of Maulmain as a building yard for men-of-war, see “Pegu,” p. 30.



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Burmese soldiers. Of course, their design was to carry him off; but the enemy were vigorously repulsed, the ex-Governor having fought bravely with his small band, defending himself in a manner, although severely wounded, worthy of the best days of Pegu chivalry.

The Burmese at Prome, it was affirmed, were now employed on an extensive stockade, or breastwork, in a commanding position, beyond the fire of the steamers. From ten thousand to fifteen thousand men were reported to be in and about Prome. There were seven thousand at Pegu, with a large body of Cassay (Munnipoor) horse; armed outposts between Pegu and Rangoon; and a large force at Beling, near Martaban. Ava was said to be filled with guns; and there were the two fierce brigades, headed by a Picton and an Uxbridge of the Burmese army, styled the Invulnerables and the Invincibles, who were certainly to cut all the English to pieces! The Burmese were not going to await attack; but they determined to attack us when the rains abated. There were accounts from the steamers up the river that Bandoola with the various expelled Woons, or ex-Governors, remained at Prome. The Dalla Woon sent a communication to Commander Tarleton proposing a conference on the subject of the war. Tarleton replied, "that he had no power to entertain the subject, but that if the Dalla Woon was duly authorised, he would guarantee him safe conduct to Rangoon in one of the steamers." The Woon did not accede to this proposal, but wished to know whether, in the event of his communicating with the Commodore, we would remain below Prome till matters might be settled. This ruse was so transparent as to indicate but an indifferent opinion of our penetration. His Dalla Woonship was informed in reply that nothing short of a treaty of peace between the two nations would stay our proceedings. The Woon would not trust himself to the mercy of the British General. At Ava his head would surely have gone for losing Dalla. But in such a case he should have been allowed to keep it on for his admirable



diplomacy and cunning! However, the nation that produced Lord Palmerston could hardly have been defeated by the tact of a Burmese Woon.

At the end of August, war-steamers were despatched from Rangoon to Madras, to bring troops for the approaching campaign. The Commodore had utilised the little passenger-steamer "Fire Queen," mounted her with some 12-pounders, and made a man-of-war of her. Captain Keighly, 49th Madras Native Infantry, and Mr. Chisholm—the former from Martaban and the latter from Maulmain—were also engaged in the preparation of a flotilla of boats for the conveyance of stores and baggage in the movement upwards. At Rangoon, too, the Artillery were usefully employed in attempting to effect a breach in a flank of the west face of the great stockade with two 24-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers, at ranges of from four hundred to six hundred yards. But it was found perfectly useless to attempt the breaching with such pieces in any reasonable time.* We carefully examined the construction of the dense, tough, timber wall, which, though lacking the beauty of a work issued from the hand of a Vauban or a Cormontaigne, nevertheless had been raised on simply natural principles of surpassing strength. With two hundred pounds of powder, or even with one hundred pounds, you can occasionally effect a fair breach in a strong part of a stockade. Engineers and Artillery are well acquainted with how to effect this often difficult and sometimes dangerous operation.

The boats of the Hon. Company's steam-frigate "Zenobia" were now doing some useful service about thirty miles above Martaban, reconnoitring various positions preparatory to an advance. They were frequently fired on by the determined enemy. The boats returned early in September to Maulmain, officers and men having suffered much from fatigue and ex-

* See "Pegu," p. 21.

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posure. In this expedition, Mr. Bondville, with three boats of the river police, also joined, and gave great assistance. Eighteen canoes were captured in all. On the 1st of July the Queen had prorogued Parliament in person, when Her Majesty, for the first time in her reign, was pleased to allude to Burma. There had been "an interruption of friendly relations" with the King of Ava. The "promptness and vigour" of the Governor-General of India received "entire approbation"; and the valour "and discipline" of all "the naval and military forces, European and Indian," were causes of just satisfaction, having led to "signal successes," which, it was to be hoped, would lead "to an early and honourable peace."

Our English Cicero, Lord Derby, had said in the House of Lords on the 5th of April, with reference to the coming operations,—“If these steps” (striking a blow against Rangoon and Martaban) “should not be sufficient before the rainy season to induce the Burmese authorities to tender their submission and to enter into terms of peace, then it will be for the Governor-General to consider what steps it will be his duty to take in the arduous struggle which will be forced upon him.”*

On the same date (1852), in the House of Lords, Lord Ellenborough endeavoured to show that the Burmese war might prove “more serious than we contemplated.” Is it not so with nearly every war engaged in by any nation? The uncertainty of the issues of war is proverbial; and none knew this better than the great Duke of Wellington.† “In the last war with Ava,” said his lordship, “we employed no less than forty thousand men,” but he doubted whether “in the end ten thousand were left fit for duty.” But the noble Earl wisely

* For a detailed account of the “Army of Ava,” see “Pegu,” chap. iv. p. 33.

† See His Grace’s remarks on the war at the end of this Abstract.



admitted that we had undoubtedly "some advantages now we did not possess then."

Early in September we became aware that there was an "inadvertent omission," regarding the 9th Madras Native Infantry, in General Godwin's despatch published after the capture of Bassein. When the orders for immediate landing were given, the gallant party of H. M.'s 51st K. O. L. I. were followed in a boat from the "Moozuffer" (*musáfir* (Arabic), "traveller") carrying some seventy grenadier and D company men of the 9th Regiment. The soldiers and sepoy, say four hundred and thirty, were formed up close to the river's edge, about eighty yards from the stockades which were manned by numbers of the enemy. No sooner had the "Hurrah!" of the British soldiers, and the "Deen, deen!"* of the Madras sepoy rent the air, than the Burmese became discomfited, and fled "like chaff before the wind." The original writer of this brave conduct of the 9th did not think our gallant General a master in the art of despatch writing, but asserted that our Chief had conducted the campaign hitherto "with a talent and energy worthy of a Soult." Whatever may have been said of the General's style, in conciseness of expression he was not to be excelled when he chose, as many officers who served with him will, doubtless, recollect. There was a good anecdote of him during the war, for the exact truth of which we will not vouch; but his expression, which makes the pith of it, is certainly true. Two rather "fast" medical functionaries arrived at Rangoon from Calcutta, at a time when, after the capture and during much cholera, medical aid was in great demand. It was reported that these two worthies were seldom sober. We were too busy for courts-martial in such cases; but the following order soon appeared from the General. "The undermentioned pair" ("brace," some said) "of *Chronic Inebriates* will return to Calcutta forth-

* Literally "the Faith," used by Mussulmans; equivalent to calling on Allah (God).



forthwith, per steamer, and report themselves to the Town Major, Fort William."

It may interest some to learn that the transports, of about four or five hundred tons, employed by the Government at Rangoon as store-ships, or stationed with the army on the Irawady, were paid at the rate of eight or nine rupees (at par, 18s.) per ton per month. In China the transports received twelve rupees per ton. During the first Burmese war the enormous sum of twenty-five rupees was given.

On the 5th of September news reached us that Bandoola was tired waiting at or near Prome, that he now intended to push on to Ava, where we must go if we wished to find him. The trick was not badly conceived, and deserved a better cause.

On the 6th it was announced in General Orders that active operations would be resumed on the 18th. No more welcome intelligence could have been given to the troops; for notwithstanding some comforts now enjoyed at Rangoon, they all hoped to see more service, or to have change of scene and an active life. The General's order on resuming operations was very concise, entering carefully into every particular. The regiments to embark on service were H. M.'s 18th, 51st, and 80th, with the 9th and 35th Madras Native Infantry, and the 40th Bengal Native Infantry.

There were two brigades, one under the command of Brigadier Elliot, K.H., and the other under Brigadier Reignolds, C.B. Bengal and Madras Artillery, with the ever useful 8-inch howitzers, and a light field battery, also a detail of Engineers and Sappers, were to form a strong part of the force, now quite ready to go to Ava or Peking at a moment's notice. The General hoped to embark the 2nd Division three weeks after the departure of the first.*

* See "Pegu," p. 52. For remarks on Horse Artillery, see page 53. The C. Troop, Madras Horse Artillery, arrived at Rangoon on the 7th of September, under Major Burgoyne.



We should have remarked that, at the end of August, Captain Shadwell, of H. M.'s steamer "Sphynx," proceeded up the river to relieve Commander Tarleton* in the command of the flotilla on the Irawady. And now there was a pleasing anecdote of our fine old General to record. On first hearing of Captain Tarleton's dashing attack on Prome (already narrated), the veteran lost his temper for the moment, took off his wig and threw it at his aide-de-camp (so the story ran), exclaiming, "Dash it, C——, there's that fellow Tarleton again! he's gone and taken the wind out of my sails!" Such is the splendid emulation which, we trust, will ever exist in the Services while their members are fighting for their gracious Sovereign and for the glory of Old England!

We shall now try and entertain the general reader with a sketch of Burmese

Costume.—A Burmese Feast.

The long flowing robes, which give the females of India such a graceful and classical appearance, we look for in vain in Burma.

The lower orders simply wear a sort of jacket, white or any other colour—open in front; at the base or near the centre of this garment, a robe, reaching nearly to the feet, is fixed or tucked in round the body, just covering the lower portion of the bosom. This robe is composed of two pieces sewn together—the upper piece being of red cotton stuff, while the other is frequently of silk, or, if too poor to afford it, of some fantastically coloured substitute. The female petticoat is styled *hta-mein*. Small shoes, or sandals, are worn by the women, and these are extremely simple and primitive in construction. The wealthier females adorn themselves, but not so profusely as those of Hindustan, with jewellery. The poorer classes have the rose, jasmine, and other flowers of the country to adorn

* The present Sir J. W., K.C.B., who was a few years back a Lord of the Admiralty.



their jetty tresses. The men wear a rude cloth round the loins, with a muslin ring of turband only, displaying economy in its strictest sense; the higher classes wear the turband in full, flat and ungraceful in form, with a smart jacket and under *toga*,* in part tucked in like the dress of the women; shoes also, with a handsome dhāt complete the costume, which in some instances is striking enough. The nob of hair, and ears bored, also the pendent lobes, like Gautama,—the ears boasting for the sake of ornament an unfinished cheroot or piece of wax candle, to ensure the safety of which the holes in these valuable organs are carefully distended,—are held in considerable importance by the men of this country; nor do the fair sex neglect the wax candle ornament, and smoking appears with them to be a favourite pastime, as it is also with their children. It was amusing one day to observe a fruit-woman, cheroot in mouth, attempting to bargain with an European soldier by means of sounds and signs perfectly unintelligible to him. Finding that she made no impression, she took up her basket, placed it on her head, and walked off, smoking as coolly as possible! Sterne could have moralised on the picture. The Burmese children appear to be smart and intelligent. On one occasion, while lounging down the principal street of Rangoon, we took particular notice of two sharp-looking Burmese *chokerahs*,† seated by the roadside, each with his little table, and the pice counted out upon it, ready to change money for the passers by. These juvenile money-changers, as they sat, gave a rupee an occasional ring, tossing it with the air of men well up to their business; they received one pice, or three pie—the fourth of an anna or of three halfpence—for changing a rupee.

* The *potso* of the men—of bright silk or cotton—reaches from the waist to the ankles.

† The universal weapon of Burma.

‡ Boys.



We now turn to a Burmese feast when the upper terrace of the great pagoda was crowded with Phongyees, and people, chiefly from Kemmendine, in every variety and shade of costume. By the base of a graceful banian curiosity—beside the old green walls of the building—sat two Phongyees, as usual in the fashion of Gautama. One of them was praying fervently in a moderate tone of voice, whilst the congregation, seated around, repeated what he said * at the conclusion of each prayer or sentence, bowing to the ground three times. The greater portion of the audience appeared to be women; but several old men were there—patriarchal looking fellows, with their long staves. At the same time all around Gautama's Temple din and animation reigned to the utmost—gongs sounding, people talking, laughing, and praying. The sun, now beginning to shine from a bright blue sky, aided the fantastic beauty of the lively scene, causing also the sacred silvery posts to borrow beauty from its rays. Every colour for dress seemed to have been brought into operation. Some of the females, with Tartaric countenances not pleasant to look upon, wore elegant handkerchiefs or scarfs over the shoulder. Several of the small children were very fair in appearance, and were dressed in fancy style; one with a green silk boddice, turband of yellow and red, and silver ornament on the foot. At the conclusion of the Phongyee's oration, large red-painted dishes were filled with the boiled rice, which, as offerings, in smaller plates, had been placed before him; and a well-filled dish was set aside for each cluster of applicants, who immediately com-

* "In Ceylon, upon some of the festivals, one priest reads from the original Pali, and another interprets in the Vernacular Singhalese; but this method is not very frequently adopted. Whenever the name of Buddha is repeated by the officiating priest, the people call out simultaneously *Sadhu!* which gives them a participation in the proceedings, and prevents them from going to sleep."—"Calcutta Review," No. xxxii., Art. "Eastern Monachism."



menced their morning meal in good earnest. The women rendered the rice palatable by means of mango-fish, chili, prawns, and other savoury ingredients, proving themselves not unskilled in gastronomical science; added to this, tumblers of genuine glass, like our own, showed symptoms of coming civilisation; and that with more speed than in the land of Vishnu and Siva which we have held for nearly one hundred years.* And why is this? simply because the people here are not fettered by CASTE, nor are they subject, as the Hindus are, to a vile priestly dominion! Were it not so, the moral precepts of Buddhism could not be so much more pure and efficacious than those of Brahmanism. In Burma a woman is not her husband's slave but his helpmate; you could observe this even during the simple operation of an occasional feast. In the Great Pagoda, say the Phongyees, or gentlemen of the yellow robe, are deposited the hair and teeth of Gautama, in a large gold vessel: these relics of sanctity, of course, form a chief source of attraction to worshippers at this celebrated shrine. Ceylon is made sacred by the tooth of Buddha—the grand tusk, which is now under British protection. The mighty shrine of Jagannāth, in Orissa, is said to contain the bone of Krishna; and such is “hero-worship” in the East! The intelligent reader is well able to compare it with that of the West. Without the aid of Carlyle, he will surely find a likeness. We shall conclude our observations on the feast by remarking that the Burmese and Talains of every class take off their shoes before entering on the upper terrace of the Shwé Dagon Pagoda, and that the circumference of the base of this temple is about five hundred yards. The height has been already given as three hundred and twenty-one feet.† With this splendid edifice upon it, also the smaller temples, the curious and beautiful trees, and the

* Written in 1853.

† See “Rangoon,” p. 112; also plan and section.



numerous relics and 'emblems of religion, the upper terrace cannot fail to command, from every diligent and inquiring traveller, genuine admiration.

A document was said to have been found at Meaday, intended as a report to the King of Ava, in which it was stated that more than one thousand Europeans were killed during the operations against Rangoon, "and that we set more than one thousand sentinels all round the camp to defend ourselves!" One thousand sentinels, with earnest eyes, keeping watch around the Great Shwé Dagon!—Heaven defend us!

Before the middle of September some two hundred boats were ready to assist in the transport to Prome. In every department activity reigned; and it must have been no small satisfaction to our gallant General, while these preparations for an advance were being carried on, to know that the health of the troops at Rangoon was highly satisfactory—forming, in this instance, a remarkable contrast with gloomy, deadly, destructive 1824. On the 13th, the "Sphynx" and "Moozuffer," each with a transport, arrived with Brigadier-General Steel, C.B.,* Brigadier McNeill (Madras Cavalry), and the whole of the 1st Madras Fusiliers,† under Lieutenant-Colonel (now General) Duke. On the 16th, the Artillery entertained General Godwin and Staff at dinner. The warm politicians at home, on festive occasions, never looked forward with more eagerness for a declaration of work *in esse*, in a political campaign, from the leading Minister, than did we on this social evening while expecting some important information as to "coming events" from our gallant and distinguished guest, the Chief of the Army in Burma. Our worthy Brigadier (Foord) proposed the health of the General, whom he hoped to hail, ere a few months

* Afterwards General Sir S. W. Steel, K.C.B.

† For remarks on this famous corps, incorporated, like the Madras Artillery, in 1756, see "Pegu," p. 65. The 39th Regiment—*Primitis in India*—was then the only other complete European regiment in India.

had passed away, as "Conqueror of Ava." The General rose. In the course of his speech he said:—"With regard to Ava" (now it may be Mandalay), "political as well as other reasons had urged the necessity of staying in position at Rangoon till the present time; what had been already effected had been perhaps slow, but he was certain that it was sure. He hoped before six months were over to have the grand object of the expedition fully carried out. Without going to Ava no successful ultimatum could be accomplished so as to produce a lasting peace."

While the embarkation of the troops was going on, remarks like the following were current at Rangoon:—"The word *annexation* has only to be sounded, when the Peguers (and many Burmese resident among them) throughout the length and breadth of the land will rise as one man, and expel the Burmese soldiery and dacoits, and give peace and liberty to the oppressed ryots."

Wild flowers are numerous in Burma in September. The great beauty of the creeping fern is very striking during this month, of which plant there is a great variety at Rangoon. The *maidenhair*, a beautiful fern, is seen in the crevices of old ruins and walls. A very rainy day, succeeded by a dry and very warm one, may give an idea of the nature of the weather, which seemed highly favourable to rapid vegetation.

Through the astonishing energy of Major Fraser, of the Engineers, Grand Architect of Rangoon, and the labours of his assistants, a new city arose as if by magic. Ample shelter had been afforded to the troops, even while the reinforcements were gradually pouring in; and now as the city emptied itself of a portion of its defenders, there were almost palaces for some, and houses for all, until another stream of life came in to stop the gap, as it were, among a social throng.

On the 24th, the last detachment of H. M.'s 80th, also the head-quarters of the 35th Madras Native Infantry, with General Sir John Cheape (Bengal Engineers) and Staff, embarked



in the "Phlegethon." Meanwhile another attack on the village of Puzendoun was expected; so the surveying-brig "Krishna," with a party of marines and seamen from H.M.S. "Winchester," started to look after the creek. The ex-Governor of Pegu was again the object of Burmese vengeance.

The P. and O. Company's splendid steamer "Oriental" was now at Rangoon, and gave rise to not a few reflections. This fine vessel had, at the commencement of her career, carried poor Warburton, of "The Crescent and the Cross," which made us think that a graphic pen like his would have had an excellent field for display in the land of the Golden Foot. Sir David Wilkie also, the Scottish Teniers, we believe died at Malta, on board the "Oriental."

On the 25th, General Godwin and Staff, with Brigadier Foord and the Artillery, embarked on board the "Proserpine." And now the whole of the 1st Division had gone from Rangoon, and Brigadier-General Steel was left in command. Meanwhile there might be work to do in the southern portion of the delta of the Irawady. The General was well aware that before advancing with a force on Ava, if necessary, or even being able fairly to secure the province of Pegu, it would be necessary to clear the country up the Sittang river—say by taking a land column from Martaban to Sittang, thence to Shwé-gyeen, thence to the reported strong post of Toungoo, and next, perhaps, across the country to Prome. It might be politic for such a step to succeed the recapture of Pegu, the ancient kingdom's capital.

With regard to the advance, the following letter was received from Prome, at Rangoon, about the middle of October:—

"I have just sufficient time to give a detail of events as they occurred since leaving Rangoon. The voyage was marked by a few interruptions in our progress towards Prome. In the first place, the 'Fire Queen' and 'Enterprise' steamers grounded, thereby causing a detention of all the other steamers for three days. Again, there was the very melancholy event of the



Admiral's death, at the Island of 'Shouk Shay Khune.'* It appears he had been taken ill on the night of the 5th; the following day he became worse; and he died on the afternoon of the 7th on board the 'Pluto,' which left for Rangoon on the morning of the 8th. From this island, which is not more than ten miles from Prome, we weighed and started, in all eight steamers, at daybreak on the morning of the 9th. In two hours we were under the hill fortifications of Prome, which have a full command of the river. Fortunately only one shot was fired from the hill, on the second steamer sailing abreast of it. A few rounds of shell from the steamers soon silenced the enemy for a time; but on our advancing a short distance higher up the river, they fired on almost every steamer that passed, and annoyed us very much with jinjals and musketry. The two steamers in advance returned the firing with great precision and effect; in short, all the steamers had a share in replying to the ineffectual firing of the Burmese. During the greater part of the day the steamers were alternately bombarding, for the purpose of landing the troops. In the afternoon, at 5 P.M. (rather late to commence operations inland), H. M.'s 80th, the Sappers and Miners, and the Artillery landed, taking only two guns with us. Getting our guns ready took up a considerable time; so that while evening was closing upon us we had made but little progress. At length we were all busy in securing a resting position for the night. The 80th lost but one man, who was shot, and three were wounded that same evening. The following morning, with the 18th Royal Irish, and 35th Madras Native Infantry, we proceeded to the pagoda, where we expected a sharp contest; but on our arrival at the steps we found the Burmese had fled, so we quickly ascended and took possession of the citadel. It is a similar

* Also written "Shouk Shay Khenee." The Admiral was in his 74th year—too advanced an age for active service in Burma.



one to the Shwé Dagon, but apparently of recent finish. The Artillery are located in the north steps, far superior to those of Rangoon. Since our occupation of Prome we have had no fighting ; but now and then we hear a few stray shots between our skirmishers and the Burmese. On the night of the 9th, one of the 80th soldiers, whilst at his post as sentry, between the hours of 1 and 2, was attacked by a few Burmese, who cut off his head and left his body some distance from his post. The remains were not found until the relief went round. This happened actually within one hundred and fifty yards of where our guns were placed, at the north gate ; and two of our sentries were walking about at the time. It appears at this juncture, a few shots having been fired on the guard from another direction, the attention of the men was diverted, giving the Burmese ample time to accomplish their ends. They also carried away the sentry's musket and belts. Since this atrocious murder was committed, double sentries have been planted. Just as I am writing, the bugle sounds for the 'assembly' of the 18th Royal Irish, one of their picquets having been attacked a little way out by a body of Burmese.

"The country seems to have been entirely deserted for some time, judging from the total absence of food of any sort being found ; not even a grain of rice ; and also from the overgrown state of vegetation. Even the roads and paths are all green and covered with long grass. No accidents have occurred to any of our men ; nor has there been any sickness, save a few trifling cases, since leaving Rangoon. The hospital, an old Poongi house, is situated within a few yards of the steps, and is very convenient. The General and Staff, I believe, return to Rangoon this evening on board the "Proserpine." Brigadier Foord, and his Brigade-Major, Captain Scott, also go. We are to await the arrival of the 2nd Division ; until then, nothing further is to be done."

Intelligence of Admiral Austen's death reached Rangoon as early as the 8th of October. It is needless to say that it was



received by the Naval and Military there with a feeling of sorrow. The gallant Admiral had been "changed into clay"; but then he had died in harness, while serving his country, with his flag flying! Thus, it was neatly remarked, "it is the pride of British sailors and soldiers to die; and his memory will be honourably associated in history with the Second Burmese War."

The "Pluto," while reconnoitring off Prome, had been fired upon by "two guns well mounted on the crest of a hill, a few jinjals, and several hundred muskets." Then, in the town itself, there were supposed not to be more than five hundred Burmese troops, but numbers were said to be strongly posted a few miles distant inland, at Eutháy-Mew. Major Brett had accompanied the Naval Commander-in-Chief to Prome.

Just before the melancholy news of the Admiral's death arrived, the Artillery mess at Rangoon had the pleasure of entertaining the purser of one of Her Majesty's men-of-war—a fine old tar of the genuine old school, which is fast passing away, to make room, it is to be hoped, for a better. That very day he had completed forty-one years in the Royal Navy. The Service was now as much changed, he said, from what it was on his entering it, as if it were altogether a Foreign Service. He was very severe on the "young gentlemen." The young gentlemen were too fine now-a-days. In his time, a tumbler between three or four, or a tin pot, or a bottle wanting the neck, sufficed for a mess; but now each must have his cut glass, and he did not know what else besides. He was a promoter of "progress"; but, shaking his head as he pronounced the word, he could not help adhering to his opinion that the "young gentlemen" were too precocious now-a-days. The Yankees were evidently no favourites with him; and he considered their expedition against Japan* as "sheer humbug."

* Strange enough, in 1864 (July), we find a question in the British Senate about our sending troops to Japan. Thus, it would seem, does destiny impel us onward!



Altogether, there was the dry humour of the true British sailor about him which it will not be easy to forget. At this time also, as if by way of variety, the "Moozuffer" and "Feroze" arrived from Calcutta with the greater portion of the Bengal Fusiliers. On the 9th, the "Sphynx" came into port with the remainder. This distinguished corps had come from Meerut, and was under the command of Colonel Tudor.

On the 12th of October the "Pluto" left for Bassein with the body of the Admiral, for whom minute-guns were fired the same day. The "Pluto" was to relieve the "Rattler," which was ordered to proceed with the remains of the late Naval Commander-in-Chief to Trincomallee.

Three most useful river steamers had now arrived at Rangoon, the "Lord William Bentinck," the "Nerbudda," and "Damooda." The former had been sent on the 5th to Pegu, "to see what the Burmese were about up there"; she left well provided with ammunition.

On the 6th the head-quarters and a detachment of Bengal Artillery, with about forty horses and numerous bullocks, and two light field-pieces, under Major Turton, embarked on board the steamers "Nerbudda" and "Damooda" for Prome. The subaltern officers who accompanied the light field battery were Lieutenants Willoughby, Dobbin, Ashe, and Lewes.

Some high Burman chief, who had been under the zealous and indefatigable Captain Latter's safe keeping, was now released, leaving, it was said, "his two sons as hostages." It was likewise asserted, with what degree of truth it was impossible to say, that the King of Ava had promised the Peguese that if they would "join in opposing and harassing us, and finally succeed in expelling us from the country, they should have a prince of their own to rule over them, and be again an independent nation!" But these people seemed rather inclined to say—"We *shall* have the British to rule over us!" As may be well imagined the Commissariat establishments had now sufficient work on their hands. It was pleasant enough to hear,



at a time when poor Madras was considered to be sadly in the background, some experienced Bengal officers declaring there could be little doubt that in two most important items we did excel the Bengallis—in the Commissariat and in the Medical Subordinates. However, in the former Department, Major Budd, Captain Simpson,* and their officers, were wisely too much occupied with the service of the State to think of rivalry; and there can be no doubt that in the face of many difficulties they did their work nobly in the Second Burmese War. Another company of Golundauze, under Captain Money, was now added to the Artillery.† On the 16th of October the General, Staff, and Commodore reached Rangoon from Prome. Brigadier Foord, Captains Scott and Robertson, and Dr. M'Cosh also arrived. And now we began to glean some fresh intelligence about Prome, the city which had fallen with so little loss to our troops. The scenery on the Irawady is for the most part flat and uninteresting. No palm-trees, no banyans, to be seen; but plantain trees numerous on the banks, with abundance of brushwood. It may here be remarked that the plantain fruit is as commonly used in Burma as the potato in England.

Near the Panlang Creek the river is so narrow that two steamers can hardly pass abreast. On nearing Prome the scenery improves, becoming picturesque, and not unlike the Rhine. At the city itself the river is more than a mile broad. Yen-benzeik, a pretty village, with richly-wooded hills, crested with pagodas, presents a beautiful distant view. Prome was described to us as boasting its few artificial as well as natural beauties, the wood-carving there especially being very fine. The golden pagoda likewise commanded its share of admiration. As at Rangoon, the Burmese had removed the old town from the beach, or rather from the bank of the river. Regarding the

* Chief of the Bengal Commissariat.

† The 5th Company, 9th Battalion, Bengal Artillery.



before-mentioned act of cutting off the European sentry's head, General Godwin had written to Bandoola, through Captain Smith, the Burmese interpreter, protesting against the barbarous murder, and reminding the chief that on a treaty being concluded the act would be one of the first for which he should be called on to give an account. Although we imagine Bandoola had very little to say to the business, yet we believe that the General's excellent letter, which also remarked on the way in which we treated our prisoners, was not without a salutary effect. The four steamers* which had come down with the General and Commadore made the passage in forty-eight hours; they were just thirteen days in going up, including the time lost by the "Fire Queen" having stuck in her progress through the Irawady. The "Sesostris" now acted as a sort of troop and guard ship off Prome. The once noble war-steamer had of course been lightened considerably previous to her voyage up the river. Portions of the 2nd Division, including H. M.'s 51st, were now ordered to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to Prome at a moment's notice. Rangoon became once more a scene of bustle and preparation. By the 22nd of October the intelligence was generally spread that the King of Ava had sent down for Bandoola to come into the royal presence. He was ordered to appear before the Golden Foot in the dress of a woman, having disgraced himself by losing his army in July. Bandoola would not go, as he feared the King, or perhaps the loss of his head more. The wily chief therefore thought it wise to leave his stockade at or near Eutháy-Mew,† and come over to the English. He did so—delivered himself up to Sir John Cheape and was now a prisoner on board the "Sesostris."

* The "Proserpine," "Phlegethon," "Mahanuddy," and "Fire Queen."

† Three thousand or four thousand men were reported to be at Eutháy-Mew.

On the 25th the Burmese had a grand ceremony on the upper terrace of the Great Rangoon Pagoda, which consisted in putting up an immense orange-coloured cloth round the bell end of the vast exterior of Gautama's Temple. They likewise put one up round the smaller pagoda near it. These cloths are sometimes sent by people to the Phongyees from distant parts, as substitutes for attending the sacred feasts and meetings at Rangoon, where it is considered all such assemblies are of vast importance.

On the following day there was another grand Gautamaic display, that of placing the drooping muslin pipe* encircled by orange-wreaths, in the foliage of the beautiful banian tree, in which it appeared to be blown about so gently as if simply intending to woo the air. To others must be left the pleasant task of informing the public on this ceremony, which, on the present occasion, was carried on during the striking of gongs and the clamour of a vast mixed Burmese assembly.† The pagoda at Prome, they say, is dedicated to the Hare; by no means an unimportant dedication in the religion of Gautama. It may not interrupt in any very serious manner the chain of this narrative if we here remark, to satisfy the curiosity of those interested, that Gautama—the fourth or last Buddha—is supposed to have been a hare in one of his previous transmigrations. A hare in Burmese is *yon*. Yong-meng signifies the Hare-Governor—that is in a measure among the Burmese the present ruler of the Universe. There are said to have been twenty-eight Buddhas originally in all; twenty-three have appeared in different successive worlds previous to the present world; of the remaining five four have appeared, the fifth is yet to come. The inferior celestial regions are said to be inhabited

* Some of the Burmese style this Tan-hgun. *Tan-hgun Deing*, according to Chase, means "flag-post."

† After twelve or fifteen days the cloths and ornaments are removed from the temples, trees, and sacred posts.



by the Nats or Fairies. At Rangoon, if we recollect aright, Mr. Kincaid said there were about sixteen hells in the Buddhist religion; but the number varied. During a journey to Ava he had seen some very curious infernal resemblances engraved on palm leaves. Time would not permit our waiting to hear the learned lecturer enter fully into his interesting subject, so we merely glean the following information,—that the four states of suffering or punishment in general use are hell—transmigration into insects, reptiles, and fish—transmigration into animals—and the abode of the fallen Nats under the Mayenmo hill. Then, again, the worshippers of Gautama entertain the hope of being numbered among those who by some miraculous change have become “raised above the common destinies, passions, and infirmities of human nature.” The Pali word *Niebban*, already alluded to, means annihilation, or emancipation from all evil. By some it is believed to be a state of total annihilation, by others a state of perfect tranquillity and abstraction, like the quiet visage and demeanour of the wooden or alabaster Gautama. And now, after all this mixture of sublimity and absurdity, many Burmese think that the greatest glory of the present Phya (god), the fourth Gautama, on the appearance of the last or maistree (chief) Buddha incarnate, will be again to breathe in and assume the form of a hare! Perhaps in these wild beliefs it is not too much to trace the origin of such a remark as that put by Shakspeare into the mouth of Ophelia:—“They say the Owl was a baker’s daughter; we know what we are, but know not what we may be.”

The river steamers with any intelligence from Prome were always welcome to the *quid nunc* sojourners at Rangoon. At this time we learned that there had been several cases of cholera in the monastery at Prome, where the 80th had taken up their abode. A detachment of H. M.’s 51st had already left; the remainder was now in orders to proceed on the 27th. A portion of the 40th Bengal Native Infantry had embarked for Prome; and another portion of Major Reid’s Horse Battery,



under Lieutenants Anderson and Fraser, was about to leave Rangoon for that important scene of rendezvous.

On the 26th of October the 10th Bengal Native Infantry, of the 2nd Bengal Brigade, arrived. The admirable state of discipline which, at a critical time, preparatory to crossing the *Kala Panee*—literally the dark water—distinguished this fine corps, was a subject of eulogium throughout Bengal. It was said that emissaries from certain malcontent corps in that Presidency had been trying to dissuade the 10th from crossing the water; but like good soldiers they were true to the last to their honourable and liberal masters; and the regiment arrived, after roughing it a little, in splendid condition at Rangoon. Colonel Dickenson, who had been appointed to command the 2nd Bengal Brigade, might well be proud of his corps, which now fell under the command of Major Welchman. No doubt the 10th* wondered at the idea of, for one moment, a soldier not going where he was ordered. The chief fault, however, in the case of any native corps, did not lie with the Bengal sepoy but in the Bengal system. We certainly have ordered these matters better in Madras; and there can be no question but that the Bengal sepoys should be enlisted to go anywhere and do anything according to the call of duty.†

On the 27th it was announced that a chief recently captured was the adopted son of the late Rangoon governor. He said that his father would come in; but having fired upon our flag of truce he was afraid to do so. A female, described as the wife of the adopted, likewise appeared as a warlike *Rosalind* in man's clothes. Gathering information from the Prome party was now not an unimportant occupation among the doings at Rangoon. We were not surprised to hear from one or more quarters that the General was annoyed at not having had a

* Not a General Service Corps.

† This was eventually well manifested by them in the call for Indian native troops during the late Russo-Turkish war.



decisive action at Prome. It was natural also that he should have been irritated by the navy during its previous progress on the river, having, after procuring wood and provisions, left the friendly villagers to the mercy of the Burmese soldiery. The naval officers present on these occasions, of course, were not to blame; they simply obeyed orders, but they never should have been there. Immediately after Captain Tarleton's operations on the Irawady, which few will now look upon in their originally intended light, that of a surveying expedition, the naval force under Captain Shadwell—finding, as it must have done, that it could only afford very inadequate protection to the friendly population in the important towns and villages on the river's banks—should have been withdrawn. Its presence only held out false hopes of protection to people who might have sought refuge elsewhere.* Some may therefore insist on the fact that the unsupported presence—there is no necessity to say advance—of the steam flotilla on the Irawady was the cause of much misery to the friendly people of the country. It doubled Burmese vengeance against our allies. Had there been none of this naval meandering before the regular advance of the army in the steamers, the General might have found a determined and powerful enemy to resist his occupying a position at Prome. A blow might then have been struck at the ancient city itself which might have annihilated the Burmese army, and at once have forced the Golden Foot to any terms we might have chosen to dictate. Numbers of course will dissent from these opinions; it is utterly impossible to argue on such a subject with satisfaction to all parties; but there is one thing certain, that all concerned were interested in serving the State faithfully and well!

* The indefatigable exertions of Captain Shadwell, R.N., and of Major Brett, in defending Shouk Shay Khenee, with Her Majesty's allies, against numbers of *Burmese*, were worthy of the highest praise.



On the 30th of October the report of an attack by the Burmese on Henzada reached Rangoon. It was simply a "brush" with the enemy at that important position, beside the junction of the Bassein river with the Irawady. Captain A. Becher, of the 40th Bengal Native Infantry, with only one company of his regiment, highly distinguished himself on this occasion by his promptitude and gallantry in repelling the Burmese, for which he received the thanks of General Godwin.

By the end of the month nearly the whole of H. M.'s 51st and the 40th Bengal Native Infantry had embarked for Prome. On the arrival of the 9th Madras Native Infantry, either there or at minor posts on the river, the whole of the 2nd Division would have left Rangoon. On the 29th, H.M.S. "Hastings" had left for Madras, homeward bound.

On the 1st of November a terrific explosion took place, which few will forget during their lives if they were at the time on the upper terrace of the Great Dagon Pagoda,—the discharge of heavy artillery, the rattling peals of thunder, will not describe it. It was like some demon inside the earth growling for a considerable length of time with a terrible power, certainly not of this world; the noise wound up by the fury of Jupiter in full play, hurling about the bolts which Vulcan is reputed to have forged for Jove! It turned out to be the explosion of a small magazine near the theatre, to the southward, where there were many boxes and barrels of ammunition and some powder. The explosion set fire to the temple of Thalia, which soon appeared in one huge and dangerous blaze.* The large magazine on the west was immediately occupied by men with buckets. Through the exertions of the troops this important building was saved; if it had not been, few of us would have been left alive to tell the tale. The casualties amounted to three Burmese and two or three of the native lascars killed and wounded. Pieces of

* This pleasant place of amusement, with all its excellent scenery, was entirely destroyed.



wood, fiery gun-wads, and musket balls,* were sent into the air with terrific force; and an artillery European gunner, who was sentry over the upper magazine at the time, was lifted some feet off the ground! A committee of three field officers assembled at the Artillery Mess-house to inquire into the cause of the explosion, and to report on the extent of damage done; and the impression at length became general that it was accidental.

Akook-toung,† it was now said, had been occupied by the Burmese with two guns. On the 8th of November five dacoits were caught by the *Thoogyee* (Judge) of Dalla. One of them was described to be the leader of five hundred men of the King's army; the titles given him by Royalty were engraved on palm leaves; these were carried by his servant.

On the 11th a company of the 9th Madras Native Infantry, and one from the Bengal Fusiliers were sent to Puzendoun and Dalla, respectively, as a guard to the friendly inhabitants in these near positions to Rangoon. Attacks by the Burmese had rendered such measures necessary.

On the 12th, the melancholy news reached us of the death of Britain's greatest warrior—Wellington! The "Times" was magnificent in its eulogium on the departed hero who had "EXHAUSTED NATURE AND EXHAUSTED GLORY." But indeed all the leading journals seemed to vie with each other in doing honour to his memory. We do not believe that on any previous occasion so much graphic, elegant, and impressive writing had been poured forth by the Press.‡

The 4th Regiment of Local Sikh Infantry arrived on the 12th at Rangoon. Major Armstrong's corps was regarded as quite a curiosity in Calcutta, and its appearance here was con-

* Some of these actually came through the thatch of the author's house, though some hundred yards away from, and about forty feet above, the magazine.

† On the right bank of the river, some fifteen miles below Prome.

‡ His Grace's valuable opinion on the Second Burmese War was probably the last given by the "Iron Duke" on the familiar subject of a campaign.

sidered to be an event of no ordinary importance.* The Ramghur Cavalry also arrived. On the 15th news reached us from Prome that a force had proceeded to Akouk-toung, and had captured four guns. Another had landed at the stockade opposite Prome. The enemy were completely surprised by the tars and troops. Landing at different places, the gallant sailors and marines drove the Burmese into the hands of our soldiers, who made quick work of a large number of them, with little loss on our side. Upwards of ninety Burmese were said to have been killed.

News of a sad nature from Prome informed us of the death of Captain Rundall of the Madras Engineers, commanding the corps of Madras Sappers and Miners in Burma. This excellent officer had served with distinction in the Chinese war. His gallantry on the field in Burma has already been alluded to in the second part of this Abstract. He was a zealous soldier, of high talent, and of the most exemplary character; and he died in the prime of life beloved and regretted by all. In him another had been added to the list of worthy men who had fallen by a stronger hand than that of the enemy.

It may be recollected by the reader of the former narrative that early in June 1852 a force of between two hundred and three hundred men, under Major Cotton, left Rangoon to attack the city of Pegu. The troops did their work in what may be called dashing style, while exposed to the fierce rays of a burning sun. The enemy were driven out, but did not suffer very great loss. It was then much to be

* The following is an analysis of the men then composing the 4th Sikh Infantry:—

" Sikhs	500
Afghans	150
Punjabees	100
Goorkhas and Hindustanis	150—200."

The Governor-General, it was said, had paid the Sikhs the high compliment of visiting them; and the regiment had been furnished with percussion arms, which, at Rangoon, with the British bayonet, they seemed to carry with as much pride as the British soldier.



regretted that General Godwin could not afford troops for the permanent occupation of Pegu. The real capture and occupation were now to come.

By the middle of November four river steamers were under orders for Pegu, to convey a force consisting of three hundred of the Bengal Fusiliers, three hundred of the Madras Fusiliers, four hundred of the 5th Madras Native Infantry, with small detachments of Artillery and Sappers, and two guns. Brigadier McNeill of the 2nd Madras Brigade was appointed to command. The Bengal Fusiliers were under Colonel Tudor, the Madras under Major Hill, the 5th companies under Major Shubrick, and the Artillery under Captain Malloch of the Bengal army. The Sappers were under Lieutenants Shortland and Harris. General Godwin was to accompany the force, when it was to be expected with his accustomed energy he would superintend operations. The troops embarked on Friday morning, the 19th of November, at daybreak, and anchored the next day at sunset, a little below Pegu. In consequence of the shallowness of the river the steamers were not engaged. The force landed on the morning of Sunday the 21st, amidst a dense fog. The fatigue endured by the troops was very great, and the casualties in this gallant affair were considerable. The Grenadiers and Rifle companies of the 5th Madras Native Infantry, under Captain Wyndham, were on board the "Mahanuddy." The following notes may be selected as containing at least a faithful account of the capture and occupation of Pegu:—

"My detachment (5th M. N. I.), all ranks included, was 400 strong; 280 were with me in the foremost steamer, the 'Bentinck,' the remainder with General Godwin in the 'Mahanuddy.' At noon, on the 19th, we first sighted armed Burmese; that night we were aground about seven miles below Pegu. I was requested to furnish strong picquets on the eastern bank for the protection of the steamers. Captains Watts and Nicholls were sent with their companies. I visited all the sentries, who were in a jungle so dense they could not



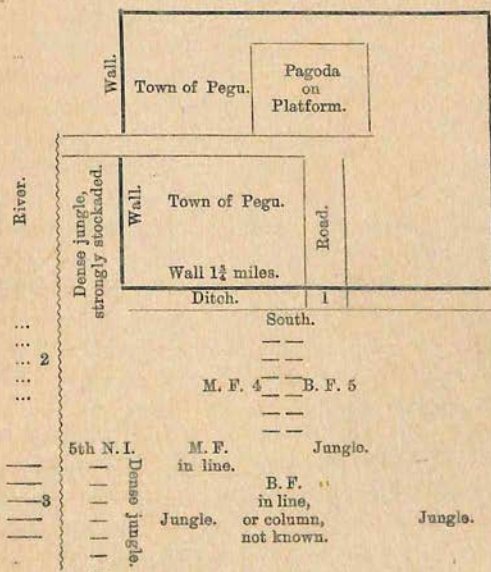
be seen at a distance of 20 yards one from the other. On the afternoon of this day I had accompanied Captains Lambert and Seymour, R.N., who attended the expedition—the former in charge of all the gun-boats, the latter as an ‘amateur’—and Captain Digby of the ‘Bentinck,’ in an armed cutter up the river, which we found staked, but of sufficient depth. We rowed till the noise of shouting from a vast multitude, about 150 yards ahead of us, told us we were discovered. The town proved to be Pegu, and the people its inhabitants. I concluded those armed among them were not there, but at their respective posts awaiting the arrival of our force, of which the smoke of the steamers and the guns we had been compelled to fire had given them notice, for we were not interfered with. At 10 P.M. our picquets were attacked, and a sharp fire poured upon them, which was as promptly returned.

“On the 20th, at daybreak, we advanced about a mile or so, the tide having fallen. I was requested to furnish companies on either bank, for the clearance of the jungle. Captain Watts and Lieutenant Whitlock performed this duty, aided by all spare hands from the steamer, and several men of H. M.’s ship ‘Fox,’ under Mr. Daws, who all worked with right good will. In the course of the day we exchanged many shots with the Burmese, who, before and after the return of the working parties, came boldly down and delivered their fire on the steamer. At 5 P.M. the remaining steamers appeared in sight; we weighed and proceeded about two or three miles, and dropped anchor. I was again called on for a strong picquet—this time on the western bank—which I accompanied and placed in person, under Lieutenants Maud and Cloeté. About 7 P.M. General Godwin arrived, and directed me to have my detachment drawn up on the Pegu bank, at 6 A.M. the next morning. The Sappers also came with the Artillery, and remained on board for the night, the former under Captain Elliot, Bengal Engineers, being engaged for a couple of hours during the night scarping the bank for the easier ascent of the



two 24-pounder howitzers the next morning. The river is very narrow where the landing took place, but the banks are very steep. The scene on board that night, so crowded as we were by the new arrivals, beggars all description.

"At 4 A.M. (November 21st) the 5th got under arms, and about a quarter to 5 the landing began. We were soon formed up, as ordered, occupying a grove of plantains. The Rifles and Grenadier companies shortly joined me; and by 6 A.M. General Godwin in person came and gave me his orders; they were, in the advance on Pegu, or any other movement which might take place, to keep up with the Madras Fusiliers, and not lose sight of them. Supposing the following to be a rough sketch of Pegu, the position of the troops will be clearer to you:—



1. Gateway.
2. Gun-boats.
3. 'Bentinck' and other steamers.
4. M. F.—Madras Fusiliers.
5. B. F.—Bengal Fusiliers.



“ At a quarter past 6 A.M. the firing began from the jungle, close round and about the troops. Four or five casualties immediately occurred. General Godwin, who was ever in the front, was reconnoitring. The advance was first contemplated through the jungle, between the river and the wall, and the Bengal and Madras Fusiliers, feelers from both, were pushing in that direction; but the severity of the fire proved the Burmese were there in a strong position, and a flank movement parallel with the south wall, and distant about one hundred and fifty yards from it, was begun and continued for nearly two miles through breast-high grass and a dense—most dense—jungle. Before the movement a working party, covered by the Rifles of the 5th, was sent forward to clear a track, and nobly they did their work, the whole force following as they best could, scattered here and there in single and double files over the whole way, a heavy fire pouring upon them for four hours and a half. The guns and Sappers, the former covered by the Grenadiers of the 5th, had been hurried meanwhile to the front. Advantage was taken, wherever it could be had, of a good bank to pour in volley after volley; but of course the whole force was greatly scattered. The sun was fearful, and the fatigue very great. By the time General Godwin had arrived with the working party, Rifles, and hindmost portion of the Bengal Fusiliers opposite the gateway which was to be stormed, it was discovered that most were dead beat, and that some time must elapse before anything like proper columns could be formed. By dint of great exertions the best part of the Bengal, and about half of the Madras, Fusiliers were at last got together, allowed breathing time,—the Rifles forming a line of skirmishers in their front,—then nobly harangued by General Godwin, and, with a British cheer, let loose on the gate and the crumbling wall, the ditch here having little water in it. The fire while the columns were being formed was very severe, and opposite the gate and at the south-west portion of the wall, where the 5th were first formed up, was the severest expe-



rienced. Captain Seymour, a gallant sailor (the amateur), was first of all the assailants, and conspicuous throughout the day. Passing the gateway, the storming parties drove the Burmese, now flying to the westward, fast before them, and then retracing their steps, made as rapidly as they could for the pagoda, about a short mile distant. Here some volleys were exchanged, and Pegu was in our possession. This was about noon.

"All this time the 5th, that is the remaining portion of them, with the remaining half or so of the Madras Fusiliers, were returning the severe fire at extended order, as they best could, along the south face of the wall, but collected within three-fourths of a mile or so of the river, knowing nothing of what was going on ahead, the firing permitting no sounds of any kind to reach them. Once only a staff officer, Captain Darroch, came down, and noticing the heaviness of the fire, directed me, in my flank march, not to lose sight of the possibility of the Burmese occupying the intervening space between the left of my line and the field hospital, which had been formed on the spot where the 5th landed. At noon, another staff officer came down and hurried the Madras Fusiliers on my right, and the 5th, up to the pagoda. Our fire, doubtless, kept the Burmese from passing along the whole length of the south wall, as General Godwin moved in that direction, and in fact quite disconcerted their plans, for they were not prepared for an assault where it was made; and keeping up a steady and rapid fire, they were so held in check between the two points. The Rifle company had one officer wounded severely, Lieutenant Whitlock; two privates killed, and five wounded; the Grenadiers none. About the centre, between the south-west angle and the place of assault, the fire was far less severe *at times*, and in my remaining detachment I lost one officer; Lieutenant Cloeté severely wounded; one havildar killed; and two privates wounded."

By the 24th the General, with the greater portion of the



troops, had returned to Rangoon, having left a force at Pegu under Major Hill. He was, on the whole, pleased with the gallant affair, though he had to lament the loss of several brave officers and men. About to storm the pagoda, our gallant Chief "nobly harangued the troops," in a practical style seldom surpassed. "Now," he said to the Fusiliers, "*you* are Bengallis, and *you* are Madrassis; let us see who are the best men!" A deafening cheer—a rush—and all was over! Pegu had fallen; but, we trusted, only to rise in greater beauty than ever! Our loss was three officers wounded; one, Lieutenant Cook, of the Commissariat, mortally; and from thirty-five to forty of the men, Europeans and sepoy, were killed and wounded. Two or three officers were disabled by the sun, among them the worthy Brigadier, Malcolm M'Neill.* They were fighting from 7 A.M. till 1 P.M.

All zealous soldiers should, we thought, come to this country and learn what fatigue is, fighting with the enemy in ambush, under a Burmese sun! Had there been carriage, it is highly probable that the General would have gone on to Sittang and Beling.

Brigadier Elliott, commanding the 1st Madras Brigade, with Captain Manners and Lieutenant Pilmer, Staff, had now left for Prome. Intelligence had arrived at Rangoon of the death of Captain Gardner,* of the 40th Bengal Native Infantry, at Akouk-toung. One story went that he was out patrolling—the "Enterprise" lying off Akouk-toung, high and dry the while—and going rather far into the jungle, he suddenly came upon a work of the enemy; a jinjal was fired at him, and he

* General Godwin bestowed his thanks on the following officers in his Despatch:—Brigadier M'Neill, Commander Shadwell, Lieutenant-Colonel Tudor, Majors Hill and Shubrick, Majors Mayhew and Boulderson, Captains Malloch, Brown, Hamilton, Darroch, Burne, Renaud, Latter, and Chads, A.D.C. The enemy was stated to have amounted to upwards of five thousand men.

† Killed on the 19th November.



fell, shot through the head; a havildar, in trying to recover the body, was shot also. He was, we were informed, a son of the Honourable Lieutenant-General Gardner of the Royal Artillery, and had just been appointed a brigade-major on the permanent establishment. He was a man of considerable ability, and his kindly disposition could not fail to strike one immediately on coming in contact with him.

Sixteen iron 9-pounders having arrived, chiefly for the defence of the second terrace of the Great Pagoda, Colonel Anstruther, with his usual practical knowledge and zeal in all matters relating to Artillery,—on the efficiency of which, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, the security, offensive as well as defensive, of all nations chiefly depends,—allowed several officers to peruse an excellent paper he had written on the expediency of having all iron 9-pounder guns reamed out to 12-pounders, so as to throw a 12-pounder shot.* The 24-pounder was the favourite breaching gun in the Peninsula—at Badajoz and at St. Sebastian. But the weight of the iron 9-pounder reamed to a 12 is more than half the weight of a 24-pounder gun. Weight should be dispensed with on land service as much as possible. It is a terrible drawback, especially in such countries as Burma. With the Navy weight is of little or no consequence. Robins' rule—"the strength of iron is as the quantity of metal"—fully sanctions the general introduction of all 9-pounders (iron) being reamed out to 12's. Again, Colonel Anstruther proved by experiment that a 12-pounder reamed up to an 18, with carronade windage, is superior to all 18-pounders now in use for land service. Those who uphold the use of weighty guns on land forget the vast amount of toil and trouble necessary to bring them along. Reaming, such as pro-

* It must be kept in mind that these remarks were written a good many years ago, before the improvements of Armstrong, Whitworth, and others astonished the world.



posed, improves the windage, and diminishes the weight of our Indian train.

The country about Pegu was described to be in an uncultivated state; the Peguese had, on account of the war and its effects, neglected to till the ground.* It seemed for the time as if a beautiful and fertile province were on the verge of ruin.

Major Reid, with two guns of his horse battery, embarked for Prome on the 26th of November. A company of the 9th Madras Native Infantry also left for Yangain-chainya.

On the 27th we received intelligence that the chief who had so distinguished himself at Puzendoun had managed to destroy some three hundred or four hundred of the enemy who were escorting rice to various posts. This, with the fact of an attack having already been made on the newly captured city of Pegu, showed very plainly that there were some desperate characters about. The news of this latter affair was not unexpected by many, and the receipt of it was considered to be of little importance.

On the 6th of December poor Walter Cook was no more. A finer young officer than this (of the 22nd Madras Native Infantry) never stepped. The author had served with him in the field among the jungle regions of Orissa (in 1848), where his ardent temperament and zeal for the public service were conspicuous in a remarkable degree.

Pegu had been attacked a second time by the Burmese, on which occasion it was said a large party of the enemy went to an old house where we had formerly lodged a picquet, and fired away for about two hours. The quarters had been vacated some days before this act of gallantry on their part; some two

* It is during the months of June, July and August, that the Burmese plough, sow, and harrow the ground after their own fashion.



thousand people were said to have come into Pegu the next day seeking Major Hill's protection.

It is now time to turn our entire attention for a while to this important quarter; but it may be well to chronicle a few events before leaving Rangoon. The headquarters of Artillery left for Prome on the 9th of December. A French officer,* who had established himself as a favourite, appeared on the morning of packing up, and gave a few suggestions as an old campaigner. In June he had come over in the "Emperor" from Calcutta, and was then said to have been employed by the Golden Foot. He struck not a few of us as being a sensible and well-spoken man. He had done everything and had been everywhere. He had served in the Brazils, in Africa, in Spain, and in Portugal. "The Burmese," said the Adventurer, "were very brave behind a stockade or a breastwork, but they knew nothing of regular warfare." He had a particular horror at Royalist France being turned into the country of a republic. General Godwin now cared little about what the French officer did, although he considered himself on parole and under surveillance. But things were very different in June, when it was thought necessary to send the "Fire Queen" and "Berenice," on her voyage from Calcutta, to bring the "Emperor" in sight of the Commodore, and our Adventurer before the General.—The evening before the departure of the Prome party (8th) was saddened by the death of Brigadier M'Neill, already mentioned as having been disabled by the sun in the operations against Pegu. He never recovered from the fatigue and exposure attending the capture. He was of the old school, an excellent and gallant officer, and a great favourite in the army.

On the afternoon of the 9th intelligence arrived that Pegu

* D'Orgoni, afterwards the famous "general," of Ava celebrity.



OUR BURMESE WARS.

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was surrounded or besieged. Two hundred Fusiliers and quantities of ammunition were ordered to be shipped immediately "To the rescue!" was the thought of every officer and soldier in Rangoon.



CHAPTER II.

THE BURMESE INVESTMENT OF PEGU.—CRITICAL POSITION
OF MAJOR HILL AND HIS TROOPS.—SUMMARY OF MILI-
TARY TRANSACTIONS.

It seemed to be General Godwin's policy to retain Pegu as a most important military position. He had won it after a rather severe conflict, but yet the fact appeared to have escaped him that the Burmese set any great value upon it. Might there not be a combination among the hostile villages of the Sittang Valley to recapture it? On the 22nd of November all the troops, with the exception of two hundred Madras Fusiliers under Major Hill, two hundred of the 5th Madras Native Infantry under Captain Wyndham, two guns, with a small detachment of European Artillery, and some Madras Sappers, were ordered to return to Rangoon. The news that a small garrison was left to defend the ancient fortress and all the inhabitants of the country who chose to come under our protection, was not long in reaching the Burmese camp. Perhaps at this time it was thought by the enemy that they could stand a defeat, but could not bear to be despised. It certainly does seem strange that our Military Commander did not calculate on a speedy



attempt at recapture by the Burmese, who knew tolerably well that on the General's return to Rangoon there was every chance of his proceeding as soon as possible to take the field at Prome. Rangoon was now in a position to have afforded a considerably greater military force at Pegu than what was left there. Very different was it from the month of June when the first capture took place. The plans of the campaign were then, it appeared, in a slow and uncertain state of development, and it was probably prudent at such a time not to draw away troops from our chief conquest. But now, through the unceasing exertions of the Engineers and Sappers, much had been done to the fortifications of Rangoon, and numerous pieces of ordnance had arrived to strengthen that noble fortress. Allowing for the absence of a division of the army at Prome, and troops elsewhere, some three hundred or four hundred men more, one hundred and fifty of these at least Europeans, could have been left with ease to garrison Pegu.

As soon as the night of the 24th of November the enemy made an attack upon our gun-boats, but were immediately repulsed. Late in the evening of the 27th they made a most daring attack on all sides of the pagoda, but as the garrison turned out in a few minutes, they were at once vigorously repelled. The troops remained on the alert till morning, when on examining the ground several dead Burmese were seen. A most desperate attack had likewise been made upon the gun-boats in the river and the Commissariat Guard.

About 8 o'clock on the morning of December 6th, the enemy—infantry and cavalry—surrounded the pagoda, and attacked us in great force. They continued to annoy us with jinjals and musketry all that day and during a great part of the night, and succeeded in driving off a large herd of the Pegu buffaloes.

From the 7th till the 13th inclusive, the enemy, according to one of the besieged, were firing jinjals and musketry day and night. On the 11th two gun-boats arrived from Rangoon with stores and ammunition; but these were driven back after



losing several men.* The gallant besieged were now doing their utmost, animated during their unceasing toil with the hope of a speedy reinforcement. Major Hill had sent in three or four bold messengers to Rangoon. The foe seemed determined to drive the small band from Pegu; in addition to their rude iron and leaden balls, small brass representations of Gautama, pieces of iron, necks of bottles, even stones, or round lumps of granite brought hither for the purpose, were fired on our troops from every quarter. Truly the position of Major Hill was at this time hardly less critical than that of the immortal Clive at the famous defence of Arcot. The Burmese had managed to bring a gun of considerable size into a commanding position, which dealt forth several deadly missiles. According to another of the besieged, spent balls hit some one or other very frequently; several of our men were thus wounded at night and not discovered till the morning.

Before turning to the Relief of Pegu, it may be well to give a summary of military transactions in November and December 1852, and January 1853, at this bravely manned post.

The sketch is from the manuscript notes of a distinguished officer present throughout this arduous service:—The besieging chief Moun-g-Kyounk-Loung's entire force consisted of eleven thousand men, disposed as follows:—two thousand men at

* See Appendix No. VIII., "Pegu," p. 469. On the 10th, Captain Shadwell proceeded with the war-boats to Pegu, also the "Nerbudda" with the Fusiliers. Some seventy-five rounds per gun had been shipped on the evening of the 9th with the greatest speed, through the energy of Captains Voyle and Robertson. At 3 p.m. of December 11th, we received the disastrous intelligence that the boats under Captain Shadwell and the steamer had been compelled to return. The enemy being in vast numbers and more determined than ever, he wisely returned for reinforcements; but not without the war-boats—containing also Captain Malloch and a small party of European Bengal Artillerymen—having had an affair with the Burmese, in which our loss was a sergeant and two men of the Artillery killed, and two or three wounded; also several marines and sailors killed, and many wounded. It was a serious affair, and the whole required and received immediate attention.



Shwé-gyeen, ninety-seven miles north of Pegu; one thousand men at Sittang, thirty-two miles east of Pegu; and eight thousand at Pegu,* which latter force opposed the British troops on the 21st of November 1852. In addition to the small body left to garrison the pagoda—which post was under the command of Major W. Hill of the 1st Madras Fusiliers—to keep the river clear of the enemy's boats passing by, two gun-boats were also left at Pegu under the command of Lieutenant Mason, R.N., of H.M.S. "Fox." Each boat carried a 12-pounder howitzer and 12-pounder rockets. The boats were completely hidden from the pagoda by thick belts of bamboo jungle, which grew up to within one hundred yards of the great temple.

General Godwin had left the once famous capital of an independent kingdom, assured that no force would again assemble in that part of the province. So little did he think of the enemy daring to attack the garrison of Pegu, that he left a Peguese chief, by name Moun-g-Loung, with about fifty followers, to induce the families of the inhabitants to come in, settle themselves quietly in their houses, and re-people the then almost ruined and deserted city. But this glorious consummation was not in the order of things; and, as has been seen, was not destined to be accomplished. It was too much, after losing the Shwé Dagon—the stronghold of Gautama—to lose also the Shwé-madoo Praw, which for so many centuries had towered in sublime magnificence to the skies. Some idea of what the troops had to defend may be gained from the following particulars:—The pagoda stands upon three terraces; the upper one contained the troops of the garrison and the commissariat stores; the upper platform was nearly a square, each side of which measured from two hundred and ten to two

* Under Moun-g-Gye, the Commander-in-Chief's brother-in-law.



hundred and twenty yards.* A low brick wall, three feet high, had formerly enclosed the upper platform. The dilapidation of the walls was on every side apparent, and on the north-east and west sides scarcely any wall remained, but high reedy grass had sprung up—vegetation, as usual, rapid amid the scene of neglect and ruin. A range of low buildings ran along each face in a line with the walls, which no troops occupied. There was a Phongyee house on each side, and adjoining the base of the pagoda itself. In these sanctuaries the officers were quartered, one only being reserved for a magazine. There were four large entrances on the top platform, open, and about thirty feet wide: to join these entrances from below there were between thirty and forty flights of steps. The second terrace was twelve feet below the upper, and extended about forty feet on all sides from the wall. There was then another descent of six feet, when a third terrace also ran about forty feet. The second and third terraces, respectively, were three hundred and twenty and four hundred and fifty yards in length on each side of the pagoda.† The high grass which had grown up all round prevented our posted sentries in many places from seeing each other. Those who are acquainted with Burmese warfare will readily understand how very much exposed our troops were to a sudden surprise, when Burmese are so skilful in preserving silence when creeping through grass to cut down sentries. There were a great many small pagodas on the east and west sides, a little way beyond the lower terrace. These were so close to each other that on the east face, about one hundred and twenty yards off, they formed a complete wall forty yards in length, behind which the enemy were in perfect safety.

* The terrace on which the Shwé Dagon at Rangoon stands is nine hundred feet long and six hundred and eighty-five broad.

† Each side of the base of the temple measures one hundred and sixty-two feet. The shape is octagonal at the base.



Numerous other pagodas were dotted about at distances from one hundred to six hundred yards, and these became formidable barricades when jinjals and matchlocks were fired from behind them. The remaining very important advantage on the side of the enemy was, that the north and east sides of the country being higher than the platform, caused every man to be observed passing to and fro. The gallant defenders, it will now be fully seen, were thus placed in a very critical position, with only four hundred and thirty-five men to defend what required at least one thousand two hundred to maintain, without harassing the soldiery.

But, not at all strange in this contrary world of ours, the very fact of a small band being left to garrison Pegu, this military blunder on the part of the General, was the means of achieving a decided political success. The prowess of the British arms was here displayed to its full extent, which must have struck terror into the hearts of the Burmese assailants, whose tale would run rapidly through the neighbouring hostile soldiery—all tending to bring about the conclusion of the war.

Major Hill commenced his work of defence by barricading the upper platform. Three of the four large entrances to the pagoda were the first places to be looked to. The enemy were in the neighbourhood, and work became the order of the day. Parties from the Europeans and Natives were ordered out. The Peguese were employed in cutting down the high grass with their dhás,—their expertness in the use of which we frequently noticed. All seemed determined to render the citadel as strong as possible. Two brass 4-pounders and a 3-pounder, captured on the 21st of November, were placed in position at the gateways, which were built up the whole breadth of the entrance with timbers, about twelve feet high, leaving just a sufficient opening for the gun.

The following is a detailed account of the attack on the river-picquet and boats on the night of the 27th of November.



These did not escape the attention of the enemy; for though we heard but a few shots in that direction whilst the pagoda was attacked, yet as soon as they drew off from us they made a desperate assault in that quarter, and we could tell from the firing increasing at intervals more than at others, that the attacks were being resumed; but the blue jackets, with their marine artillery, made such excellent use of their 12-pounder howitzers and rockets, that, with the support of the picquet on shore, they proved too strong for the Burmese. This was a very unequal contest. There were houses within thirty yards of where the picquet was posted, besides having brushwood all round, which enabled the enemy to conceal themselves, whilst our men were exposed on the bank of the river. Lientenant P. A. Brown of the Fusiliers commanded on this occasion. Having commissariat stores to protect, that officer with his men had taken the precaution before dark to pile up the bags of rice, tobacco, barrels, and other articles which were lying about, so as to have everything as compact as possible, and then make his post secure in case of an attack. Some of the bags caught fire during the night from the rockets, which encouraged the enemy to approach nearer, when some of our men dashed forward, charged them, and compelled them to retire. After continued assaults had been made upon this little post, British blood, as it always does, proved too much for them, and they withdrew, leaving the picquet quiet for the rest of the night. On this, as on several other occasions during the war, the rocket practice of the boats' crews of Her Majesty's Navy was very good; and the effect of such practice, added to the untiring efforts of the gallant infantry, plainly showed what a small body of men can do against a large number. It is on such outpost affairs generally that the sharpest firing is seen. General Godwin complimented Major Hill and his force for their steady gallantry in this dashing business, and he trusted that the severe lesson which had been given the enemy would teach the Burmese respect for our new position and the vigil-



ance of its garrison, so as to prevent any future molestation! The loss sustained in the boats was four seamen and one marine artilleryman wounded. Three men of the Fusiliers were wounded. Lieutenant Mason, R.N., narrowly escaped with his life, a shot having cut through his neck-tie. It was singular that our loss on the 27th was not greater, as the enemy attacked also from the other side of the river, which is about one hundred yards wide where the boats were in position.

In consequence of the Burmese having attempted to escalate on three sides of the pagoda on the night of the 27th, Major Hill found it necessary to appoint a captain to command each face of the pagoda, with instructions that if any one face was pressed by the enemy, the captain on the side attacked was to concentrate his men at the given point of attack until support was given. This admirable arrangement gave a responsibility to the officer commanding each face, and enabled him to act on a sudden without waiting for orders. The commandants of faces appointed were Captains Stephenson and Nicolay of the Fusiliers, to the north and east faces respectively; and Captains Brown and Wyndham of the 5th Native Infantry, to the west and south. This plan allowed Major Hill to have a general supervision over the whole of the operations, and enabled him to move about and give directions where his presence was most required.

It was soon learned from the manner of this night attack by the Burmese, that they had regularly trained troops opposed to us. Chosen crafty ones had doubtless found their way from the "city of the immortals" to assist Moung-Kyouk-Loung! Now our men might be seen climbing up the splendid pagoda to take a *coup d'œil* of the surrounding country, and then would appear a cluster of officers talking earnestly over the number of troops and the defences. Uncertainty hovered in the atmosphere. But this, with the British character, only tends to make the nerves firmer, and to raise expectation the higher. It is difficult to say what were the feelings of the de-



achment of the Native Infantry. They were ready, at a moment's warning, to fight or die by the side of British soldiers!

On the 29th, parties of the enemy were seen moving in various directions to the north of the pagoda; Cassay* horsemen were among them. Next were seen elephants moving about, bearing officers of rank, all apparently determined on another plan of attack. All this, of course, tended to increase the vigilance of the garrison. Major Hill very prudently withdrew the picquet of fifty men on the open bank of the river, a mile away from the pagoda; and Lieutenant Mason, with his boats, was desired to repair to Rangoon. Upwards of forty men of the force were now sick in hospital, and the withdrawal of the river picquet brought additional aid for the defence. It was signally providential that the Burmese did not come on, for Moung-Loung, the Pegu chief, reported to Major Hill during the forenoon of the 1st of December, that a very large train of carts with Talaing families was then making its way to the southward, and that some of their gouns (chiefs) had come in advance to know whether they might claim protection from the garrison. At about 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the same day two hundred and sixteen carts, laden with the goods and chattels of two thousand persons, chiefly women and children, came in for protection. These poor creatures had taken refuge in the jungles, and had wandered about from place to place, with of course no settled residence while the royal troops remained in the province. "Pity and protect the slave!" was never uttered by the swarthy African with more intense feeling than now marked the desires of those Asiatics—whose ancestors had had a king of their own to rule over them

* "The Muniporeans, or people of Cassay in particular, abound in great numbers, and they are much prized as clever workmen. Owing to their superior skill in the management of the horse, the Burmese cavalry is almost exclusively composed of them; and they are distinguished by the national appellation of 'the Cassay Horse.'"—Major Snodgrass's "Narrative of the First Burmese War."



—as their eyes were directed to the British for protection! The ground covered by their carts occupied several acres, for it must be recollected the Pegu carts and buffaloes are of a prodigious size. It was now a matter of anxiety to afford protection to the families as well as to their property, whilst they lay scattered about, and the enemy were nigh at hand. The infirm, as well as all the women and children, were allowed to remain on the upper platform of the pagoda during the night, while the others remained below to look after the cattle and goods. Reader, just picture to yourself the upper platform of the Pegu Pagoda! It is night, and the troops are wearied after the preparation and arrangements of the day. Sleep for the weary watchers would fain “knit up the ravelled sleeve of care!” Suddenly bursts forth the clamorous noise of children; the sentries cannot hear beyond the walls. There are sick children, and others wanting food; and behold! several officers, up a great portion of the night, feeding the weary and destitute with biscuit, to quiet the Peguese vociferation! The helpless now feel assured that Gautama, through the influence of the fairies dwelling in the golden *tee* above, has sent guardian angels to protect them! As this arrangement inconvenienced the troops, it only lasted three nights. Major Hill determined on destroying all the houses in the street below, as they could only give cover to the enemy; and orders were thereupon issued to stockade in the Peguese under the walls of the pagoda. This severe work was performed in a manner truly admirable—officers and men, every one assisting to fortify the oppressed, after their own national fashion! There was the European working with almost gigantic strength, felling down many a noble tree, working with a right good will; there the skilful and active sapper; and there the sepoy, having stopped work for a time, grinning with a benevolent countenance! The husbands of those we had to protect only a few miles off, and forced to fight against us, were little dreaming of British humanity being exercised towards their kindred under the



walls of Pegu. The stockade, covering about two acres of ground, was soon done. The carts and buffaloes were all systematically arranged, and took up their position in line and column in a manner quite worthy of the "Artillery Exercise." All were stockaded in by nightfall. The women and children were placed in the carts nearest to the walls, so as to shelter them as much as possible from the shot. The men were stationed in front, with their spears, matchlocks, and sharp dhás, to fight for their families—which they did, fearlessly and well. Dr. Beaufleur, the zealous surgeon in charge of the stockaded allies, had several severe cases brought to him for treatment. Spies had been loitering about; and on the morning of the 5th, we could discover, from the elevations of the pagoda, that the movements of the enemy were more extensive than usual, and that they mustered in greater force. The Cassay horsemen did not now conceal their numbers from our view, and were seen galloping about in larger bodies. Towards the evening of that day faint sounds of firing were heard at intervals, as if from a long distance down the river. Night had set in, when a shot was fired from the jungle, which was immediately returned by the sentry who was fired at. Shortly before this it had been reported to Major Hill that a low sound of voices was heard, as of troops moving about in the jungle. Firing soon became the order of the night, and a discharge of canister from a 24-pounder howitzer, in the direction of the voices, roused every one into action. Before 9 o'clock Major Hill was called away from the defences to two sepoys of the 5th Madras Native Infantry, who had hailed the picquet from the jungle—the south picquet—the sergeant of which had brought them in. Fortunately for these men, the firing, which was commenced at the pagoda just before they arrived, was on the east face, whereas they came from the south.* Their object was to

* Firing was kept up round the pagoda, and did not cease until after midnight, when the moon rose.



OUR BURMESE WARS.

CSL

report the sad fate of a jemadar and his men, the former of whom, with three or four sepoy, while conveying supplies in a boat from Rangoon, had been killed by the Burmese.

The officers were sitting quietly at breakfast, discussing the deeds of night and morning, when the well-known cry of "Turn out!" raised a stir among all hands; at the same time the Burmese shout of attack was heard at the south-west angle of the pagoda. While the firing at the south-west angle summoned the men to the walls, a very singular and guerilla-like scene was exhibited. In an instant heights, mounds, and pagodas were crowned with men, who opened a sharp but ill-directed fire against our troops. The little curling smoke was now to be seen issuing from the place where was perched each wily matchlock-man; the sky was beautifully clear; every object came to view; and the whole had the effect of a gorgeous panorama. It was soon discovered—from the Burmese balls coming among us from such elevated positions—that our enemies were likely to have the best of it. It was, however, highly ludicrous, in the midst of danger, to hear the men joking with each other as they brought down a man or two from the high pinnacle on which the Burmese had so proudly perched themselves. The surprise having failed, the enemy were no doubt astonished to find that the Peguese were sheltered in a well-made stockade; there was the reality bristling up before their eyes! It was now evident, from the enemy taking possession of the elevations, that they did not intend going away; and so decided an advantage did the heights give them of sweeping the platform with their shot, that nearly fifty rounds of ammunition per man were expended that day in keeping down their fire. To save life it was now requisite to barricade the pagoda as strongly as possible. Lieutenant Campbell, the officer of Engineers, had had no sand-bags supplied him to make a temporary defence; it was, therefore, necessary to apply to the Commissariat for all the empty bags and barrels they could give, and these being found inade-



quate, bags of rice, and barrels of pork and biscuit were also called for. As soon as it became dark the Sappers were set to work. At night gongs were heard in various parts of the jungle, as if the Burmese were assembling their troops. The firing was not so heavy during the night as it had been that day, still there was little cessation of it, while the working parties were heard about the walls. It was of importance to get the Peguese into military order in the event of an attack. Some two hundred and ninety had enrolled themselves as fighting men, but out of that number only fifty had muskets—our old flint-locks—while the remainder were armed with spears and swords. Major Hill visited the stockade, and, with the assistance of a Burmese interpreter, pointed out to Moungh-Loung the way in which he wished his men to be disposed of should an assault take place. The men with fire-arms were placed at short distances between the spearmen, so as to give a greater appearance of strength in that particular arm; a certain number were told off as sentinels on duty, to be regularly relieved. The gongs were placed so as to give orders, and to overlook their own men. Major Hill visited the stockade of the allies every night, to give them confidence, and to see that they were all on the alert. To show how much our troops were exposed on the platform notwithstanding all that had been done, the officers' servants were obliged to erect some kind of protection for the beds of their masters and themselves when they lay down to rest. Several days and nights were passed without any cessation of firing. With all the fatigue of mind and body was excessive, particularly so with the indefatigable commander of the garrison. The chance of being able to eat one's dinner without being shot at seemed remote indeed. An officer of the Fusiliers received a severe contusion while seated at the mess-table; several servants were wounded, and one was killed while waiting upon his master. A Peguer also received a mortal wound while at work inside the mess-house. On the 8th the men began to feel the incessant work. Every man



was daily on duty ten hours out of the twenty-four. The exposure and fatigue increasing, Major Hill at length deemed it absolutely necessary to inform General Godwin of the determined nature of the enemy. All ammunition expended, we would then be compelled to evacuate the pagoda, and force a way back to Rangoon at the point of the bayonet. Four goodly men and true, for fifty rupees a head, came forth from Mounge-Loung's detachment and volunteered to carry a letter to General Godwin. Three copies were sent with the original, so that each man had his letter. The Major did not ask for any more men, but added, "All I want is ammunition." As soon as it was dark, the messengers started on their hazardous enterprise. There was a Burmese force on all sides of the pagoda of at least six thousand men, and had the carriers fallen into their hands, they would probably have been decapitated or crucified, according to Burmese custom.

On the morning of the 12th the joyful sound of firing from British war-boats ran like an electric shock through the weary garrison. But despair soon followed, our forebodings were indeed verified,—the naval party had failed in their attempt to communicate with us. From the crowded state of the stockade, together with the cold damp nights and the scanty supply of food they had, cholera broke out among our Peguese allies. Fortunately, the scourge did not extend to the troops. The sudden withdrawal of the gun-boats, with relief so near at hand, quickly became the all-absorbing topic. But the assurance that General Godwin was now aware of our difficulties, served to rouse us to increased effort.

After this event the enemy's fire gradually ceased. Those only who have watched night after night can form an idea of how much a temporary calm is appreciated. But yet it is difficult to reconcile oneself to the change. On the present occasion the whistling of the bullets—the rattling of the boards—the speedy movement—the sound from a cluster of voices,—the want of all this seemed to create a vacancy in the state of



affairs quite unintelligible ! The reply of " All right, sir ! " to the officers on duty passing along their beat, could not disturb well-earned repose. But in the morning, yelling from the Burmese—the firing of canister from our howitzers—and clearing the platform for action, soon destroyed the peaceful delusion. The Burmese having made a determined attempt to force their way into the Peguese stockade, came to a hand-to-hand contest with the allies, who received some severe wounds from spears and matchlocks ; and it was not until they tasted the cold steel from some of our Rifle sepoy's that they drew off.* Another night had closed upon us, when again the welcome sound of a British gun was heard down the river. The Artillery officer reported his hearing guns ; he had also observed a rocket fired perpendicularly. Wellington's remark at Waterloo, " There goes old Blucher at last ! " could scarcely have been uttered with more heartfelt pleasure than " There's old Godwin at last ! " by the garrison of Pegu.

At 11 o'clock on the morning of the 14th the first firing of General Godwin's relieving force was heard. As the troops were seen nearing the pagoda, cheering became general throughout the garrison, and continued until Lieutenant Elliott, who commanded the advanced guard, entered the small aperture—made as an embrasure for one of our small guns—on the eastern entrance of the pagoda.

On the 4th of January, although no troops had been observed moving about, a sudden discharge of musketry issued from the opening of the jungle, which had been cut down. A 12-pounder howitzer, loaded with canister, was ready pointed in the direction, to the north, where it was supposed the

* The loss of the Burmese must have been very great, as they had not before ventured to cross a piece of clear ground. One man of immense stature was found dead, supposed to be a chief. The Peguese hung him up to a tree in triumph, but his body was cut down at sunset, and thrown into a dry well.



enemy might appear, and it was discharged with the happiest effect. Firing now commenced, and at sunset the picquet was increased to one hundred Europeans and fifty sepoy. By that time several men had been wounded.

On the 5th, 6th, and 7th, the working parties were increased and uprights were fixed in the ground, about ten feet from each other, and planks were nailed upon them, as being the most expeditious way of keeping the men out of sight of the enemy. Their attacks were now directed against the north face; and notwithstanding our men had been for some time worried and fired on—in spit of shot flying about—the Europeans were quite observable outside, coolly nailing on the planks, while others sat on the top of the beams, assisting in the work, under a heavy fire all day. The Burmese must have set them down as at least possessing a charmed life; but it was nothing more than British courage and working with a hearty good-will—qualities which had for nearly a century distinguished the Madras Fusiliers. The picquet was obliged to act as a covering party to keep down the fire, otherwise we might have lost many men. The enemy had now taken up a position on the opposite bank of the river with the number of their force increased, and where an irregular brick building was turned into a battery by them. It has not been recorded that on the departure of General Godwin a stockade had been erected, according to his orders, at the landing-place on the bank of the river. The enemy's battery was about one hundred and twenty yards from this stockade, and was a great annoyance to it. The gun-boats, under Captain Tarleton, R.N., having been withdrawn, we could not cross the river to dislodge the enemy from the strong position they had taken up, who, finding that we had no boats, at length rendered the stockade, from its unfinished condition, almost untenable. Up to the 7th one captain was mortally wounded (Captain Nicolay of the Fusiliers), one artilleryman was killed, and thirteen men were wounded. On the morning of the 8th, for some strange



reason difficult to understand, the enemy were seen from the heights of the pagoda marching in two confused columns, in full retreat. They went northward, and never again appeared to oppose us. And thus ended the protracted transactions at Pegu !

In consequence of the "very gallant and distinguished conduct" of Major Hill throughout these stirring events, the Most Noble the Governor-General of India in Council bestowed upon him a special mark of favour.* Previous to this the thanks of the Supreme Government of India were sent him by General Godwin, as well as to the garrison under his orders, for the gallant defence of Pegu :—

"Fort William, 4th January 1853.

* * * * *

"4th. The Governor-General in Council requests that you will convey to Major Hill of the Madras Fusiliers, and to the officers and men under his command, the marked acknowledgments of the Government of India, for the bravery and steadiness with which they met and repulsed the continuous and harassing attacks of a large body of the enemy for many days, before reinforcements arrived at Pegu."

* Command of the Gwalior Contingent, with about 2,000 Rs. a month. We had the pleasure of reading the courteous letter from Lord Dalhousie by which this noble gift was conveyed.



CHAPTER III.*

RELIEF OF PEGU, AND OTHER OPERATIONS.—THE
PROCLAMATION.

THE most energetic measures were now taken at Rangoon by General Godwin to answer with all possible speed the needy call for relief which came from the Pegu garrison. Rangoon had not been in such a state of excitement since its capture by the British in April. Had the tide of fortune at length turned against us? Had the mine of Burmese vengeance at length been sprung, to tell us that the dynasty of Alompra was not yet in danger, and rouse us into action? In any way a great event had taken place. The wonted energy of our chief when anything like danger was to be encountered proved him to be the man for this emergency. But General Godwin unfortunately had much difficulty in providing transports for the troops for the relief of Pegu. Two hundred and fifty Madras Fusiliers under Captain Renaud had been obliged to return to Rangoon in consequence of the disabled state of the river steamer "Nerbudda,"

* A melancholy interest is attached to this chapter, it being chiefly written from notes furnished to the author by General Neill—the "avenging angel" of the great Sepoy mutiny—the hero who fell, in 1857, at Lucknow.



in which they had embarked. These troops were transhipped to the "Mahanuddy," a vessel whose boilers had seen rather too much service. It was not, therefore, until both these steamers had been repaired that the head-quarters in the "Nerbudda," and the Madras Fusiliers in the "Mahanuddy," were enabled to leave Rangoon. At noon of the 12th of December both vessels steamed on until sunset, the "Nerbudda" leading. At daylight next morning, which was very foggy, all the boats conveying the other troops, under convoy of Captain Tarleton, R.N., proceeded with the "Nerbudda" up the river; the other steamer was supposed to be following not far astern. They approached the village of Lomen Seedee as the mist was rising, which was found, as expected, occupied by the enemy, and the river staked, abreast of it. We were quite prepared for the foe; guns loaded, and a party of twenty-five men on each paddle-box—the starboard furnished by the Madras, the larboard by the Bengal Fusiliers. We had evidently taken the Burmese by surprise; some of them were seen about the village, also a large party with some horsemen moving about on the plain. The left bank near where the steamer was anchored was an open plain; higher up and out of shot, stood the village. The troops were soon landed; and it was speedily determined to occupy the village, as affording shelter—it having been taken for granted that the enemy had retreated. The Bengal Fusiliers were, therefore, moved up to some of the nearest houses, when about twenty shots were fired into them from the high grass and jungle adjoining. One man was slightly wounded; the Burmese escaped without either being seen or fired upon. The village was then occupied, the Madras Fusiliers being on picquet in advance. The "Mahanuddy" not having yet arrived with the remainder of the Fusiliers, the other steamer was therefore sent down to bring the men up. The day wore on, and there being no appearance of the steamer, arrangements were made to pass the night in the village, and picquets were thrown out; but no attempt was made to drive